The Food System Wasn't Designed for Health- What We Can Do About It with Dr. Domenica Melinda Urzi Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Introduction and guest background

Welcome to Dive into Health MD, the podcast where we explore how everyday habits shape your physical, cognitive and financial well-being. Through conversations with physicians, scientists and farmers, we explored how daily choices like food, movement, sleep and mindset shape the health and life we experience with special episodes on sourcing high quality food ingredients.

We do our best to stay up to date and we're always open to refining our thinking as new knowledge emerges. I'm your host, Dr. Akshita Mehta. Let's dive in.

So welcome to our episode today. We have Dr. Domenica Melinda-Erzi with us, and I am so excited to chat with you about all of your work. If you want to just start off and telling us a little bit about yourself.

Absolutely. Yes, I'm a social scientist on a PhD from the School of Sociology and Social Policy. of the University of Nottingham here in the UK and I start learning about the food system while investigating the reality of migrants, agricultural workers in southern Europe and I realised by observing day living conditions how much the entire food system was more compromised than expected.

So I interviewed and observed a variety of stakeholders involved in the agricultural sector in Southern Europe and particularly in Sicily, where I come from.

And by interviewing not just the farmer workers, but also farmers, food engineers and local politicians and journalists and trade unions came to learn more about how the food industry is now mainly monopolized by multinational corporations that control the seeds that are used in order to produce fruits and vegetables, but also the logistics and the distribution of these agricultural products.

So thanks to my PhD, I start to understand how the fruit and vegetables that we consume today have less and less to do with nature, seasonality, biodiversity and more and with padded seeds and use of pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers in order to reach the end result or harvesting those fruits and vegetables.

And I witnessed firsthand the effect of those pesticides and herbicides that can have on the workers that are managing those substances. But we don't really know how many workers are protected when handled those substance, but that already made me think how the substances then can be harmful.

And I saw first time that I thought with my eyes how many of those farmer workers actually experience skin reactions and respiratory problems. And then now I also looked into more evidence and there are strong link of these pesticides and herbicides with also forms of degenerative disorders like Parkinson's and also some cases of cancers.

And therefore, from that moment on, my research was not any more academic. It became very personal in terms as a consumer, as now a mother. I began to explore more and more how the food that they eat is produced.

And I realized that the entire food system, the whole supply is quite… have been hijacked and reorganized in the hand of multinational corporations names like Sigenta or Bayer and they also absorb Monsanto.

This only is some of the biggest name but there are many others and those companies they have patented the seeds that were used to grow those fruits and vegetables and farmers into what we call chemical dependency.

Pesticides, exposure, and food system concerns

So each single seed that produces a plant, we only complete the full cycle if it's accompanied by certain pesticides and certain herbicides and some chemical fertilizers that are sold to the farmer.

at the beginning of the season in order to then be able to harvest the crop. And this was quite revealing and I decided to never stop investigating how the food that we eat is produced.

So after my PhD, I continued my investigation as a consumer, as citizen, and as person. I just realized how much the foods are already compromised because it's not anymore original.

is being patented, so it's being bred to display certain features, certain characteristics in terms of consistency, look, shape and so on, and selected in order to produce a fruit or a vegetable that can last longer on supermarket shelf.

So once the food is harvested, then it travels across countries sometimes, long distances, and then it lands on our supermarket shelves and we buy it and take it home and consume it.

There is a very long time from when that food was produced to when it's actually consumed and there are clear consequences of this way of producing in terms of how much we might miss from the nutrients that this food is supposed to give to our body.

as a consequence, are less nutritious than the food that we are exposed to these days. And then I continue investigating the link between this food and once this goes through levels of processing and how much we carry on losing in terms of nutrients while this food gets processed and to the point where it seems quite clear that we are not anymore eating food that is nutrient dense as it's supposed to be in order to support human health.

Incredible. Well, thank you for all the work that you've been doing. And to backtrack a little bit, you know, part of the way that we got connected is you just wrote this book, and it's called Ultra Process-Free Family Guide and Cookbook.

You really break down all of these different steps. And I think what you and I are both trying to do is the education piece, right? This isn't fear that, you know, we want to instill in anyone, but the more that we are educated, the More that We understand our food system, where it's coming from, Where the issues are, then we're empowered to make different choices.

and we have lots of options available. One thing that you mentioned was the pesticides, and that was part of your initial research looking at these farmers and the effects.

And one really good reason to look at it is because that's the population that has the largest exposure. What we don't have good data on is the cumulative effect.

So if there are these residues on not just one product, but many products that we then incorporate into one meal, right? The dose is higher than just a study being done on a single fruit or vegetable.

And so what these farmers unfortunately experience are probably the highest exposure of these products because they're working with them on daily basis.

And it allows us to show that even if some of the studies have shown safety, that may be a dose response, really the culprit for why some people are experiencing some these symptoms.

It's when we're eating these things every day for decades, then we have these cumulative effects. Is that something that you found as well? Yeah, absolutely.

In the book, I talk about level of exposure and because we are completely immersed in this food system now, we're all very much exposed to those substances on a regular basis.

And as you said, the scientific evidence is catching up. So we are lagging behind and we're missing important

information as consumers. And that's why I felt also the urgency to write a book and trying to give as many tools to people that they can put into practice immediately to start reducing their exposure to those substances.

So in the book I really focus on trying to give us many usable practical tips, like for example one that I tend to tell everybody, which sounds for some people very common, but actually I learned that it's not as common as we might think, that is to wash thoroughly your vegetables and your fruits before consuming them.

Many people just don't. And sometimes people justify that because they think, oh, I'm peeling the fruit, so there is no need to wash. But even handling can sort of carry the residues on your hands, for example.

The skin is an organ and it absorbs substances. So it's very important that we wash thoroughly these vegetables, fruits, and that could be step number one that I suggest to everybody to do.

Then there are many other tips that are given, like for example peel fruits and vegetables, although we know that in the skin there is there fibers, there vitamins that also part of all the food and it's important for us to eat those substances, but unfortunately often is where the pesticides residues are.

There are other tools that we can put into action. For instance, bicarbonate or soda is being proven to reduce the residues of pesticides between 40 to 60 percent, because also there is a variety of those pesticides.

So then it's not just one single substance. It depends on what fruits, what vegetables and what pesticides we are talking about. But in general, soaking in bcarbonat or sodas seems to help, and also the use of vinegar can also help.

