Stop Blaming Your Gut: It’s Not What You Think Transcript

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Gut Health and Longevity

I don't see people talking about the gut health as part of longevity. And the good is integral. There was a study done on centenarians and they looked at, well, what is different about their gut microbiome compared to other people who don' age as gracefully as centenerians.

The major difference was the centenary's gut micro biome had less bugs that cause inflammation and had the ability to shut down inflammation. What if aging isn't about slowing down but leveling up?

I'm Dr. Isaac Jones. This is the Longevity Leaders podcast. Welcome. I am Dr Ashley Beckman here with the longevity leaders podcast and I have our guest Dr Pedre.

How are you? Doing great. Thanks for having me. Of course. So we've been chatting a little bit and we uncovered a few things we have in common, but let's get into some of your favorite things that you focus on with your clients, right?

You have, tell us a bit about your practice. Well, my practice is a mostly virtual functional medicine practice focused on gut health. That's been my specialty.

I've been in the space for over a decade, but probably more on the map since my first book came out. in 2015 by the name of Happy Gut. And since then, I've been a nationally recognized gut health experts.

I have seen patients from all over and look at the gut as the gateway to the rest of the body. It's kind of like the root system of a tree. Like, if you want to heal a three that's not doing well, you've got to look the roots.

For the bodies, the system is the guts. So I'm a Chinese medicine practitioner, and so we talk about looking at the roots and not the branches. And unfortunately, most of traditional medicine is looking a branches only, right?

From Hives to Root-Cause Medicine

Yeah. When I first started working with gut health, One of my early patients was a patient that was breaking out in hives. My practice, I had a brick and mortar at the time in New York City, and she had been to some of the top most respected dermatologists in NYC.

And I'm sitting there thinking, how am I going to solve this problem? I am just a budding functional medicine practitioner. This is like 2007. And, I figured out that she had celiac genetics, she was gluten sensitive, took her off of gluten, and the hives were gone within two months.

after she had been going to doctors that were putting her on steroids and this topical steroids. So it's an example of treating the branches instead of really looking under the hood and treating.

The root of the problem, obviously, that was, you know, early in the early days, the quick wins seemed like I would just get like the yes. I'm a rock star.

And then as you progress and you become more well known, you start getting the more complex, difficult patients and start realizing, okay, this isn't as easy as taking someone off of gluten.

It's way more complicated than that. That was what it was 20 years ago, right? I, even with myself, me going off gluten and dairy resolved 90% of my issues until I realized there were some other things going on.

But it's not the case anymore. Right? We have so many people with complex illness and we were talking about this

a little bit, but mold can be implicated, Lyme, mast cell, histamine issues, and then these viruses that have been around lately.

and everything associated with that. And no longer are we seeing easy cases. No, not at all. I had a case recently that was referred to me, a patient with obstructive sleep apnea, who is an athlete runner, like you would never think.

And he's working with like a very forward-thinking dental group that deals with Obstructive Sleep Apnea teaching, doing tongue exercises. and things because he can't get through the night without taping the mouth like that.

It's this whole ritual and thought, you know, maybe the gut is implicated. You know we started thinking about like, are there other issues maybe potentially going on here?

Mold, Mycotoxins, and Hidden Exposures

And long story short, we discovered that he was full of mycotoxins and there was mold growing on the doorframe to the bedroom. Black mold. And his wife also, same thing, tons of the mycotoxin and since then they've moved out of that apartment and he's doing really great on mitochondrial protocols.

But it just shows like, you know, he came for gut issues, but it's never just the gut anymore. I just think like that when patients come to me and they say, I have bloating this, i'm just thinking, oh no, that's just a tip of the iceberg.

There is a lot more that we need to uncover here. That's maybe not front vision because people don't come in with a symptom that says, I'm mold toxic.

Right. No. And especially because it can be any organ system. So even all the members in the household that could be exposed, depending on the rooms, you have a child with eczema.

and hives, or you have a mom who has chronic fatigue and migraines, and then the dad maybe has some sinusitis and chronic sinus infections, so it presents differently.

Yeah, everybody has different symptoms, but the commonality is the exposure to the mold, the mycotoxins, in the atmosphere. So since you have had some clients that have been exposed to mold, right, we see this all the time.

And I'd say in my personal practice, it's 95% of my clients. I can only remember two people I've tested where nothing showed up from mycotoxins. Yeah.

