Summit Introduction and Fiberu2019s Role

Welcome everyone to the Gut Health and Longevity Summit. I am so glad you're here, and I want you to pause for a moment, because what you're going to hear over these sessions could genuinely change the way you eat, the way you feel, and the way you age.

Most people have never been told that a single, unglamorous nutrient fiber may be the biggest lever they have for a healthy gut and a longer life. And our experts are here to change that.

So today's conversation is one about how fiber and how a whole plant, foods that carry it, feed the bacteria and protect us from the inside out. My next guest lost her father to Alzheimer's after years of watching heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and cancer take hold of him and that loss center looking for answers in research and what she found changed the entire trajectory of her own health.

Kim Murphy did dug into something on a Whole Foods plant based eating, and decided to put the test to herself. Within three months, she lost 17 pounds and 20in, regained her energy and cleared the brain fog she'd been living with for years.

She holds a plant based nutrition certificate from Cornell and the Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies, and a health coaching certification. And now she coaches thousands through her program Plant Powered Life.

She's a founder of Simply Plant Based Kitchen and the Amazon bestselling author of Plant Power, where she helps busy people make whole plant based eating simple, doable and sustainable.

No perfection a required. So here we have it. Welcome, cam to our interview today. Thank you. Thank you so much for having me. And I want to start with the first question here.

So gut health seems to be a topic everywhere. Everyone's talking about it. Whether it's in the longevity and healthy aging conversation. And you keep coming back to this one word fiber.

When so many people are trying all these different hacks and trying all these different diets from, you know, the keto diet to the low carb diet to the carnivore diet, all of these.

So let's get into tell me a little bit more about the word fiber and what that means, and where it plays a role in longevity and healthy aging. Yeah. So I think, you know, the research has finally kind of caught up to something that's pretty intuitive once you learn about it, is that your gut isn't just about digesting food, it's actually talking to every other system in your body, your immune system, your brain, your inflammation levels, your blood sugar regulation, your heart health, your hunger, your hormones, even your mood.

Types of Fiber and Why Diversity Matters

And when researchers started looking at populations who lived the longest, like the blue zones, places like Okinawa, Sardinia. One of the biggest things that these populations have in common is that they're eating somewhere between 90 to 95% whole plants.

And that's not a coincidence, because these diverse, plant rich diets feed a diverse, healthy population of gut bacteria. And that diversity turns out to be one of the strongest markers we have for healthy aging.

And the piece, I think, makes us so urgent for everyone instead of just kind of, oh, that's interesting, is that most of us are not feeding our gut bacteria anywhere near what they need, and that fiber is the food source that they eat.

And when they eat it, they ferment it, and they produce compounds that help to lower inflammation throughout your body, the short chain fatty acids. And, you know, depending on your age, you need to be your gender.

You need to be somewhere in the range of 25 to 34g of fiber a day. But that's actually still pretty low, you know, on a whole food plant based on a diet.

We can easily get more than that, but the average American is only getting about 14g. That's like roughly half of this low level of fiber. And what's more striking is that one widely cited analysis found that 95% of Americans aren't hitting their recommended fiber intake.

95%. That's that's like almost everybody. So when we talk about gut health and suddenly becoming this big topic in longevity, you know, part of the honest answer is almost all of us are walking around with an underfed microbiome, and this research is finally connecting that gap to the exact chronic diseases that we're all trying to avoid as we age.

And I think where people get misled, honestly, is that food companies are now taking this fiber conversation and they're slapping, you know, high fiber on all these junk foods and things.

That's a source of fiber. But really, they're just these package and processed foods that they added fiber to fiber, added cereals, fiber added protein bars, fiber fortified snack cakes, you know.

And on paper you go, oh, sweet. Yeah. You know, checks the box, Scott fiber. But a lot of times it's just junk food disguised as healthy food. They just added a, you know, fiber to it, but it's still something that's ultra processed and full of stuff that your body doesn't need anyway.

And the fiber that you actually get from a whole plant, you know, an apple, a lentil, a sweet potato that doesn't come alone. It comes as a whole package, you know, with vitamins and minerals and antioxidants and nutrients that your gut bacteria are also depending on.

