Introduction to Longevity and Dr. Shah

Today we're gonna be talking about the future of longevity, how science is redefining human health span. And I know what some of you are thinking, like, I'm not really feeling so great right now, why would I wanna live another like 50 to 60 years?

And, and I just wanna be clear, longevity isn't just about living longer, it's about being healthier and thriving. Today's guest on the Thyroid Pharmacists Healing Conversations podcast is Dr.

Darshan Shah, he's a physician, surgeon, entrepreneur, and the founder CEO of Next Health, which is the world's first health optimization and longevity center with locations all across the U. S.

I had the pleasure of visiting one of the locations in California, in the Los Angeles area, And I was just super impressed with all of this services that you offer your entire clinical team, the testing that You offer.

And this is a place that a person can go and seek healing. This is really a place that combines cutting edge science, like advanced diagnostics, personalized medicine to help people live longer, healthier lives.

And you also work a lot with autoimmune patients and thyroid patients, women with hormone issues. You also have like a aesthetic arm of your clinics, which I think is fantastic because, you know, we all want to look better and we all want to feel better, right?

And sometimes bringing that all together and under one roof can be so challenging. I had the pleasure of being on your podcast, Extend by Dr. Shah. Thank you so much for having me on and I am so, so excited to have you here and have the opportunity to pick your brain today.

Yeah, it's such an honor to be here. It was such a great conversation with you when you were on Extended. And I was so looking forward to this. So thank you for Oh my gosh, it's my pleasure.

Now, um, one of the things that I want often times wonder, how do people get into what they get in to? Cause you were a surgeon before this. And so how did you go from being a Surgeon to being.

A functional medicine, longevity doctor that helps people like optimize their lives and live better, longer lives. What brought you to this line of work?

Yeah. So it was a couple of things kind of happened at the same time for me. One was I was doing surgery. Well, let me just start at beginning. I have been a doctor for 30 years now.

The first 20 years I spent doing typical Western medicine, just operating since I graduated from medical school. I graduate really young at 21 years old.

Yeah, and I did my first surgery at twenty one. Since then, I had done thousands and thousands of surgeries, like close to thirty thousand, i think.

From Surgeon to Longevity Medicine

And what that meant was that I was operating almost every single day, six days a week, sometimes even more, twelve, fourteen hour days, tons and tons of surgery.

And over time, I just got really burnt out with it because I felt like we were playing whack-a-mole in the Western medical system. No matter how many surgeries you did, there was always two to three more that needed to be

done for each one that you already did.

And it just seemed like this never-ending stream of problems that people needed get operated on. And I just felt like a cog in the wheel of a broken system.

And at the same time, because I was working so hard and I were stressed and wasn't eating right, I myself got really unhealthy. I had 50 pounds overweight, thyroid abnormalities, an autoimmune disease, hypertension, diabetes, all the bad things, metabolic syndrome, and was in a really bad place with my own health.

And so then what I decided to do was get myself healthy. And there was something that, you know, near to your heart right now as well, the birth of my first child, and so I know you're on your second child but your first-child really gets you thinking like you were saying, like, I got to be around long enough to make sure this kid gets through high school and I want to see my grandkids.

I was a bit older when I had my first child. I as 42 years old. And so chances were with my consolation of symptoms and my constellation of diseases and the way I was living my life, I might not make it to see that happen.

So I knew I needed to make a change. You know, and I'm a doctor, so I thought for sure I can get myself healthy. But when i really sat down and thought about it, all I could really do with the current knowledge base at that time was to throw more pills at my problems.

And so I knew that there were pharmaceuticals out there that might help me get better. I was already on 10 of them. Rather than choose the path of seeking out more pharmaceutical intervention, I thought there has to be a better way.

And so I learned all about nutrition, which we're not taught in medical school, you know, and so had to go out there and learn about it. First, I learn through reading some books and then I learnt through getting a nutrition certification.

I've learned about exercise. And then my trainer and my nutritionist who were helping me told me about functional medicine. And that's when I really learned about hormones and gut health, all the things that you talk about.

That's where the power and the magic really came. It might sound like a miracle, but it's not because I see this happen every day now. In eight months, I completely turned around my health.

I got off eight of my 10 prescription medications and I felt incredible again. I no longer had markers of autoimmune disease, no long had marker of thyroid and testosterone problems, I had no more markers for metabolic disease in eight months.

And so I was like, this is the kind of medicine I want to practice. So I started winding down my surgical practice and started Nexelf. It really started with like doctor heal by self.

Yeah, exactly. That's where it started. A lot of us really come to functional medicine because we see conventional medicine for all of its limits. And you were already on 10 pharmaceuticals.

You were a doctor, you are supposed to be healing other people, yet you're struggling with your own health. Yeah. I think, you know, the thing about healing people in Western medicine, it's about you get to a state of really of disease, right?

Where things are really broken down and the only option you have at that moment is pharmaceuticals and surgery. And really Western Medicine was never built to keep people healthy.

