Small Habits, Big Healing: 8 Daily Rituals for Thyroid Thrivers with Ginny Mahar Transcript

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Introduction and guest background

Hello, welcome back to the Thyroid Pharmacists Healing Conversations podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Isabella Wentz, your thyroid pharmacist. Today, we're going to be diving into thyroid health a bit more.

Jenny Mehar here with us. We're going to be talking about daily rituals of thyroid healthy living. So what do we do when we have a thyroid condition? How do We properly care for ourselves, right?

This is something that we need to oftentimes be really mindful of and take the charge on it. we can go to all of the best doctors in the world, but we are not going feel our best unless there are some effort that we're putting in on our end to make things happen in our lives.

So welcome, Jenny. It's so wonderful to have you here with us. Oh, thanks so much for having me, Isabella. That's wonderful, to connect. I'm going to tell people a little bit more about you.

This is actually the second time that you've been on the podcast because I love your work and I loved everything that bring to the thyroid community. Jenny Mehar is the author of the newly released Thyroid 30 Cookbook.

a 30-day plan, and 100 delicious recipes to restore your energy and help you thrive. She combines her personal experience with expertise as a functional medicine health coach with her cordon bleu culinary training.

So you know those recipes are good. And she transforms the thyroid healing journey through the power of food as medicine. Following her own Hashimoto's diagnosis in 2015, she founded Hypothyroid Chef, creating a trusted resource for thyroid-friendly recipes and evidence-based lifestyle strategies.

So, can you tell us a little bit more about what your thyroid healing journey has looked like over the years? Yes, absolutely. I was diagnosed back in 2011 shortly after my son was born, so postpartum, not that uncommon.

For the first four years after that diagnosis, I just got the conventional standard of care. Here's your levothyroxine, we're going to monitor your TSH, test you once a year.

And that's that you should be fine. And over the next four years, my health just really kind of went on this slow but very definite downward spiral. I was sick all the time.

It was severely brain fogged. i was gaining weight despite being, you know, like restricting calories, doing all of the things, I just felt flat, i didn't feel like myself, it felt like my my light was going out and eventually I hit rock bottom.

That was in about 2015 and I started looking for better answers. I um started doing my own research. I read your book. Of course that was a huge part of me getting the information that I needed to turn my health around.

So uh thank you for that and also you know searching for holistic health care uh in my area so I found a naturopath to work with and she really helped me understand that this was more than about just one test and just 1 pill, right?

This is really about a whole life approach. There's food factors, there's lifestyle factors. there is micronutrients. We need to optimize medication. and all these things.

I also learned finally that I had Hashimoto's, which I'd never been tested for, for those first four years. So that was a big piece of the puzzle. And what happened when I hit rock bottom and started looking for better answers and found them and starting doing the things is I got my health back.

It was like, I always say it was somebody flicked the light switch back on inside me. because that light switch had been in the off position for four years.

I just got used to waking up and going through every day with no energy. These are the first four of years of my son's life. Gosh, if I could get that time back, I would do anything for that.

Jenny's thyroid healing journey

We're moms, right? We power through, we do our best. it really was a really like defining moment in my life and my healing journey, the way that I was able to turn things around, like get my energy back, feel better, dial in, my meds, dialling my supplements, deal with some root cause issues.

And as I doing that, it was like I kind of started, you know, after I learned all the things, It was, okay, I kinda know what to do, but now I have this task of how to it, right?

And this was back in 2015. And so it was like, still kind of early days for a lot of the information that's available to us now on thyroid health and wellness.

So it like hello, is there anybody out there? And I remember back then I was using another program that was actually for CrossFitters. That was a whole life program, and it helped so much.

It helped me build awareness about all the daily choices I was making, but these were CrossFitters, right? These weren't thyroid and autoimmune patients, so this lightning bolt hit me in the shower one morning where I thought, somebody needs to create a system like this that's for us.

Because we can know what to do, but then we have to address the how. How do we do it? You know, how do you like spin all these plates at once? And the truth is, even the experts have a hard time spinning all those plates.

At once, aren't we always a work in progress? Aren't? We always having to come back to our choices and go, Oh, well, I need to fine tune my sleep again.

I'm kind of, You know being staying up late watching Netflix or oh my gut health seems to be going sideways or gosh that brain fogs coming back I gotta you know dial this in or or manage my stress with regular self care all those things that you recommend for us to feel our best.

How do we like continually do those in a sustainable way that isn't going to make us lose our minds that Isn't gonna, you know, require that we turn our lives upside down or live, You know solely for like our thyroid healing journey, right?

We need to be able to live our Lives pursue our dreams and do this in A sustainable Way that works for real life. So that was really kind of what like catapulted me into this realm of, I think I have solutions here, you know, and part of that was starting Hypothyroid Chef.

So I started Hypathyroid chef in 2015. I'm celebrating 10 years of HypotherapyroidChef. Thank you. It's very exciting. Um, it's been a really amazing road.

And that Was really like a place to share my journey and share recipes because my background is in food. I've been cooking professionally basically since I was 18 years old, went to a Cordon Bleu culinary school, have done all the things, catering, food writing.

I had multiple food blogs and all of that. So I know I'm not the only one searching for thyroid-friendly recipes. That inspired me to start Hypothyroid Chef.

