The Invisible Impact of Brain Injury and What the Brain Needs to Recover Transcript

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Introduction to Brain Health and the Podcast

One traumatic brain injury slash concussion actually will increase your risk of another one in the future. And then those increased TBIs also increased your risks of developing Alzheimer's later in life.

Right? And once again, like I say, for me, my philosophy has always been. Hashtag cell care is self care so because like i said i looked at all these thousands of millions of cells under the microscope i'm always focused on how can we protect each and every one of ourselves and still live the life that we're living.

Everything is connected and I'm here to tell you how. I am Dr. Laura Hanson with Connect My Brain. This podcast is for moms who are concerned about their child's development.

The brain impacts our mind, body and overall health. I explain how your brain is wired, what happens when it's out of balance, and how early childhood development not only impacts your child, but can affect you as an adult years later.

Want to know how to improve your life? Join me and learn about your amazing brain and what it can do for you. Hey everybody, it's Dr. Laura with Connect My Child's Brain.

But you know, I like to add connect my brain, connect your brain. We can all connect our brain so we're so glad that you're tuning in today. we have another very special guest.

I'm so excited to hear her story. This is Dr Benote. Dr, Benot, thank you so much for joining us today, where are you located? Uh, hi, Laura. Thank you so much for having me.

I'm excited to talk to you on connect your brain and your child's brain, and the adult brain all of that. And I am currently based in Florida. Oh, what part?

Dr. Benoteu2019s Background and the Golf Ball TBI

Um, I mean the Northeast just outside of Jacksonville, Florida Oh, I'm going to Jacksonville the end of August for a conference, and I grew up in Hollywood, Florida.

Oh very good. Now I am curious what conference you're going too. I m speaking at the 2026 Balance Conference for the Neuro Infinity, which is a diagnostic tool that literally measures the stress response.

Lovely. Okay. Well, I'll make sure you get some information in case you're interested. Definitely. We were chatting before we got everybody connected right now.

I think you have an amazing story and I don't even know all the details of it, but I really love to focus in the brain. There's so many things that can happen to the brand from mild injury to traumatic injury.

And these can have such a long lasting impact on a person's life. And I would love for you to share your story and then tell us about your book and your supplement.

Time permitted, we'll go into some other things. So my story, I've got lots of stories. So I think, the one you're referring to is something that happened to me quite recently.

During the pandemic, everybody had their own experience during the. Whether for some, it was not good. For

some it, was great for me personally, up to a point.

I loved it because this was like the first time in my decades-long career of being a physician where the hospitals were closed, the operating rooms were close, and being physician who's been diagnosing disease under the microscope for decades, if there's no operations, there is no diagnosis for me to create.

And so it was the first time where I was like, Oh, I've got some time on my hands. So I use this time to, you know, uh, would be going for four or five mile long walks, listening to podcasts and audio books and.

you know, just doing the things you don't have time for when you have to be in the hospital by 7am because there's a surgery happening at 7.30. So on one of those walks, and I used to take the same route every day through a residential neighborhood, you now, my neighborhood houses, that's it, right?

However, on one of these days I'm walking and it was a Saturday morning. I remember it. It was sunny like nine o'clock in the morning, all I had on me was my cell phone because I was listening to an audio book and my headphones.

And I feel this like. pressure on my head. Like something had almost fallen out of the sky and fell on My head and I'm going, Oh my god, like what just happened?

Did I get shot? You know, Like, I didn't know what happened. And I was wearing a baseball cap. So I took my baseball hat off and put my hand to my And I'm like, gosh, it's like really gushy here.

And look at my hand and it is all covered from my arm to my shoulder, all in blood. Am I feeling my brain right here? And as somebody who has literally dissected brains, lots of them, I know what brain feels like.

So I am like what is going on here! And so all I did was I called 911 because I honestly, I didn't know what happened. I had my phone on me. You know, we're pretty trained to call 911. And, so while I was waiting for the ambulance to come get me, this guy comes up to me and he goes, did I just hit you in the head with my golf ball?

And I'm like, I'm sorry, but where is the golf ball? So he was playing golf on a golf course behind a house and hit an errant golf. Ball that went off the course pass.

