The Truth About Stomach Acid: Why Low Acid, Not High, Causes Heartburn Transcript

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Introduction to Laura Frontiero

Well. My next guest is my good friend Laura Frontiero. She is the founder and CEO of Bio Radiant Health, the creator of nine online functional Medicine Health Summits, and has served thousands.

I think it's probably tens of thousands of patients, to be honest, in the clinic and in her online virtual setting as a nurse practitioner over the last 25 years.

Laura's focus is to solve the root cause of chronic health conditions by supporting cellular energy production, gut health, and detoxing the whole body.

And her work in the health industry really marries both traditional and functional medicine, and she's known by her community lovingly as the Energy Lady.

So welcome, Laura. Thank you Jason, it is so nice to be back with you. I mean, we've done so many projects together and I'm just so happy to be talking to you again.

Absolutely. And we're going to get into, kind of fundamental stuff, really digestion and all the things that can go wrong. But first, you actually have four pillars that you'd like to talk about in your practice.

Maybe you can just kind of start us off there, because I think this is the sets, like a groundwork for who you are and how you really think about health.

Oh my gosh. Yes. So, you know, when I very first started out in the functional medicine space, I was really trying to figure out how do I get people feeling better?

And I trial and error in a bunch of things. And after many years and actually kind of probably making things worse for people by not knowing exactly how all this worked.

I finally settled on. I'm going to stay in my lane. I'm going to stay right where I know if we solve these certain problems, then most things start to get better.

And so the, the really the four pillars that everything in our practice is founded on is that there's a root cause for the way you're feeling, the way you are, and that your body can heal.

And those four things would be chronic infections, not just in the gut, but anywhere in the body. Toxins. I mean, we are in the toxic age, right? We have to solve for toxins and nutrient deficiencies, which, interestingly, nutrient deficiencies aren't just because we have, you know, depleted farming practices or even poor eating right like that.

Right? Or poor eating or ultra processed food. It's because of those first two things.

The Four Pillars of Root-Cause Health

So nutrient deficiencies are actually created in the body by infections and by toxic overload, because it requires a lot more nutrients for your body to actually handle and solve for those things.

So we end up, being nutrient deficient just because we're so sick. We can't solve this with just our regular eating. And then the fourth thing would be boy stress and stored trauma.

Two huge factors that will prevent people from healing. And we can literally do everything right. We could give them the perfect protocols, the perfect lab testing, the perfect everything.

And if those things aren't addressed, people just get stuck and they don't get better. Yeah, I love this because, you know, having something really this is kind of my wrap.

Two is a practitioner's I started with what I knew, then my knowledge base grew and I would say the complexity of my practice grew. In other words, I was just doing more exotic stuff and trying to incorporate more and more and more because I was learning more.

And of course, it's so complex, right, that we can just keep adding more. And then I got to the point where it's like, okay, this is actually taking away from my results and and making it harder to be a practitioner, to be honest.

So really simplifying and sticking to these core principles, these core pillars that you mentioned, to me is really where I ended up. And, and I think that's really the way you get good results is you stick to the really big levers and the main things that are driving dysfunction.

And you do you don't get distracted with all of these other things. Yeah. I mean, it's funny because everybody, you know, in my community will get distracted and they want my opinion on, well, what about this medication and what about this medical condition and what and I and I to bring it back, are we focusing on the root reasons that this is happening?

And are you supporting those systems in your body so that you can solve this? It's always like coming back to basics, right? Yep. And it's like once you get that dialed, then you can maybe start adding some things or whatever.

But but even then, like through the lens of those four pillars to me is, is the really the the appropriate approach. So one of the main things that you really focus on, especially at the beginning, I know with your clients is on digestion and maybe just give me, just a quick primer, right.

This I mean, digestion, okay. It's like, well, we eat food and we digest it. Why is this such? When this goes wrong, what happens? Why is this such a big deal for you to focus on and get right with your clients?

I mean, this is huge. And and we see it play out in every aspect of healing, whether they're trying to support immune system, whether our clients are trying to, support their brain neurotransmitters and their mood, whether they're trying to eliminate pain in their body.