Then a couple of years later, as I'm going through my own healing journey, figuring this out, learning about the what and sorting out the how. How do I do this and what has helped me and and would help others too?

Then I put that system together, which ended up being Thyroid 30. of how do we take all these recommendations and apply them in a sustainable way. All those recommendations are what I call the eight daily rituals of thyroid healthy living.

That's the model that is the backbone of that thyroid 30 system and of my new thyroid thirty cookbook. It's just become the foundation of philosophy and my approach and how I help people.

I love that you've taken your healing journey and everything that. You've gone through and then you made it more approachable for other people. I know there's a lot of things we need to do oftentimes beyond take meds to really feel our best with a thyroid condition, but sometimes the lifestyle changes can be quite overwhelming.

And, you know, to your point, a lot of the programs and things that are out there are more for like Jim bros. Like a CrossFitter is not the same as like a thyroid patients.

Yes, there our thyroid patient that do CrossFit, right? And do thrive with Crossfit, but a of us. are struggling with fatigue and our metabolism can be impacted and so we really need to make sure that whatever, I guess, advice we take in and whatever recommendations we try to implement are going to be a little bit more specific.

to thyroid conditions for women of, you know, if you're in postpartum period, You do want to take some of those considerations into account as well. If you are in perimenopause or menopausal, these are all their considerations to really take into accounts.

I know I've had seen a meme of somebody saying like, oh yeah, I can't listen to these influencers that are that are telling me how to lose weight or how too live my best life.

It's like, hey, I was like skinny when I. 22 and I, was I? Was like smoking and dancing or you know what? Whatever the or drinking tequila or something like that, whatever the advice or whatever people did in their 20s.

it's. Doesn't necessarily always translate to when you're postpartum or it doesn't translate too when. You're in perimenopause menopausal and definitely the a man's metabolism that a men in his 20s or 30s that gets all these benefits from the way that he eats and the ways that exercises, we're not going to see that same benefit with the average thyroid patient.

And when you have hypothyroidism or Hashimoto's, it's like this is a whole different ball game. It's different. Sometimes it just feels like it makes everything a little bit harder.

We have a narrower road to walk down. sometimes we have less wiggle room. it is like less forgiving if we overdo it or under do it. you know, we've got to really kind of get sort of dialed in on our choices, right, to truly thrive when we have thyroid issues and then absolutely through the various seasons of life for sure.

I'd love to bust a common thyroid myth that I believe has been perpetuated by conventional medicine and physicians and pharmacists like myself, you know, in my past life.

But one of the myths is that medication alone will fix everything. What do you have to say to that as somebody that is both a thyroid patient and somebody who's worked with hundreds of thyroid patients?

Yes, yeah, I think this is so So important, there's so many patients who hear food and lifestyle aren't going to make a difference. First, I want to say diet and Lifestyle aren' a substitute for proper medication if it's needed, and there is no shame in taking medication.

The way I look at it is to really feel our best. We have to address what's called the thyroid trifecta. So that includes proper medical care and treatment, optimizing our food choices and our nutrition, and of course optimizing are supportive lifestyle choices.

And when the thing about that trifecta is, you know, those two big pieces of the puzzle, diet and lifestyle, in terms of

that, patients just aren't really getting what they need from conventional doctors.

I think in many cases, they're getting the opposite of what the need. They're dismissed, their gaslighted, They are told to just eat less, exercise more.

You know the one that kills me, there told, oh, Diet and Lifestyle won't make a difference. And the thing with that is hypothyroidism affects the entire body, every system and every cell in the body.

There's over 300 associated symptoms or probably more when it comes to hypathyroid. So this idea that this is simple to treat and you just test TSH and treat with levothyroxine and your normalize the T SH and that's, call it a day.

And that all the patient needs is not the lived experience of patients. So what we really need is support on a cellular level, on the mind-body level.

We need to be testing for and addressing autoimmunity, if that's present. we need giving our bodies a fighting chance. You know, we've got to give ourselves the right inputs to get the best outputs.

The reason, you know, the reasons behind why I really feel strongly that it's not true that like food, for example, won't make a difference. There's multiple reasons here.

Okay, so like, think about thyroid hormone production and conversion, we've got to be able to, hopefully make some thyroid hormones on our own, but then we need to that inactive T4 into active T3 and that conversion is going to be influenced by our nutrition status, our gut health, or liver health.

All of those things can be directly and significantly meaningfully impacted by the food we eat. Also, there's the inflammation and autoimmunity factor.

Hypothyroidism can lead to chronically elevated inflammation, and inflammation is also especially prominent with Hashimoto's. That inflammatory autoimmune attack on the thyroid can be triggered for many of us by certain foods like gluten, for example, or maybe dairy for some of use.

On the flip side, certain anti-inflammatory foods can also help calm that inflammation in the body. That really makes food a powerful factor in managing thyroid-related inflammation and autoimmunity.

Also, there's gut health and nutrient absorption goes right along with that. Thyroid patients, some studies show we're up to five times more likely to experience gut-health issues.

Hypothyroidism also you know, in many ways affects our digestive system. And that includes how well we break down the food we eat, how will we process the foods we and assimilate the nutrients from the fruits we ate, and how we breakdown and process and assembly our medication.