You know, there was no way for me to see it unless I have eyes on the back of my head off. The course onto the street. And it hit me in the left temporal parietal region.

And, it didn't just hit, me it was going 150 miles an hour. It hit and then bounced another 50 yards in. Wow. You know, you might be thinking, oh, well, everybody gets hit by something every now and, then and I'm like, yeah, but.

The rain lives in a cavity like in the skull where there's only some CSF fluid for it to get shaken up. So I was rushed to the emergency room and, you know, got all the imaging, the CAT scan, they, had to, get sutured up and all this stuff.

And the ER physician basically was like, oh, go sleep it off and follow up with your doctor the next day. And me as a physician, I'm going, Oh my God, have to go make brain drive neurotropic factor.

Like sleep will not do that. But what happened afterwards is, was a consequence of neuroinflammation. And what I experienced then, and mind you, I had no health problems before that, like nothing, not on any medication, nothing.

Zero, right? Literally the next day I wake up and I'm not speaking properly like the way I used to. I am not able to type or write, i'm dropping words.

My balance is completely off. Um, so I mean, the number of times I fainted, The ball hit me so hard that I suffered three cervical disc herniations. So then I ended up with chronic pain down my, my neck and my right arm.

um had sleep issues, had forgetfulness, focus issues. I mean I burned a lot of pots and pans in the upcoming like weeks and months.

Recovery, Neuroinflammation, and Long-Term Symptoms

i had to basically retrain my body to function again, like the feet up from the head down, I had had, to retrean it and you know I did a But when it came to some of the symptoms, like the memory loss and the focus issues and pain, and forget the fact that you also have trauma from not just the ball, but now you're afraid to step outside because I was literally blindsided, right?

I'm like, Oh, anything can happen. I don't even want to leave my house. Right. So now we've got this whole like fear of, oh, you know, I, i'm sure anybody who's either been in a car accident, had a sports injury, like like if something's coming at them, they have this like kind of response in their body where it's like.

Oh. When I was going to all the specialists, mostly what I offered was a lot of medications, meaning, oh, we can give you ADHD meds, and Alzheimer's med, Parkinson's, anxiety med and antidepressants and pain med.

And I've never been one to react very well to medications. And that just, you know, that doesn't feel right to me because medications are going to suppress my symptoms.

So I had to tune into, the fact that I have five medical board certifications. so somewhere along the way I learned. How am I going to repair my body?

How I am going repair cells? how am i going make new neurons? new mitochondria for my chronic fatigue? And so I tapped into that. So, you know, already nutrition is a key part of it.

And, my nutrition was already really quite good, but I did step it up. I typed into all the lifestyle things. But one of the things I didn't do is I ended up taking a lot of supplements.

Because I was trained in supplements. So I'm like, you know, at one point I Was taking 30 pills and I"m like okay. This stuff is working. The ingredients in here are really working I mean, honestly, I wouldn't be standing here right now if it wasn't for the different things I did in my lifestyle, You know a big part of that is the gut microbiome because if you have neuroinflammation you then develop gut inflammation and and gut Inflammation is a cascade of its own of inflammatory compounds throughout the body What I was doing in that time was really determining how can I, as an expert on cellular health who's been looking at cells under the microscope for decades, and I don't need a microscope to know what's going on inside my cells, like I can feel it, how am I going to repair these cells?

And that's really, that happened in 2020, but that that what I spent those next few years doing. How many years do you feel like you really had to hone in on nutrition, gut balance, to really get the inflammation and the neurons quieted down.

I think that's so important because there's many things out there that make it sound like everything is just a quick fix. And I it's important for people to hear sometimes you've really got to put some time into your journey.

So how long was that for you? You know, I would say just like any health journey, there were good weeks and then there was bad weeks. Like some, like I, would definitely the first two years were awful.

The first four years, There was a lot of, you know stuff going on in the sense of really active support. I would say the last two years is where I kind of start feeling like, okay, I'm beginning to feel like myself again.

But it's not like on my old self, my new version, you know, in the sense of I know what my body can handle. And I think that journey is going to be different for everybody.