And these are items that are found in most kitchens. How much baking soda should we be soaking it in? So it depends what we're talking about. So first of all, I always suggest to people to be informed on the most spray crops.

For instance, strawberries and spinach and grapes tend to the most spray crops. So I will use a teaspoon per 100 grams and I would just soak in plenty of water.

I won't leave them too long because it might spoil the fruits or the vegetable itself, but at least a good 10 minutes and then I'll wash through again.

It's worthwhile, I think. Yeah. And then does rinsing with just tap water, does that do anything? Oh God. Yes. When we look at the literature inside pesticides, the problem is that Pesticides don't just stay where they get sprayed, they also leak into the soil and so the soils get contaminated but also the water supplies can get polluted.

I personally invested in a very good water filter although I live very near the countryside and in theory the waters that go through my tap water should be quite clean because it depends on where you live in the world.

Where I live, I could taste the heavy metals and I would taste some substances, taste chlorine in the water, because sometimes we might think that just rinsing with tap water is enough, but if our water supply is contaminated, you know, it goes in circles.

So, yeah. There you go. Things that can make a big difference over time. And then the other thing that seems kind of obvious to talk about is the organic label and other side of the coin where people say, well, organic can still use some pesticides, maybe not a certain list of pesticides.

But is that something that you have found to be worth it to pursue? Yes. Festival organic food is unavailable and unreachable for millions and millions of people.

And so in an ideal world, what we eat should be organic. You know, 100 years ago, we didn't have the problem of pesticides, residues in our fruits and vegetables.

We didn''t have that problem or chemical fertilizers. Everything was organic and the problems with organic is that now it's so unavailable for so many people.

It is a luxury these days.

Practical ways to reduce pesticide exposure

So for how much I wish to say we should eat organic, I understand it is not reachable for for many. But at the same time, yes, there are some pesticides used in organic farming, but they are defined as biopesticides, so they're natural compounds or the sort of contrast pests.

And there are also the techniques used in organic farming to try and contain pests and let's say increase the chances to harvest a rich crop. There can be physical, mechanical techniques.

So yes, organic Farming is ideal. And what I suggest in the book is probably trying to at least buy organic the fruit and vegetables that are mostly sprayed.

Again, going back to the example of grapes and strawberries and spinach, but also it depends on the part of the world where you're living. It could be also apples and pears.

that are highly sprayed. So I regularly check those organizations that, um, are available in most countries and I give some indications in the book as well on how to stay up to date with the top 10, let's say, most sprayed crops and trying to at least shop, uh, organic for those items.

But yes, in theory, biopesticides are less harmful, if not harmful and also more easy to wash away with tap water. So it should be safer. Yeah, I think that's really important.

You know, we don't have to have perfection here. And that is another part of the puzzle and where it really makes sense to get into the details and the nuances.

So two pesticides are not equivalent and you've already alluded to this. Some have different effects than others. Typically what we see on the organic list, if pesticides were used, overall seem to be less toxic compared to the conventional produce.

So it seems to worth it to pursue it if you have the means and if it's available to you, understanding that there is a financial component to that. And then another thing I want to ask you a little bit more about, you were talking about the seeds and how nutrient density and the foods that we have start when farmers are starting to plant these seeds in the ground.

Can you tell us a bit about where those seeds come from and what the life cycle is like? So effectively the fruits and vegetables that we consume today, the seeds won't be able to reproduce themselves, which is mind-blowing when I learned about this.

So every single year, every season, farmers will have to go back to those companies to buy brand new mini plants to then bring it to the greenhouses and then cultivate until they can harvest.

So this chemical dependency obviously gives enormous power to multinational corporations to keep the monopoly over the entire agricultural sector. and keeping those farmers locked in and unable effectively to decide on any aspect of the work that they do.

Of course initially it was done to increase the chances of successful harvest and also breeding seeds in order to sort of meeting the demand for more fruits and vegetables with a growing population around the world.

But the thing went a bit out of hand when then the regulations around pesticides have been so weak that substances that are actually harmful to humans have been widely applied without overseeing the effect that they

might have on humans and we are realizing that because we're all struggling in many levels with health and there are many links that have being increasingly established between pesticides and effect on human health.

So on one hand we're trying to meet a demand for more fruits and vegetables and on the other we just start doing it in a way that we lost sight of what is ethical and what isn't nutritional and acceptable even.

Yeah, it's a really interesting part of history to learn about and to think about. You know, there was the Green Revolution and a time where we had to figure out, well, how do we feed the world, right?

How do make enough food so that we don't have famine? And we solved that problem. And so there's only really specific seeds that farmers are allowed to use.

To explain that a little bit more, if you're to plant broccoli, for example, There's not just one type of broccoli plant. There are so many varietals.

And this is true of all food. There's so many different types of lettuce. They're so may different kinds of tomatoes and all of the above. But what farmers are given is one specific kind or maybe just a selected few because of really selected reasons that increase the monetization and that allow these companies to function as a business.

And that's what it ultimately comes down to, right? That's everything usually comes out to. What happens is these seeds that they have selected for, they all grow uniformly, which is something that we've been accustomed to looking for.

They all have a longer shelf life like you're talking about, right? Something that. We have found has been helpful in our food system that We want for convenience.

and they all grow at relatively the same time. So all of these steps help the farmer develop a uniform process. And then when we pair that with the chemicals and pesticides, we increase the yield of what they're growing because they are not losing crops to these things that are just normal and part of nature.

Some of those things were put in place just to create more and more food, but we sort of lost the nutrition along the way, and the nutritional component of the food was never really taken into account much.

And that's where we start seeing seed saving initiatives, where if we can save the seeds from some of these different varietals, then we see a little bit more nutrient density.

So now our apples are bigger, our broccoli is bigger. Our tomatoes are big, but the nutrient of that is not equivalent. And so we've diluted the nutrients that's in our food.

So someone can have a caloric dense meal and they can eat a good quantity of food, but when the nutrient in that have been dilute, our bodies really aren't seeing the effect of eating the calories that we are, even when we aren t choosing produce.

Yeah, absolutely. Those multinational corporations, they are businesses and as a consequence, primary interest is that they return on their investments and they operate.

But we're talking about food. We're taking about feeding humanity. So it is not like independent from what these fruits and vegetables will cause to humans.