It was never built to reverse chronic disease, right? First of all, there's no financial incentive in reversing chronic diseases and taking people off the operating room table or off prescriptions.

So financially, no one makes money. But also, no one has the knowledge there to really effectively institute protocols for people that get people healthy.

And I don't want to say no-one has a knowledge, maybe they have the knowlege, but they don t even have time to talk about it. It's just a broken system in many ways for getting people health and keeping them healthy, but it's not a broken system if you have a heart attack or if get diagnosed with stage four cancer or, you know, if we get hit by a bus.

Like, thank God we have that system, right? But it is generally not very useful for the things that we're talking about. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I mean, like if I had cut my leg off, I'm not going to be putting turmeric on it or cutting out gluten.

Healthspan, Functional Medicine, and the Future

Like I might be going into the hospital and we just have this amazing system that really helps people with chronic issues when they are at the point where it's a point of almost no return.

And I really struggled with that when I was in pharmacy school because I, was like, Oh, so you have a person with diabetes and I'm supposed to give them drugs, but it turns out that like I could have given them advice 30, 40 years ago on how to live a healthier life.

And they would be thriving today and do living their best lives, even though they. maybe weren't 20 years old anymore, right? But just putting those pieces in place can help you feel so much better where I think in traditional medicine, the focus is really like, okay, you have somebody who is in a hospital bed or is ready to have their leg amputated or has had these issues for such a long, long time that we really need to intervene.

And maybe, I always feel like lifestyle interventions can be offered. Maybe they can't make as big of an impact in late stage disease, but it's always worth it.

A lot of times that I've talked to people who are older and that have struggled with their health for quite some time, They're oftentimes saying, I don't want to live a long life because I'm just not feeling that great.

Why would I want live longer? Can you share a little bit more about the future of longevity evolving in the next decade? What are some of the things that you're working on?

I think the first thing that's gonna happen is health span is gonna increase dramatically. And so there's two different terms here. Health span, is a number of years you spend being fully healthy, fully vibrant, enjoying life, being able to travel and pick up your great grandkids and not have brain fog and sleep well and keep fat off and muscle on.

All of that is going to increase, dramatically in the next decade for sure. And then what we're going to see potentially in the next decade, but probably later, is getting down to the cellular basis of aging and being able to slow that process so that we can add even more years to our life.

And so right now, the goal is really healthspan. we know we need to figure out how to reverse chronic disease, right? I mean, that's table stakes right now.

We just can't get any sicker as a population. It's costing too much money. People are just feeling miserable. And we needed to put into place really, really good programs and protocols for people to revert chronic diseases.

But then how do you stay healthy for a longer period of time? Like how you make sure that when you're 90, you're still able to do all the things that you want to.

Well, the same lifestyle changes that reverse chronic disease improve health span. So really getting clear about what are the lifestyle change is step one.

Step two is what I'm really excited about is this explosion of functional medicine where I feel almost everyone I talk to now is looking for a functional medicine practitioner to help them.

And I think this is creating this kind of perfect storm of allowing, finally, root cause medicine, functional medicines, integrative medicine. Whatever you want to call it.

There's a lot of different terms right now. It's little nebulous. But people know they need two different providers, which is huge. People are not just waiting for the Western medical system to get sick and get treated.

Now they're looking a different type of provider. And I think that's gonna make a major change. And then what I'm really excited about is new classes of interventions that we're seeing.

Things like peptides, using some technology. Some technology is actually older, but we are using it in new ways. That also really accelerating this journey towards reversing chronic disease and improving health span.

Yeah, that's fantastic. I know I do want to get into some of the more advanced strategies, but before we do that, I was hoping we can go through some the foundational lifestyle changes because I feel like sometimes people jump ahead to like the fancy, expensive, cool stuff when they just need to start with the foundations and get those things in place.

And the foundation in many cases can help reverse. autoimmunity, chronic illness. And yeah, I mean, when we feel good, we can really live a thriving life.

People who are in their 70s and they're physically active, they are free of chronic illnesses.

Nutrition and Metabolic Health Basics

They show up in a way that a person who has diabetes, hypertension that's taking 10 different meds and is obese is just simply not able to show up, right?

Exactly. And to your point, these lifestyle interventions are the base of the pyramid. Then we can build on top of that. But without a strong base, any intervention you do that is new and shiny, number one might not work, but number two is going to have much less of an effect than it would have had if the basis was solid.

So do you want me to talk about some of my favorite interventions on lifestyle? Yeah, let's start with the foundations for lifestyle. What are some your go-tos and favorites that you like to use with your patients?

Yes, so I focus in on four core aspects of lifestyle, one being nutrition and metabolic health, secondly being our movement and our exercise, thirdly being sleep and recovery, and fourthly, being emotional and stress management.

So we always start With nutrition, and I always like to use a Pareto principle, like what's the 20% of the information that's going to give you the 80% in the result, right?

So with nutrition to me, it's very simple. It's three things. One, a limited ultra processed food. Number two, formulate a diet that has A lot of fiber-containing vegetables, a lot good sources of protein, and a lots of good fats.

