Reversing Eczema Naturally: Healing from the Inside Out with Andra McHugh Transcript

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Opening Story and Podcast Introduction

That's crazy because my husband and I are like fit, we eat vegetables, like we filter our water, we don't eat gluten and dairy, all the things. But I took the younger two into the pediatrician and I was holding my month old baby in one arm and I was holding the hand of my two year old with the other and the pediatrician was just like, this is so bad.

And I was like, I know, that's why we're here. Thank you. And he's like, yeah, you have to use both these prescriptions on both kids. Definitely put gloves on yourself before you put these on, because admittedly, they are very caustic.

Welcome to Take Back My Brain with Lori Hammer, where real healing starts in the brain. I'm Lori, a functional nutritionist and mom who's walked the path from anxiety and burnout to clarity and calm.

Each week, we're going to dive into brain-based tools like amino acid therapy, gut health, fasting, and faith to help you reclaim your energy, emotions, and sense of self.

Hello, everyone. Welcome back to the Take Back My Brain podcast. I'm your host, and today I have with me, Andra McHugh. So if you have ever struggled with eczema or your kids have, or you know somebody that has, then this podcast is definitely, definitely for you.

We're going to dive into what is eczema, What causes it? How do you reverse it? And so much more. So I'm really excited to dive into this topic because we have not had this on the podcast, Andrea.

So I feel like our listeners will be super tuned into this one. So thanks for being on today. My pleasure. Thanks for having me. Absolutely. So I know you have a story about this.

So not everybody wakes up one day and says, oh, gee, I think I'll help eczema. There's usually a reason behind that. So can you tell us what happened and kind of what led you into this space?

Sure. Yeah, I would love to not be an eczema expert.

How Eczema Started in Her Children

I would much prefer it. But that was just what was in our cards. And that's okay. But yeah, six years ago, I had three little girls, four, two, and newborn.

And then the two of them, my third daughter was just born with eczema. She was just born on fire. like the papers on our discharge papers that said she has a needle-nail rash, and then it just got worse and worse and worse.

She got drier and drier and drier, and redder and redder and redder. And then simultaneously, my two-year-old just like came down with eczema, like you would a colt.

It was so crazy. It just started this tiny little piece on her thigh, and then it just took over her whole body. And, you know, my four-year-old, I know you have Celiacs and dealing with that, like my four-year-old at the time was just throwing up like every night, you know, didn't have eczema, but also an autoimmune condition, you know, she thinks Celiacs and I don't know.

So it's basically three for three on autoimmune conditions and That's crazy because my husband and I are like fit,

we eat vegetables, like we filter our water, we don't eat gluten and dairy, all the things.

But I took the younger two into the pediatrician and I was holding my month old baby in one arm and I was holding the hand of my two year old with the other and the pediatrician was just like, this is so bad.

And I was like, I know, that's why we're here. Thank you. And he's like, yeah, you have to use both these prescriptions on both kids. Definitely put gloves on yourself before you put these on, because admittedly, they are very caustic.

And then throw in a cap full of bleach in their bath at night. basically, you know, his recipe was suppress and kill. And I just knew that there had to be a better way.

Yeah. So they were just so young and I just, I couldn't believe that that was going to be their lives. He said, all you can do is really manage it from here.

And I was like, that's just not, I'm not going to work. So that's just what started the charge to, to, to heal us naturally. And we did. Right. So what exactly is eczema?

I mean, it's presented as a skin condition, and that's what we're told. But we know to actually reverse it and heal it, it's not. This is an internal gut issue, right?

And what you're seeing on the outside is mirroring what your gut lining is looking like on the inside. So it's a little broken, it's a little inflamed, it's a little open.

And basically, I mean, it's described as like the rash that itches, it's just so uncomfortable.

What Eczema Is and Why It Happens

And I like to think about it, you know, as a mom that was trying to heal it, like what best served me was to think about like the properties of eczema and that kind of guided me and like what might help heal it or at least, you know, help the symptoms subside and like eczema is so like hot and fiery and kind of mobile.

If you balance that, it was just really easy to digest foods, just like this simplest, warm, clear, easy to digest foods that are just super nutrient dense.

That was my first step in trying to start to reverse this. What were those foods? Things like So basically, you know, like warm, warm foods. So you're ideally cooking, like kale is a great nutritious food, but if you're eating raw kale, that's not going to help your health, right?