So, when our gut health and digestion are compromised, you now, so is our ability to absorb and nutrients, and that's going to make excellent nutrition and gut-supported food choices, again, really important for thyroid patients.

There's energy and metabolism. What we eat is the fuel that our bodies use for energy. The quality of that fuel is directly going impact how much energy we have.

It impacts our mitochondria, which are like the powerhouses of our cells. When fatigue is one of the most common symptoms that thyroid patient deal with, When we can support our energy with good food choices, it's going to make a difference.

It's essential. And then finally, thyroid medication isn't a cure-all. Medication is essential for many of us, but it can often leave a lot of residual symptoms behind.

You know, It helps a lots, But it doesn't always solve everything. I think patients are led to believe that. From what I've seen, a lot of doctors are also led to believe that.

As I said, it's not the lived experience of so many patients. The medication doesn't address autoimmunity. It doesnt address underlying root cause factors that might have led thyroid dysfunction in the first place.

How about dietary sensitivities or chronic stress or gut health issues? So yeah, feeling our best, we really have to tackle that whole thyroid trifecta.

And I just know, clearly I'm passionate about this. It's because I know food and lifestyle do matter for thyroid thrivers, because i'm living proof. Because I see it every single day in my community, in the people that I work with.

Why medication alone is not enough

Yeah, it's definitely something that I feel like, I think we're starting to get a little bit more appreciation for it these days, but I still have a ways to go in raising that awareness.

So I love that you talked about the trifecta, that have the medical care, you have your nutrition, and you your lifestyle approaches. What are some of those lifestyle approach that that advocate for?

Yeah, so really, that's my eight daily rituals of thyroid healthy living. That's kind of like the framework, the model, and the backbone that really fuels my philosophy, my thyroid 30 wellness adventure.

It's the back bone of my cookbook and everything that I teach in my community. Should I go through what the eight daily rituals are? I think that would be fantastic if you would like to.

Okay, sure. So these are all R words, right? The eight Daily Rituals, they're all our words. We call them the 8 R's for short. First is remember. This is remembering to take your medications and supplements.

For a lot of us, I that's like low hanging fruit, it's easy. It's a no brainer. Not for others, you know, for some people that is a real trick to just remember like to take your medication on time and and in the proper way, distancing it from food and things like that.

Number two is refuel. So that refers to everything that we consume. Our food, and drink, thyroid nutrition is a huge topic, but the basic premise is avoiding inflammatory foods, increasing anti-inflammatory foods and maximizing our nutrient density.

Three is reactivate. So that one's about movement, staying active, moving our bodies every day. And there is a little bit more to it for thyroid patients because so many of us can experience issues around that, like exercise fatigue.

Some of experience hypermobility. We might have connective tissue disorders, that added inflammation. We might end up in exercise induced autoimmune flares if we overdo it with super intense or long duration exercise.

Really important to listen to your body with that and know that in many cases we need to start slow and gradually work our way up. But just trying to do something every day and making that a priority to be in your and make that physical activity a part of your regular routine.

And then four is repair. So repair is about supporting the gut. Gut health, maintenance, it just really needs to be something that we're thinking about daily and on an ongoing basis as thyroid patients.

Whether that's incorporating more fermented foods or taking various gut supporting supplements, learning about the small daily things that you can do to support your gut health, some of the different ways that can increase your fiber intake or some benefits of foods like bone broth and things like that, addressing underlying gut infections, doing something, having it in our our awareness daily is really helpful.

So that's repair. Number five is rejuvenate. That's about daily self care. As you have written about too much stress, it can be really impactful on us.

thyroid adrenal axis and our cortisol levels. If they're out of balance, that can lead to adrenal imbalance. It can really throw off our thyroid hormones.

That can affect our metabolism and just have this cascade. Really becoming mindful of how we cope with stress and incorporating self-care on a daily basis is an important part of thriving.

Number six is reduce. So this is about reducing the toxins in your home and body. Dr. Jeffrey Bland, he's known as the father of functional medicine. He says the thyroid is the sentinel gland for the environment.

Or I think you said the thyroid is the canary in the coal mine, right? When it comes to environmental toxins. So we have to be really mindful about what we expose our bodies to.

And also how we can learning how, we, can support our built in detoxification systems, like the liver with. You know, healthy habits with the foods we eat with looking at our supplements and different root cause factors there.

So reduce is really about taking those small but mighty steps to reduce our exposure to toxins. Seven is relish. This one's about celebrating your wins and connecting with your support system.

This really uses the power of positive psychology. This is just a very effective hack for up-leveling our healthy habits is to have tiny celebrations.

When we listen to the health podcast, when we go for the walk, we cook the healthy meal, If we just take even like two or three seconds to pause and acknowledge that with a tiny celebration, it could even be just the intentional thought of, hey, good job, you're doing it.

Or you can high-five yourself in the mirror, give yourself a pat on the back or a little fist pump or whatever feels good to you. By doing those tiny celebrations, we can rewire the brain.

to help wire in those healthy habits. So, you know, that's just been proven to significantly improve our health outcomes. And the other thing there with relish is connecting to our support system.

That's also been proving to significant significantly improved our outcomes when we have that group health coaching and support. It's about, you know, giving support and being supported.

It is about connection and those tiny celebrations. And then finally, number eight of the eight R's is recharge. So this is all about sleep. Because, obviously, as we know sleep is foundational to our health.