That's it. I don't care if it's a Mediterranean diet or if you're a Japanese diet, or a paleo diet. As long as you need those three things from good, well-resourced places, you are gonna combine yourself a really healthy diet and lastly, understand what metabolic health is.

Really dig in a little bit. really understand that the amount that your body is able to control blood glucose levels, it's almost foundational to getting every single disease.

So if you have poor metabolic health, you're going to have cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment that leads

to Alzheimer's disease you might have a higher risk of cancer, all of it.

Infections, so you've got to get your metabolic under control. And so I think people need to learn what does that mean What is the science behind that at a high level?

And how do you measure that, right? Because metabolic health, you don't see it when you look in the mirror. You have to measure it in your blood. And so fasting insulin levels, continuous glucose monitors, hemoglobin A1C, extremely important there.

I love the continuous glucose monitors because they can really help you tailor your lifestyle. So you can figure out that, hey, eating a whole bunch of rice, maybe not my thing and skipping dinner.

This actually works really well for me, but skipping breakfast doesn't really work for. And guess what? If I have a very stressful day, then my blood sugar is going to really swing.

You can start to dial things in. I did an experiment before I got pregnant. what's going to happen if I have rosé? What's gonna happen? And I was going hypoglycemic at night and I wasn't sleeping well, right?

Which brings us to sleep. Right. Yeah. So it's so incredible how much diet affects our sleep and people don't realize that, and so with sleep, I think what is extremely important is Pareto principle number one, get yourself some sort of tracking device for your sleep.

Because a lot of people feel like, I slept okay last night. You hear this all the time. How'd you sleep? I sleep okay. Or I said I'm good. And then if you look at their data, you see that they're sleeping.

you know, 10 minutes of deep sleep every night. They're waking up multiple times in the night and they don't know. And the problem with not knowing is it takes multiple years of not-knowing before the sleep is actually causing symptoms and problems.

Then it take multiple more years for people to understand that it is the majority of the problems that they're facing now they have real diagnosed disease because of poor sleep.

And so I have all of my clients wear for at least six weeks some sort of sleep tracking device, whether it's a ring or a band, whatever have you, it doesn't really matter, as long as they can get some data that I can follow over time.

Now, some people like to look at their data and make improvements. Some people don't, and I get it. But if you dont like looking at your own data, because it's overwhelming to you, never look of the data.

Instead, find yourself some practitioner, like a health coach or a doctor or anybody, anyone that can look up the date for you and tell you what's working and whats not working, then work with them.

And I think this can make a massive change in your life because once you know you're not sleeping well, you can start putting into place modifications of your sleep environment, your sleeping routine that really work.

And so that's critical is sleep monitoring. It's really fascinating. Looking at the research of sleep deprivation and Hashimoto's, night shift workers had higher rates of Hashimoto's antibodies and people with sleep apnea have really high levels of thyroid antibodies.

I started tracking my sleep and I found that my deep sleep wasn't really great. And I started doing Epsom salt baths and I found that the Epson saltbaths like really, really drastically improved my deep sleep.

It's sometimes it's tricky to get them in. My husband would be like, when are you going to out of the bath? I'm like I really. Really trying to optimize my sleep here, but there's different lifestyle changes that you can hack.

You can figure out what's working for you when you're tracking the data. So I love that. Do you have aura or are

you a whoop guy? I have my Aura on. I like my aura, but people like different things.

And I don't push any one device as long as I can see over time what's happening.

Sleep, Recovery, and Daily Habits

To your point about the absence of baths, that's amazing. You would have never known to even try that if you didn't know you had poor deep sleep, right?

And then you saw it improve your deep sleeps, so you know it's something that you should keep doing. And it's so simple once you think about it. For me, the things that really, really help my sleep is whenever I do sauna in the evening before going to bed, my asleep is so much better.

Whenever I put my cell phone in a different room to charge at night, Such better sleep and there's data on this actually that people are just by even having a cell phone off next to them in their bedside charging their sleep is affected by it.

And so putting your phone in different room can be really helpful. But the number one thing I see help most people sleep more than anything else is going to bed the same time every night, no matter what.

And then whether it's a weekend or whatever have you, always stick to your bedtime. Your body uses that as a circadian rhythm trigger to get you to sleep better.

So what you're saying is my mom was right? We'll probably be saying that a lot during this conversation. Well, it's funny. My mom is a physician and she would give me all this advice, but I just didn't really want any of it.

And sometimes it is like, I don't know how it has been with your children if they listen to your advice today. They do the exact opposite. They always ask, why?

Why do I have to do that? But I think once they understand the why, it's a little bit better for them. But yeah, It's hard for kids to listen to their parents.

Hang in there. It'll happen. So now these days I look back and everything that I've learned with functional medicine, I was like, turns out my mom was right.

Turns out she was right. And some of the things were things from Poland, right? Or old wives tales, quote unquote, or things that I thought were just like too basic to work, but sometimes they actually do work.