So it is a huge problem, and a big part of that is coffee. Right? It is, especially when it comes through okra toxin. Yes, that's the one and the most stubborn one to get rid of.

It's a retained mycotoxin, so it requires like, you know, really good detoxification, but obviously uncovering that people don't realize that if you're going out and drinking coffee from, some of the more popular brands out there…

Popular chains available. They are not buying the highest quality beans. And the theme is that, I don't know if people realize this, but the price of coffee as a commodity has quadrupled since 2020. And just in the last couple of years, it's quadrupled.

And one way that, you know, coffee is sold by weight. The coffee beans are sold my weight, so if you're not working with an honest supplier, they might add a little bit of water.

to make the weight higher. So then you're having to pay more for the beans, but then those beans that are moist are going to get mold. Or if they're low quality beans coming, you know, coffee's grown in tropical environments with a lot of humidity.

But depending on how the beings are being cared for, they are either going be more susceptible to developing too

much moisture and then they can or they even get There is this insect called the coffee borer, and it creates tiny little holes in the the Coffee Bean.

And then in those holes, it's very easy for mold to grow. So what people don't realize is that, you know, the quality of your coffee matters greatly.

Coffee Quality and Toxin-Free Sourcing

Even though the roasting process can reduce some of the mycotoxins, depending on how the Roasting is done, really it comes down to the Quality of The Beans.

And a lot of patients mistake organic to mean also mycotoxin-free, right? So they'll say, oh no, no problem, I have organic, but that doesn't. If you're a medical doctor, nurse practitioner, chiropractor, or other health expert that's stuck in a broken system, there's a better way.

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Doesn't necessarily mean, although you hope that if it says organic, that already you know that these are beans of higher quality, they're being cared for in a much more conscious way.

They're coming from smaller farms. But yeah, I mean you get what you pay for. Right. If you're not paying attention to that, that's one of those things.

I call it the micro habits that have the macro effects on our health. Right. It's. One of the most surreptitious microhabits because it's so normalized.

Like everybody drinks coffee that you wouldn't think like your coffee could be poisoning you if you are one. Of those people who are mold sensitive. and it scrambles your gut health, your hormones, everything.

So that's partly what inspired me to come out with Happy Gut Coffee because I wanted people to have a coffee that was gut-friendly, starting with that, low in acid, but also free of all potential toxins.

So we take our batches and we send them to a third-party lab and at pretty significant cost to test for all of these things, we test all pesticides, glyphosate, mycotoxins, and heavy metals.

Yeah, because the groundwater, all of the things can really contribute in so many ways. And the pesticides, again, with what we work with and uncovering some root issues, pesticides are huge and impact the gut.

I'm sure you see this with patients, I have patients that primarily eat organic and when we run a toxin screen. Yep, still high. They might have atrazine, have other pesticides.

Maybe they're living somewhere where the neighbors spray the lawn with a weed killer, or maybe they just live in an area that has a lot of still pesticide sprayed farms and stuff.

Or you take your child to the park or they play sports and you're on the sports field. I mean, the amount of kids with the high glyphosate and pesticides is off the charts now and a of it's from the sport fields.

It's crazy. And it's so sad because they're getting injured, right? It is attacking the tendons and it is a big thing. And these are major gut disruptors.

Yes. People need to understand, like, the mycotoxins would affect the gut lining, disrupt the microbiome, but also

glyphosate, which it's funny because they say it doesn't have an effect on humans.

But it short circuits an enzyme pathway in bacteria. And what do we have living inside our gut? Yeah, bacteria. Almost 100 trillion bacteria that are symbiotically living with us.

Pesticides, Glyphosate, and Gut Damage

So if you look at glyphosate, it's basically a chelating agent. It binds minerals, but it also shuts down this pathway. And that pathway is essential for creating the three essential amino acids, which are necessary for precursors for things like dopamine, serotonin.

Then you wonder why so many people are walking around depressed and stressed. Yep. And the pesticides too, I mean, they basically can cause the insect's insides to explode.

So there are these neurotoxins and they're very damaging for our gut lining. Yeah, and then if you already have damage to the gut line, like inflammation from having been on antibiotics, stress, taking over-the-counter NSAIDs.

I know this is a longevity podcast, so I wanted to mention, you know, No one's really, overall I don't see people talking about the gut health as part of longevity.