This is like, just if we don't sleep well. Everything is so much harder, isn't it? And getting enough quality sleep really, I think, ranks right up there with things like drinking enough water as far as just simple, very impactful ways to reduce a lot of thyroid-related symptoms like brain fog, fatigue, depression.

So that's the eight Rs system or the Eight Daily Rituals of Thyroid Healthy Living. These are such great rituals for anybody with Hashimoto's and auto-immunity and thyroid disorder to follow because I feel like that can really set them up for sustainable healing and without it being so overwhelming.

I'm curious, in your experience, is there one of these that people tend to perhaps be a little bit more resistant of compared to the others? And I know it may vary depending on the person, but what's been your Yeah, I think in terms of that I'd have to say sleep, sleep is so impactful, but it's also one of those things that we get really habitual around.

We might Always look at our phone before bed. We might get into the pattern of every night I watch TV and I have a hard time turning it off. I was talking to a neighbor the other day who sleeps with her two giant standard poodles

in her bed and she was complaining about her sleep, but do you think that she's going to just kick the dogs out of her bad?

People are resistant to sometimes making those changes. But I think when we can address them, it can be very impactful. I feel like it's one of those things that can overwhelm people.

But what I've found is just what helps people is if they can just start with one small thing. Pick one thing to address, like plugging your phone in in another room or setting a bedtime reminder to, hey, it's time to start winding down, creating those simple rituals.

After dinner, we do the dishes, once we're all cleaned up, the lights go down in the house. The dimmers get put all the way down. Those things signal our circadian rhythm to star winding downs.

Little things like that when I find when coaching clients can just practice like one shift like that, they'll start to notice results and then that builds momentum.

But you know, it doesn't all have to happen overnight. No pun intended. Yeah, it's interesting because I think I've always been somebody that loved sleep.

And so that's never been a point of resistance for me. But my husband, for example, like he, you know, he knows all of the things he's supposed to be doing.

and yet he will be on his phone or watch like still watch a movie before bed and so on and forth. That can really, really impact how you fall asleep, if you wake up throughout the night, how do you Wake up in the morning, How you show up the next day.

Sometimes, you know, I know personally for me, If I don't get enough sleep, i get super super cranky the Next day, there's also a lot of research tying to when people don t get Enough sleep they end up making unhealthier choices.

Throughout the day, whether that's reaching for foods that they know that are not good for them, not optimal foods to being, I mean, like dozing off in traffic or or even being like really irritable and irritated with their loved ones and family members.

So it's just so, so important to get sleep. when you can, I think definitely people, there's the people that can sleep, but choose not to. And then there is also the really do struggle, like they would love to sleep but they might have insomnia and other types of issues potentially because of their lifestyle, potentially, because a medical condition, sometimes it's a nutrient deficiency.

I'm like for anybody, if it is a choice, make that choice. And I know it can be a little bit trickier if somebody does have insomnia or issues, but there's also a lot of support for that.

So there are things that people can do if they do struggle with insomniac sleep issues. I like I said, I used to be always a good sleeper and then through my postpartum period.

And then also, as I went through perimenopause, that has shifted. There's a a of solutions for people out there, sleep is so, so critical. The other thing I wanted to talk with you about is thyroid-friendly eating.

This is something that you emphasize in the Thyroid 30 Cookbook. How do you approach this? What specific food principles do think make the biggest impact?

The way that I kind of break it down is there's pillars and principles of thyroid-friendly eating. So first, thyroid friendly eating is anti-inflammatory, it's nutrient dense, its gut healing, is blood sugar and hormone friendly, and ultimately it is personalized.

The eight daily rituals of thyroid healthy living

It's dialed into what our unique needs are. There's not a one size fits all around thyroid friend eating, you know, we've got to learn to tune into what's working for our bodies and what nots, and then tailor our food choices around that.

But we can start with some of those templates that give us nutrient-dense anti-inflammatory food choice and tinker from there to find what is personalized.

I think personalization is the ultimate goal, but a lot of us need to start just with a basic step. Like, okay, I'm going to trying going gluten-free or gluten free, dairy free or something like that.

Every small step is going to add up and we'll eventually get there. This is a process that I just want people to know it takes time and it's important to let it take the time that it, takes know that that's okay.

It's not going happen overnight and We're in for the long haul really fine tuning and up leveling our food choices is something that can support us throughout our lives.

If we can get to that point with food where we know what we're eating is up, leveling, our health and not diminishing it. And I think that's. like a mindset piece that is helpful to start with is putting our choices around food through that upgraded filter of asking ourselves, will this food serve and support my well-being or will it diminish it?

There can be a lot to learn here. We have to find our own timeline with it, but you will get there. The way that I approach it is Really, I think the basis of my recipes is really that anti-inflammatory approach.

There's three parts to that. You want to avoid inflammatory foods, things that are just generally inflammatory, refined white flour, sugar, trans fats, fried foods.

gluten. For many of us, there might be unique foods that are just inflammatory for us personally. So we also want to think about the foods we're personally sensitive to.

And for one person, that might grains and nightshades, gluten and dairy. Another person might be gluten, eggs, and so that's where we get into that personalization.