Holy cow, you get your sleep, You're going to be in a good mood. You are going make better choices, Right? You going have better appetite control. Yes, absolutely.

It's just amazing what happens when we put these foundations in place. And I also love some of the really innovative therapies that you're offering in your own clinic, clinics, I should say, because they're like all over the place so people can really connect.

Can you tell us more about peptides, regenerative therapies, all these cool things that You've been working with? Sure, sure. Let's talk about peptides first.

So peptide are basically natural biological signals that we're able to emulate now because we can put together amino acids into the same configuration as our natural, biological, signals and inject them under our skin to mimic those signals.

And I say all of that because they're very different than drugs. Drugs are chemicals that are synthesized to exert an effect in our body. Natural biological signals, our bodies have been making these signals since the beginning of humanity, maybe even before.

One of the first ones that peptides that were sold was insulin, right? And so when we discovered insulin we could synthesize insulin. All of a sudden, type 1 diabetics got better.

They didn't die. It was a major game changer. The second big game-changer peptide was GLP-1s. Companies are making billions of dollars off GLPs right now.

Well, guess what? Our body uses thousands of natural biological signals, and we've discovered a few hundred of them that we can use. And we know how to synthesize them to exert similar effects.

So, What can they do? Well, they have anything that our natural biological signals can do. You have peptides for inducing muscle synthesis, you have the peptide for reducing sleep, peptids for introducing mitochondrial energy production, better T cell activity.

There's so many different reasons you can use peptidies. And really, I think for people, it gets really confusing when they're looking into peptidae. because it is, because there's a massive box of opportunity there.

And so working with a practitioner that really understands peptides and how they're useful is important. I'll say one more thing about peptide is that because they are natural biological signals, they have a lot of effects and they don't have a lot of side effects.

They're actually really safe to use, so much better than drugs in many ways. The side-effects come from peptides when you use too high of a dose, because this is a natural biological signal, your body's not used to having a high, high dose of it all the time, and also when biological signals, they get cycled, there's feedback mechanisms, like GLP-1s, we're not cycling it the way our body does, right?

Our body is not producing GLp-ones when we are hungry. So what happens is that, you know, when you inject a GL p-one for a week, for, a, week long dose, and you have a high level of GL P-ONE all the time, And that's not natural.

In general, y'know, th-there's cycling, then he's apple and peptides as well. Some of my colleagues have found that using low dose GLP-1s in women with Hashimoto's and perhaps some weight challenges has been really game changing, not just for the weight, but also for Hashimoto's antibodies and a lot of the inflammation.

And they're really finding that if they minimize the dose and they really advocate for lifestyle changes, so eating protein, making sure you're weightlifting and doing all the things, This is a great addition to your lifestyle.

It can make a really big difference. Are there other peptides that you might be a fan of for, let's say, women with Hashimoto's or autoimmunity, gut issues?

So you know, you touched upon something there when you said people are using GLP-1s for Hashimoto's and that's because people think of GLPs as just a hunger controlling thing, but it's much more than that.

There's GLp receptors on your immune cells and GLP-1s are a game changer for autoimmune disease. I can't tell you the number of patients now that I see with auto immune disease that come in and I make GLp- 1s part of their protocol.

And your immune system is at the center of everything. We're discovering more and more about how important our immune is, especially in aging and especially chronic disease and so supporting a healthy immune systems is I think we all know is extremely important, but what happens is just like many other cells in our body, as we age, we get what's called immunosenescence.

We make less and less of our immune cells and they're not as healthy as they were when we were. children, for example. And so, you know, our muscle cells we do that with.

As we age, we have less muscle, but we can exercise and make more muscle cell, right? But what do we for our

immune cells?

Peptides and Immune Support

How do you get your immune systems to be healthier? Well, there's a peptide. There are many peptides. Actually, a few peptids that really help with immune system health.

TB 500 is one of them. Alpha thymusin is another one. Then I consider this probably One of my core uses of peptides is keeping my immune system healthy because I know that if my system is healthy, it reduces my risk of chronic disease, all forms of disease.

What about like aesthetic peptide? Do you have any of those? Inquiring minds want to know. There's one that's used very frequently. It's called GHK-CU, a copper peptid.

And so that can be used as either a skin cream or also an injectable to help with skin health and collagen production. Okay. I'll have to write that one down.

Thank you for that. What about some regenerative therapies that you're seeing are making a big difference? Yes. So, you know, it just broke the news about a month ago that Florida, Utah, and Montana have approved stem cell usage finally.

Yeah. And so, I'm extremely excited about this. We've been using stem-cell therapy for quite a while now. effective stem cells are for a lot of different issues.

I think there's a lotta promise there. And legitimizing stem cell therapy, especially in these three states, I'm hoping that science really progresses to where stem-cell therapy becomes kind of like another foundational aspect of what doctors do when they're treating anything, really.

So I am really looking forward to the research on stem–cell–therapy. that we can also harness exosomes from within the stem cells and use those effectively.