My journey was a lot quicker because I was able to get on my protocol, like my supplement protocol my nutrition protocol literally right away because I'm trained and even when I Was going to like the top specialists in the country

that you know have taken care of, you Football teams like you know things like that They even said to me they're like, you no more about nutrition and supplementation than we do like You know and I'm like I just need somebody to help me and that basically everybody was like.

You actually know more than We know so it was put back in me to Help myself And there are days where I'm like, oh, I am tired, but then I m like oh what didn't I do that I know can support my body?

Because it's like once you kind of start understanding and I always use this as my like little like thing, like you know, always pull up, we have these cells in our body, right?

And we've got trillions of them. They all need support and if we are not giving the cells what they need, they don't function. And like I said, chronic fatigue where I was walking four to five miles and then I went down to like literally walking to the mailbox and walking back because mitochondria, the little organelles inside each and every one of these cells was not doing what it needed to do.

Well, I tell you, first of all, look at traumatic brain injury as the invisible injury. A lot of people see you on the outside and think you're absolutely fine, but the struggle is real for somebody that has actually experienced that kind of an injury to their brain.

You know, Laura, I think that is a key point that I did not mention because everybody did think I was fine on the outside because they're not seeing it.

Yeah. I mean, if you look really close, you can see where the suture and the scar and all that. But because I don't have like a cast on or, they are like, oh, You're fine.

Honestly, like anybody who suffered, even if it's a mild traumatic brain injury, They know that something is not feeling right and to have somebody go, Oh, but you look fine.

When you know, like I know when I go back and look at some of the talks or presentations, I like, can see where my words will slow down because my body is like.

emotionally and physically fatigued, like I start slurring my words. Like I can see it. You know, at that time also I had developed tinnitus and ear ringing and pressure in my ears.

And I remember I went to the ENT and they're like, you know with traumatic brain injuries, You develop like light sensitivity. So basically I could not be with any lights above, Like, walking into an office or anything like that.

Even going to a doctor's office, I'm like, you got to turn the lights off because like I am so sensitive to this. Super sensitive, to hearing, so no loud sounds.

I mean, trying to get an MRI out of me was, because you hear the bang, bang bang with the MRI. That was like painful. Traumatic in and of itself. In itself you'd be surprised more people than not because after this happened when I when i was working with my patients I would talk to them and i'd, be like hey, when you were a kid did you ever like have like a sports injury or like you know a car accident anything like that and When i'm working, with, my, patients, which my focus is gut health and longevity now and I talk, to, them a lot of their health issues started back in when they had those injuries and nobody ever connected that for them.

And that's a really interesting point too, especially when we think about what's the acronym for reoccurring traumatic encephalitis, the CTE.

Why Head Injuries Need Better Evaluation

You know, you think of these re-occuring chronic, that is what it is, chronic when these kids are having repetitive mild concussions or even just a hit in the head, but it's accumulative because so many times nobody is actually addressing the initial one, which really should have put them on a pause button until they had met certain criterion

that really showed that that inflammation had changed.

And I think what you say, like the cumulative part of it is very, very true because one traumatic brain injury slash concussion actually will increase your risk of another one in the future.

Then those increased TBIs also increased your risks of developing Alzheimer's later in life. Right so to me I'm going oh my god now this one Saturday morning all of a sudden now my body is more likely if I don't do the things that I need to do to protect my gut and my brain higher percentage of likelihood of developing this.

And I think we don't think far enough into the future. We kind of just look at what is the immediate like, oh, okay, you're fine. Doctor sent you home.

You take some of this and then get back to the busy lives that we have. And once again, like I say, for me, my philosophy has always been. Hashtag cell care is self care.

So because like I said, I've looked at all these thousands of millions of cells under the microscope. I'm always focused on how can we protect each and every one of ourselves and still live the life that we're living but there is a support that We need well and you know a lot of the low-level investigation for head injury is going to be like an x-ray.

And oftentimes, you're not going see any of this trauma, especially if you go from the car accident to the ER, A lot of that doesn't show up in that first hour or two.

Sometimes these things are not showing up for even days. And we are really just dismissing without the right quantifiable evidence what's really going on for an individual.

And so I think that the whole thing needs to be redone. An x-ray shouldn't be anything that should even be done for days. What would be a gold standard of evaluating somebody to say, based on what you've reported, you had a golf ball hit you in the head, we need to quantify that neuroinflammation is going We need to quantify, what's your state of health that is going to allow you to heal properly?