And the good is integral. There was a study done on centenarians and they looked at, well, what is different about their gut microbiome compared to, you know, other People who don't age as gracefully as centenarians, people who are on multiple medications.

And the major difference was the centenerians' gut microbiome had less bugs that cause inflammation. and they had the ability to shut down inflammation, whereas people like compare an 80-year-old who's on seven different medications, on diabetes, heart disease, all this.

If you look at their gut microbiome, it's probably going to have a lot of dysbiotic bugs that actually cause more inflammation. And with that inflammation is the, you know, common denominator behind every disease including mental health issues.

Yes, yeah. Well, one thing too, when we, at least in our program of longevity, that's why we talk about the kind of the foundations and detox first, because you can't optimize if you haven't gotten those in place.

Yeah, and like the gut being the foundation. Yeah. That's critical in the Foundation stage. And the same with getting those toxins out, right? You can't start to heal up the Gut when you have a toxic soup in there.

So it's, everyone wants to skip right to the fun stuff and the optimization, but we have to get those foundations and detox in place first in order to optimize.

Yeah, and unfortunately for our, you know, short attention span society, our TikTok, Instagram, real society. I think what I try to teach patients is that you are still a biological system.

Your body is not a technology, it is biology. And that biology takes time. Things can happen pretty fast sometimes, but they're not going to happen in a day.

And not if you're not making the changes. Not if your not make the change and depending on the person like you can't just make one of three changes and expect the results that are in order to achieve the result that you wanna achieve.

Sure, it may be overwhelming to make all these changes so I'm very much in favor of stack changes But you keep adding as you refine your lifestyle behaviors because a lot of it comes back to what you're doing every day.

Like what coffee you are drinking and what your drinking it in. Are you getting those to-go cups? I feel guilty

because sometimes when I travel, I forget to bring…

Your travel mug. My travel mugs. It's like, oh my God, now if I want a coffee, i'm going to get it in one of those plastic-lined cups, which is not great.

We can't be perfect. No.

Gut Microbiome and Centenarian Longevity

But when I'm home, I am always making that choice, either making my happy gut coffee at home or if I go to the coffee shop because I still like to treat myself to just going out for a coffee.

I bring my tumbler and that's what I try to teach people because what i found really interesting is I started looking into the effects of microplastics on the gut and the got microbiome.

So we know that microplastics are endocrine disruptors, horrible for women, they disrupt estrogen, but yeah, and men. What I found was that they were finding correlations.

One study found a correlation with microplastic exposure and inflammatory bowel disease. That makes sense. There were other studies where they are looking at micro plastic exposure in rodents, in zebrafish, studying them to see what are the effects and found that the micro plastics cause dysbiosis.

And they actually destroy the mucus layer of the gut, which is basically like your protection, and then leads to leaky gut and inflammation. So you wonder like, okay, we were looking for, you know, were talking about like the things that are hidden, like microtoxins.

And now we have to start thinking about microplastics. Yeah, and all of those things, again, like the forever chemicals, people know about them, but they don't realize how many things they're still in.

And people assume that products are safe, even though they've been supposed to be phased out because of their toxic tendencies, but they're still on the shelf.

Glyphosate's still in the shelves, right? All these products are, and they are not safe, we see them accumulate in our body, luckily we have the testing.

So you were talking a little bit about mitochondrial testing, let's go into that a bit. What's your favorite test right now? I'm super excited about this test because this has been vetted at the University of San Diego.

It's been used to look at mitochondrial effects of space and NASA. And it's unlike the organic acids, it is more of a direct test on mitochondria function.

And I've started, like, I have been using it now for several months on patients. And it's quite outstanding, how it correlates with what's going on with a patient, a mycotoxin-exposed patient has kind of like a certain mitochondrial signature.

that you can see. But what's really cool about the test is that it looks at mitochondrial energy production at rest.

Detox Foundations Before Optimization

And then they use certain mechanisms where they decouple the electron transport chain. These are used in studies using established chemicals that do that.

Then they study, well, how do your mitochondria react to stress? So you can see how you are a baseline. But then what happens when your body's on when you're not getting enough sleep when they maybe you've had too much to drink.

You're stressing your buddy out. What happens to your mitochondria. And then they also look at reactive oxygen species both at rest and under stress. Again, and then they're looking at the balance between mitochondrial energy production and glycolysis to see where your patient is.