And then I think also in the regenerative category, you're going to see massive news coming out soon because there is these four factors called Yamanaka factors.

Have you heard of these? I haven't. Please tell us more. This is a game changer. 40 years ago I think there was a professor in Japan, Dr. Yamanaka, that discovered four proteins that when we add them in a culture medium to any one of your cells, I can take just like a muscle cell or a skin cell, We can add these four proteins to it and it can reverse that cell's age to a pluripotential stem cell.

So this is like an embryonic stem cells that can turn into any kind of tissue. I mean, that sounds like science fiction, right? Like you can even clone that pluri-potential-stem cell to make a new you, The problem with the Yamanaka factors is they were discovered kind of almost accidentally and there's four of them and they work very inefficiently.

They only work 0.1% of the time. So when scientists are doing research on these Yaminaka Factors, it takes a long, long time to even create a pluripotential stem cell.

And also the process is uncontrolled, like you don't want all of your cells going all the way back to pluri-potential. You want them to stop in like a healthy liver cell or a heart cell.

So fast forward to today. Sam Altman, the creator of ChatGPT, he created a special model of chat GPT that we can be used on protein folding. And so he's funded a company called Retro Biosciences that is looking at these four Yamanaka factors and applying artificial intelligence to making new proteins that are similar to Yama Naka Factors but work better.

In just under a year, they've discovered how to make these Yaminaka Factor, two of them, work 50 times more

effectively. Okay. So as this research progresses, we're going to be able to create proteins that can reverse cellular aging.

And that's a game changer. Think about like if you have liver failure from being an alcoholic or having fatty liver disease and injecting these factors into a liver and you create new liver cells.

If you've a heart attack inject into your heart, creating new myocardium. There's actually drugs from retro biosciences going into clinical trials next year.

So this is coming really fast and I think regenerative therapies are going to explode in the next decade. Wow, that's fascinating. It's like a way of really rejuvenating your organs and your body through these cells.

Right now, these are not available. Right now these are not available, but stem cells and exosomes are. Can you tell us what those might do and what they can help with?

Yeah, so stem cell and stem are really good at honing into areas of your body that need repair. So they follow cytotaxic signals. There's an area in your brain that's screaming out for help.

Stem cells can find those signals and swim towards there and then release exasomes into the area to create more healing. Exosomes are signaling molecules.

So this whole system as we age becomes less effective. Our stem cells have less exosome. They're less able to find where they need to go. And what we can now do with using donated stem cells from umbilical cords of new babies that are born.

We can harvest those stem-cells and we can inject them into people so that they have a similar effect but with much more power. And as you can, you know, surmise it, there's massive amounts of potential there, right?

Regenerative Therapies and Stem Cells

So if you have inflammation in your shoulder and you're going to inject stem cell and they find their way to your shoulders and regenerate the tissues, inflammation in your brain, inflammation in you heart, your body, or liver, wherever they're needed, they can be sent to those areas.

That's incredible. Now, so donated umbilical cords, can a woman who's pregnant take her own umbalical cord and put it on ice and bring it to your office?

not to my office, they're going to be sent to a lab, but I really highly recommend that every woman having a child look into freezing their umbilical cords and even their entire placenta and cord.

It's not cheap right now, get the cells out of there that we need and we can create new tissues using these Yamanaka factors. Fascinating. Are there companies that you know that are offering this kind of service?

Yes, they are. If you just Google placental donation or umbilical cord, not donation, freezing, cryopreservation it's called, you can find that. Fantastic, I have another item on my to-do list.

Yes, you got to do this. That's awesome. I wanted to ask you about how people should think about biomarkers and N of 1 tracking. Hmm, that's such a great question.

So glad you asked me that because this is my mantra. Every person listening to this needs to become the boss of their own biology. how do you become the boss of your own biology is to understand what's going on with your biology.

If you own a business, you're not trying to run this business day after day by not looking at how much revenue you have, how many profit you've have. You know, there's numbers you look at, right?

And so just like your Biology has numbers that are indicative of things are going in the wrong direction, 20 to 30 years before it becomes a real disease diagnosis.

And so you just got to know what those numbers are. I think there's about 15 numbers maybe everyone needs to, know some of them are blood tests, some are tests that you can do at home with devices like a blood pressure cuff, a bio-imput in scale, and a grip dynamometer.

When you do these tests every quarter, if you get into the habit of doing them every amount of knowledge of what direction your health is headed in. And you can stave off problems sooner.

You know, I always say, like, if the Titanic were to have sailed one degree differently from the moment it left port, it would have never hit that iceberg, you know?

Just one-degree. Just over time, that makes such a big difference, right? I actually have a guide for these that your audience, if you want to put in the show notes, they can download at drshaw.com slash biomarkers and I list what are those biomarks, how to get them, what's the optimal range and why it's important and how you can change it.

And so it was just 15 to 20 of them and then you get done and you do a little bit of research and get this guide and track it and your good to go. Thank you so much for creating that.