And as you said, in nature, there are so many variety of any fruit and vegetable. while instead, as consumers now, we are used to thinking that tomatoes should only look in certain ways and pears should look certain way and we're only exposed to two or three varieties.

that are regularly on the shelves and then maybe one or two that can be more seasonal. But in nature is completely different, the situation. I remember full well when I was growing and how much food can vary even from region to

region, from a county to another county.

And there could be even exchanges among areas or those different fruits and vegetables. different types of strawberries, for example, in size and shapes and colour and taste and nutrients as well.

And we are losing all of that and we cannot afford to lose that heritage.

Seeds, corporate control, and nutrient loss

So it definitely is a conversation worth having and definitely is a section of the market that is worth supporting. Yeah, it's so interesting talking to so many different people.

And when we talk to older generations, I mean, they can remember when food didn't look like what it looked like today. They talk about how wheat used to grow up to the next.

right? And now we've only really selected for dwarf varieties. And so they're growing really short to the ground because then, you know, wind can't knock it over and ruin a crop.

There's all these things that we'd done in farming to help farmers with a larger harvest, but the nutrition really hasn't played a part. We've seen how food's changed over time.

And as consumers, we've gotten used to it. We expect to go to the grocery store and see a whole bunch of zucchini that look exactly the same. Yes. Yeah.

So another big thing that we can talk about, can you tell us why is it helpful to eat local and seasonal? Why does that matter? So one thing I think it's important to reflect on is the fact that food is important, to stay seasonal and follow the rhythm of nature.

and also give the chance to the soil to rest. And this is something that doesn't happen with intensive agriculture. This is also why we use those chemicals in order to keep producing without giving the chances to soil.

And that is why we start hearing more and more talk about regenerative agriculture that only means just to follow the rhythm of nature and the seasonality in order to, again, be able to get as much nutrients as possible from the fruits.

And also, by eating seasonal, we are more likely to eat a fruit or a vegetable that's been harvested not a long time ago. So if we eat from a rich soil, a fruit or a vegetable that also is nutrient dense, then we increase our chances to be properly nurtured and to have the ability to support our human life.

in our system, our body. So it's very important to try and rethink the way we eat and re-think in what way to spend our pennies. And as I was saying in the book, every penny that we spend is a vote towards the food system that wanted to stay for our children to grow up in.

We can find solutions around this. There are now many box schemes where farmers get together and organize boxes that get delivered to your home, for example.

It is also something worthwhile because when you have those boxes of veggies and fruits that also probably were a bit of a stretch of your budget, you sort of more encourage not to waste anything.

So in a way it can be uploss an incentive but in general again is a matter of discouraging monocropping and encouraging food diversity and variety and biodiversity and food heritage so all in all eating locally is of the virtuous cycle and that we all should be part of Also, I, from a sociological perspective, there is always my background.

I also see shopping locally and supporting local farmers as a way to contribute to someone's child university course or, you know, someone child dancing classes.

So we should just reconsider the way we eat in a way that we remember that, we are part of the same ecosystems together with the trees and the soil and stars.

We're all part to the system. What goes in the so you will end up entering our body or what we feed to animals and then we consume the animal will eventually enter our bodies as well.

And also another thing that's often made me think about seasonality is when I was growing up in Sicily 40 years ago, I remember full well when we had to wait summer in order to consume fruits and vegetables like berries, blueberries and peppers and eggplants and zucchini, these are all summer fruits.

And I remember very well because school was over and then it was time for my mom and my dad to cook all of those dishes that we've been waiting all year around.

The flavor is just so more enhanced that can be achieved today. I often reflect to the fact that I have these memories, I had this understanding, but what are the memories and understanding that my children will have because they are completely immersed in that food system that's completely different than what used to be in the past.

So they're more likely to consider packaged food as food and the taste of fruit and vegetables to being quite bland because that don't even taste anymore the same that they used So I don't blame people that really struggle to eat what we call real food because often this real doesn't taste anymore what it's supposed to taste.

And this is also another reason why we should shop locally because once you shop from local farms, apart from the fruits and vegetables tend to be bigger.

and then the flavor is so more enhanced. So you gain more pleasure from an apple that you buy from a local farmer than an Apple that your buy it from the supermarket where it doesn't taste of anything, doesn´t smell of supports a diet based on real food, shopping locally, I think, and my experiences anyway.

Yeah. I mean, that ties into a whole other component. Food is this just really fun aspect of life, right? It's something that we enjoy together. It brings people together, it brings families together and when it tastes great, there's a huge dopamine response and just happiness response to really good tasting food.

And a lot of the things that Or are also kind of old. I mean, we've touched on this a little bit, but we haven't talked a lot about the transportation system and the storage of food.

And we talked about how people are expecting to see all kinds of foods all year round in the grocery store. We think of that as normal now. But if there's an apple in a grocery story during a certain time of year where apples don't grow, how long ago was that harvested?

How was it stored? And how has it been kept in cold storage? for sometimes it can be months before it's even put onto a grocery store shelf just to make sure that we have things available year round.

Do you know or have you found that fruit and vegetables that were harvested a very long time ago, does the nutritional density of that decline over time versus something that you eat right after harvesting?

Absolutely, yes. And also there is another aspect of that, that is we are used to eat fruits and vegetables all year round, and also, as you said, they can be refrigerated for a long time before they hit our supermarket shelves, but then also they might come from other countries where maybe the fruits and vegetables are in season in that moment in time.

And that brings another set of problems because often what happens, and we see here for instance in the UK very clearly after Brexit, the exit of the U. K.

from the European Union, most of fruits & vegetables now come form developing countries like Morocco, Egypt,

Sometimes even from South Africa, which is at the other end of the hemisphere, I mean, fruits and vegetables that come from the planet, they've been definitely travelling for a long time.

for a long time before arriving on the supermarket shelf, and they clearly don't taste the same of more local produce. And definitely, they look the part, but they don t taste of the thing.

Also, in those countries, regulations on labour relations and also on pesticides and chemicals can be way weaker than in our countries. So there could be substances that might be forbidden, in our countries, but they're still entering the market because they are imported from other countries.

So this is another set of problems that sort of expose us as consumers to the risks of substances that are actually illegal in Yeah, yeah, it really, It's interesting when you learn all of the different details, right?

A berry is just not a berry. And a Berry in the United States, if you're in California, is not the same berry as if your in New York or in Maine or on the East Coast of The United states, because most of those either come from California that come form the West Coast or they come From Mexico.

So the transportation time, depending on where you are in The country, might be seven or nine days after harvest before it even gets to the grocery store.