And that's not going to help heal and seal your lining. And, you know, same with things like I guess, there's just so many things that we're told, right?

Like, eat all the fermented foods and drink only bone broth, you know, for life. And for eczema, those things are really harsh because they're just very high in histamines.

And so, these little people, or even adults, I mean, if you're an adult struggling with eczema, It's the exact same story, right? You're having a really good time breaking down these histamines.

So it's warmed foods first and foremost, like stewed apples, things like that. It's like so great with these non-spicy spices, like cinnamon and cardamom, like those chai type of spices.

Yeah, I mean, coriander and cumin and cilantro and cucumber, just all those things that are like cooling, that are nutrient dense, that are easy to incorporate into your life.

I just find like our most successful meals, I have four kids, and they're just, you know, the most healing successful

meals are just like steak and broccoli.

You know, just easy stuff. And while you were just on my, you know, I was just on your podcast too when we were just talking about that, you know, just the basic foods, like good nutrient-dense proteins and healthy fats are the things that heal us the most.

Diet Changes and Healing Foods

Yeah, ghee can go a really long way that helps your body, you know, create butyrate and it's a short-chain fatty acid. That's like what the microbes inside like really love to eat.

There's just, yeah, there's so many things that you can do by way of nutrition. And as a parent, as a mere mortal parent, that's just where we start because, you know, that's the first is what you can do most immediately, right?

It's like starting with their next meal, like how can we make this most nutrient dense and digestible thing possible? And you hinted at that when you were on my podcast, like you don't want to pair things like you want to be cognizant of like pairing things with like rice and animal protein, right?

Because those don't go together, right? You need completely different digestive enzymes to digest those things. And so I love having, I love like vegetarian meals where like beans are, but you do that, do that one meal.

And then when the next meal rolls around a few hours later, ideally, right? Then you can switch back to like animal protein. Right. Yeah, absolutely. So that was your first line of defense.

What results did you see just with shifting? Because you already ate a healthy diet. So I know there's lots of people going, well, we already eat like a paleo diet or a keto diet or whatever, but there's just some even deeper tweaks that you can do.

And then how long did that take to see a difference? you know, you could start to see the difference. Like I was nursing my baby. And so that was helpful, you know, in that I had full control over nutrients going in.

And so that really helped. And you can start to see differences. Like once my baby did start eating solid foods, like I only gave her pate, like chicken liver pate to start like reversing her higher zinc deficiencies that I knew were pretty great.

So anyway, you can start to see results just from diet within a week, you know, especially parents that are, you're with your child every day and you're changing their diapers and you know, you're doing bath time and like you can notice like, oh, they're a little less itchy.

Like there's so many of my clients where their kids have to be in scratch sleeves all the time and they can't be left on the floor. all the things or, you know, I have a lot of adult clients as well and they're just so, the itching sensation, it just starts to dwindle a little bit.

And, you know, that's a big win because you certainly can't reverse within a week, but you can see noticeable changes. Are there other specific nutrition things that you do or lifestyle changes that you teach?

Yeah. It's a whole, I mean, unfortunately, there's no silver bullet. Right. No, it's all cumulative. Yeah. So all the, you know, the healthiest diet in the world, it's not going to be enough.

Like you also have to address everything that's going on the skin. And for eczema, you know, that's a big part of it because you're in the here and now and you have to deal with the symptoms and they're very itchy and they're very dry and they're very uncomfortable.

So you just need to moisture, moisture, moisture. But our goal in putting on those on those topicals is that it's not one more thing that they have to detox from.

Ideally, everything that you put on the skin is something that you could eat because you're digesting it just the same, right? It's going into your dream and it's circulating throughout your body.

You know, we start with an herbal oil and that's based off of a practice called Abhiyanga.

Skin Care Routine and Topical Support

It's been practiced for thousands of years and many people do it preventatively, but it just helps get your lymph moving and just in way of infusing these herbs into the oil.

It helps all the anti-inflammatory and all the anti-fungal properties of these herbs. go into the tissues because of its lipophilic properties. So that's a thing like, you know, put herbal oil on and concentrate on those like lymph dense areas, you know, like neck and groin and under your feet, things like that.

