The Coalition with Dr. Shani Belgrave: Preventive Health for Gen Z with Aminah Phelps MD Transcript

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Show Introduction and Guest Welcome

Welcome to The Coalition. This is a talk show dedicated to discussing health, wellness, and inspiration. I'm your host, Dr. Shani Belgrave. Hello, everybody.

Thanks for joining The Coalition. I'm your host, Dr. Shani Belgrave. I am a bariatric and minimally invasive surgeon in Atlanta, Georgia. You can get connected with me at www. DrShaniBelgrave.com.

I am excited to welcome to the show today Dr. Amina Phelps. Dr. Amina Phelps is an esteemed family medicine doctor that joins us today for a special episode.

Today's episode is back to school, Preventive Health for Gen Z. I'm just so honored to be part of the Preventive Health for Gen Z conversation. So I just want to say thank you for having me.

Absolutely. I'm glad you are able to join us. So Dr. Amina Phelps, before we get into it, can you please tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

Yes, ma'am. So hello, everyone. Once again, my name is Dr. Amina Phelps. I'm a board certified family medicine physician. I am also certified in aesthetics as well.

I started my own practice, it's called Atlanta Family Medicine and Med Spa, right in the Southwest Atlanta area off of Cascade Road this past year. My mission, my passion is all about preventive health.

I spend a lot of times with my patients, educating them on different things in the community, how we can eat better, how we can exercise more, and just teaching them how to be advocates for their own health.

Absolutely. Well, that's what the show is all about, how patients can become advocates for themselves and discussing all things, health, wellness and inspiration.

So I'm really excited to do something special for the young people. And our theme is back to school. And I know you work with a lot of young people in college, grad school, what would you say 18 to 26 or?

Back-to-School Preventive Health Overview

Yes, ma'am. 16 and up. We treat men and women 16 and up. And my focus is our young adults. Absolutely. All right. So what do these folks need to know as they are getting ready to head back to school?

What are the key things you'd like them to know? Well, I spend a lot of time with my young adults making sure that we focus on a few key things. Number one, the biggest thing is STDs, how we can prevent STDs.

What are all the STDs? We spend a lot of time just educating my patients how we can get them treated for different STDs. I spend a lot of time with our women educating them about cervical cancer testing.

and how we start that at age 21, and really educating on why that's important for our young women. Also, spending time, which is one of my main focuses, is on mental health.

I spend a lot of time asking our patients how is their mood, focusing on how they're coping, how are they managing with stress. Our young people, they are hit with so much on a daily basis.

So spending time with them, relating to them about their friendships, their relationships, and just making sure that they are in healthy and safe relationships.

If blood work is needed, the great thing about our practice is we do have in-house lobotomy. So we can go ahead, draw up labs if needed to follow up on things like fatigue.

And then like I said, I spend a lot of time educating our youngsters on how to eat healthy. What does 150 minutes of aerobic exercise really look like?

Because we say that, but really going over what that means. And then like I said, just really focusing on their mental health. and making sure that they feel comfortable to express and to be completely honest with myself and all the providers.

Well, fantastic. Thank you for giving us that intro. Now I'd like to dig a little deeper for those folks watching so they walk away with some key tidbits.

So going back to STD testing, can you give a brief overview of some of the STDs that are out there and symptoms? Absolutely. That's such a great question.

Because we have so many different STDs from chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, of course, HIV, herpes. And nowadays, when you're asking, I want to make sure our youngsters and even our older adults, when you're asking for an STD panel, make sure you ask for a complete one.

I mean, even nowadays, they are including something known as urea plasma. But making sure that her be simplex virus type one and type two is being tested.

A lot of times, we tend to focus on our pregnant women, but we are seeing a rise in herpes simplex virus type two. and educating the community on what type one looks like and how that is mainly the fever blister and what type two looks like.

But I get a lot of questions, especially from my youngsters about, oh, I came in contact with chlamydia and now that means that I can't drink water after somebody or you know how that affects them.

So it's really important to really spend time educating our youngsters of diseases that they can get from intercourse, diseases that they can get like herpes.

simplex type one, really just from touching different objects.

STD Testing and Sexual Health Basics

And it's really important to explain to patients that, for example, for syphilis, if they ever came in contact with syphilis, that antibody is going to be positive forever.

And so then what we're testing on is the titer to actually see was it actually treated. But so many times I get patients and when I do a full STD panel, whether syphilis or herpes, it'll come back positive, but they were treated.