And then we also have this idea that we want that produce to last for a week or so in our fridge. It could be a weak or too old before we're really consuming this product.

And it is a different product than if we were just to harvest it and then consume it right away. So it's helpful to learn what does grow in your region around you and to make those choices.

Again, no one needs to be perfect if you like berries. And if that's part of your rotation, or you and I were talking earlier, if something that your kids love and you want to buy them for your kid, then that is great.

We just rotate and other things that are seasonal and local and we just try and balance what we're eating. So no-one has to perfect. It doesn't mean that you can't eat things if they don't grow in your region.

But I think just having that understanding and making those informed choices is really what were going for and can go a long way.

Why local and seasonal food matters

Yeah, absolutely. There are obviously examples like citrus fruits, oranges, satsumas, tangerines. They for instance don't grow in the UK because the weather doesn't allow it.

But Southern Europe, for instance, is very rich with those. So even like looking at the origin of fruits and vegetables before you're shopping and trying to make a more informed decisions can be helpful.

For instance when I go to the supermarket and I see fruits, vegetables, particularly citrus fruits in this particular case from South Africa, I don't encourage that.

I'm really sorry. you know, that way of producing and stocking supermarket shelves. I'd rather not buy it and grab, I don't know other fruits, like I dunno, kiwi from Italy.

They still contain vitamin C, if it's a vitamin c that I'm after, for example. Or I might wait until I can find some Spanish or some Italian citrus fruits because I know they have a smaller environmental footprint.

and I also know that they come from a region where many pesticides are forbidden and regulations on substances used in agriculture are stricter and in that way I feel safer.

I still wash them thoroughly and and i still peel them of course but feel like I'm making a small step towards more safety, if you want. Yeah, there are so many small steps that we can all make to change.

And the more that you know, we're interested in buying these products, then the morning stores will also respond to that demand. If we want to buy eggs, and if we only really look for the pasture-raised eggs.

Now granted, they're way more expensive. But if we look or pasture raised eggs that only have organic feed, then they'll learn those habits too and the stores will respond.

It takes us and our choices as well to play a big role in that. This has been great. We've talked about the food and how it's grown and some of the problems at least that have come into that, can we talk about processing of that food, and what it turned into today, why there are some issues?

related to that? Yes. So when we look at how these raw materials, as I say, are produced, and they're already quite depleted, then they hit manufacturing and go through all the level of processing in order to create the food that will then get packed and again sold on supermarket shelves, then it's quite common sense to start wondering how nutritious really is this food?

And then you come across the arguments for fortification when we have, for instance, wheat that's been fortified with vitamins because through the level of processing the wheat goes through these days loses those vitamins and then you start wondering like yeah okay but can synthetic vitamins added to food be equivalent then the natural version of it and my common sense will say no probably we need to extract of nutrients straight from the source and straight, you know, from our nature as intended for us to have those nutrients.

So the link to ultra processed food is quite strong. And when we also add it to the level of processing that the food goes through, then there is a level food additives added to food in order to preserve its consistency.

is look and again it's shelf life then the end product quite frankly lacks the real basics of what food is supposed to be that is about supporting our level of energy, our mental clarity, how our hormonal balance, our cellular health and our digestive digestive system.

so on and so forth. And so let's say the link is quite clear for now probably millions of people around the world that have seen how much we have entered an era of chronic diseases and that clearly stem from a food system that is not able anymore feed us to the level that we need and also an health system that is not able to cure us.

So the link is obvious to hundreds and hundreds of people. And since I'm on my journey, I am meeting people from all walks of life. We all see it clearly that, we'd need to start fighting back for a festival food system.

that can guarantee optimal health. And secondly, for transparency on food labels that is lacking these days. Absolutely. So to take that back in and clarify a little bit, when we talk about ultra processed foods, let's like really define that.

When we start with produce, I mean, all food essentially starts with something that was grown from the ground. We start that when harvest it, that's what we're really talking about is real food.

a tomato off of the vine, right? Or when we pick an apple from the tree or a pear from a tree. Everything that happens after that is some level of processing.

And not all processing is bad, but there are a lot of foods that have been processed that we now know is not beneficial to our health. There are so many layers to that where the amount of processes and the additives and preservatives that are put into these things have really essentially diminished or hindered any nutritional value that's left in what that initial food started off like.

And can you tell us a little bit more about the health effects of eating ultra processed foods? Yes, the main issue we are facing is, first of all, that when we talk about ultra-processed food, we're trying to define such a wide array of

food that can be edible or drinkable.

Therefore, there is a problem with the definition of this food. all those drinks. We can rely on some classification. So once you start your journey into ultra processed food, one of the first classification that you come across is the Nova system.

And this is a classification there has been developed by Professor Carlos Monteiros. He's a Brazilian professor in his team that are pioneer on the conversation on ultra processed food, and they have classified food into four groups.

In the NOVA one, we find all what we consider real food. So let's say an apple, chicken, an orange. Then we have the Nova 2. It's a group that involves the food that we define as a culinary ingredients that are useful to cook.

For instance, olive oil, It's a strata from olives, but it's been going through a level of processing that we could consider gentle. in order to extract the oil from the olive and becomes olive oil.

And we use that for cooking. The same could be the example of milling flours, for example. It's a level of processing that the wheat goes through, but it's gentle enough so that what we call the food metrics is still intact.

Food metrics are very important to focus on. when we talk about processing, how much through the processing the balance that the original fruit or vegetables had in nature, so let's say the balances between the fibre, the water content of the vitamin, and how it's been disrupting through processing.

So until NOVA 1 and NOVAA 2 groups, let us say, this food matrix is almost intact, it is preserved. But then we have the NOVEA 3, that is where the processed food sort of belongs to.

And this is a food that still retains some level of food metrics, but the processing level is heavier. A typical example could be like a tin of baked beans, for example, with tomato sauce, beans and maybe water, salt, and citric acid, maybe an emulsifier sort pectin.

This is already a food that has been going through a level of processing that is harder. The food is still retaining its nutrients and its metrics, like I was mentioning, but we are now exposing ourselves to some chemical additives to the food.

And not all the addatives necessarily are harmful, and this is something that I clearly make a distinction in the book. Additives can be harmful the ones that are more risky and the one that is less risky, and ones are actually safe.

And then we have the NOVA IV group and in this particular group we find an array of food and beverage as well. It's been so processing to the level where the food metrics has been quietly compromised or destroyed.