I know a lot of times when we have like a chronic condition that might be our core focus. And so I knew a lotta times people might focus on, hey, what are my thyroid markers doing?

But there's a few other things that can really set you up for lifelong success and longevity and really feeling your best and thriving. On my own healing journey for a while, I was like, oh, nutrition is like where it's at, but I wasn't necessarily like exercising or I was doing some of these other elements that can be critical for how well you age and how good you feel.

And so I think this is awesome that you've put together this guide for us. I'm going to definitely link it into the show notes so people can track that for themselves.

Are there daily practices that love to use for longevity that have the biggest impact? Absolutely, yes. I think the things that have the biggest impact, and I this works for most people, is number one is to make sure that when you wake up that you do some sort of morning routine.

Just get some winds in at the beginning of the day, you know? I've added things to my morning routine over time, but in general, I think having physical activity first thing in the morning, even if it's a five-minute workout routine, 15 minutes is what I do every morning.

Fifteen minutes of workout every single day. The compounding benefits of that are massive. Secondly, what I would say in my morning routine is I do something for my mindset.

And so I have a gratitude practice that I, do I some journaling. I think that's very important. Lastly, I spend 20 minutes learning. highlight and I actually take notes on the side and just something I do every morning.

And that way I get these three big wins in at the beginning of every day. Having a habit is so powerful because even if you're doing so little every, the compounding benefits are massive to that.

And so I think that's critical for people is to get into some sort of habit. It doesn't need to be a morning routine. Be an evening routine, it could be your lunchtime, maybe at lunch when you're at work and you have an hour off.

Do these three things. Go for a walk, read a book, and do a meditation or some breath work. Just it can be very simple. Find an hours a day to spend on yourself.

I really love that because I feel like a lot of times people wake up and they wake with an alarm and then they go

into checking their email or looking at social media or just kind of go in to work mode without setting themselves up for success first.

And they're like, oh well, I'll do my supplements later or I will do exercise later. Then they end up, you know, it's like 8 o'clock or 9 o clock at night and still haven't done the things.

I personally really Bright light therapy first thing in the morning Los Angeles and you know Austin really allow me to have that where I can just step outside and I'm getting beautiful bright lights and it's warm outside.

And I find that for people with fatigue that's like one of the best things that they can do. Isn't it amazing? And it's so simple, right? It's like five minutes, you just expose your eyes to the lights.

But some people, it is hard to get that in. Once it becomes a habit, It is super easy. You are just like, okay, I just open up the door and I get the mail or I got my newspaper.

I don't know if people still get newspapers these days. Yeah. I drink my coffee outside every morning. That's how I just, you know, I go outside with my book and my copy and that's the last thing I do and I'd do it outside.

And it's so powerful. Once again, it is a compounding benefit. You might not feel awesome the first day you do, but by the 10th or 14th day, I love that and it doesn't have to be like you're climbing a mountain every day, but all the steps of working out 15 minutes a day these really add up and you are not pouring through seven books a but if you just doing 20 minutes of day of reading like before you know it you will have read stacks and stacks of books.

I know people, myself included, sometimes will set very ambitious goals where they'll be like, I need to read this and how do you do it? You have to really break it down into small digestible steps like that.

Yep. Absolutely. Reading is the best example of why this works because, you know, to your point, people have a lot of reading goals, right? And they have bookshelves, like I have books like packed with books that I should be reading.

Biomarkers and Personal Health Tracking

And I wasn't reading them because it gets overwhelming. But when I started reading 20 minutes a day, I got through two books a month. It really works.

And so then by the end of the year, you're through 20, 30 books. You're like, wow, breaking it down into little chunks works so well when you have 365 days to do it.

Yeah, it really, really adds up. I've heard of people doing squats when they go to the bathroom, and I love all of these suggestions. What are some of their common myths about longevity that you encounter most often?

You know, I think a lot of the myths center around people confusing longevity with biohacking, right? Yeah, you know I, think, a lotta people ask me, oh, your longevity, should I go get all my stem cells injected on my whole body down in Panama?

Like, no, that's not what longevity's about, ya know? A lot of these things that are extreme should only be done when you're in extreme cases, not when your healthy.

You can cause a lot problems by doing these therapies if you are doing them when not really needing them as well. So just be very careful about newer things.

Let other people try it first, you know, and only do it if you really, really need it. Always look at the risk-benefit ratio of what you're trying to do.

I think that's super important and I get really concerned. You know there's like gene therapies out there now that

people are doing and they're doing it to build muscle.

Well, why don't you go to the gym and lift heavy weights and do creatine and look at your testosterone levels and all those things first, like those are tried and true versus like doing a gene therapy, you know?

And so it's like, I get it, maybe gene-therapy will be something that we, as part of our treatment protocols in the future, but right now there's so little research around it and you're actually injecting yourself with something, who knows what's in there, Yeah, I mean, that is like I've heard of people like doing homegrown gene therapy too.

And I'm like, wow, but that just scares me. I think for genetic conditions, some of these devastating pediatric conditions that like makes a lot of sense to do something like that.