But not understanding that that antibody will always be positive. Whereas when we're testing for things like trichomonas, chlamydia, gonorrhea, I'm testing for the antigen.

And so that's different. So once again, it really comes about educating. And I always tell my patients, please do not feel afraid to ask questions. The more questions, the better.

Anytime you're feeling anything with your body, please you speak up. Of course, I get a lot of questions on urinary tract infections. And is that considered an STD?

And it's not. A urinary tract infection is not a sexually transmitted disease, but it's very important that you get that tested. So any time that you're experiencing burning, discharge, anything like that, please, please, please go and see a provider to go ahead and get checked out.

Because one of the things that we see so much in African-American women is bacterial vaginosis. Bacterial vaginosis is not a sexually transmitted disease.

But it is an infection. It is a bacterial infection. It just comes from the vaginal pH being thrown off. But so many times we'll get young women to say, I'm having these recurrent episodes and to come to find out it is bacterial vaginosis.

So of course, you know, we always recommend no douching. You know, being very mindful of if you're using tampons, using them as instructed. Please don't allow tampons to stay in longer than what they're supposed to.

Even the clothing that we wear, sometimes wearing very tight clothing can cause for our vaginal pH to be thrown off and can cause vaginal, excuse me, bacterial vaginosis.

And how is that treated? So we treat bacteria, bacteria, noses with an antibiotic or over the counter treatments as well. So for some of our ladies who are there, they're not sure what they're experiencing, but you know, I've had BV in the past.

Absolutely. They can definitely get the over the counter medicine. But to be on the safe side, I definitely, if you're experiencing any differences in your vaginal pH, any vaginal burning, any blood in your urine, any pain, definitely.

I would recommend coming and seeing a provider just so that this way, yes, they'll test for the urine to see if there's any type of urinary tract infection, but also they can test for any sexually transmitted infections as well.

OK. I wanted to talk a little bit more about syphilis because And this you can shed some light on this, because when I think of syphilis, I think of that as being an older disease, I guess, because of what we learned about it from the Tuskegee experiment.

What tell me is syphilis still common now? And do people know that it can be cured? Absolutely. Unfortunately, we are actually seeing a rise of syphilis, mainly in your southern states.

I'll never forget a few years ago when I was living in Louisiana, they actually had a rise of syphilis in the state of Louisiana. And it was so unfortunate because, like you said, Dr.

Belgrave, syphilis can be treated, I mean, simply with penicillin. So it's something that can be treated. So it's really just about being tested for it.

And a lot of times, we kind of bypass the signs. So once again, if you're experiencing joint pain, that just kind of started and you're not really sure where it came from.

Please don't sweep that underneath the rug. Let your provider know. If you're experiencing a rash and you're not sure where it came from, even if you're like, hey, I'll just take some hydrocortisone, I'll apply some cream over it, please make sure you get that rash checked out.

Brain fog, you're feeling off balance, definitely get that checked out because you'll be amazed on there's so many different symptoms when it comes to syphilis that sometimes we'll wait until we get a rash or when something is really, really, the symptoms have kind of built up.

If you get a paper cut, I want you to come and see the doctor, honestly, because I feel like that's really the difference among different races. Sometimes other races, they'll get a paper cut, they get a full workup, and that allows for them to get early detection on certain things, whereas sometimes in our community, we will wait, unfortunately, until the finger's fallen off.

And by then, maybe at that point, we cannot treat. Please, if you feel anything that is not normal in the body or, you know, I'm just feeling like something is off, speak up, say something, let somebody work that up, because you just never know if there's something else going on that could be contributing to that.

And then for all my youngsters, yes, syphilis is on the rise in our young people. So please, every year, please get your annual STD checks. If you have encountered a new partner, please, I definitely recommend getting rechecked.

But at least every so often, please go and see a provider and get checked for STDs, because this is so important. Absolutely. The next thing I wanted to talk about is mental health, particularly as we are discussing young people.

I often hear life is life and adulting is hard. I can say both of those things are true. So what can you let young people know? Is there a screen that they can know about if they're trying to figure out what's normal in terms of dealing with stress, anxiety or depression versus when there could be something deeper going on that they should come and talk to their provider about?

Absolutely. That's such a great question. Thank you so much for asking that because the good thing is the tools are right on the internet.

Mental Health Screening for Young Adults

I mean, our youngsters, they have access to so much, so many resources, but it's really about knowing those resources. So I encourage, I urge all of our youngsters, no matter what your age is, please just take a few minutes to go and look up is called PHQ-9.

