Welcome to the Menopause Summit

Hello, ladies, and welcome back to Mastering the Menopause Transition Summit 3.0. It's our third year. I'm still your host, Dr. Sharon Stills and coming at you with all new information, all new interviews to help you make the best of this time.

I truly believe this is a time to step into your sacred second act, and that you can feel better than ever before. If I can do it, you can do it, I promise.

So I am thrilled to have a fellow and naturopathic doctor here with me today. Many of you may know her because she's part of the DrTalks family Dr. Beverly Yates.

She is the nation's leader in online type two diabetes care and diabetes. And blood sugar regulation is just a huge, huge piece of managing your health of I always say we're going to balance your hormones, but we have to put your hormones into a happy, healthy terrain and having good blood sugar balance is definitely at the top of that list.

And so we're going to have a conversation today and share with you what you need to know for you to make sure you are preventing doing what you can do.

So welcome Dr. Beverly to the summit. It's an honor to have you here. Oh, thank you, Dr. Sharon Stills, it's a delight to be here. I appreciate your invitation, and I can't wait to have our conversation, because you and I both are aligned in making sure that the people that we serve and obviously here, the women on the summit really have great info, actionable insights, and can leave feeling inspired so they can take action now to make sure that the rest of their years are the best of their years.

Why Menopause Affects Blood Sugar

Yeah, I love that. That's that's like a bumper sticker. Okay, so let's just dive in because we are going to just give you the information you need. No messing around.

So, you know, just a start. Like why what's going on? Why is menopause such a sensitive time? I see it all the time in my practice where women who had good glycemic control, who had no problem with their blood sugars, and all of a sudden it's like things are going crazy.

And why is that? Yeah, that's a great question. So, you know, let's peel back the layers here. you know, similar to puberty where our reproductive window opens and many of us can remember our puberty being a time of transition.

And then now we're on the other end of that. Right. So with menopause, the transition now is leaving that fertility window. And in that journey a number of things are changing.

And I know you're going to cover this in depth on your summit and all the work you've done. One of the things that's changing is our estrogen levels are dropping.

Progesterone is dropping what is all right. The stress hormone is naturally rising. And it's an interesting dynamic because a lot of people may not be aware that with the release of stress hormone cortisol that rise, there is always, without your consent, an increase in the release of blood sugar of glucose to your bloodstream.

This means that your blood sugar levels on average may go up, so you may find where you had great glycemic control. No problems. You may not have had any, prediabetes or type type two diabetes issues.

Right. And A1 c of 4.8 and A1 see a 5.1 fasting 20 sugars in the 80s. That's awesome. That might start to change and you might be gone. What's happening?

Well, it's because the rest of this dance is unfolding. And for some of us, if it's also a time window, unfortunately, where we are stressed, whether it's financial stress, workplace stress, things to do with family, our household, our own personal health, caregiving, those are usually the five things they're going to affect.

any number of women over the course of that menopausal transition. Your blood sugar will go up even higher. And it's easy for this to get out of control unknowingly because it's silent.

You're not necessarily going to feel it, but you will see some changes and you might start to feel some changes too. So that's part of what's going on.

can you talk a little bit about what you might feel and what you might see, like, are there labs that you want the women asking for or a little more so they know get their checklist out?

Yeah. Get your checklist out. Right. So some of the things you might feel are that your stamina is shifting. You may not have the same energy that you used to have.

If you're one of these women who would wake up in the morning with like carpe diem, seize the day, couldn't wait to get your day going, you might find that you're not feeling so carpe diem anymore, right?

You know, you might like, oh, I want to snuggle. I want to stay in bed. You know all of that, right? That's one thing that it could shift. Another is the, ability to go without snacks between meals.

Some people find themselves in the midst of a menopausal transition, becoming very snack ish, as I call it. And if you're usually someone who eats meals and isn't snacking all the time, you might find that starts to shift.

In fact, you might find that you're shifting towards craving things that are either sweet or savory or more umami, more high calorie foods. And you're not giving your blood sugar a chance to rest between meals.

If you're snacking between meals, your blood sugar is not resetting to a healthy, normal range, and this can start to be a compounding, factor and issue with the changes that are naturally happening because of the decrease in estrogen and decrease over just around an increase in cortisol, these all have a role to play.

Some other things you might notice is you are more likely to be irritable. Now I want to make a distinction here, Dr. Stills that I think is really important.

There is this thing around the world.

Symptoms and Signs to Watch For

It seems that often in many cultures, women and females are expected to be pleasant and sociable at all times. I'm not here to say that that's our job, okay?