Take like an epsom salt bath. It really helps move the needle and that helps you detoxify and also remineralize and And then you follow that up like we have a itch spray and it helps.

It's the Chinese herbs that are in there are prescribed to Asian women a lot for vaginal issues. So it helps with itch and staph and yeast. And then we follow that up with just like a very thick cream of tallow cream because that's just like the most bioavailable, most nutrient-dense cream that you could possibly have.

It's just so rich in vitamins A, D, E, and K. And so all three of those steps are just like all four of those steps. If you include the bath, it's just taking supplements to the skin.

So it's just like one warm way to get nutrients in and then And you have your own skincare line, right? People can find that on your website? Yeah. Yeah.

So what I just outlined was the Skin Comfort Trio, so you can find those in a variety of sizes. And yeah, we have a few other fun things too, but that's a big part of the therapies, right?

There's a lot of people that are coming down from taking steroids or they're even on biologics or dupixin or something like that. And so we have to balance it and start leaning down from the pharmaceuticals.

And yeah, like in doing this skincare system, it really helps build the skin barrier and get in those those herbs and vitamins and minerals that your body really needs.

From there, we go into your environment, right? Because we got to address that and do the best you can there. And even, you know, I have clients that live on organic farms and we're still talking, right?

Because it's just like, there's still things that you're missing there. There's always ways to optimize. And we space this out because you can't take it all on at once, right?

You can't. Yeah. Like we're already stressed. We're already very, very stressed, right? And this is not helping our stress levels seeing our babies unwell.

So we break it down and we go for the most immediate and then we keep on making these progressional changes. And we touched on this when you were on my podcast too.

It's just like these little incremental changes, they add up so substantially until you finally you finally get to healing. And then we add in supplements because they're just too far off from healthy and from where we want to be, clear, calm skin.

Environment, Supplements, and Recovery

So we have to address those nutritional deficiencies that are 100% there and to help open up those detoxification

channels, the proper detoxification channels.

Because when we're looking at eczema, we're looking at toxins coming up and out through the skin. And so there's just a lot of work to be done there and supplements can really help you get over that hump.

Yeah, absolutely. I know people don't really like to take supplements, but I think just in the day and age that we live in, you just have to. You really do, unfortunately.

I mean, it's just part of everything. Let's just do it. Because nobody's going out and eating raw bison, liver, and kidney today for lunch. Let's just be honest.

I mean, you're not getting all the nutrient-dense stuff that you need. So you're going to have to take a few supplements to have optimal health. And I don't feel like that's a big deal.

It's not, it's not, especially when you start it early, you know, or anytime. But I mean, especially if you start your kids on it early, like they ask for it.

They like it. It's just like, it becomes a part of their routine. Right. So you have four children, right? I do. Okay. How is your fourth baby? He's great.

Yeah. And I had all, you know, cesareans, like, we did not start it out right. Yeah. But, you know, by him, I, you know, by number four, I learned what to do, like, even in that circumstance, because, you know, they're like after three, no way on the VBAC.

And so, yeah, you know, there's, there's things that you can do, like swabbing, and I started him on probiotics right away. And You know, of course, nursing helps a lot too.

But yeah, he's, you know, knock on wood doing, doing really, really well. Yeah. And how are your girls doing? They're doing excellent. Everyone has clear, calm skin.

We also homeschool, but it was not because we, it's, it's not because these conditions made us, you know, we had some that weren't aligning and then, and then it turned out to be like, so fun.

And so we just, it is so fun. Yeah. We just finished our homeschool journey. Like, Yeah, 18 years. I'm like, oh, it's done. Are you like, what do I do with my time?

I still have plenty. I mean, I'm going to have two grandbabies now and stuff like that. So I mean, it's okay. Like it's just the next stage. And my youngest is still at home.

So I haven't, we haven't experienced emptiness or anything. Yeah, but to not have to do corrections or lesson plans or things like that. Well, and it shifts as you get older, just so you know.

As they get older, it doesn't look the same. The way we were homeschooling 18 years ago is not how we ended up. Cool. Your philosophy will definitely shift and change.

I think I shared one of the reasons why we didn't need to homeschool because my son has celiac or anything, but it was a bonus, right? It was just easier to help with those kinds of things and just to help them.

overcome, you know, their health challenges. My daughter had several different TBIs and those kinds of things. So traumatic brain injuries and from falling off horses and a little boy ran into her and gave her a concussion, you know, when we were doing a homeschool play.