But the way to think about that is even with healthy foods, like those nightshade vegetables, they're not bad foods. They have a lot of health promoting qualities.

If they are inflammatory for you and they sparking that inflammatory cycle, then that will spark a cycle of inflammation and possibly leaky gut or disease so those healthy foods, if you're sensitive to them, may not be healthy for you.

those personal sensitivities can change over time, depending on where we're at with our healing. A lot of people come to the table to this when they're new with gut health issues, oftentimes leaky gut, also known as intestinal permeability.

So when we've got leakey gut we can often be a lot more sensitive to more food. With time and healing a of us might be able to reintroduce certain foods, but There may be some dietary eliminations that have to happen.

Then the third part of anti-inflammatory eating is also incorporating some of those really delicious anti inflammatory foods. Adding in more of the good stuff, the whole nutrient dense foods, things like fatty fish, lots of colorful fruits and vegetables.

We can think about different spices like ginger or cinnamon that help support lowering inflammation. There's so many different ingredients, so that's always top of mind for me when I'm developing recipes.

And there's also, because we need that starting point too, okay, that the big picture, how do we get started with that? The way that I approach it is giving people three dietary templates.

In the Thyroid 30 Cookbook, there are three dietary templates to choose from. Level 1, you can start with gluten and dairy-free, level 2 is Paleo, and then level 3 is autoimmune paleo or AIP.

Those templates are great because they give us a starting point, they gave us the common language. We know what those templates include and what they omit, we know kind of the guidelines.

And we can start with those, see how it goes, build that awareness of how did my body do when I eliminated these foods. After that, We can go through a systematic reintroduction process of certain foods if we want to try re-introducing once we've done some healing, That's how we ultimately reach that ultimate goal of having our personalized thyroid friendly diet.

That is the approach that I walk people through. Yeah, it's so empowering. I think there's skills in there, like learning how an elimination reintroduction trial works, for example, learning to do that correctly.

There's a few little rules and nuances there that people need to learn, and also just having the right mindset, knowing, okay, I'm going to give myself enough time to prepare for this.

And I know that if I'm doing, you know, AIP, for example, it's good to kind of have like have my game face on and to know this is going to require more planning more preparation, schedule this for a time in my life when I don't have like a wedding that I'm planning or, you know, a huge vacation or work project or something going on.

So there's just, little things there that really try to help walk people through so that they have those skills in their their thyroid thrivers toolbox that they can use forever.

I really want people to end up with those skills that don't have an expiration date that are going to come back to again and again. Right now as we're recording this, I'm currently doing AIP.

i've been putting a lot of extra love into my gut health the last six months or so since I went on a trip to Honduras. i think we might have talked about this before but you know just gut health issues like they come and they go there are those ups and downs so it's not one of those things where we do this diet and we Do it for 30 days and then we're fixed right this is like a long-term journey and there Are special unique things that come along with that with thyroid issues, like needing to take care of our gut.

So we can come back to these tools again and again, and, again throughout our journey to kind of fine tune and go, okay, I've been on this. Am I ready to maybe reintroduce certain types of dairy, for example, or or gosh, I feel like I'm backsliding, something really stressful happened, maybe I've been through a trauma or I had a major illness and I need to hit the reset and really calm inflammation and do some healing.

I can use one of these therapeutic healing protocols like Paleo or AIP to really try and dial down that inflammation, and reset things in the gut. Lots here that we can learn, put in our pocket and utilize whenever we need it and throughout our healing journey.

But yeah, really just along the way, I'm always trying to help people think about their bodies and nourishing themselves and giving ourselves that love and self-care of cooking.

Cooking for ourselves and our family is such a form of love in self care and it really determines so much about how we feel and the output that we can get from like our energy, our minds, how can we be there for the people and purposes we care about most?

How can do our important work in the world? A lot of that starts in The Kitchen. Yeah, absolutely. That's such a good point. I feel like a lot of us, perhaps, you know, this day in Asian America, a lotta people didn't really grow up knowing how to properly care for their bodies.

They may not know how do a proper grocery store run, like even understanding how read labels, how figure out which types of foods can be helpful, what your protein goals might look like.

And I know for myself, when I was initially transitioning from a standard Western diet to a gluten-free diet, I went through the process of going gluten free, and this helped some things, but unfortunately I, went on like a, glutenfree junk food diet.

Which then worsened some other things that actually worsens a lot of my blood sugar issues, which were causing me to have anxiety. And I didn't realize that, and there's so many different things where people, I've talked to numerous people as I'm sure you have, where they'll say they tried and failed a healing protocol, but there is, you know, the devil's in the details.

Sometimes it's like they thought they were going gluten free, But they didn' t realize, that a lot of like, let's say the spices that they we're using.

actually had gluten in them. I know I had a I love to cook this Mexican dish where you add like taco seasoning and one of the taco seasonings it's like flour is the ingredient in that and then you might not be aware of some of these things to look for where.

You might be I guess sabotaging yourself. you could be putting all this effort into something and you know, you're not eating enough protein or you are not enough fats and you eat all of these like corn-based things and rice-base things, just speaking from my experience here, and then you get on this blood sugar roller coaster, which can actually increase your thyroid antibodies and a lot of the thyroid symptoms like the hair loss and anxiety.

So I absolutely love that you've put together Three different templates for people. I think those are great templates to work with gluten free and dairy free.