Are they more using sugar for energy or are they efficiently using mitochondria? for energy. And the cool thing is then you can do before and after testing and see, you know, how your interventions are working and what it is that they've already done a couple of studies, Dr.

Patel. I've talked to him a lot about the testing, and the different things like using phosphatidylcholine to improve the mitochondrial membrane and redox potential.

but also using things like urolithin A, but not at actually much higher dose, at 1,000 milligrams, not 500 milligrams. And they found improvements in mitochondrial energy by, they did one small study where they put patients on for 1 000 milligrams daily for four weeks.

So I started incorporating some of these strategies with patients and helping them improve their their energy. Because like I said, people come to me because of gut health issues.

Right. But I don't just look at the gut. I look at everything because oftentimes no other doctor that they've worked with is looking at all of these things and they're complaining about fatigue, about brain fog, energy issues, and a lot of times their thyroid looks fine.

So it's not the thyroid. Right. And they basically, too, the gut issues are kind of speaking the loudest, but we have to uncover why. A lot of the deep diving and amazing tests that we had at our disposal now are extremely helpful.

And everything is integrated. So if you got mitochondrial dysfunction, you have gut health issues that have contributed to that mitochondria dysfunction.

If you're not looking at that. I started with the gut and really like zoomed in and kind of like really focused on the good and now I'm kind like going from there.

And broadening again, because I realized, well, I can't ignore that these patients are living in a toxic soup.

Microplastics and Gut Barrier Injury

And they are still going to have mold. I had a patient that had mycotoxins, but then her whole home had carpeting that has not been changed in like 20 years.

So we got her to remove the carpet. Right. And she's finally starting to improve, but it's taking time because she was so toxic to begin with. And that's the one thing I think is hard for patients to really understand and grasp.

Just even getting rid of mycotoxins, if they have a lot, can take six months to a year or more. It just depends on the body and how much. So they're used to quick fix, and none of these things are a quick fixed.

And it requires some work because, and it does require an investment in your health as well because maybe you need to get a portable infrared sauna so that you can do sauna therapy at least three times per week or more.

And that's a commitment because now you have to be in the sauna for like 30 minutes every day. Yeah, it's not a quick fix. But again, once they feel better, and usually they will feel that are incrementally along the way.

So you're getting at their core issues, but actually getting to their root causes throughout the whole process. Yeah. Yeah, what I find is that it is as much a spiritual, mental, emotional journey for the patient as it a physical journey.

Oh, for sure. And usually they're coming in with physical symptoms, but behind those symptoms there's actually a lot of mental emotional and spiritual stuff that needs to be addressed in order for a person to heal.

Oh, for sure. And that's one thing I loved at least about Chinese medicine. So we look at all the organs and what emotions connected, and why did it impact somebody's gut, right, versus their liver or their joints, what emotion is tied.

It just depends on how open and willing the client is to dive into those things.

Mitochondrial Testing and Energy Recovery

Yeah, a hundred percent. Because some of the work that I do with patients is looking at childhood trauma and looking earlier versions of themselves where maybe there was a block.

There was something that they learned. Right. and it's still playing in the background. Oh, for sure. Now as an adult. And I find that, of course, only if the person is open and willing to go there because those memories can be too painful for some people.

For sure, well, it sounds like your practice is very integrated. Yeah. That's the thing is even though we love the toxins, It's not only about the toxins, they just There's something we have to deal with and we to have deal them with all the patients.

Because it's just, you can't escape them in our world today. No, it is a bit scary because even if you are healthy and you're thinking about longevity, You're not gonna get there without doing positive things for your health.

And I think we probably have to start, you know, looking beyond like just the regular stuff, like thinking about like sauna therapy and red light therapy, and all the other things that we can use now.

We're in such a great era with all of the biohacking tools that have. But also at the same time remembering how important it is to like put your feet on the earth.

Get grounded, be in nature, get connected to your body, breathe, meditate, like really work on regulating your nervous system. I think those are just as important as everything else.

Mind-Body Healing and Where to Find Dr. Pedre

A hundred percent. So where can people find you? I'm very active on Instagram at Dr. Pedre. And if they want to check out my mold-free, toxin- free coffee that we send to a third-party lab to get tested and it's been cleared from mycotoxins, pesticides, glyphosate, and heavy metals, happygutcoffee.com.

Perfect. Well, thank you so much for joining us.