So lots of crazy stuff. So I, you know, there's reasons why we homeschool too, but lots of conviction reasons. So I'm glad you guys are homeschooling too.

Any words of advice to somebody who's just starting on this eczema journey or just even like, I don't want to give my kids these medications anymore. Where do they start?

Yeah. Start in the kitchen. That's like the best place to go. Just start with real food. Yeah. That wouldn't be any way around it, is there, Andrea? Yeah.

No, no.

Homeschooling, Parenting, and Practical Advice

I mean, I used to look at, you know, when my baby was really struggling and my toddler and then I'd look at my friends and Their kids were just eating pizza and ice cream and their skin was beautiful and soft.

And it's like, just, you know, sometimes you can feel bad. And they even said like, you know, maybe you should try less hard. Like that might make them better.

Like just give them McDonald's. And I think it'll just be easier for everyone. What I realized later was that nobody gets around this. What we're dealing with then is chronic sinus or ear infections.

Nobody gets a pass on this. you know, I guess sometimes in my bad moments that gives me solace because it's like, okay, yes, everyone has to work hard.

You just do to raise. Choose your heart. Yeah, raise. Yeah, healthy, happy kids. And sometimes it gets chosen for you if you are contending with an issue, any sort of issue, if it's a neuro issue or any anything.

that's then you know like this is your time now like there's no getting around it right like if you're not sleeping if you're up all night because your child is screaming from pain and itching or if that's your experience right now like you can't go out because your face is just a big blister right like It's chosen for you.

And I just think in everything that we do, you know, like when we first implemented this whole protocol, my kids, my oldest was in school. She was just in preschool.

My other two, I always worked. I never stopped working. I used to work in dental. You know, it's just, it's doable. And that's what I guess it has to be ultimately is sustainable.

And it's really all these like small changes coming together. over time is what really moves the needle. Yeah, for sure. Because you can't make all the changes in one day, so you have to take it bite, bite, bite.

can. And everything that you talk about, right, is like, you want to stress yourself out. And if you just know, what brought me a lot of solace is just everything, every effort that I did is like, I knew everything that I was doing for my kids, even if I didn't see an immediate benefit, I never saw an immediate benefit, but I just knew baseline that it was healthier for them, that it was like whatever I was trying to do was like bioavailable, that it was a better choice than other choices, that maybe an easier choice or just, you know, any sort of, and you know, like you make 8,000 decisions a day, right?

And it's just, If you can do your best to be like, okay, what would align them, you know, circadian rhythm? Like what season is it right now? Like how much have they been outside today?

Have I, how many rappers have I opened today? You know, just, just that. And that's what helped me feel better when my head hit the pillow. I was like, okay, like we're not, we're not healed and yeah, things look still pretty grim right now, but I did my absolute best by them today.

Right. Yeah. And that's all we can do. That's all we can do as mamas. We just do our best with our kiddos. And our Heavenly Father walks right next to us and carries us through all of those times.

So I admire what you're doing, Andrea.

Hope for Reversing Eczema

It's amazing. Thank you. Likewise. Yeah. Anything you want to leave the audience with? If you are contending with this issue, it's an autoimmune disease and it's serious and it's unfortunate, but it's also 100% reversible.

I mean, there's certainly worse things, right? There's childhood cancer and there's way worse things out there. But if you're really in it, this can make your life really miserable, but is 100% a way out even if you've been on pharmaceuticals for a very long time, even if you're scared to try them or if you've just dabbled in them.

There is a way out, 100%. I love it. Awesome. Well, thank you so much, Andrea. All of where you can reach, Andrea, go to her podcast, eczemakids. What's your website?

eczemakids.com. So you can find it there. Everything was on there. It'll all be in the show notes too. So thank you, Andrea. Thank you everyone for listening and I know you know somebody who would love to hear this podcast.

So make sure you like, subscribe and share this with that person or persons in your realm of influence because everybody needs to hear this. God bless each and every one of you.

I will see you in the next episode explore our courses and our coaching programs at lorihammer.com backslash store. So until next time, remember you cannot medicate away a nutrient deficiency and healing your brain isn't just possible, it's powerful.