And that is the screening that we use for depression. Even if you're just feeling, I'm feeling down, I'm feeling sad, I'm feeling fatigued, I'm sleeping too much, I'm not sleeping enough, I'm overeating or I'm not eating enough, please take just two minutes and look up that screen.

It's called a PHQ-9. And if you feel like, hmm, I'm getting some of these on the higher end of the score, please, you print that screen out, you bring it to your provider, or either you ask your provider, hey doc, do you mind doing a PHQ-9 on me?

The other really important screen for our youngsters is a GAG-7, G-A-D-7. This screen is for anxiety. And every single patient that walks through the doors of our practice, they are given a PHQ-9 and a GAG-7.

Because we see so much of an overlap, honestly, between the two. But like you said, with our youngsters and how they have to continue to persevere and to keep going in the midst of so much, it is important to sit down and ask them, how is their anxiety?

Their face was so much, I couldn't even imagine being their age with social media and all the pressures that they have and how much anxiety that puts on them.

So it's just so, so, so important to get all of our young people Just to do those two at least, I get now a lot of questions about ADHD and what screening should my youngsters be doing for ADHD.

And the first thing I say is I want them to do a PHQ-9 and a GAG-7 because you'll see a lot of the same symptoms of inattention when we are suffering from anxiety, when we're suffering from depression.

And so I always recommend let's treat the anxiety and let's treat the depression first. If we find out that we are still having some of those symptoms of inattention, a lack of focus after successfully treating our mood, then I will start to do a screen for ADHD.

But a lot of times, at least eight times out of 10, once you really treat the anxiety and depression, I mean, the brain fog, the lack of sleep, it all goes away.

It all goes away. So it's so important to really get our youngsters just to take a few minutes. And if they're feeling kind of anxious, definitely, if they just want to know, hmm, I wonder, is it anxiety?

I'm feeling heart palpitations. I'm feeling chest pain or just stomach pain. Definitely, I recommend taking a few minutes and doing a GAG-7 because a lot of times they'll see that that anxiety level, that anxiety score is so high.

And untreated anxiety can really affect the health. in so many ways. So it's so important to make sure that we do treat anxiety and depression. Wow, that's a great point.

I never even thought about the overlap between anxiety, depression and ADHD. So that's really good point because There's a lot of people who will say they have ADHD and they may, but just to make sure that a thorough evaluation was done so that it's not a diagnosis that's being given when it's really some, you know, anxiety, depression, that's actually the underlying cause.

So that's very interesting. I'm really excited to talk to you about this next point because a lot of people, not just young people, love to be on TikTok.

We love these different challenges, and I've heard this will do this, and this will do that. And so things that I hear a lot about are cleanses, all kinds of different teas, and also supplements.

And so I would like to know what you think as a PCP, because I feel a little weary. I think it's important for patients to know that a lot of these things are not regulated by the FDA.

you can kind of get yourself in trouble if you start taking a bunch of different things. So Dr Amina Phelps, what should young folks know about the detox teas, the supplements and the cleanses?

Supplements, Detoxes, and Safe Wellness Habits

Yes, yes, yes, yes. Thank you so much, Dr. Butler, for asking this, because nowadays you're asking why you see so many people. They're on herbal pills, supplements.

Honestly, the biggest one that I'm seeing now is creatine. I am seeing so many of our youngsters, whether it's men, it's women, to build up muscle mass.

and they're taking creatine before they work out and they're taking it afterwards. I even heard there's even like a challenge of it to see like how much of it can you take.

Any type of herbal supplement, any type of pill, cleanse, detox, please, please, please, please, please. talk to your provider, talk to your primary care provider first.

It's not that I'm against all of the cleanses and the detox and the herbal supplements. It's just that every patient is very different. And what might have worked for one patient does not necessarily mean it's going to work for you.

So sometimes, you know, I recommend for my patients before they start the creatine, let's go ahead, let's check on their kidney function. Because if they already are experiencing acute kidney injury, their kidneys are already dehydrated, the last thing I want them to be on is creatine.

Same thing with those herbal cleanses or those detoxes. They can be so harsh to the gut. They can be so harsh to the colon that I really recommend every single ingredient.

Please bring the bottles to your providers. Let your doctors go over them. I mean, there's been times where I've just had to look up every single ingredient.

Because I want to make sure that for my patients who are already are on medications. Number one, is this going to interfere with anything is this going to have a side effect.

And so, once again, every single supplement every single cleanse detox. I just, I always recommend, please, please, please talk to your provider before starting anything like that.