So you can't just isolate this one nutrient fiber, add it to processed food, you know, and expect to get the same benefits. So my advice is don't shop those health claims on the front of the box.

You know, get your fiber from the foods that actually grow out of the ground in the first place. So, you know, this gut health thing, I don't think it's a trend, but I think we need to be careful about, you know, how we're understanding, you know, fiber and where it's coming from.

But it's definitely something that's super interesting. I love, like hearing about it because I think we're just really scratching the surface about, you know, our gut health and microbiome and how it has such a big influence on our health and longevity.

Yeah. So just just to kind of summarize that a little bit for the people listening, our gut is really the common thread when it comes to underlying inflammation.

When it comes to our weight, our mood and all of our chronic diseases. Now fiber, which you mentioned, Americans are not getting enough. And I know when I like, I have patients who are like, I went and got some fiber powder, and now I'm having a bowel movement and I'm like, no, that's not the solution.

I'm glad you're having a bowel movement. But the reality is a majority of the diet that people are eating, which is meat, dairy and cheese. Where's the fiber? Right.

Why Many Healthy Diets Still Miss Fiber

So with that, let's talk a little bit about the different types of fiber before we go into more more details like I want people to understand like what is actually fiber in Whole foods plant based because we can get it from many things.

We can get it from fruits, we can get it from vegetables, we can get it from legumes, you know. So what is the different types of fiber when we are thinking about fiber?

Yeah. So there's lots of different types of fiber. The soluble and insoluble fibers. And you know they kind of do different things. Some of them, you know, bulk up the stool so that you can, you know, like you said, have a bowel movement, things like that.

Other types of fiber actually, you know, kind of like act as a, a vacuum cleaner for your intestine. And so they can, you know, clean out toxins, clean out excess cholesterol, clean out excess hormones.

And so they they just kind of like your vacuum cleaner. And there's clean out everything and take away, you know, some of the excess, you know like toxins and things like that that can build up.

But the different fibers I mean, there's just so many different fibers. And that's why we wanted a diversity of different plants, because they're going to feed different strains of our microbiome.

And we want that diversity in our gut. We don't just want, you know, one type of bacteria in our gut, you know, overpopulated everything because then we can have an imbalance in our gut.

So we want to have a lot of diversity in our in our diet, you know, eating different vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans and lentils and, and getting that variety really helps to, you know, create that diversity so that the different types of hundreds and thousands of different types of bacteria can, you know, feed on what they like.

And then you have that diversity and that just really helps to improve the health and the create all the different short chain fatty acids and lower inflammation.

So it's really just about that diversity. Yeah. So I have a lot of people who who say I'm eating a healthy diet. Like people will be like, oh, my diet is fine.

I eat really healthy, I eat lean protein, I eat salad, a little fruit, but yet they still fall short on fiber. So why do you think Americans are falling short and fiber like, what would a meal that's healthy on paper but fiber poor look like?

Walk us through? Like where people really are and where we need to get to? Yeah. And I think that, you know, I hear this a lot. Yeah. I'm eating, you know, some plants and things like that, but they're not eating enough.

Like, it's really, you know, a lot of meat, a lot of dairy, a lot of processed foods. And especially in, you know, the processed foods because they are devoid of a lot of fiber.

They've been stripped of their nutrients, refined grains, white flowers, things like that. So it's really, you know, people think that they're eating healthy and they're but if you're consuming a lot of processed foods, then you're just not getting fiber because you've got to have those whole grains that have been unrefined.

So like whole whole wheat instead of white flour and beans and lentils are such a great source of fiber. And most people don't eat, you know, enough legumes.

That's such a great food that one of the the foods that most of the blue zones, they all ate a different type of lagoon. It's high in fiber, high in protein.

How Fiber Feeds the Gut and Lowers Inflammation

So yeah, I think that it's really kind of a balance of, you know, we really need to center our plate around whole plants and getting just the money we can in our diet, you know, different types of, you know, different type of beans and lentils being kind of the center tofu, tempeh, soy, those can be great, you know, kind of protein sources to build your meal around and then making sure we're getting whole grains too.

I think that's a lot. You know, it's kind of silly to me that some people are afraid to eat whole grains and, you know, things like whole wheat, oats, quinoa, what else?