And ultimately, I mean, I think we've all heard the concept of you. You are what you eat is not entirely accurately true because you are what you digest.

And if you ingest food and you can't break it down to the smallest molecules that make up the food, if you can't extract the nutrients, then how are you to support building up neurotransmitters in the brain so that you have a stable mood?

How do you make dopamine? How do you make serotonin? How do you make epinephrine norepinephrine? How do you balance that? And how do you protect memory if you can't even extract the nutrients?

How do you build mitochondria ATP energy to support every process in the human body? If you can't extract the fatty acids from the food and the carbohydrates from the food to actually put into that energy production cycle.

So if you don't digest, you truly can't heal you. It becomes a, an uphill, frustrating cycle of trying out. Well, I tried this bio hack and I tried this supplement and I tried this.

And at the end of the day, if you cannot extract nutrients from your food, and if you were to learn anything from this talk today, if you can't extract nutrients from your food, you're never going to fully resolve what you're trying to achieve.

You'll get a little bit better. I mean, we're going to extract some nutrients, but not fully what you need. And really, if you digest well, then you don't have to supplement so much.

You don't just supplement amino acids, for example. I mean, so many people, we run tests and see amino acid, deficiencies. And at the end of the day, if we can just get people to improve their hydrochloric acid in their stomach, then they could start to extract these amino acids from protein, and we wouldn't have to supplement them so much.

But getting people to do the digestive piece, it's so easy. And yet it is one of the things that I run up against the most in my community of people not taking the simple steps.

It's yeah, it's a it's like two basic to really even focus on right. Like we wanted to skip to the complex stuff, especially since we're working with a, with a knowledgeable practitioner.

It's like, okay, well get me to the exotic stuff. Give me to the stuff that, I don't know how to do. Right. Or I don't, I don't know what to focus on.

Right. There's a piece to digestion as well, like the other side of digestion that maybe you could touch on. Well, which is elimination. Right. So if we don't digest our food well then that's going to inhibit or prevent us from proper elimination.

Why is that such a problem? Well, because you get a buildup, right. So the elimination is like the daily bowel elimination.

Why Digestion Is the Foundation of Healing

We're supposed to excrete from our bowels the waste, the unprocessed food particles, the the toxins, the microbe, you know, byproducts of microbe metabolism.

And if you're backed up and you're not moving this out of the body every day, this is going to be, an energy steal. It's going to be a brain steel. It's going to be painful.

It's going to cause joint pain. So it's not only digestion on the top, but the digestive tract is really end to end, mouth to rectum. Right. This is the full tube, the full digestive track.

And if it's not working all the way through. And here's the crazy thing, Jason. So many people say I can't solve my constipation. I can't solve it. I can't solve it.

And interestingly, solving constipation starts with what's happening up above. It starts with what's happening with chewing mastication, taking time, liquefying your food.

And then the next step is this hydrochloric acid in the stomach that's going to start extracting nutrients in order to solve constipation. For many people it's starting with the stomach.

It's starting with hydrochloric acid and building that back up so that as this bolus moves through the body, it can actually be broken down to a point where it's easier to excrete.

It's wild how many people just ignore the digestion piece. And what's funny too is right. So we're not digesting. We're not, eliminating, which means we're not detoxing properly.

Right? We're not getting rid, like, we can do all the detox work that that we can find, but if we're not eliminating properly, then we're just going to spin our wheels at best.

And at worst, we may even sort of re deposit and move these toxins into other parts of the body. Right. So there's, there's that detox part. And then you have you mentioned constipation and we have gas and bloating and, and these other things too and Sibo.

Right. And then people are focusing on the gas. They're trying to focus on the ciba what food is causing what may not be the food per se. It's the fact that you're not digesting it and you're not moving it through the system. Right.

So I think I know you've seen this a lot. I've seen this a lot too, where people are focusing downstream. And as you mentioned, they're not thinking about the upstream issues and they're just focusing on the bacteria.

So when you're focusing downstream, you're focusing on the bacteria that lives down there, when really it's the it's the environment, the terrain. What are you doing that is making that environment really cozy for those bacteria?