But like you said, Why not just try like exercise and optimizing some of your hormones that can really contribute, right? Exactly. What's your best advice for balancing like high tech interventions with foundational lifestyle habits?

So do you think everybody should have like all the gadgets? I know they're really cool and trendy. At Next Health, we have what we call the longevity circuit.

The longevity is a hyperbaric oxygen chamber, an infrared light sauna, a cryotherapy chamber and an LED light bed. These are four of those expensive biohacky things that people like to do.

and we put them in Next Health so people can use them because they are super expensive. They're hard to find. We have it all under one roof. You can come for two hours, do all of it, and once a week if you wanted to as part of being a member of NextHealth.

But I always say that those modalities are only going to work if you have your basics in line first, right? And so what's great about it is a lot of our patients do get their basics online.

They do functionally evaluate it and get the hormones right and their gut health right. And they're looking at like, what is next? set of modalities that is the next thing that you can do, but they're only doing them after they've gotten to that point.

Now, what I will say is when people are on the journey, some of these modality can help accelerate it a little bit as well. Mainly it's being in a habit of doing these things, which I think that habit formation is great, and then when you're at In the sauna, you're doing something healthy for yourself, so you end up thinking more about your own health.

Maybe you stretch in the sauna, maybe you meditate in a sauna. It kind of piles up and adds up. You know, it's called habit stacking. And so people start habit-stacking healthy habits.

So I think there's a lot of benefit to doing these technologies, but only for the right reasons and not in replacement of getting the basics right. How do you incorporate like lab testing and do have any lab tests that you love to use?

Yeah, so we call it a baseline biomarker panel. We do that every quarter for our patients. And so in that same guide that I told you about, people can get the same blood test done from their own doctor or in their city.

But basically, we'll do a base line blood panel, which is about 30 different biomarkers. Then we will also have them do additional testing if it's needed.

Now once a year we like for all of our patients do a total toxin test. So we look at all other toxins accumulation and that's very helpful. And if they're having gut issues, we'll do gut health test looking for like a leaky gut, looking at sensitivities.

Then we also have additional testing that we can do based on what their symptoms are. Yeah, that's really nice to know what you're dealing with because sometimes you can be doing all the right things and eating a healthy diet

and exercising and really struggling.

And you might have something like mycotoxins in your system or you may have some kind of a gut infection that could just be really sabotaging all of the great work that you are doing.

So that is great that offer those to all your patients like once a year. If you're feeling sabotaged, like if you are eating right, you exercise, and you try to do everything you can and not feeling better, not losing weight, the brain fog is not clearing up, You got to go get this testing done.

There's definitely something else there that we're not detecting because your body wants to be in a state of health, right? And so anyone who exercises two to three times a week and eats well, there's something else going on.

We just got to find it. A lot of times it could be a high mercury level, it can be high levels of, like you said, mold toxins, wheat sensitivities. There's so many things, but we can find a lot at times.

Yeah, that's so important. I always encourage people to start with the foundations and a lot of times they can heal themselves, right?

Longevity Routines and High-Tech Tools

So just the habits can lead them so much farther than any medication could, but in some cases it's like, okay, now we have to dial things in and sometimes medication might be the right answer here or doing a specific protocol like to get some of the toxins out of your system.

Right. I would love to talk more about plasma exchange. Sure. Now, this is one of those real, I'd say, high-end longevity procedures right now. So, what plasma exchanges is a therapy that we do at our clinics where we hook you up to a machine.

and this machine is drawing your blood. It is spinning it in a giant centrifuge and separating your plasma from your body. And we're giving you back your cells, but we are removing the plasma.

We're exchanging it for albumin and after the therapy is done, we'll give you some IV immunoglobulin, IVIG. So why are we doing this? The reason we do this is because all of the stuff that is accumulating in our body, that our bodies trying to get rid of, it's circulating it in our plasma, okay?

So all the toxins, all of the inflammatory cytokines, the malformed proteins, and it is circulating in your plasma so it can go to our kidneys and our liver to get eliminated, right?

However, when your body is overwhelmed with these toxins Your liver and kidneys can't catch up. And what the plasma exchange does is it allows your body that catch-up time.

It is basically an oil change for your bodies. We're removing about three liters, like a big bag of plasma full of your toxins, and we throw it away. and this gives your body a really good reprieve and gives it time to heal.

Because what happens in our balance of having too many toxins that we can't get rid of versus having enough toxins, that can eliminate them through our normal elimination mechanisms, is when our normally elimination mechanism is not overwhelmed, the entire body starts healing through stem cell activation, through reduction of inflammation, all of it.

And it's a really powerful therapy. It's been FDA approved since 1970s. We're not giving you something, we're removing. So the side effects are pretty minimal in my opinion.

Yeah, it's incredible because I've seen a lot of it in the research and I have a lots of clients that have asked about it or had seen it as something that can be helpful for autoimmune disease, but it is not necessarily easily accessible.