We can be fierce, we can be friendly. We can be very chill. We can be aggressive. We have to be all the things. I'm simply saying, if you own perception, you might feel that the leash is shorter.

Yeah. You know that phrase that, like a woman who doesn't suffer any fools that might be a little more prominent at this moment, and that's fine. But that also might start to shift, and you'll find that blood sugar is an issue.

You might find that the bottom drops out of your blood sugar. You might be more vulnerable to low blood sugar moments, hypoglycemia. And then with hypoglycemia, too much blood sugar.

You might find that you're kind of spacey, kind of foggy. You can't really focus. You know, that blood sugar

rollercoaster is a real thing. Yeah. I think there's two points you just brought up about snacking right.

Like I'm like okay the kitchen is closed. Do what you got to do women. If, if you got to put a lock or a sign or closed the door or whatever it is. But we have to get used to being okay with not just stuffing our feelings and eating all the time.

The, you know, the refrigerator is a great modern invention, but there's some backlash to it if you're constantly going to it. And so I think it's great to, you know, use that fridge as like with signs or reminders.

So as you're going open the door, you're like, wait a second, I just ate an hour ago. I don't need to be eating again because I think of it also from an innovative perspective.

And if you're constantly eating, it's like there's your agony is just on overdrive and there's no way to cleanse and you just start getting very congested.

And thank you for saying we get to be everything right. We get to experience the whole range of emotions and ultimately it's up to us. I know sometimes when I'm getting like super irritable or cranky, I'm like, wait a second.

This I'm getting very annoyed at the person in front of me online. Like, why is that happening? I have to take it back to me. Did I not get enough sleep, am I not?

Did I not get enough protein? Did I not exercise like so? It's that self-responsibility, but also that ability to say I get to be me. I get to express the full range.

We don't have to be these prim and proper that that's old school thinking we are. Women hear us roar, right? Absolutely. It's our time to shine. You know, I think that the way this is set up, sometimes there's, or most of the time, at least here in the US, there's not enough, in my opinion, respect for the different phases of a woman's life.

And it's often like, you kind of can't win, like you're damned if you do and damned if you don't, you know? and in the case of the menopausal transition, I feel like all that life energy that was tied up in fertility and reproduction is now being regifted back to us.

That's a tremendous transition. If you think about the spiritual implications of that, the energetic and implications of that, the physical implications of that, all of the various realms.

It's a time where we should be able to coalesce and bring that power back to ourselves. Probably before menopause. We have been pouring into others. We may have been pouring into a career, pouring into children, perhaps other close intimate relationships, whatever it may be.

Now it's a time to corral all that amazing generosity. Frankly, we've given to the world and get it back for us. there you go. That's it. Women. That's all you need to hear, right?

Using CGMs to Understand Glucose Trends

It's like it's so true. so. Okay, but I want to go back to blood sugar. So I'm curious what your thoughts are on continuous glucose monitors and do you utilize them?

And could you just kind of speak to that for the women listening? Yeah. I'm happy to share with you about this. Yes I do use continuous glucose monitor CGM.

In fact, I happen to have one here handy because much of my work has been that integration between naturopathic medicine. So natural approaches to these lifestyle primary care kinds of issues like diabetes and applying that the data, the information we can get from a CGM, a continuous glucose monitor. Right.

My prior background is electrical engineering from MIT, living and working in Silicon Valley. Love math and science

and numbers and data, but I love people more so people can be served by numbers instead of overwhelmed.

So we look for trends when we're looking for how do you use a CGM or continuous glucose monitor? So that way the information is an overwhelming. It can give you actionable insights so you can start to see, hey, does my blood sugar really be set in the middle overnight?

Or do I have an outsized spike, let's say around 4 or 5:00 in the morning? What is that about? Am I someone who maybe struggles with going to sleep? Maybe I have insomnia.

Maybe I go to sleep, can't stay asleep, you know, things like that. But sugar often will track it. Maybe you have food intolerances, food sensitivities, and you'll find that your blood sugar often gets on the blood sugar rollercoaster, so goes up and down or the bottom drops out.

You might have, hypoglycemia when you eat things that really aren't in agreement with your body. And CGM can absolutely help us point that out. Or maybe we're just trying to figure out I'm a tablet and I'm like, where did my materialism go?

I used to have one student abandoned me, right? It really can give you info. Again, the idea is to look for trends and actionable insights. Really, really helpful.

And to get more familiar with how your body is responding in this this moment. I will say one thing about Ktms everyone needs to know this. This is important.