Bulgur, sorghum. There's just so many different kinds of whole grains that you can really explore and, you know, add to your plate to, you know, just really beef up the fiber.

But also, I mean, and they're also a great source of protein too. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I know run a lot of advanced testing on my patients.

And I have a lot of plant based patients, and I have a lot of omnivore patients, and both are really nutrient deficient because one I'm finding, especially in populations over, say, 40, that they are just not eating nutrient dense foods to give them the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants that they need for their body and their cells to function.

So and then even when I show them my plate, like, I'll show them like, okay, this is what a meal looks like for me. And I've got 6 to 8 cups of dark leafy greens on this plate.

And they're like, what? Like they're like literally having like, like a little handful. I'm like your cells. Your body is literally starving. Right? So let's get into the mechanism a little bit for our gut health audience.

When fiber reaches the colon, what actually happens there and how does that process affect inflammation and long term disease risk. Yeah. So like we've been talking about the fiber is the food for our gut microbiome and our gut microbiome, our good gut bugs that populate our colon, our intestines.

They when they eat that fiber, we can't digest it, but they can. And when they digest it and ferments it, they produce short chain fatty acids. And these short chain fatty acids are some of the most anti-inflammatory compounds on the planet, and one of them being butyrate.

And butyrate is a great marker. It's been shown that the people who, you know, have the most butyrate in their bodies, they tend to be leaner. It's because it helps activate leptin, one of the appetite suppressant hormones.

And so, you know, just by eating beating your friendly flora, you can actually be keeping your hunger and cravings down. And I think that's one of the things that is really fascinating is that when we feed our gut bacteria, they do so many things for us.

So besides the short chain fatty fatty acids being so anti-inflammatory, you know, it's also helping with hunger and it's helping with GLP one and, you know, keeping those cravings down and feeling feeling full because the, you know, the gut bugs and the short chain fatty acids, those are all working throughout our body.

So even though we can't digest the fiber, our gut microbiome can. And they in turn are giving us these, you know, important nutrients, these short chain fatty acids that we need to keep inflammation down.

Yeah, absolutely. It's kind of like when you don't feed the gut bacteria fiber. The opposite of this when you are eating a processed, ultra processed diet or a highly animal based diet and you're not giving the gut fiber, it does not create that microbiome or the microbiota or those organisms.

So if you don't have those organisms, that can then make the compounds like the short chain fatty acids like butyrate, you can't keep inflammation down.

Whole Food Plant-Based vs. Vegan Junk Food

This is why when we eat an ultra processed diet one, not only are we still hungry and we want more food, yeah, we're creating inflammation in turn. That's why when when you've just eaten like a bag of crackers or or like a thing of cookies, you're like, oh, I just want more because you haven't satisfied your gut to actually create the compounds that it needs and the biochemical metabolites and all this that you're saying.

So great. Okay. You speak about a very specific language here. Whole food plant based versus just eating vegan. So technically someone could go vegan and eat mostly processed food with almost no fiber.

And I actually have such a patient. They I met them on the a vegan cruise. Right. And they've been going to this vegan cruise for years and they thought they were learning, you know.

All right. Eat vegan. But what they were eating was, you know, vegan nuggets and vegan hot dogs and vegan burgers. And when they'd order out at restaurants still like vegan Chinese, but they didn't get healthier, they actually got worse because they weren't understanding that.

What it means that like, what the difference is. So let's talk about the real distinction here and why this matters so much for healthy aging. This I get so many people coming to me that have been vegan for years, decades, and they are overweight, even obese.

They have high inflammation. They even have, you know, could have high cholesterol because maybe they're getting too much saturated fat from these processed foods.

So that's a big distinction. I try to teach people, and I even teach my kids is like, just because something's vegan doesn't mean it's healthy. You know, Oreos, vegan exactly.

Where you are vegan. Yes. There are so many. There's so much vegan junk food out there. And it's just it's kind of getting bigger and bigger. And people, you know, they're looking for something quick, maybe they're really busy and they see something that says plant based or vegan and they think, sweet.

That's that's what I need. It's healthier. And in some cases it's just as bad. And so the difference is like we kind of talked about touched on before, is these processed foods have been well, they don't even look like the whole food.