This might change with time, and there might be additional food reactions, like, for example, to grains as when that's where paleo comes in and some of the night shades and seeds and nuts.

And that is where the autoimmune Paleo diet comes. It's also important to note that you can actually heal a lot of the food sensitivities as you work on your gut health and so you might not need to be on those diets forever but then if you have a situation and I know I've been there before too when you're exposed to something maybe you sensitive again and so at that point you might need to like back down and take a few steps back and it's wonderful to have those healing protocols at your disposal so that you can say okay you know what my gut is really really not happy with me right now and I know how to dial things back in and I'm always nutrition is is a cornerstone for that.

And I always advocate for doing gut testing to figure out if there's a specific imbalance or infection that you might have that that is not supposed to be there.

That can be causing even more inflammation. So. I love that you have created this resource for people. I did want to ask you again another question is, goiterogenic foods.

This is a common thyroid myth. Can you tell us a little bit more? Yes, this is one of the most pervasive. I like to say it's like an overblown warning, right?

Because there was some scientific evidence on this that was older. It was based on animals. it was on massive amounts of cruciferous vegetables fed to rats or cows.

amounts more than people would normally eat.

Sleep as the most resistant ritual

And those goitrogenic substances in those cruciferous vegetables were shown to inhibit thyroid function, blocking iodine uptake by the thyroid and throwing things off there.

So for a long time, Patients were counseled. If they got any counseling on food, it was, oh, don't eat broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower. Well, these also happen to be some of the most nutrient dense foods.

A lot of them are really high in sulfur, which can be very detoxifying, there's lots of health benefits, glutathione production, which is like our body's super antioxidant, a lot of that can be sparked by these cruciferous vegetables.

Well, when the experts, you included, came back to this and said, let's take more of a microscope to these and really look at it, what they started saying and what the found is, this is an overblown warning.

We don't need to completely cut out these foods. What a tragedy for people to be afraid to eat something as healthful as broccoli. The other part of that is not just Was that was it that, you know, okay, these tests were done using like massive amounts that people wouldn't typically eat.

It was also that it was done, using raw cruciferous vegetables. And we found that when we cook those foods, it greatly diminishes or reduces the goitrogenic compounds in those food.

So the basic rule of thumb, I say be aware of these foods not afraid of the foods and enjoy them in normal amounts cooked whenever possible. because there's lots of different goitrogenic substances.

There's the ones in cruciferous vegetables, but there are others too. When you look at the whole list of, quote, goituagenic foods, there is 30-some things on it, all stone fruits, almonds, pine nuts, so many greens, arugula, healthful, plant foods.

So to be cutting out all those goitrogenic foods would be just an absolute nutritional tragedy for us. And most people, honestly, it's been incredibly rare that I've worked with anyone who has ever said, oh, I can't eat those.

Oftentimes what I find, and this has been my own personal experience too, when people are maybe reacting to foods like cruciferous vegetables, for example, there might be something else at play.

Like we mentioned sulfur, right? Well, sulfur is great, but Some of us might have some of these like lesser known food sensitivities to naturally occurring chemicals in healthful foods.

Sulfur is one of those chemicals. Another one you might hear about is oxalates or salicylates, or histamines, right? So for me, I ended up getting I was having like this weird brain fog.

It took me so long to figure this out. I'm like, what is what am I reacting to? And I finally figured out like we had My husband makes this great Caesar salad that has so much raw garlic in it and we like to do half romaine and half raw kale.

And so I remember like every time he'd make this, and we put salmon on top. So every he would make his Caesar salad, I'd be like, that weird brain fog is coming back.

And for me, it was like you have this sulfur bucket and some of us just I don't methylate especially well. I need some supplemental support to do that.

So my sulfur bucket was overflowing and I was having symptoms. So it wasn't the cruciferous vegetables like kale, it was sulfuric foods. Garlic, onions, those greens, crucifers vegetables have a lot of sulfur, even eggs, avocados have some sulfur in them.

You know, so many healthful foods and that can be so frustrating from a patient perspective because it's like, At the time, I'm really on point with my food.

I am eating so well and now I have symptoms from these really healthy foods that I eat. I finally figured out it was sulfur and then went to my naturopath.

We talked about it. She's like, you're not methylating well. I have some supplements we can talk about. That helped. It was like boom, solved it, I say it like it easy.

it took probably over 12 months at least to figure this whole thing out. but it was sulfur for me. It wasn't the cruciferous vegetables is what I'm trying to say.

So if you do find you're reacting to some of those foods or you feel like, is this goitrogenic foods like I read about? there might be something else there that's worth exploring with your healthcare practitioner.

Thyroid-friendly eating and elimination diets

But yeah, that that kind of my approach with with goitrogenic foods is be aware, not afraid, normal amounts, you know, even some raw is fine and cooked whenever possible.

and most people don't have an issue with that. That's based on everything I've read, the research and the common core messaging from the most respected thyroid experts out there like you.

Yeah, you bring up such a good point with the goitergenic foods. Like, one is they're not all created equally. So all of the Goiterogenic foods work on a different pathway.

And that's with Hashimoto's, it's not necessarily a condition of iodine deficiency, and you would need to eat like pounds and pounds of raw foods for most of.