And that's the thing too, right? So if we're not if we're not digesting, our proteins or fats or carbohydrates, then they're going to be slowly moving through the system, not broken down properly, which means generally that these are going to purify.

This is going to attract various types of infections. Right. Candida being sort of the most, I guess, common or obvious one that people are dealing with.

But blastocysts is harmonies and other parasites and and and protozoa and all these things that we naturally come in contact with. We're now setting up a terrain where they're going to thrive because we can't digest, break down, and move this stuff through the system.

Yeah, absolutely. So you mentioned hydrochloric acid. You mentioned the stomach. So let's, let's, let's really focus there because I think this is where I know you've had a ton of success when you can get people to take action. What what is it about hydrochloric acid that makes it so important?

And what's causing this disruption? Why do we why do we what's the what's the dysfunction from. Okay, well, let's first explain why it's important and what it is.

Because I feel like there's a lot of misconception here, especially because the Western model, which I worked in for 25 years, says we should suppress stomach acid.

If you're feeling indigestion, heartburn, if you have any type of gastric upset whatsoever. The, immediate reaction is to give an acid blocking drug. So acid has been demonized by the Western model.

And and what we really want to do is promote s stomach acid. So I think we need to start with what is stomach acid and why it's important. So, you know, if you've been working on on solving gut issues like bloating, like food sensitivities, like pain in your like diarrhea, like constipation, like whatever's going on.

If if you don't have stomach acid, if you've been trying to support your mitochondria energy production, if you've been trying to balance your hormones, if you've been trying to solve pain, you're still going to kind of feel stuck because it's a missing piece that almost no one talks about and that the Western space demonizes.

So at the end real quick, Laura, so and you're also talking about the person that doesn't necessarily have heartburn. They don't have this sort of noticeable effect.

In other words, they wouldn't really know that they have low stomach acid right. Yeah they wouldn't. Some people don't have that feeling right. Some people many people have low stomach acid without heartburn, indigestion or upper GI symptoms.

So you need to think about stomach acid as a sparkplug. I think I think that thinking of it as the thing that sets the whole digestive engine in motion is really supportive here. So.

So what does it do? Actually, you mentioned, Jason, that if you eat food and it doesn't break down, it purifies, right? So what purifies in the body is protein.

So it breaks protein down and it breaks it down into those amino acids which I mentioned earlier are the building

blocks for brain neurotransmitters are also the building blocks for hormones.

They're the building blocks essentially for all of your tissues. The other thing hydrochloric acid does is it actually unlocks minerals from food. So when you think about, minerals like zinc, magnesium, calcium, all super important. Everybody knows about those minerals.

You want zinc for your immune system. You want magnesium for your heart and for sleep and for tissue. You want calcium for bones. So this is really important to unlock that from the food.

So could you imagine if you're taking a chronic acid reducer and not able to unlock those nutrients. It also acts as a disinfectant. So think of hydrochloric acid as your first line of defense against some of those things.

You just mentioned fungus, right? Candida parasites. You mentioned blastocysts and also just pathogenic bacteria that should never be in the human body.

Bacteria like certain strains of B coli salmonella, there's many bacteria that shouldn't. If we eat it, we should be able to kill it in the stomach. And it shouldn't be moving through the system and causing problems.

It also does something really important. Hydrochloric acid triggers downstream digestion. So we talked about how important it is, to have this triggering in the top of the digestive system for the rest of the digestive system to work.

Elimination, Detox, and the Gut Terrain

So bile from your liver is actually stimulated by hydrochloric acid production and enzymes from the pancreas to help you digest your fats. Your carbs and your proteins are actually stimulated from hydrochloric acid.

So if you've suppressed this now, all these other systems in the digestive track, including the pancreas and the liver, are not doing what they should.

So the the pearl of here, the pearl of wisdom here for all of our listeners is if stomach acid is low, the entire digestive domino chain just collapses.

And you're not just missing nutrients, you're actually inviting invaders in, pathogens in and once I learned this, Jason, I mean, I lived in the Western model.

I prescribed all the acid reducers. Boy, now, now that I know different, once you see it, you can't unsee it. And I just don't understand how the Western model hasn't figured this out.