It came out of the ground, you know. And they have a lot of additives, added sugar, added salt, added boils and artificial ingredients and things that are actually increasing inflammation.

And you don't have the fiber coming with it, plus all the antioxidants and nutrients and phytochemicals that you're not getting in those processed foods.

And so a whole food plant based diet is one that's based on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, all the different beans and lentils and peas and soy, nuts and seeds.

And so those are the categories that a food that you want to be filling your plate with. All the different colors of the rainbow have different antioxidants that are doing different things in your body.

And like we said, the, you know, the diversity of all the different fibers and all those different kinds of plants, even spices can really make a big difference.

And so we want to make sure we're filling our plate with those whole plants first, you know, and then crowding out the calories of all the other things like the processed vegan junk food.

And really instead, you know, so that's really that's the center of the diet is the whole plant foods. So since you're mentioning that I am going to share meal prep from yesterday, which was Sunday, with you, because I sent this to to my community of patients and they're like, I need to go do that, right?

And honestly, it's not complicated. This is this is nothing fancy. I'm busy. So when people tell me they're really busy, I'm like, I promise you, nobody's busier than me, okay?

So if I can make this happen. So I'm going to show you. Let's see if we can see. So this is my four wedge salads for the week, the number of veggies in here.

And then of course it's going to be topped with like a tofu and some white beans and some hemp seeds.

Eating More Plants for Weight Loss and Gut Health

Right. So it's going to be great. Then the other thing I made is I'm making a lettuce tempeh wraps. Right. So this once again with quinoa. So we're not afraid of food.

We eat a lot of food. Which brings me to my next question. Right. Because I really want to have people have a better relationship with food and not be afraid of it.

And you often say, eat more, not less. And that runs against almost everything. People have been taught about weight loss. So how does eating more actually support weight loss and gut health?

And where does the fiber fit into that? Yeah, I love this question, and I think this is what made me fall in love with a whole food plant based diet the most because I was, you know, dieting for decades before this and was always about restriction and perfection, tiny portions.

And you just can't keep that up and is when you're hungry all the time, you know, you're going into these, you know, binging and yo yo dieting spirals.

And so, you know, being able to eat more and still lose weight is like I think it's like magical. And so biggest reason one of the biggest reasons is fiber.

And we talked about this being, you know, the missing nutrient. But fiber does so many things all at once that work in your favor. And so first it's, you know, bulky and filling so you can eat a larger volume of food, a big bowl, a big, you know, full plate.

And it's still a good spot for weight loss because whole plants are naturally lower in calorie density than animal products and processed foods. So you're filling up your stomach.

You're satisfying that need to eat, you know, a real large volume of food, stretching your stretch receptors in your stomach. You're also, you know, activating those nutrient receptors.

So that helps to turn down hunger and keep it down with fewer calories than, say, if you were eating the same volume of processed foods, it would probably be like, you know, 4 to 5 times the number of calories.

And so fiber also, you know, directly crushes cravings because and there's a real mechanism behind that, not just a feeling. And it's a fun parallel here because it's something.

Everybody's talking about right now with the GLP one drugs. That whole conversation and part of how these drugs work is they activate golpe one and it tells your brain, I'm full, stop eating, even if you haven't really eaten that much.

But what most people don't realize is that fiber does this too naturally. So eating more fiber triggers your own body to release more GLP one, so you get the same version of that appetite suppressing effect without paying hundreds of dollars a month for, you know, a drug just by building your plate around the whole plants.

And we also talked about the gut bacteria fermenting fiber and those short chain acids producing butyrate. That also helps to, you know, keep, activate leptin and suppress hormones, suppress appetite suppressing.

And so, you know, the interesting thing is that, you know, being able to eat whole plants, you know, you get your gut bacteria to thrive. It helps control your appetite.

And so you kind of naturally settle into a healthier weight almost as a side effect of a healthy gut. And it's not not like the direct goal you're chasing.

So by eating more plants, it's not just a slogan, you know, it's really what happens when you build your plate around whole plants instead of animal products and processed foods, because you get to eat more food by volume and lose weight naturally because the type of food change, not the amount.