Food storage, transport, and imported produce

disrupted completely and a serious level of food additives have been added to the food in order to keep the shelf life, the consistency, taste and so on.

Here we find food for instance that has stabilizers, preservatives, colorants, flavor enhancements and natural flavourings or flavouring in general. These are all chemicals added to that food in order to present it and keep it for what it is.

Typical examples can be, for instance, ready meals. Now here we need to be very careful because not all ready-meals have this amount of food additives added or have been so processed to destroy the food metrics.

But let's say ready meals often can be the ones that are mostly ultra processed and with the highest number of food additives. So learning to read the labels in this particular case is extremely important in order to make a distinction between a ready meal.

It has some addatives that they are safe to eat and some that actually can't be quite disrupting and harmful if consumed on a regular basis. But other examples could be like candies and sugary drinks and fizzy drinks.

These are all chocolate bars, these are examples of food that when you read the labels basically you cannot recognize most of the ingredients. And even if there are some real ingredients, the percentage of those real ingredient are very small.

in order for us to consider it natural enough for our body to recognize it and extract some nutrients from it. That's super helpful. Another part of it too, in terms of the processing is, as you're saying at the end, even if it does have some real food ingredients that you can recognize, Sometimes the processing techniques almost get rid of the nutrients that were originally in that food.

So wheat, if it's a whole wheat product, does have some natural oils and natural fibers and some vitamins. But when heated to an extreme and pressed into a cracker or something, those don't always remain in the final food until how far are we getting away from a wheat berry, which is the end product of wheat that's grown.

And once we process it so much to where it looks completely different, it's not always the case, but sometimes even those nutrients are lost and it is not actually giving our body a scene very much.

And something that I think you did a great job talking about in the book is another whole layer of this and the effect on health is when we don't get our nourishment from the food that we're eating, It makes us want to continue snacking.

And then our energy just kind of declines and gets pretty depleted. So it does tend to be a cycle. And so when we're eating all this food that doesn't have much nutrient density to it, it doesn' signal proper satiety signals to our body to say, okay, we got what we needed out of that meal.

Now I'm okay for a little while. We don't need to eat anymore. And it makes us want to eat really frequently after consuming a pretty caloric dense meal.

Sometimes, you know, even an hour later, we might start to feel hungry again, and our body's just not getting those signals and not the nutrients that it's looking for.

And so it telling you, hey, give me something else. Find me, something that has some nutrition in it. We end up snacking and then having this pretty poor cycle of continuously eating.

Then there's almost an addictive effect to this. Can you talk about that a little bit? Yeah, sure. So first of all, just to go back to what you were saying, I think it's very important, this cycle of snacking, not filling full and so on, because we keep consuming food that lacks nutrients.

And that feeds into my critique of ultra-processed food defined as convenient food. I really feel it's a false economy, a fals idea that's been sold to us.

It's convenient because you grab and go and if you need a, you know, cowboy dry sauce and you got a pack of crackers and they've maybe been in your cupboard for weeks and then you don't have to go to the bakery and buy the bread.

Yes, it is convenient in terms of time, but it isn't convenient for the nutritional value that you extract from the body. and also because this food is designed for over consumption, you're going to end up spending probably even more in crackers without even getting the nutrients from the same food that you want to feed yourself from.

So yes, I'm a fully A full believer that we've been missold this food. And when we're looking at snacking, for instance, we will be much better off snackin' on, I don't know, boiled eggs or a mozzarella or olives than snack in on food that comes from highly processed food, food doesn't exist, let's say, in nature.

Let's say even mozzarella doesn't exist in nature in that particular form, it comes from milk, but let's the level of processing is gentle enough to retain those nutrients going back to the idea of the food matrix.

that I was talking about. At the same time, what is being increasingly established in academic debates but also through studies that have been proven is that because of this, food is not just innocent.

and is there because before reaching the supermarket shelf, it's been going through a level of vetting through people that participate in food experiments and the experiments that companies do on this food before they actually get out in the market and they marketize it to us.

And these research participants are not just testing this food, they're actually scanned. So their brain gets scanned and these food scientists have a clear understanding before that product ends up on the market shelf what reaction the brain will have after you eat that food.

When we consider this element, before eating food that comes in packaging and heavily marketized to us, then we understand what we are up and against.

And the academic debate is now pushing to have ultra processed food to be recognized as a source of addiction.

What ultra-processed food is

But again, it's very complicated because Compared to other substances that cause addiction, let's say drugs or tobacco, you can single them out. While we ultra-process food is a different matter and there are always loopholes and guidelines on food that they might can still guarantee to factories and and companies to go away with food that actually is designed to be addictive, is design to create that craving so that the person wanted to back and consume more of it.

And this explains also why so many people struggle with the relationship with foods, which is very complicated to begin with because as you said food is a part of pleasure in life and people can have a very difficult and different relationship with food.

So again it's very individual the way we experience food and the ways we understand food, the relationship we have sometimes can be also linked to our trauma, our unmet needs, or our level of stress.

It can related to our social life or lack of social lives. So there are so many factors to consider when we talk about food. But when see that food addiction can only develop towards food that is being pre-packed, made in a lab and heavily marketised, then we can, let's say, identify a bit more clearly our enemy.

Many people struggle to stop eating this food and many people suffer the consequences of this. We're talking about people losing mobility because they are overweight, people struggling with mental health, and people are struggling self-regulation with hormonal balance, with anxiety.

and so on and support. So the data are now out there. Research is catching up on this food, but the links are quite clear. And so it's quite promising and what is going on.

I feel quite optimistic about being able in the next maybe five, 10 years to be able to establish exactly what is the effect that this food has on us and what we can do in order to protect ourselves.

But my suggestion is, while we're waiting, that the academic debates establish a clear-cut definition. The policymakers make the policy changes, the multinational corporations stop lobbying our governments.

We can, in the meantime, start putting into place steps, heavy steps even on a daily basis, they can put ourselves and our families in a safer position.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And something that you touched on was, you know, these foods have been engineered to

be addictive, right? So this is not a failure of willpower.

I think another really important thing to bring up We have pretty clear links to adverse health effects in relation to eating large quantities of ultra processed food.

And in America, it's been, you know, the numbers that are thrown around is we're eating 40 to 60% of our calories from ultra-processed foods. It's a very, very significant portion of diet.

Some of these foods we don't even realize are ultra process and that's part of the problem. But these food have been engineered to make us want more of them.