Don't you think we need kind of revamp how we're investigating this? I do think that needs to be revisited and we do have the beauty of having so many diagnostic tests available now, you know, from different imaging.

One of the things I would say in the last decade that is newer is some of our functional tests, right? So we can see the status of gut microbiome, we see how much mitochondrial dysfunction we have, how many oxidative stress we've been exposed to.

So I don't think it's one or the other. We technically have a lot more we could do now to get a full picture. And that's where I think preventative health really plays a role is like in the acute situation, nobody's looking at those tests.

And then people have to go try to find somebody that going to do it. Of course, there's a lot of wonderful tests out there, but I just like, I'm thinking about so many children that have had repetitive concussion and you know there's plenty of literature now that talks about how it's even creating this mood disorder.

They're becoming depressed and to me it would be great if we were looking at things far more ahead of time then we get to a point that it's almost like, it almost too big for people to manage.

And then it is like okay I did everything, everybody told me to do in the acute phase, I'm still no better, so now what am I gonna do? And it would be great if we had some kind of standard of care that knew these things were gonna happen.

I think part of that is the overall lifestyle and people understanding that, you know, When I went to school we had home ec. We had all these different classes I don't you know and now everything is just literally on a computer and people don' know how to make their next meal.

They don''t know How to do these like life things and that's always going to be in my experience like kind of building the foundation back for your body is you know the way you move your, body the, way, you fuel it the.

Way you do your sleep all of that we're kind.

Child Nervous System Stress and Dysregulation

Of living in this world where we are still in that outer layer we can't even get into that deeper. Healing of that response because we're so focused on the outside of oh, we need to go do this So we to do that and I think once we kind of Understand and and this is really what I do with my patients is I teach them.

How does your body work? I'm like literally putting them through med school in six months of a program so you they know how their body works because Then they can start identifying what's not normal.

So instead of going, oh, my kid is, you know, always irritable or he just behaves differently. And we just like make excuses and accept it. Like, Oh, because some somebody put a diagnosis on it instead going.

Oh well, maybe this individual needs this kind of support. That's pretty much how I run my office as well. Well, you have some really good thoughts too on what parents can do to help their kids, what's going on in the nervous system, especially like if you're scheduled and you are going from one place to another.

Why don't we take a little bit of time and talk about some parental support for kids. Yeah, absolutely. So I kind of like to think of it this way. It's like, what is actually happening in the nervous system when we have a brain that's being triggered by, you know, let's just use an example of travel, whether you're traveling for the weekend away, a sports game after school, whatever it might be, it doesn't need to be like any fancy international travel or anything like that.

Why is it that a child might have a meltdown as opposed to somebody else? And you know, we might see this very often, like, on an airplane. Like I see all these kind of videos online and like, oh, this child wasn't being quiet on airplane and they're like you know, people commenting like oh you shouldn't bring your child with you if you're flying if they are not like trained.

But the thing that I think most people don't understand is that there are several stressors going on for children that their brain has not even developed, okay?

So it's not humanly possible. for them to address them. And some of those stressors might be things like, okay, you've got new sounds, right? So you can imagine airports, like train stations, even a weekend at Costco, how many different sounds are there, Right?

Like there's all this overhead stuff, You got news smells going on. You've sensory of all these extra people. So, your taking your child out of the house and now they're surrounded by all of these people, You have lighting that's not their normal, right?

You might have the loss of the regular routine anchors, like they might at home have their normally breakfast at school, their lunch and their dinner when they come home.

But now if you're like going here and there, you are like, oh, let's go pick up this. And their microbiome isn't keeping up. Then they have physical stress, whether that is just from, I notice nowadays I'm seeing a lot more kids get car sickness.

or cabin pressure, maybe they're dehydrated, right? So some of these things, we've got all this overstimulation and sensory stressors all at once, so the brain is literally seeing this as a threat because it's all these stacked things.

Right. And now you have this kid who might only be 11, 12 years old and their cortisol levels are high. We shouldn't be like giving them more reasons to have their cortisone levels or their stress hormone levels higher.