So you're, you know, putting your gut bacteria to work for you rather than against you. Yeah. And one of the things is it's also empty calories in the sense of there's no calorie density in processed food.

Right. So with whole plants you're getting that volume. Which is why. Yeah you get full off of eating a big salad. You actually do. Yeah. If you eat enough of it. Right.

Fiber also will slow digestion. So that means that your blood sugar spikes that you get with, you know, the Starbucks coffee and the bagels and stuff aren't going to happen.

Right? So the shift is is not coming from cutting food out. It's coming to crowding more with more plants. Right. So that's what we're saying. That's where the weight and the gut health benefits would follow.

Simple Plant-Based Swaps for Busy Families

So for somebody who's listening to this and just is feeling overwhelmed by all of this, what are the simplest plant based changes that make the biggest impact?

And realistically, how do you make any of this work if your family is not on board or you are just two plain busy? Yeah. So I think and this is what I really teach people, and this is really important, is that you don't need to overhaul your entire diet overnight.

That approach rarely sticks because it there's so many things to learn, so many new habits, so many new ways of cooking. So I say start ridiculously small, like add a serving of beans to one meal a day.

Swap white rice or brown rice or quinoa instead of white bread. Use, you know, sprouted whole grain bread. Aim for adding, not subtracting. So add a big full salad to a meal.

Try to make one meal a week fully plant based and you know. And then then gradually, you know, learn a little bit more and a little bit more. And if there's one single number you want to hang on to, and this is my favorite, is to aim for 30 different plants a week, not 30 servings, but just 30 different types of a week.

Because this is getting back to that diversity and that variety. So different fruits, different vegetables, different whole grains and beans, nuts and seeds, even herbs and spices count.

And there's actually research behind this. So one of the largest microbiome studies found that people eating 30 or more different plants a week had a noticeably more diverse gut bacteria than people eating fewer than ten.

So diversity is the goal because those different plants, like we've been talking about, feed different strains of bacteria. So a bowl of oatmeal with berries, walnuts, cinnamon and flax, you're already at 5 or 6 by 9 a.m..

And so it sounds like a big number until you realize that herbs and spices count. And so you can add those to different meals. Actually, one of my favorite breakfasts, and what I had today, and almost have every single day is a tofu scramble, avocado toast on a Z keel, sprouted grain bread with everything bagel seasoning and topped with microgreens and a side of, say, blueberries.

So with all the spices and ingredients, it's got 13 different plants and a whopping 16g of fiber. That's more than the average amount people are getting in their whole day.

And I just had it for breakfast. And for those concerned about protein, it's got 26g of protein. So that's one of my favorite ways to start the day with lots of diversity.

Now for the family question. And I get this all the time. And I and I live it too. I'm still really busy like you were just talking about. You're really busy and so you don't have to cook two separate dinners.

Say, for example, if your family's, you know, not on board, but you can build one corn meal that's whole food plant based that works for everybody, you know, like a taco or pasta or chili.

And then, you know, if they want to add something that else on the side, they can. But nobody feels deprived because it's really just about adding whole plants to the meal, you know?

And so over time, families tend to come around, you know, just naturally you don't have to announce it as a big lifestyle change. You can just kind of start making simple swaps.

So like we talked about, instead of white rice, brown rice instead of white pasta, you could do whole grain pasta or being pasta. They got so many legume type pastas that are super high fiber and protein that are great.

Maybe instead of meat for your tacos, you do. Lentils. Taco lentils are like a staple in our house and super fast and easy to make. And so for busy people, you know, it's really only going to work long term if it's simple enough to survive a bad week.

And so that comes down to a few habits. And you mentioned you meal prepping a batch cooking yesterday I did the same thing. I batch cooked a whole bunch of different things so you can make a big pot of grains.

I did some brown rice yesterday. I did a big pot for me, split pea lindell soup. I did some roasted sweet potatoes, so I batched a whole bunch of different things.

And then you can start to use that to build meals with for the week. And then having my pantry and freezer stocked with quick staples I can go to so important frozen veggies, frozen fruit.

You can even get frozen whole grains, canned beans, cans you know, things that you can heat up in a moment's notice when you didn't plan ahead. Let's be honest.