The goitorgenetic foods to interfere with. Iodine absorption, so not super relevant for a lot of people. I think soy is the one that tends to be the most relevant.

There are some direct studies with soy impacting thyroid antibodies, and that does seem to interfere with the thyroid peroxidase receptor. Really great point about figuring out what is actually causing you to react.

So a lot of people may have sulfur sensitivity. Potentially, it could be due to the CBS gene mutation. And so that pathway might be impacted, or the sulfur oxidase pathway, might impacted.

There's actually a few different things, people, in my experience, that can really, really help. One of them is molybdenum and then butyrate adenocobalamin.

and then L-carnitine are some of the ways to like move that pathway. I talked about that in the Hashimoto's Protocol book because sometimes people might think they're really sensitive to dairy or they are really to eggs or broccoli and it's like figuring out like what's driving those reactions and if somebody's been on a pretty clean And healthy, nutritious diet for 30, 60, 90 days, and they're still having these weird symptoms.

It's like, let's ask more questions. The other thing that I can sometimes see with issues. with sulfur or crucifers is when people have SIBO because then they're just not necessarily digesting anything and the bacteria in their small intestine are eating everything up and then causing a lot of symptoms like gas and brain fog.

And so again, that's kind of assigned to you. If you've got your nutrition dialed in, you're eating a clean, balanced, nutrient-dense diet and you are still having symptoms, then that is assigned more questions.

But first, you know, nutrition is, of course, foundational, so we don't want to ignore that. And we do not want get too down a rabbit hole when we're excluding too many things with, for example, oxalates.

It's going to be, oftentimes, it's like a red flag that you have a candida or a mold issue. Same with salicylates, this could be an issue with your glycine pathway.

So we want make sure that we are we're really nourishing ourselves and not restricting foods that we don't need to restrict. Thank you for bringing up the iodine deficiency detail too.

That's where they find that goitrogenic foods have more of an impact, but iodide deficiency is pretty rare. It's not typically a huge issue for the majority of us, I feel like, especially in the developed world where we're dealing with

Hashimoto's driven hypothyroidism.

most of the time. There's definitely iodine deficiency induced hypothyroidism and you see that more in developing countries but in the United States Hashimoto's is more a autoimmune condition and actually their research shows that excess iodide can flare it up and drive it and so that's not necessarily something that I worry about with a lot of people.

I do think the amount of iodine in a multivitamin is generally safe and helpful for most people. But I don't necessarily worry about people eating raw vegetables too much or about, I do not necessarily advocate for utilizing high doses of Iodine, like the mega doses, because there have been too many people that have found that to actually worsen their autoimmune condition.

I think looking at some of the interventions, there's a list of things and they say goiterogenic foods but I don't know one person that has like healed their thyroid or improved their symptoms by eliminating goitorgenic foods.

Sometimes it is helpful when you have SIBO or sulfur issues but SIBo generally like you can't eliminate your way out of SIBO. Like you generally either need to do a herbal medicine protocol or you need work on something more of like an elemental diet.

It's not like you stop eating crucifers for two weeks and then you're no longer going to have SIBo, like it's still going be there. So it is kind of a red flag if you are reacting.

We talked a lot about the different things people need to do when they have Hashimoto's. And so you've just released the Thyroid 30 Cookbook, and so, you blend food as medicine recipes, like how to it, along with the eight daily rituals.

Can you tell us how this is going to help support thyroid patients? Yeah, absolutely. I'm so excited. This is my first cookbook. And Isabella, this has been a lifelong dream of mine since I was nine years old, is writing a cook book.

So it feels amazing that it's finally here. As we were talking about, it is the 10-year anniversary of Hypothyroid Chef, too. Really excited to bring this to the world.

But this really gives people you know, that framework because of all the eight daily rituals, right? I find that food is the one that really people tend to need the most help and support with.

They have a lot of questions about it. how do I know what to cook and I need recipes and for someone who's just even going just gluten free for the first time, that's a really big endeavor.

Just as you mentioned, it's hiding in so many things. We got to figure out where it hiding and how to avoid it and not fall into the gluten-free junk food pitfall, all those things, so this gives people a framework of that whole life system, but also there's a hundred recipes in there that are just tons of color, lots of plant foods, lot of clean, healthy proteins, Lots of healthy fats, nutrient density, and lots those anti-inflammatory ingredients worked in.

But really, as a chef and a food lover, I really think food needs to be fun right like so in functional medicine, they say food is medicine in from information connection and communication right it's also.

self care. It's also it can be comfort, it could be celebration, right? It can our culture. There's so many ties there to food. And so we've got to be able to not just make the best choices for our health, but to really love what we're eating, to make be making meals that we are happy and proud to share with our family or our friends.

meals that feel like they tick all the boxes. That's a wonderful feeling when you're like, this is so beautiful. I feel amazing after I eat it and it tastes great.

You know, and I just, I'm too much of a food lover to, like, accept recipes that just taste dreary or, oh, i'm just going to boil a chicken breast and roast a sweet potato and call it good because I am on AIP and that, you know.

I mean, hey. do like do what you got to do and some people are good with like very simple things like that, but I want a little more spice a, little, more flavor and so I think I bring you know some skills to the table there with my food background and one thing that you, know has shifted in my own approach and my, own mindset is When I started out writing about food and as a chef, even cooking, as chef I had multiple food blogs and stuff and it was more about like, is this really like a wow recipe?