Now in an adult, which is pretty fascinating because technically an adult's prefrontal cortex, which can address that this is happening and identify it and plan for this.

And they have their so-called impulse control technically developed. They can take that alarm signal and go, oh, it's not bad, but guess what? Have you ever seen people?

They don't really travel well or deal with stress very well. So now if you can't ask an adults to do it, and now you're asking a child who's Anatomy can't do it.

You're actually asking something that is not possible. Yeah, I couldn't agree more 95% of my practice is children. So I see it all the time. There's a lot of things today more so than, especially when I was a kid, but there are just too many things that are dysregulating them.

And I do think it's too much. It's great to be aware of it, it also becomes overwhelming for parents try to, how do I regulate this child? How do i help them go from point A to point B?

And you might be working on a deep program, a long standing program. But like day in, day out, I think there's a huge struggle today so much for parents trying to help children and children.

The numbers are just incredible of how many kids just are not moving in the direction that they're supposed to. And I'd think about it this way. You know, children model what you do as an adult, right?

So I think about like my niece and nephew and I'm like, okay. I know that when I'm with them, I always like, all right, how can we just have like quiet time?

Because I like somebody who suffered from a TBI. I just like peace and quiet, right? But it's a matter of training them to go, alright, it okay to not have a TV on in the background or an iPad running or always have phone in your hand.

And I think it is a manner of, okay, are you training the kid to always want like this stimulation? Because then when they don't have it, it's like another kind of meltdown, right?

But if you kind train them in a way that, and this is really about being more intentional about what is going to be good for my child's overall brain development.

I know in schools now everything is on computer. They're doing everything remotely and all kinds of things. Thinking about the way like when we were kids and how we would learn like we literally have textbooks and notebooks and pens and pencils, you know, and a child's brain actually just like, I mean, still do it.

I will rewrite entire textbooks when I'm trying to learn something like that. That's the way I did it too. I had to rewrite it. And science actually tells you, you will remember things, the research tells that you'll remember that way better.

But we started taking away all those things that we know can help a child's brain develop and we've just put things in front of them that I personally is influencing them in a slowing development.

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. I always talk about, I bring up the picture of the homunculus and the Homunculus for the audience, you can Google that word for yourself.

You might want to spell it for them. It's a big word. Well, but you know what? I've put it in the show notes before, so I'll do it again. But it's part of your sensory motor cortex and your whole body is mapped out on it.

and you look at it for the size of the body part. And that is the greatest influence coming from that area. The face, the tongue, and the hands are huge on the homunculus.

Homunculus, Movement, and Brain Development

This is exactly why it is so important that children crawl, get into their hands. Why it's important for them to have things in their hand so that they can go to the pincer grip.

And if we remove all that with a keypad, that is not fine motor movement. So there is such a gift and here's a little trick I recently learned which I absolutely love is taking a book and you might want to do this from your brain injury is The left side of your brain is your intellectual, your reasoning, and your details.

The right side is the creative, big muscles, the big picture. So you take an open book, maybe you write your goals on the left, then you draw a picture on your right.

And now you're literally putting these pieces together in your brain. So those are the kinds of things that I think might be really beneficial too for parents to put some of these tangible items back into the hands of their children.

And then your legs, if you look at the homunculus, It's in the middle of both sides. And so the legs are connecting both side of the brain. This is why we've got to get people moving.

You've gotta move. Well, I know that you've also got a book. I want you to spend some time on your book and your supplements. Tell the audience about your stuff All right.

Perfect. So my book is called the anatomy of well-being It's bestseller in my muddy medicine and it's the book you read before you the other health books because what it does is it walks you through How does the human body work?

Like, okay, how does my digestion work, How Does my sleep work how Does movement actually work before you go? Oh, I need to do this diet or I Need to Do this exercise because if you can't understand what's going on, then You're gonna go through years and decades of not knowing how your body functions and just trying stuff so I always say read this book before and I like to put things into the perspective of creating lifestyle rituals around it like practices that you do because You know, we all fail at our habits of, oh, We need to eat this many veggies or we need To go to the gym this Many times a week and it's really bad for our self-esteem.