You know, sometimes we don't. Stuff happens. And so those are really kind of key staples that I have on handle the time. And I keep my recipes really fast and simple.

So I've got a running list of my family's favorites. I mentioned, you know, taco night using can lentils can't matos taco seasoning, pasta nights, a whole grain or bean babes pasta.

You know, marinara sauce, ground up soy curls instead of beef. A quick stir fry with frozen veggies, brown rice and tofu. You know, it doesn't have to be complicated.

And it doesn't have to have any, like, specialty ingredients. So I think that making it simple and just, you know, starting small is really important.

And just think instead of taking away and restricting, think adding, how can you add more whole plants to your plate? And I think that that's really interesting for most busy families is that most people don't need 100 recipes.

Most people go through and rotate, say, 12 to 14, you know, recipes on a kind of a regular basis. So, you know, once you kind of start to get a handful of different plant based recipes that your whole family likes, then you can start to put those in on repeat.

And so you're not reinventing dinner every single night. You're just kind of slowly swapping out what's on your regular rotation for a whole food plant based version of it.

Yeah, and I would say the freezer is my friend. Like I have an entire freezer in the garage. So like, for example, like I was just telling you I was away for a month and I came back and I'm like, okay, I got to do food prep for the week

and I'm like, went grocery shopping.

And I'm like, oh, I forgot to pick up stuff for my like, ginger, lemon, orange, Merrick shots. And then I went in the freezer. I'm like, oh, I froze a batch.

And you know, and I'm like, all right, defrost those. And I've got my little shots ready to go. So, you know, the freezer can really be your best friend.

Like when you're doing the food prep you can make a little bit extra. So you know, when those busier weeks or you're going to have somebody over or something like that, you're kind of like prepared.

And like the last thing this should do is create overwhelm, right? We don't want to create overwhelm in the kitchen. And I know a lot of people have not been trained how to cook.

We're not even asking you to cook. Like some of this is just like chopping and putting it together, right? Yeah.

Kim Murphyu2019s Story and Common Mistakes

So you've coached thousands of people through this and it's deeply personal for you too. Can you share a little bit more about your story? And I know I mentioned it in the intro about your father.

Can you share a little bit more and what it is that you are seeing, that the biggest mistakes that people make when they're first starting out? Yeah. So, you know, my this all kind of came to me like it just it definitely didn't go looking for this.

But my dad I was watching him struggle with chronic disease and the Alzheimer's was what really shook me. And just watching him just fade away and then forget who I am.

That was just devastating. And I remember just being sorry. I'm not going to get emotional about this. So I always do when I talk about him, but I just remember being there with him and thinking, I don't want any of this.

And that was just such a like just a transformation in my life of like, I need to do something and I'm such a doer and I don't want to be a victim. And so I went researching, and how can I prevent this from happening?

And everything I kept coming back to was whole food plant based diet. And, you know, even though I couldn't help him, you know, he was doing what his doctors told them.

They told him there was nothing I could do. And so now I'm discovering the science. Oh, that's not true. There's actually so much you can do. So much power in eating whole food plant based in, you know, not just preventing but even reversing these chronic diseases.

And so that's really where this, this all grew from is just that moment of losing my dad and then discovering this whole world of whole food, plant based nutrition, and then not wanting to keep it to myself, you know, and trying to help other people because I couldn't help my dad.

And some of the, you know, there's so many different mistakes I see people make. There's probably three big ones. And number one is like a kind of a quick fix, like a probiotic, a supplement, a powder, instead of focusing on what's you're actually eating every single day.

And, and I get that appeal because we all want a shortcut. We're busy. And, you know, we're thinking that these things are going to help us instead of really focusing on the whole plants.

And it's worth knowing that different these people mix things, things up all the time. But probiotics, the actual live bacteria you get from you can get from naturally fermented foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, miso, tempeh, and prebiotics are the fiber that feed the gut bacteria.

And those things can come from, you know, onions and garlic and oats and beans and bananas. And you need both. And whole plants can give you, you know, real amounts with everything.

And one thing that surprises a lot of people is many of these probiotic supplements aren't actually this great upgrade that they're marketed as, because many of them contain billions of copies of just a few different strains of bacteria.