I mean, how a gastroenterologist keep prescribing proton pump inhibitors like candy? I don't get it. I don't get it because it messes everything else up.

I'm with you. And I think what further complicates this, this perception of this story for the the client or patient who was actually working in sort of a functional way, is they might be taking digestive enzymes and they might feel better when they do that.

And it's like, okay, the thought is, well, my pancreas is not doing its job. I need these. And it's like, well, but what if hydrochloric acid is the missing signal and your pancreas is not doing a job because of that?

Right, exactly. It actually stimulates pancreatic, enzyme release. So there's this huge ripple effect when you have low stomach acid. So a lot of our viewers here are wanting to improve their energy.

If you can't break down protein into amino acids, then you can't make carnitine, which is made in the body from two amino acids, lysine and methionine.

And without carnitine, you can't shuttle fatty acids into the mitochondria to make energy. And I know this is kind of

scientific, but I know our audience also appreciates kind of understanding the why behind it.

All right. So low stomach acid equals chronic fatigue. On the brain side of things. There's amino acids that are really important here. Tryptophan becomes serotonin.

Tyrosine becomes dopamine. But only if you digest protein not if you just ingest it. The key here is digesting it. So the result is anxiety, depression poor focus feeling like you can't keep up with your brain.

I mean obviously we talked about digestive dysfunction and heartburn. So and reflux often being treated as too much acid. But low acid means food sits and ferments and purifies, so it causes a pressure that pushes stomach content contents upward.

And then there's just some basic nutrient deficiencies that can occur. I mean, we've talked a lot about protein digestion and amino acids, but hydrochloric acid is needed actually to extract vitamins, not just minerals from the nutrients.

Are the, excuse me, the vitamin nutrients from your food. So a good example would be B12. It's needed to support nerve health, mood, energy. There's even a type of anemia that's caused by B12 deficiency because you can't get it, extract it out of your food.

You know, hydrochloric acid helps you extract iron. It's needed to prevent fatigue. It's needed to prevent hair loss. There's a big one that all women want to know.

How do I prevent airlocks? Right. Hydrochloric acid could be an answer. And then zinc. We briefly talked about that, but it's needed to support immunity and wound healing.

And even stomach acid production. So there's this vicious cycle with zinc where you need zinc to produce stomach acid, but you also need stomach acid to extract zinc from the food.

So you get into this cycle of not enough and it's a problem. And then I think the final thing that we have to shed light on here, Jason, is, food sensitivities, right?

Because your people develop these food sensitivities throughout a lifetime, and it's because poorly digested proteins, you know, these fragments of protein leak from the gut, from the intestines into the bloodstream, and then your immune system sees it as a foreign particle that shouldn't be there, and it triggers an immune response, and that triggers a food sensitivity.

So, you know, it's just a it's just a cycle of constant suffering for people when they don't solve this. Yeah. I hear you. And there's there's one thing I want to clarify too, because we intimated at it, but I want to get real clear.

So if somebody's suffering from heartburn, right.

Hydrochloric Acid and Low Stomach Acid

Acid indigestion is that too much stomach acid or too little stomach acid? What's really the cause there? Yeah, oftentimes it's caused by too little or excuse me, it's caused by too little.

Not too much stomach acid, and it's caused by the pH being off. And so when the pH isn't right and the and the food can't digest and it sits there and creates pressure, it'll push the contents of the stomach back up through that sphincter and cause heartburn.

So it's it's literally counterintuitive because we think, oh, I need to take an acid reducer to solve this. But truly, it's a it usually is a problem of not a not enough stomach acid, not too much.

It's it's wild. And I just can't even. Jason I can't even wrap my mind around where we went wrong with this one. I

mean, it's like follow the money trail.

That's all I'm going to say. Even then, it's just such a it's such a wild error that that seems it's again, it's, it's it's interesting that we haven't corrected this.

It's so basic and it's such a fundamental piece to the digestive picture that if we don't get this right, then we're setting ourselves up for years and decades of further issues.

Right? I mean, I think, you know, we we've talked about this, but it's like it's really we're saying, again, this is so fundamental to your health that if we don't get this right, this could be the first domino that sets off a chain reaction of dysfunctions that leads to cancer, dementia, autoimmune.