No, we're trying to make it more easily-accessible. But for Autoimmune flare-ups, one of the things that we remove is that auto-immune reaction through inflammatory cytokines, through immune globulins, immune complexes.

That was actually the reason a plasma exchange was invented in the first place, was for immune crises. Yeah. Yeah, and it's amazing that you're making that available in people's neighborhoods so they could come in and ask for these things that are mostly in their research or you have to go through a whole ordeal to get access to that.

I do know a few people that have been able to access through their conventional doctors, but it is pretty hard to have access these advanced tools that your offering.

Yeah, and the traditional system is very hard to access it because they only bring out this machine when there's a really bad problem going on. So now that we have an outpatient in our clinics, people can come anytime and talk to our doctors about it.

Well, that's incredible. It's fascinating. I think it's like you're taking what's in the research and you are bringing it to the community. You have how many clinics now?

We have 50 in various stages of opening. They're either in construction or opening, but we actually have like 14 open right now all throughout the United States and Miami and New York and Chicago, Nashville, Los Angeles area.

So yeah, we have clinics right and we're just expanding more. So we talked about some of the cool biohacking things. They can work up with a functionally trained practitioner and they can get some these advanced strategies and also some aesthetic work.

Did I miss anything? Yeah. So, you know, I think what people can expect when they come in is we are not just like this advanced longevity center. We do have all of that, but really our goal is to get you healthy.

And it's along four pillars. 1. Optimize your lifestyle. 2. Use functional medicine to make sure that we've eliminated all the root causes of disease.

Then we want to be hyper-preventative, I call it. There's so much technology out there to prevent chronic disease that we don't use. Preventing cancer, heart disease, preventing metabolic disease.

Even preventing Alzheimer's. We have incredible diagnostic and treatment technologies, and so we're going to prevent disease. And lastly, the longevity stuff that we talked about.

So we really want to keep you healthy and improve your health span, And we use these four pillars as the basis of a program. It's all empowered by your data.

We check all of these biomarkers that were talking about, We use that to guide us into where do we focus our energy, also to let us know like, are we making improvement?

So we can do these end of one experiments and see if there's improvement or not, if we're using plasma exchange or sauna or whatever we are using. I love it.

You're making it so accessible and what a beautiful mission. Thank you. And you're helping so many people. What excites you most about the future of personalized medicine?

Plasma Exchange and Personalized Medicine

You know, I think the thing that is really exciting me right now is that I people are finally realizing that the Western medical system was built for one reason, to get you out of a really bad jam.

We need something different and people were looking for something differently. They found functional medicine,

they found practitioners like you, their finding neck stealth, and we're building a whole new system from the ground up right.

And we are at the beginning stages of it. And I think in a decade, we'll have many more of clinics like Nexel, practitioners like you that offer this.

And we are going to see this graph. You see, this is a graph, a number of people that are sick in America. It's gone straight up, right? We're finally seeing it come down.

I mean, the number, amount of illness is going come to down, which will bring down the numbers of dollars that we spend on all this stuff. People just lead healthier, happier lives.

I think things are definitely moving in the right direction and thanks to innovators like yourself. It's been so wonderful to have you here. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to come and share about all the amazing work that you're doing with us.

Before I let you go, I have one question for you, Canada, put you on the spot. Are there any wellness hacks that would not try? Any wellness hacks that I would not try?

Ah, that's a really good question. You did put me on the spot. What I'd say is that it's way too soon to try these gene therapies right now. From what I've heard and seen, people haven't had really impressive results.

And there's not a lot of research yet on what the results could be, how impressive they could in what are the side effects. Because they're not allowed in the United States, people are flying all over the world to do this stuff.

Then I've seen people have bad problems, like infections from the injections and stuff, so I would say give it a pause on those type of things and do all the basics first.

I love that. And I loved that you're not jumping on every bandwagon and trying all of the crazy things that, you know, it's very sensible to actually let people, other people try things first rather than like diving in and potentially hurting yourself, so.

Yeah, because of social media now, the people that dive in first have a massive megaphone, right? Because people are like, what did that person do it?

And then share and like and it grows and the message spreads really quickly. But just remember that's just one person doing one thing on themself in one moment in time.

That's not research, right? And so that's an N of one for that person that got broadcast out there. So be really skeptical about what's on social media and just do your own research.

Yeah, yeah. And it definitely helps to talk with somebody with medical training and background because you can be like, you know, this thing works really well for this type of patient, but you've got X, Y, and Z going on and that might not work for you, right?

That might be your jam. Exactly. Yep. So, well, thank you again for coming on. Thank you. This is so fun. this was so much fun, hope to get to see you Again.

You will. Definitely will put everything in the show notes. I love it. We're opening in Austin in the next 12 months, hopefully, so I'll come back and see you then.

I'm so excited. So I am going to be going by the clinic. And I will be bringing my husband for all the things. Love it! Maybe the baby and the then eight-year-old.

Super, super excited! So excited, thank you! Thank you. Everybody listening, thanks so much for being here with

us today. Hope this has been healing on your journey.