And so we keep talking about that diversity. That's what your your gut thrives on. So you want a lot of different strains working together, not billions of copies of just 1 or 2, because flooding your system like that can actually throw things out of balance like dysbiosis instead of fixing it.

So again, a whole plants really naturally feed that wide variety of bacteria, different fibers feeding the different strains. And that's the diversity we're looking for.

And the second mistake I see people doing, and we kind of touched on this, is trying to go all in overnight because there's just so much to learn new ingredients, new habits, a completely different way of shopping and cooking.

That alone can be overwhelming enough to make people quit within a couple of weeks. And and there's also a physical reason behind this that can also backfire.

And this is is that your gut microbiome? It takes time to adjust to all these different fibers. So if you go from eating the average of 14g of fiber a day to suddenly 50, oh my gosh, you're going to be dealing with some bloating and gas.

Now that's not your body rejecting plant based eating. That's just your gut population. It needs time to shift and build up to break down all this new fiber.

So when people you know, they hit that discomfort, they assume something's wrong and they quit when really that discomfort wasn't assigned to stop, it was assigned to slow down.

So, you know, increase your fiber gradually. Instead, you get two things at once. It's, you know, easier to build the habits because it's not so overwhelming and your gut has time to adjust.

So you kind of eliminate or reduce some of that bloating and discomfort. And the first, first place. And so it's easier on your motivation, easier on your gut.

And the third mistake I see is people not drinking enough water when adding fiber to your diet. You know, a lot of people think, oh, if I just add more fiber, that's going to help my constipation.

But if you're already under hydrated, eating more fiber can actually make your constipation worse because you got to have that water for fiber to pull it in and help you help things keep moving through.

So without that water, you know that fiber can get stuck and slow things down and make you even feel bloated. So make sure you're drinking enough water.

At least half your body weight and ounces is kind of a a good starting point. Those are three things that I see very common. And yes, more fiber can be, you know, for some people a little painful, especially when they don't have the gut microbiome to support that fiber breakdown.

Right. Because you got to remember you're feeding the microbiome, not yourself. So all right, last question for you. And I want to be very concrete here, someone listening that has never really thought about fiber today.

What is the one thing they should start doing this week to feed their gut for the long run. I would say start with some simple swaps. So we kind of talked about this switching from refined grains to whole grains.

Getting Started with Fiber This Week

So if you're using a white bread let's go find a whole grain 100% whole grain bread. Even better a sprouted grain bread like a keel. And if you're using, you know, white rice let's go.

Brown rice, even better. Quinoa. You know, adding some vegetables to your plate a whole lot more than maybe you think snacking on fruit instead of chips, you know, have a banana, have an apple.

You know, those simple little things can really help make a big difference and slowly add that fiber and learning, you know, learning new recipes. But and maybe even just a simple swap to, you know, instead of like we talked about ground meat for tacos, I use canned lentils from Walmart.

So easy. Drain them throwing them, throw them in a pan, put it in your taco seasoning and you've got taco lentils. So it can be really simple and easy.

And little swaps like that can really make a big difference. Perfect. You know, when you were telling your story of your father and I was just thinking, like, when I'm walking through the halls of the hospital and I see these patients just sitting there waiting for their family members or coming in and like, and I'm like, I really wish they knew, right, that it wasn't like the end goal.

I mean, yes, hospitals can be incredible for like, you know, getting imaging studies and emergencies and all this kind of stuff. But 95% of health happens at home.

It doesn't happen in a doctor's office or in a hospital. And I just look at these people and I'm like, wow. Like the conversations I have with them, I'm like, they don't know.

Same thing happens in the grocery store. Like, I could stand there and just watch people's grocery carts. And I'm like, how much more can we say this?

Right? Like, why is there still confusion? So, Kim, this has been such a clarifying conversation, the idea that one nutrient fiber sits at the center of gut health, inflammation and how we age is something I want everybody listening to to sit with.

Kim can be found at simply Plant-Based kitchen.com, and I encourage you to look up her book, Plant Powered and her program Plant Powered for life for step by step support for putting this into practice.

And here's a key takeaway I want you to take your gut runs on fiber. Feed it well, and it will protect you for decades to come. So thank you so much, Kim, and stay tuned for one of our next episodes coming up next.