It's like literally the worst chronic diseases that you can think of. This could be one of the central pillars. And the first piece is that that goes wrong because it's all tied together.

It is. And I think we need to talk about all the causes next. So there's a lot of reasons. So first, I want everybody to know that low stomach acid is usually not just one thing.

For most people, it's a combination because everybody always wants the one thing. Right, Jason? What's the one thing that I can do to solve this? But it's usually a combination.

It's a combination of stress physiology. It's a combination of years of acid suppressing drugs. It's a combination of aging. We can talk about that. Like, I'm not a fan of blaming anything on aging, but there is actually a physiologic process that occurs in the body that decreases hydrochloric acid.

You know, it's gaps in nutrition throughout our lifetimes. And sometimes it's infections are toxins. So the first big one that I think both of us, I mean, we've taught so many classes together and done so many summits together.

It's and you know, we always focus on this is is sympathetic dominance. So this stress induced sympathetic dominance when you're in this fight or flight mode what happens is so you're stressed out right.

Stressed out by watching the news, stressed out by your family, stressed out by your kids, stressed out by your neighbors, stressed out by whatever's going on work.

And when you're in this fight or flight stress, blood is actually shunted away from the stomach and the intestines. Towards what? Towards the things that are going to keep you in this fight or flight.

Your muscles, your heart, your brain. That's where all the energy goes. And digestion is not a priority for survival. So acid production just shuts down.

And we're in this situation now where people are in chronic fight or flight. So especially when they eat too, right? Yeah. Yes. Eating at your lunch, at your desk, scrolling Instagram behind your phone and watching YouTube and or turning on the news or rushing around in traffic, you know, grabbing a quick bite to eat in between.

You know, whatever you're doing. This puts you into that stress physiology. You could literally eat the most perfect meal perfectly organic, toxin free, balanced, and not digest it because you're stressed out.

Yeah. In fact, there's research on this that, they if they looked at somebody, you think they used McDonald's hamburgers? They use some fast food. And the person that was, on the beach relaxed, had a good parasympathetic tone, was able to digest that and had lower inflammation than somebody eating.

And I forgot what it was, but a healthier meal that was stressed out. Oh my gosh, that is a brilliant study. Yeah. And it's and this is I think in the West, this is this is too much of what we do.

Right. We focus on what we're eating, which is good. We need to do that, no question. But we forget about the

context in which we're eating. What time of day is it?

You know, are we eating in an airport? Rushing. Right. Are we under pressure? Under pressure. And just how fast? Like the the the habitual aspect of us eating, even when we have time to eat.

Many of us are so habituated to scarfing down our food, myself included. This is a constant, mindful practice for me to to slow down, take smaller bites, chew more thoroughly, and just kind of be here in the moment while I eat.

I love you said this, so I'm going to use my dad as an example because he always said, you know, he was he was retired from the Navy by the time I was old enough to remember that I had a dad or know that I had a dad, I think he retired when I was a couple years old, and my whole life I watched him wolf down his food, just wolf it down.

Even if we were in a nice restaurant, even if we were sitting around the family table, he'd be done before everybody. And he always said it was a habit that he created in the Navy because he had his his shift to eat, and they were both down as much food as they could, and then they would go back on shift.

Right. It was just he was a submarine man, and it was a quick like, eat and get out. And he created that habit his whole life. He never slowed down. To this day, he still doesn't.

I think about a lot of the nurses, doctors, Wall Street types, attorneys. Like, there's just a lot of people, that are working construction. I mean, they have we just have these limited times.

Yeah. And we're trying to get so much done. And so we just compress the most important thing. We're guarding our health. Right? So okay, so we mentioned a lot of the issues that create.

Yeah aging. Let's talk about aging. And this is a big one. So we know that gastric acid output actually declines with age. By the time people are in their 60s or 70s.

There are many people who produce half or less of the hydrochloric acid that they did when they were younger, and as a result, we see in the older population more anemia, more B12 deficiency, more bone weakness, a higher incidence of gut infections oftentimes linked to low stomach acids.