I feel like I need, there's this pressure because I'm a Chef, I got to impress people. It's not about impressing people, it's about giving this community recipes that are easy enough for them to be able to make on their own when they may not be foodies, they might not feel good or have a lot of energy, and they desperately need to nourish themselves so they can start to get some of that energy back.

So it's got to be doable. Instead of making these fancy chefy recipes that are really complicated or we're not doing foams or anything like that.

Goitrogenic foods and common thyroid myths

I try to keep things pretty streamlined as far as instructions, as time commitment goes to make these very real world friendly. Then I use my chef skills to tie in some of those little flavor boosting hacks.

Finishing the soup with just a little bit of lemon juice is going to completely brighten all those other flavors in there or you know, I mean, you love to cook, right?

You know you learn some of these things as you go as a as someone who loves to Cook. Those little flavor boosting hacks, little time saving techniques, Little things that add texture, thinking about how to build a salad, it's not just about the greens and like some protein and some veggies, like you want a really awesome dressing, You want some crunch on there, any texture.

you need some different colors, like all those things come into play and then layer that with a lot of us having dietary restrictions. The recipes, all of them are gluten and dairy free.

Many of then are paleo and many of the are AIP. Those three 30-day meal plans in the book, there is a 30 day level one gluten- and-dairy-free meal plan, level two paleomeal plan and level three AIp mealplan.

I try to it's a lot of details to kind of juggle, but I've been doing this long enough that I just I love it. This is like this is I Just feel like, this Is something that was put here to do and I it fills me up and it feels so fulfilling to me and not just fulfilling me in my own career, but as a patient, it's been healing for me.

I'm just absolutely thrilled to share these recipes with people. Of course, then they've got, because it isn't just about the food, we got to be thinking about our sleep and our self-care and are we moving?

So it's got that thyroid 30 system built in everything you need to like implement the eight ours is built into the system. You'll have access to a downloadable score sheet.

So you can play on your own. you Can do the thyroid thirty wellness adventure in my own community. And that's how we start. making those changes and doing that with support.

And, you know, it doesn't all have to have happen in 30 days. It does not have To happen overnight, we can do thyroid dirty and say, Okay, I'm going to build awareness around all eight of these ours.

But every time we set a primary goal or intention. So right now, you know, Sue might be working on she's doing low FODMAP because she has SIBO, right?

And Judy might Be working On her sleep because that's that the biggest thing for her. But she also wants to, adhere to her dietary guidelines. And Tracy wants To really focus on going gluten and dairy free for the first time.

Melody, she's on an AIP healing protocol working with her functional medicine practitioner. Here's this framework that helps you actually do all that with support and with that awareness of, am I focusing completely on food and neglecting these other factors like self-care and things like that?

Really, I think the other part of what I do and what i have to offer and What I was put here for in addition to the recipes is the how right because we have all those expert Common core expert recommendations, right when I started this I, was reading all the books your book so many books Listening to all, the podcast right and you start to hear these common threads of the recommendations you know and so That's what the eight Rs are built upon.

But how do we do that in a way that isn't going to make us completely overwhelmed? And how did we have this system that we can use as a tool in our toolbox?

We can come back to again and again, and build on our healthy habits. And what happens as we go along with this? I've got people I'd been doing thyroid 30 with now for eight years.

Eight years, I launched it in 2017. And what happens when we use this framework is we're able to get to the point where these habits and choices don't take the mental bandwidth anymore.

There are new normal. They don't take the energy. And so, you know, we focus on one thing and we build and build.

The Thyroid 30 Cookbook and where to find it

We just keep coming back to the thyroid healthy journey and keep recommitting to making those healthy choices and building this lifestyle that supports us, that we love.

and that we can do without like a ton of mental energy and time. You know, it just becomes what we do, right? So that's really what the Thyroid 30 Cookbook offers is, you know it's not just a collection of recipes.

It's a whole food system, but also a full life system. Well, one, I am like starving right now because I just was like thinking about all of the deliciousness that you described.

And also I think this is gonna be an incredibly helpful tool for thyroid patients. Can you tell us where people can grab their copy and where they could connect with you as well?

Yes, absolutely. So they can connect me, learn more about the cookbook at hypothyroidchef.com. Go to hypathyroid chef. com slash cook book. to grab your copy, learn more about it.

There's some special freebies there, all kinds of goodies that people can get their hands on to learn about the thyroid 30 system in addition to just recipes in the cookbook.

But yeah, the Cookbook is going to be a great companion to all of that. So it all kind of like fits together. And even if people are just like, Hey, I just want some yummy thyroid friendly recipes.

I'm gluten and dairy free or whatever. Like, it's, It's great for that too. so really excited about the recipes, yeah. Thank you so much for creating this amazing resource and for all the work that you do for thyroid patients.

On behalf of the thyroid community, I'm really, really grateful for you. I am grateful to you also for taking the time to come on the show. i'm going to set up some links for people where they can order a copy of your book and you are also generous enough to provide a downloadable resource which is a grocery guide and people can get that at hypothyroidchef.com slash grocery so I'll go ahead and link to that.

Thank you again for joining us and everybody listening. I hope this has been a healing conversation on your journey.