But if we can wake up every single day and go, all right, I'm in touch with my body. What does my Body need today to have the best? And i would love to see like parents training their kids in this way like okay the kid woke up maybe they didn't sleep well because their nose was stuffy and now they're like but for the kids to kind of go alright mom i need this or you know like just starting to like teacher kids like.

the body, how it works, you know, like we don't have anatomy class like that young and we really should. So that's really what my book is about. And it is on audio book, but I definitely recommend the paper version because it's one of those like handbooks where you're going to literally go and highlight and be like, oh yeah, I'm going go try this.

But I had mentioned that during my injury, part of my protocol and regimen was supplementation. 30 different supplements to repair my brain to lower the inflammation to address the chronic fatigue, to dress the pain, all the stuff.

And I honestly got supplement fatigue and I'm like, listen, I know better. I. Know the way cells work. So I created it.

Book, Supplement, and Daily Rituals

It's a custom formulation and it's the first physician formulated supplement. Here it is, it's called Trevella Essentials. It's the first physician created supplement that combines botanical intelligence.

So really using botanic calls that have been studied for centuries. to increase circulation in the body, improve endothelial cells, to improve neural communication, create and modulate the stress response, help your body protect your immune system.

So it's the first one that has that botanical intelligence, but then also has the bio-actives that we now know in longevity science to protect our cells to create more mitochondria like PQQ and master antioxidants like glutathione and things like CoQ10 and resveratrol and magnesium bisglycinate and methylated B12.

So all the things that I know Many people, even if they have not had a brain injury, because I've tested so many people have challenges with this from an oxidative stress level, from a mitochondrial function level from and immunity from gut health, all of this, I basically combined into one supplement.

So it's been like, a passion project, but it's something I've been taking myself for close to two years, and I know there's a day I don't take it. My brain is not as focused, my energy is as good, My day is a lot harder.

That is so exciting. And tell everybody how they find you. So my website and social is all the same. It's drbenote.com, so D-R-B-H-A-N-O-T-E. dot com and Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest.

It's Dr. Benote. I send out a weekly newsletter. Always include an amazing quick, easy recipe in there, but really teaching the science of how these different things work and making it so simple that you can take those and start repairing your cells right away.

And for our supplement, it is on TravellaWellness.com. So like, travel a wellness. We'll make sure that all that goes in the show notes too. Well, that's wonderful.

Now, you said one thing that I think would be a great way to wrap up our time together. And you say that you should begin to create daily rituals for yourself.

So why don't you share one of your rituals with our audience? You know, what got me into this trouble was my morning walks. But my ritual is morning getting outside, getting, you know sunlight, and getting daylight and doing my Morning Walk.

That kind of really sets the tone for the day. Yeah, I kind of laugh because nowadays I might not be listening to audiobooks or podcasts now I'm like listening for everything that's going on around me coming through the air Yeah But when that happened the book that I was listening To was Jim Quick's limitless, which is about making your brain limitness, right?

So the irony in that is yes. Yes there is So, I mean, have many rituals. They're seasonal, they're, you know, based off of what's going on. But I think getting outside and being in nature is a no-brainer.

Well, thank you so much for being with us today. You have so many information. And it's one of the things that I've really grown to love doing these podcasts is there is personal story.

with everyone that literally has brought them to where they are today and the contribution that they're making in the world to health, to how we can better ourselves.

So thank you so much for being with us. I really appreciate it. Thank you. So listen, I know out there, this is a great topic to share. Rather, we're talking about an adult that had a TBI or a child that has experienced repetitive head injuries.

This is something to really bring forward. If you know someone that has experienced this, please share this podcast. Share our podcast with your community so that we can continue to support the world in better health choices.

And remember, here at Connect My Child's Brain, ConnectMyBrain, that's the website, connectmybrain.com, If you have a question or you just want to get further information, you can go on the website.

You can schedule a complimentary consultation and I myself will give you a call back. So thank you so much everybody for tuning in and as always, be blessed.

Thanks for listening. I hope today's lesson will help you or someone you love. Do you have a question or just really want to talk to somebody about brains?

Connect with me over on Facebook or Instagram at Connect My Brain. Looking to understand and optimize your particular brain? Check out connectmybrain.com for course information and resources.

See you next class. you