So this aging piece, I mean, it's just a physiologic thing that happens with low lower stomach acid. So you might need support. And we can talk about how to support stomach acid here.

You know before we finish today some people are going to need support for the rest of their life. If if they're one of these where it declines with aging.

But think about it. Fatigue and memory decline, brittle hair and nails could actually be a nutrient malabsorption from low acid. You might not need more supplement supplemental nutrients, you might just need stomach acid to extract it from your food.

Yeah. And what I've seen, too, in, a lot of the elderly populations, you know, in 80 plus 90, a lot of them, because, they recognize that they're they're not able to digest these foods.

They stay away from them. Right? So they stay away from these things that they actually really do need, especially at that age, to, for regeneration, for healing.

Right, and wound repair for, of course, for brain, for sleep. Right. So because we struggle digesting them, they're kind of listening to their bodies in a way and saying, okay, well this doesn't I don't digest as well.

So I'm going to go to these other foods. Right. And then it kind of continues to spiral, in this decline. So so what is the solution? You know, let's just start with aging first.

Like they start with the most base case because we're all going to do that. How do we approach that. Well there's a

lot of things there's a lot of things to approach.

But I think we also need to talk about H. Pylori as a cause before I totally this is probably the biggest one. I mean, there's a lot, but let's talk at least about H.

Pylori and then let's, let's talk about how to solve it. But this is a big one. So H pylori is a bacteria that lives in the stomach and it suppresses stomach acid in order to survive.

So it actually changes the environment of your stomach. And it does this by producing a compound called ace. And it actually neutralizes stomach acid so that the bacteria can thrive in your stomach.

And the consequence over time is this chronic stomach acid production reduction. And then what results from that is damage to the gastric mucosa. And then, you know, we hear about people with H.

Pylori getting gastritis or ulcers or even stomach cancer. So I think, you know, of all the causes we have to at least give a nod to that one. And how do we get this working most common ways that we get this thing.

Yeah. So H pylori is an interesting one. We do think that it's part of the commensal bacteria, that it lives inside of all of us and that it polymorphs.

So Cleo morphism is when a bacteria or an organism becomes a more active irritating version of itself. So it changes a little bit. And there's a lot of theories on why this happens.

Causes of Low Stomach Acid

One of them being toxins and toxic load. We we think that that the body actually allows the bacteria to thrive to help neutralize some of the toxins that we're exposed to.

So that could be a reason. And then it's a double edged sword, because I just mentioned that H. Pylori will actually change the stomach to produce less acid.

But also if you are taking proton pump inhibitors, H2 blockers, or if you, if you've lost some of your stomach acid because of aging, this also creates the environment for H.

Pylori to thrive. So it's again, one of those vicious cycles where if the stomach acid is low to begin with, H. Pylori will come in and then it will further suppress it.

So it's a there's a lot of reasons for this. Also stress. We get back to stress all the time right. So many reasons why this happens. But you know, the one that we see a lot of in our community, we see it reversing once we move toxins out of the body.

This is a big one. So once the immune system can actually solve for toxins, the H. Pylori simmers down, which is pretty incredible. Okay, so how many people would you say are afflicted with H.

Pylori? Well it's interesting. So we run thousands of gut tests in our in our program each year. And I would say just from anecdotally, I'm not basing this on a research study.

I'm just basing this on what do I see? I would say 80 to 90% of the tests that I read show H. Pylori. It's a rare day that I have an H pylori that is under the detectable limit.

It's so common, and I think it's because our strength, we're all stressed out, we're all living in a toxic environment. We're all doing things that don't support digestion.

We're not chewing our food well enough. We're eating on the go. I mean, for a myriad of reasons. But we see this chronically in our in our community. And, you know, maybe it's because people are coming to our community

because they don't feel good.

I will say that we have a kind of a biased, group of people because they don't come here to me because they feel good. They don't come here because there's no symptoms.

They come here because there's a problem that nobody's been able to solve. And so I think it's it's one of the reasons we see so much H. Pylori. It's a culprit. Yeah.

But I would say like, I've seen the same thing in my practice, in myself, in my family. Like it the it doesn't take somebody that's suffering from a gut dysfunction to have H.