If you're already on something like that, please bring it to your provider so that they can know and they can best advise you if it's a good idea to stay on it, if it's a good idea to go ahead and stop.

But like I said, just keep that open dialogue. Because sometimes we'll take these cleanses to, I've heard of one to purify the blood. And to come to find out it was really affecting the white blood cells.

It was affecting the red blood cells. It was causing them to be lower than what they should be. So you have to be very, very, very, very, very, very careful with some of these detoxes because they are extremely strong.

I mean, I use a joke, but for my patients who are constipated, they will tell me, hey, doc, I just took a cleanse and now I can't stop going. And it's like, no.

No, no, no, no. That's too strong. That is way too strong on the body. And so instead, I would, you know, we talk about, well, what have you been eating?

Tell me about that fiber intake. And then by changing things like that, now they don't have to worry about anything compared to those harsh, harsh cleanses or harsh laxatives.

Please stay away from them. Please, please, please. So I definitely, I just recommend if you're interested or if you're thinking about starting a supplement, a detox, a cleanse, before you start it, please talk with your provider to see if that is the best route for you.

Well, thank you so much, Dr. Amina Phelps. I'm curious, it sounds like you may agree with my philosophy, which is sometimes less is more and just keeping things, trying to keep things as simple as possible.

So one of the key things people can do is just staying hydrated, drinking plenty of water. That's one of the main things you can do to kind of detox and flush your kidneys and flush your system.

So I think sometimes we tend to be looking for something magical when a lot of things are very basic, fruits, vegetables, plenty of water, plenty of sleep and exercise.

So I just want to- In a multivitamin. If I can write- In a multivitamin. Multivitamin. I am so big on our multivitamins. Water and multivitamins, that's really all that we need.

And Dr. Belgrave, I am just like you. I really believe too much of anything is a bad thing. And so sometimes we'll think, oh, I got to get extra vitamin C, or I got to get extra this, or extra, no, no, just one multivitamin.

and lots of water and that is really all that the body needs. And don't forget sleep and exercise. So I feel like if we do those things we're already winning.

Guest Contact Info and Med Spa Services

Well thank you so much Dr. Amina Phelps for joining the coalition. Of course you're welcome to come back anytime. What is the best way for people to reach out to you?

Yes. First, I just want to say thank you so much to Dr. Belgrade for having me on this wonderful podcast to be a part of Preventive Health for Gen Z. So thank you, Dr.

Belgrade. The best way to contact me, please feel free to stop by our office at Atlanta Family Medicine and Med Spa. We are located at 3915 Cascade Road, Suite 260, Atlanta, Georgia.

Zip code is 30331. Our phone number is 404-480-8700. Best way to contact us, please reach out on our website.

Our website is www.atlfamilymedspa.com. And then for all of our youngsters who want to connect us on Instagram, please feel free to connect to us on Instagram.

We will love to add you guys on our Instagram page, so please feel free. And our Instagram page is alantafamilymedicine.medspa1. So Dr. Amina Phelps, one last thing, because I know some of the young folks are probably also interested in some of the aesthetic work.

Can you just let us know what you do in the aesthetic space? Absolutely. Thank you. So on our med spa, we have a wonderful esthetician. She offers facials to our clients.

We have a basic, a classic, and a platinum facial where she does dermaplaning, dermaabrasion. We also do skin tightening of the face and of the neck. We do body sculpting on the abdomen, on the arms, the legs, the buttocks, and then also with the butt, because now she does some pelvic muscle tightening as well.

We also do IV hydration. We do Botox, and that is it. That's a lot of stuff. You can take care of folks from head to toe, basically. Yes, absolutely. Our model.

All right. Well, thank you, Dr. Mina Belz. We'll see you next time. Thank you so much, Dr. Belgrade. Thank you. It was a pleasure. And thank you so much just for having me and being a part of this wonderful podcast.

Thank you. Well, everybody, thank you so much for tuning in to another impactful episode of The Coalition. I'm your host, Dr. Shani Belgrade. I am a bariatric and minimally invasive surgeon in Atlanta, Georgia.

you can stay connected with me at www. DrShawneeBelleGrave.com. Very special thank you to Dr. Amina Phelps, family medicine doctor and founder of Atlanta Family Medicine and Med Spa for doing this very special episode, Back to School, Preventive Health for Gen Z.

You can get connected with Dr. Phelps by calling her office, checking out her webpage, or following her on Instagram. Thanks for watching. Be sure to share this episode with friends, family, and particularly the folks in Gen Z in your life.

We'll see you next time.