CGM data is about 15 minutes too late in terms of its blood sugar number. So if you want to get a drop of blood by, you know, sticking your skin, getting a drop of blood, putting on a test strip, inserting this test strip into the glucometer, that reading is real time because it's actually from the blood.

If you have a CGM which is attached to your arm very simply, this reading is delayed by 15 minutes because it's actually assessing the, the situation for glucose in your fat cells.

So there's a slight delay. So just know it's not going to be a 1 to 1 correlation. It's close. That's good to know. Yeah I've really found because I used to think oh I'm so cool.

I don't just run glucose I run hemoglobin A1, C. But I find now that even that could be misleading. And just to get a CGM on, even if it's for a couple of months just to really get the data, is so important to see your own bio individuality and how your blood sugar.

And I think so many things that often we feel are troubling us. Like you mentioned, sleep energy, brain fog can often just be a blood glucose. And it's an issue of like okay, yeah okay.

And so yeah, so that's really important that you I love I love that you have it. That was not planned that you just happened to have one there. Yeah. Speaking of that bio individuality, this is where we could make those distinctions.

Even twins, triplets, quadruplets, people do not have identical responses to things. So what might be a healthy food or meal plan for one person might not be the best thing for someone else.

And so when people have these puzzling reactions or they're like, why do I always feel so spacey or I don't feel well or my energy lags? You know, often it's things like this that are going on behind the scenes, and without that data, you would not know exactly.

So what do you think the most common mistake women make during menopause that affects their blood sugar? Like, what are some of these things that we hear out there that you're like, no, no, no, that is not true.

Yeah. There's two things that come to mind. One is that the whole concept of women, women having energy, our

own energy for ourselves, like put your own air mask on first before assisting others around us.

Common Mistakes and the Yates Protocol

So making sure that we are doing our self-care, and we often aren't thinking of it that way, that we really have to prioritize ourselves and that that is necessary.

You can't help others if you haven't helped yourself, right? So the word no is a complete sentence. The other mistake that's going to come up is the need to stay vigilant during the menopause transition around maintaining your precious muscle mass.

Because active working muscles are blood sugar sponges, they are needed in order to have good glycemic control. And ladies, I'm telling you, if you're thinking that you need to just, oh, you know, lift 2 pound weights, no, you need to do 2 to 3 weeks.

Get your form down real well so you don't hurt yourself. You won't be injured after that. Go heavy. Do yourself a favor. It will be the gift of a lifetime.

If you build your musculature, you can avoid falls, hip fractures, all these other things that tend to take people out of this life quickly and with a lot of pain. It's unnecessary suffering.

Having a working, active blood sugar, sponge like your precious, beautiful muscles will keep you out of trouble with blood sugar issues. It's the number one thing.

I don't think people really know about that. Like you can't exercise a bad diet. Obviously you got to eat healthy foods, foods that give you a great blood sugar response.

But you must, you must you must keep those muscles active and moving and strong. Yes it is. I always talk about marrying the mind and the body when we're healing, and we have to marry the diet and exercise.

It's not a if or it's a yes and thank you. And so I'm thinking well like such rate just tips that I'm pulling out of just what you're saying. No is a complete sentence lift heavy things.

utilize a continuous glucose monitor, have an understanding, have a relationship with what your blood glucose is so that you know, if it is, in fact, affecting you and understanding that stress is happening as hormones are dropping, that's stressful to the body.

And it's important to to take care of your stress. Have good self-care. So you have the Yates Protocol for Healthy Blood Sugar and I'm just curious if you could just talk about it.

Tell us what it is. you know, I'm just want to know all about it. Sure. I'm happy to share. So I recently signed a book deal, and we anticipate the book will be released in early 2026.

The working title, thank you for working title is The Yates Protocol five No Shame steps to fix your blood sugar and eat the food you love. And in it we have five no shame steps.

They are nutrition. We all know nutrition is going to be the bullseye, the target for all blood sugar things. But it's not the only story. Next would be meal timing, the time of day you eat your food and what's on that plate matters there.

There are some things there that truly are not obvious. You know, after 30 plus years of clinical work and the thousands of people I've helped with this, I'm really clear about, we need to do a better job as health professionals and medical experts and explaining to people what it is and why, right?

So now we talk about nutrition and meal timing. Our next step here is going to be stress. Being aware that stress can be a bully and hijack your blood sugar.

And to understand what it's doing and why, we need to have a proactive strategy about what will work for us for stress relief. Because people once again, they're different, right?