So that we come back and we consume more and purchase more. Even I think just having that understanding of this is not a failure of anybody. But when you know that this was created to be addictive, it kind of helps in our understanding.

We can be a little bit more cognizant and aware. of, oh, there's a reason that my body's craving this bag of chips again, or this thing that I know to not be real food, and then start making changes from there.

And something else that you talk about are the healthy appearing ultra-processed foods. There's lot of these foods that look like they're a good idea.

In your book, you talked about things like protein bars or low-fat yogurts or bread that is shelf-stable for a really long time. really starting the process of thinking about, well, is this normal?

Is this, you know, what food is supposed to be like? And then even those questions can help us realize that some of these things that appear healthy, probably still fall under that category.

And, then we can, make changes and hopefully see some health outcomes related to that over time. Yes, I think we're still catching up. Yeah. So, we think it's an individual choice.

We need to take responsibility. for ourselves and our families because at the moment in time, there won't be any policy that will come and help us. So we sort of have to become those conscious consumers and develop this food literacy in order to spend our pennies more wisely, know a bit more what we are eating and also sort to establish what level of exposure we are actually having towards this food because obviously everybody eats differently.

So we're generalizing here and estimating percentages of exposure to ultra-processed food, but in some cases it's actually higher than 40-50%. Already here in the UK we've taken about 57% of diet comes from ultra processed food and when I say that what we're talking about is for instance a breakfast based on cereals or as you said like a pack of bread that comes with a very long ingredient list and jam that has more sugar than fruits and stabilizes more than flavor.

And then we carry on throughout the day through school cafeterias and packet lunch that maybe are made again or sandwiches or products that come from factories.

Then we come in the evening with I don't know, chicken nuggets, for instance, and hot dogs, so on and so forth. So it's a diet that is consistently reaching those foods that pose risks to human health.

Again, it is not a matter of consuming a random pack of crisps. A sausage roll, is like when it consists on a daily basis that we increase our chances to develop serious illnesses.

Yeah. Yeah, that was a really good picture that you just painted of how easy it is to consume these foods and how normalized they've been into our diet.

Do you want to give us an example of some things that that like to eat or places that have been able to find food that feel like match your values? Yeah, so I'm on this journey now for 15 years.

So, and I call it still a journey because don't take me wrong, I still make mistakes. And sometimes I can't even believe it. You know, like I look at what I bought, oh, nice.

I did not check the label. And the way I shop these days is very different than where I used to shop. In the past, shopping for food was like a weekly job and had to buy as many things as possible.

So the job was sorted, at least the fridge and the freezer were stocked and pantry was stock and I was going to be able to make something every day. Now I show differently.

on a more regular basis and from different sources as well. So I'm trying to buy the eggs and the poultry and meat from the local farmers. I shop from supermarkets still, so like some sauces, some, not bread, but more like wraps, for instance.

There are some brands that are well known for being clean labels, we call them.

Addiction, marketing, and hidden ultra-processed foods

so they use a very short amount of ingredients, they're all recognizable and there are no additives to it or addatives that are safe to consume. Then I would try and buy fish from the fishmonger and I go around places.

I'm lucky enough to live in a place where there's amazing bakeries, so my bread Although it costs quite a lot of money, let's say five pounds for a loaf of bread.

But because this is the staple of my children's diet, I will increase the quality of any of the foods that we use on a regular basis. The same goes for milk.

Milk, use a milkman. I get my milk delivered to my doorsteps. And I've been using the same company for many, many years. And again, trying to shop wisely, I'm trying shop ethically and I trying shopping in a way that sustain the local economy, the clean brands.

And it's more difficult than once a week shopping trip, but at the same time is safer. Number one, that is my priority for my children. But also I feel better.

I look better and And it supports my level of activities because I'm very active every day and I have two young children and go around a lot. And the food that I eat, I feel sustain my energy level way better than in the past.

Yeah, that's incredible. I think it's a good example. You can build this, but as you mentioned, it took you a long time. And it is a journey. Yeah. And me too.

But I think there are some instances where I have found at least that it has gotten easier. It's almost like a return on your investment. So it was an investment upfront to look into these companies, to reach out to them, talk to.

Sometimes I even went to the farms to really see if there's no chemicals even anywhere on this farm. I feel really comfortable knowing what's going into that food and what More importantly, not going into that food sometimes.

And I've made things streamlined. So there's a chicken company that I found and I went out and saw their plant and their whole operation. There's so many small pieces of that.

Their plant is right on the farm so these chickens aren't traveling for such a long time before harvesting. Same thing with seafood. There's a seafood company that I found.

And so now I just almost, you know, on subscription, because everything is a subscription these days, just get these things sent to my door and it's almost easier.

I never have to think about, well, going to a supermarket and choosing, Well, should I get this chicken product or

the chicken products? And I wonder what the backstory is here.

It just it comes to me as my freezer. Anytime I want it, it is ready to go and then it just comes again. Same for eggs. That took a long time, but I finally found someone locally who has a bunch of backyard chickens and she's told me everything that that she feeds them.

And there's a couple places where I've actually gone to see the chickens and see what they're like and that they are actually outside because interestingly enough, a lot of conventional chicken products, whether it's eggs, hens raised for eggs or broiler meat for chicken meat.

They're kept in these very large warehouses where there is no sunlight and they up for 22 hours of the day so that eat enough to gain weight and you don't really not favorable conditions.

But now she, you know, she just delivers eggs to me and I get eggs for a bunch of neighbors and it's gotten easier. So there are some staple products that I found where now it was easier than going to the grocery store.

I don't even have to think about them. And I have them on my list and can just focus on, the couple of things that haven't quite found yet and really slowly built that over time.

If you're someone who is interested in making these changes, but that sounds incredibly overwhelming to go to 10 different places potentially in a week, that's very understandable, right?

It, you know, looking into one or two things and then even challenging. Well, how could I even make this easier? You have milk delivered to you. That's fantastic.

I don't know. Not sure that's an option where I live, but you there are other things that I have. And so there's always something wherever you're living.

There's someone growing something or, doing something in a way that probably aligns. And it does take some work and investment up front, but can also make it fun.

I took my kids to the farm and they loved it. So it is something that's doable, by not to diminish the effort that potentially can go into it, But again, as we've talked about in terms of health, the offer is worth it And when we think about where we want to spend our time and money, if we can maintain really healthy bodies and maintain our health, then we're able to accomplish all these other things that we wanna do in our lives.

We're to have the energy to play with our kids and to be present with them and stay active and do all of these fun activities. So worth it and really cool to hear that you've been able find that.

Yeah, no, just I want to add obviously in the UK, everything is much smaller scale than in U. S. and obviously we need to take into account that not everybody lives near the countryside.

Many people live in big cities and they're very far away from those produce and those farmers and these people that deliver to your door. but at the same time there are box schemes for instance so there is great ways to go around this problem and find solutions and avoid yourself to do the trip and then as you said also make sure to include the children on the journey because They are the generation mostly at risk of not knowing what real food looks like.

The generations that are more at-risk of being completely bombarded by this type of food that is depleting their energy is undermining their health. and therefore if the educational system is not ready there yet in order to equip our children with the right understanding the, right knowledge then is us as a parents then we need to take responsibility for that and I always say that knowing where your food come from and know how to cook your, food is part of a lifelong skills is like reading and writing.

is something that you're going to use in the future on an everyday basis. So it's very important that we include the

children with us this journey. And children are so clever and I often find that as adults, it is probably because we are tired and we think that by giving the child what they want to eat, We, again, avoid food battles at dinner time, any struggles, and tantrums, but actually children are extremely clever and extremely curious and they have a very strong sense of justice.

So once you start telling children more about, in a child-friendly language, of course, what is going on in the food system and you help see through the the foods served at the school cafeteria or the party venues and the petrol station or gas station like you guys call it.

then you start educating their eyes and it's extremely important because I see that every day with my children. Now one is 10 and one in six and they have better standards when it comes to food and definitely have a critical level of thinking.

when they go around that makes them establish what we can eat, what would be better not to eat. But they're still kids, so they still have to be rewarded.

I don't want to raise them as food snobs or I want them to feel ashamed when the consume certain foods. What I realize is that this food is constantly constantly available and that is where the risks lie.

It's not the random pack of crisps, it's the occasional pack-of-candies, is more an everyday exposure to this food that poses real risks for health. So without demonising too much food, but with the right education we need to educate our children's eyes to not waste the truth and to, in the future, be able to remember that we stand up for them.

We made the effort for then to see the difference. And then obviously they would decide for themselves because, you know, sometimes things can fire back, isn't it?

You might ended up raising a child that can't stop eating junk food if you're not careful. But then at the same time, we need to remind that what you've done and you don't know where you could.

Then it's their decision what they're going to do in the future. Yeah, absolutely. I mean, we get so many of our habits and our mindset about all sorts of things in life from our parents, right, and how we grew up and what they did and eating is a big part of that and things like obesity, you know, run through families because if eating habits run you think a dinner plate should look like, you can ask 10 different people and they'll probably say different things.

But your perception of what food is really comes through your experience growing up as a family. Oftentimes, unless we learn other things and find reasons to do that.

So I think that's really important. That's a huge other piece. I feel like we could have a whole conversation about kids and food in relation to kids, because that is an area where ultra processed foods are really, really prevalent.

Um, and you and I, I think both got particularly interested in this when we had children and we were trying to learn, well, okay, how do I feed my family now?

I have these small developing kids. And they're rapidly changing and they are rapidly growing. There was this inherent level of discomfort with just choosing anything from a grocery store shelf.

And I think some understanding that even if something is being sold as food, maybe it's not, we shouldn't really think of it as good. But what do we do?

The kids are inundated and surrounded by this stuff. They have friends that come to the park with lots of packaged snacks and kids want what other kids have.

That's normal. Navigating that landscape requires some intention, but it is not impossible to do.

Shopping habits, family food choices, and kids

Like you said, it doesn't have to be a complete abolishment of anything that comes in a package, but really just mitigating those more daily and routine habits and making sure that they get some whole foods in, in addition to these things, if that does happen to be part of their diet.

Absolutely. I always suggest people to aim at a good 80 to 20 sort of ratio. So 80% of the time trying to eat a whole food diet, and then those 20% or the times we can go towards parties and trips to the parks and occasional treats and so on and I think that should be safe enough as long as they know what is the difference and as longer they still treating this food as treats as occasional and not as regular thing to have.

But unfortunately for what I'm seeing, this is not necessarily what every other parent is thinking. And we have a very close family friends that the parents are middle-class, highly educated.

They have the money to potentially even afford an organic diet, but they have not interested and they don't see it. So it's more common than we think that those children get fed loads of this type of food.

And I just hope it never gonna escalate in anything, you know, but it is quite recurrent to see the effect of those foods on the mood of the children, their behavior, the energy level.

And then we increasingly know that also for instance, teenagers struggle with self-regulation, anxiety, depression, self harm. We know there are many factors, like it could be social media, it can be academic stress, but also if you are constantly fed food that doesn't help with feeling balanced, then it's probably an element we should factor in as well.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Yeah and then tying all of that back into what we were saying earlier about marketing. Marketing to kids is a whole nother, you know, beast in itself and there are a lot of kid related products that are ultra processed that seem healthy.

And I think you mentioned in your books as well like these pouches that we see pretty commonly, right? And they have whole food ingredients listed on them like spinach or kale and sweet potatoes.

And then they get pureed into this pouch and that becomes a staple sometimes in a children's diet and the kids diet. But we know that a lot of those vitamins and nutrients have been removed through the processing that keeps it shelf stable.

So you have to be really careful with, you know, what we're giving our kids. If we have, the means to do it can be helpful, but it takes a little bit of knowledge to get through that.

Yes it goes from milk formula to food pouches for toddlers and it carries on through infant snacks to teenagers food and the industry is very much focused on younger customers because obviously that they are accustomed to certain texture and taste the longer they're going to be in the look.

So he's in the industry interested to create these mini consumers that then will guarantee lifelong customers. So yes, again, this food is not innocent, it's heavily marketized, is packaged in a way that is appealing to children's eyes and often displays childrens' highest level when you walk in supermarkets.

Yeah, it's quite deceitful and once you start seeing it, you won't unseen it as I say in the book. So it's a matter of really train your eyes to all the marketing strategies behind this food and is a doable.

I just hope anyone there will listen to this podcast, not to get overwhelmed because it is very easily done. You can feel anxious about what you're buying.

you might feel not confident anymore on the choices that you make, but In that respect, I always say to people that I deliver talk to, or in the book in any case, always trust your common sense.

We are made to believe that we need someone like a nutritionist or someone with that degree to tell us, but in reality, it's very much down to common-sense when it comes to food.