We have bias, individual responses. Someone who loves and is interested in conflict and mediation will be fabulous in stressful situations for most people because it's calming to them.

They know how to navigate the conflict. They're okay. Someone else who is like a martial arts instructor likes to fight. They too will be calm in the situation that most of us would say no thank you.

Now those same people might not thrive so much if they were working in a preschool. Completely different environment. That makes sense. Yeah, right. It's different.

We're different and so with that in mind, you have to understand how stress is affecting you. And having CGM really can make it clear to you what's working, what's not working. Number four is going to be sleep.

Sleep is so precious that sleep is where all healing happens. And sleep, unfortunately, can be part of a menopausal transition that's less than optimal.

This sometimes gets really quite blown up for us as women. And it's very important to protect your sleep. Do whatever you have to. You got to sleep. You have to be able to rest and restore and repair.

It happens when you're asleep, not when you're super active. Number five will be exercise and strength training and making sure you're not working too hard.

Because I see some people in the gym for an hour and a half, two hours a day. Wow, that's a lot of cortisol being released. It's too much. So for all the goodness that they're getting from their aerobic exercise, etc., they are pounding themselves.

If you just can't do it. If you look at what professional athletes do, Olympians, etc., they make sure they rest, they repair, they restore, they don't pound themselves into the ground.

So if they're not doing it, why would the rest of us do that right now? That's what I'm saying. You get to be a blob and never move. I'm not saying that, but we're looking for that balance and we're going to focus and emphasize on strength training.

And for women about age 45 to 5052, it becomes from the science that we know, the research exercise three times a week in terms of the strength training portion and going heavy is the way to win.

When we're talking about blood sugar management. I love it, I love it, I love it. So when you talk about meal timing, I always come from the perspective of eat your largest meal in the middle of the day.

And I'm just curious if you have any tips for the ladies listening about what you think about meal timing. Yeah, so we're meal time integrate question.

I was just thinking of a specific patient. So this is perfect to share the story about this. I have a patient that I worked with now for about 17 years.

And when we first met her original part of her story was she had prediabetes. Her, entire mother's side of her family had all kinds of insulin resistance and blood sugar issues.

They weren't all necessarily diabetic, but they were sensitive to the kinds of carbohydrates that they ate.

Meal Timing, Strength Training, and a Case Study

One of the things she liked to do was to go out with her friends mid-day for lunch when she was at work, and there

was a restaurant that had fries that were, cooked in duck fat.

She loved these fries. And they would go out and have the duck fat fries and a big platter of nachos, etc. and so that was her lunch. Now, if you're thinking about what that was, that's mostly simple carbohydrates in the way of the chips.

Lots and lots of gooey cheese. Right. And the duck fat fries, which would be white potatoes dipped in oil and cooked in fat. So this was really a blood sugar bomb.

Bomb, bomb one and two. Was that. And so she was finding that her weight was going up. The fat on her belly was going up. she was feeling really tired and lethargic.

When she originally came to me. She was worried she was going to lose her job because she was really not so productive. People could see how tired and sleepy she was.

After lunch. There were a lot of clues here about what wasn't working, so she loved to belly dance. One of the things we worked on was increasing her belly dance, so that she would do her routine for 20 minutes a day, the days of the week when she wasn't with the belly dance troupe, because I thought that was such a great communal thing.

It was very empowering. She loved to be able to perform, but I didn't want her to wear herself out, and because her job was sedentary, I felt that if she got 20 minutes on her off days of just movement, that would be enough.

Then we shifted what she was eating so that when she went out, she had a different strategy, you know, helped her look at the restaurant menu. Here's what you can order.

Make sure your friends understand you're not trying to be one of the girls or non collegial, but you got to do this for your health so you can decide you're going to have 5 or 6 of the chips.

You're not going to plow into an entire bowl. Okay. So I'm not saying zero I'm saying some restraint. And meanwhile you're going to have that with a salad.

You're going to get the salad and you're going to add on. You can choose from and they give you options, you know, like the wild caught salmon, the beef.

You could go with garbanzo beans, other kinds of beans. There's lots of ways to get the protein in here. But you have to be strategic. You can't decide you're going to have all carbs and simple carbs for that matter.

and it burns so fast. They're basically sugar, right along with this high fat and expect to win. And in her case, she had a goal. She wanted to be able to lose weight specifically around her belly, and she wanted to be able to fit into some dresses she used to enjoy wearing.

And after about six months commitment to that, it worked for her. It wasn't. And she realized she felt better. And interestingly enough, as she dropped dramatically how much she was eating in the way of those simple carbohydrates, the cravings went away so she didn't feel like she was suffering.