And you can start by just making very simple reflections, like I do speak with my children in terms of, does it come from a farm? Does it comes from the sea?

the tree or from a plant, so most likely it doesn't exist in nature. And if it does not exist, probably our body will not recognize it, and if our bodies don't recognize, it's probably going to struggle with it.

So we can have it occasionally, but we should not have regularly. It's a matter of, we're often switching the switcher. Once the light gets in, then it becomes second nature and you start going around any aisle.

It could be in supermarkets, but it could also be at farmer's shops. Also, they store food, highly neutral processed food. I don't buy everything from everywhere.

I always read the labels and made my own judgment before I buy it. Definitely. And to kind of wrap up, can you give us a sort of a quick rundown of what you look for when you're reading labels or what people can look?

So yeah, usually the recommendation is a festival, the order that some ingredients are presented because the Largest quantities go first on the label, so let's say if we are trying to buy a ready meal and we're going to have to look at the order in which the food is presented.

The ones that are higher in percentage are going come first in the ingredients list and then it follows to the smaller percentages. So obviously we need to make sure that, for example, in the case of sausages, we all love sausages.

Unfortunately, very often sausages tend to be highly processed red meat. And by that I mean that often in that sausages there could be maybe 50% of actual pork.

and then the rest of it is fillers, could be like modified starches, stabilizers, spices, salt and also preservatives and that makes something that is supposed to be a natural animal product into something is actually highly processed.

We need to tend to look for food that instead contains the largest percentage of real food and that particular case, in the case of sausages, we should be looking at sausages that contain at least 95% of pork.

and then the remaining ingredients should be salt and could be spices or herbs, but nothing more than that. And I'm intentionally mentioning sausages because what is very important to understand as consumers is that the food additives that are most risky for us, that have been established to be highly risky, are highly processed red meat.

So not red meat, so not steak, not lamb chops, these are safe to eat and we actually should privilege those foods before anything else. But when we talk about highly processed red meats, we're referring to sausages, bacon, ham, pastrami, gammon, and all of these foods, the origin is an animal source, but then the level of processing and packaging and the level of food additives added to this food makes them actually quite harmful for human health.

So if there is one takeaway that I would like a listener to consider is definitely this one. That's red meat, like the ones I just listed, are actually being declared as number one carcinogenic.

And this is not because pork in itself is carcinogenic, but because particularly the preservative use in this particular type of food that there is an E-trides and nitrates.

And in E number language will be E 250 and E 251. They are compounds that have been proven not by me, but by the International Agency of Research on Cancer to contribute to the onset of colon, rectal cancer and bowel cancer.

And we see how this type of cancer is increasingly emerging in younger and younger population. So more younger people are experiencing this types of cancers.

It's very important to be aware that diet high on this kind of processed food can seriously put our life at risk.

Reading labels and final takeaways

So that is definitely one takeaway for any listener to look for nitrites and nitrates in any type of food before you consume it, particularly when it comes to red meat.

And also I would like all the I would like the listeners to consider really learning the food label language quite proficiently, really learn more about the numbers and really start to understand which one is safe, the ones that are middle, well, carry middle risk and the ones that actually carry high risk.

And also another takeaway I think is that, so this is important because independently of what food regime you follow, what diet you followed, you could be vegan, could vegetarian, it could a carnival, doesn't really matter.

What matters to me in this moment in time that we're living is to establish which food, again, is being so processed to not being able to give us the right nutrients, but also is been compromised to a point where it can be actually active and harmful for our health.

So independently of whatever diet you follow, I think food literacy is very important in these days. Yeah, yeah, I think a big part of what you and I are both trying to do here is really the food literacy components that people can just make informed choices.

And then once you have the knowledge understanding, then you get to choose what do you want to from there. It doesn't have to be complete abandonment of anything or a total overhaul of everything, but even a couple of food choices or changes can make a difference.

That was really, really helpful. Thank you so much. Is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you wanted to bring up today? I probably would like to just talk a little bit about a bit more about the book, and I just would is actually quite personal.

And the reason why I'm quite serious about this topic is because I witnessed in my own life the loss of very meaningful people to cancer. I lost my mother and my brother both to cancers linked to the digestive tract and I could see full well the diet choices, the lifestyle choices were not conducive to long term health.

So I really feel strong about this topic and I feel really strong raising awareness about the real risks that we are exposing ourselves and that's why in the book I give as many tools as possible for consumers to start shopping more wisely and make informed consent before they're buying any food.

And that's it really. Yeah, thank you. Thank you for sharing that. You've seen that personally in your own life. I see it. really every day with patients, a lot of chronic disease that isn't, can't specifically be linked to just food necessarily, but definitely plays a huge component.

And all of these things together really have a big impact on the life we experience and the like that we live. I'm so glad that you're doing this to try and help people mitigate that in their own lives and then hopefully in others that they love as well.

So thank you so much. Thank you for all your work. Absolutely. Yeah, my life purpose to try and spare any soul what I had to witness in my live and trying to rethink a way of aging that is compatible with long term health and full mobility.

There are fantastic cases of people that age well and even though it feels like illness is something you cannot avoid and some respect is true, It doesn't have to be so harsh.

It does not have be in any case so unescapable. We can put in place actions that can preserve our future and our health and the information is out there.

And that's why I wrote the book by collecting all of the informations that I could possibly grab hold in order to give all this to anyone that wants to invest in their own health.

I live longer. Yeah. Thank you so much. Thanks for writing the book. I'll link it in the show notes so that people can find it easily. And I think it was very informative and a lot of really practical steps that, you know, people could take it to implement things now, which is really helpful.

So thank you. It was such a pleasure having you on. and I'm so excited to continue the conversations and to keep chatting. thank You. You're the opportunity to showcase my work with more people.

And it's been incredible to meet you as well, because you're on the other side of the planet, but we share so much. We see the world completely. a similar way.

I know that we are voicing hundreds and hundreds if not millions of people by now that believe that something is amiss. Thanks for tuning in to Dive into Health MD.

Our goal is to empower you with knowledge to better understand how your daily choices influence your health. If you enjoyed this episode, consider sharing it and subscribing so you don't miss what's next.

Please remember, this podcast is intended for educational purposes only and should not be considered medical advice. For personalized guidance, always consult your physician or a qualified healthcare professional.

Wishing you physical, cognitive, and financial wealth. See you in the next episode.