So it's so I love it when people get pulled forward into something healthy, because now they can take the reins and make it work, because they feel for themselves that they feel better.

And that's a great story. And that's so, as you were saying, and I'm saying to myself, as you're saying it, and her cravings went away because of that.

So for those of you listening like that is what happen. And so if you're being pulled, as Doctor Beverly says, by cravings, if you can, you know, you have to kind of it's like muscle through sometimes.

But once you get to the other side, it's like they don't own you anymore. And often cravings are due to nutrient deficiencies. Or I always think in the terms of sweet things when from an emotional perspective, it can be craving sweetness in your life.

If you don't have enough joy and you're not loving on yourself enough. So I think it all just starts building back in on each other. The things that you have shared with us today that are so, so important, and I love that you are including stress in your book.

oh my God, Mazel tov on your book. That's so exciting. I can't wait to read it. Thank you. And I always say stress is 99.999999999% of all that's going on.

And it's not about getting rid of stress. I think when we die, I think maybe we don't have stress, but if you're alive and in the human body, then you're going to have stress and it's learning how to dance with it, how to relate to it, how to respond to it, rather than knee jerk reaction and getting all crazy.

And really, what is that it's like, is it going to matter in five minutes, five weeks, five months, five years? And really putting it into perspective?

Because sometimes and often to just tie it all back in, often when our blood sugar is off. That's what I was trying to say before, you know, we get crazy about something that we're like, wait a second, this is not worth getting myself all hung up.

You know, this is not an issue. So what's going on with me? And have I not fed my body today? Have I not slept? Have I not moved all these wonderful things that you're talking about?

So thank you so much for coming and sharing with us. Is there any last words of wisdom? Because you're just like wisdom bombing us that you want to share with the women about blood sugar, about menopause?

And of course, where can we find you? For those who want to learn more. Okay, so, with this in mind, one more thing to share is just please be kind to yourself.

Recognize whatever stage you're in and whatever age you're at. And we all have seasons we go through in life. Some seasons are more demanding than others and pull in the people that you love and who are close to you.

Let them know what's going on. If you can, and if the people that you thought were on your team turn out to not be good teammates, it's time to recruit others.

One of the best piece of advice that my mother gave me, my dear mother, who's now, departed I'd love to share with everyone is to make it a point to make friends with women who are a variety of ages, women who are older, women who are your age and absolutely women who are younger.

Let's be friends and bring each other forward together as a community, knowing we're going to need different things as time shifts, because, you know, we don't really know what the future's going to bring, but we do know we need each other.

So that's the message I'd like to to leave people with where you can find me.

Final Advice and Community Support

My website is naturalhealthcare.com natural spelled just like you would think. N A T U R A L H E A L T H C A R E.com and I'm on the social media channels @drbeverlyyates including YouTube.

I'm going to get that wig. When real soon. That's inspiring. I love what you just said. I, when I used to live in Tucson, we had a group of women that we all would hang out and go to dinner and go listen to live music.

And we had a 20 year old, a 30 year old. At the time, I was the I was representing the 40 year olds had 50, 60, 70 and 80 and it was so awesome. So I love that I, I don't live in Tucson anymore.

And you just reminded me I need to recreate that because there's such value. And and the younger can learn from the elders, and the elders can learn from the younger.

And it is really such a beautiful thing. And yes, if you walk away with nothing else from being here all the days at the summit, is to just learn to have kindness and love to yourself that you are.

You're doing the best you can and that it's it's enough and you're enough. And to really pour into yourself. I use that oxygen mask. term all the time that we need to, you know, take care of ourselves before we take care of others.

We need to fill our own watering can so we can then water others. And now, more than ever at this menopausal transition, no matter where you are on your hormonal journey, it's time to just own that.

If you haven't owned it, that's okay. Don't beat yourself up. Be kind. Just work on what you can do to start owning it now. So thank you so much, Dr. Beverly.

You're just such a joy, such a force of wisdom and wellness in the world. And I really look forward to reading your new book. And, just thank you for being a part of the summit and coming and sharing with the women.

You're welcome, Dr. Sharon. I'm hopeful everyone will get what they need and get their own cup filled. Yes. Okay. Well, you ladies, you've got lots of wisdom and lots of tasks from this.

So and you know, and I love that we we talked about the things emotionally but also physically getting a CGM, lifting heavy things and so forth. So think about even if it's just one thing, what's an action step you're going to take.

And I look forward to seeing you at the next interview. Bye for now.