Pylori. Right. Like whenever I'm testing somebody, no matter what they're working on, whether it's hormonal imbalance, just you can name it and it's like it just shows up.

It's like it's it's so common that I think, again, I want to point to this because it doesn't. If you don't have gut symptoms, you still need to think about H.

Pylori. Like this is a very common thing that can be, contributing to whatever you're dealing with joint pain, skin issues. Right. So if your symptom is brain or if your symptom is low energy, think hydrochloric acid, H.

Pylori upper digestion. Could this we've got to check that. Have to. Yeah we have to. Absolutely. So so let's let's let's say let's let's start with the solution for H.

Pylori because that's such a prevalent thing. How do we approach that. Let's say we identify it and we have a high incidence of H. Pylori. What do we do.

Well it's interesting. So in the western space you take antibiotics and you take acid reducers. And it's so counterintuitive to me because acid reducers further create the environment that H.

Pylori can thrive. So I don't prescribe antibiotics or acid reducers. I kind of hung up my Western medicine prescription pad. I don't do that anymore.

So, first thing I would say is that this isn't a quick fix. This isn't a week of antibiotics and acid reducers, and you're good to go. This is this is going to take some time to solve this and for strengthening your immune system.

But the way that we approach it, Jason, is, number one, if it's depending on how high the H. Pylori reading is, if it's really sky high, the first thing that we want to do is start, giving herbs that will make the environment un, un uninhabitable for the H.

Pylori. Right. So mastic gum is one of the big things that helps kill pylori. The problem with the mastic gum is you have to take it at high doses, multiple times a day and on an empty stomach and consistently.

It's not something that you can be like, oh, I'm going to kind of do this. Like you want to be all in three times a day, high dose therapeutic, therapeutic dosing, you know, three times a day on an empty stomach, which is an hour before you eat or two hours after and absolutely consistently now a lot of practitioners will say, do it for a month, do it for two months, do it for three months, three months of mastic gum on that rigid.

That rigid of a plan is really tough. So we found that we do it for a month really, really consistently. We really coach people into you got to do this and commit to it.

Set alarms on your phone like having a product on hand. Don't run out. Like really do this after a month of high dose mastic gum therapeutic dose. Now we do a botanical challenge.

Now I don't have people with high high levels of pylori. I do the betaine challenge first because if we add hydrochloric acid into the stomach, well, while the H.

Pylori is still strong and thriving, it'll burrow deeper into the gastric mucosa to get away from that hydrochloric acid. Super hydrochloric acid is like poison to H.

Pylori. So we can talk more about how to do a betaine challenge, because it's one of the easiest ways to figure out if you need hydrochloric acid. But then we do a betaine challenge.

And then what we do, Jason, is we continue to work on solving for gut dysbiosis, and then we detox people's bodies. So then we go looking for mold, mycotoxins, heavy metals, environmental toxins, and then we help them move those things systematically, carefully and respectfully out of the body so that people don't drop their energy.

Horkheimer and feel terrible. I mean, you can really feel lousy on a detox if you don't do it in the right order. And I would say respectfully to the body for what you can handle.

So that's the long journey to eradicate H. Pylori. What if somebody doesn't have H. Pylori but they have low stomach acid. They've got all the symptoms. You know, they're not breaking down.

They're proteins. We can see it on tests. We have you know, again, just the basic symptoms. What what's your approach there. So so basically stimulating natural digestive secretions then.

So there's a lot of natural things that you can do to support this. So digestive bitters for example. And you know a digestive bitter you can get it from food foods like dandelion root, artichoke leaf, orange peel I don't know people that want to eat those in large amounts.

So just get a get a tincture that's bitter bitters. And that actually activates bitter receptors on the tongue, which then stimulates the vagus nerve back to that parasympathetic, you know, rest and digest.

It actually stimulates stomach acid and enzyme secretion. So this is amazing. If you do this before you start eating a few drops in the mouth, apple cider vinegar.

H. Pylori and the Stomach Acid Cycle

So you can start your day off with some apple cider vinegar a teaspoon diluted in water. I don't recommend you just take it straight, because it's tough on the enamel of the teeth and maybe drink it through a harsh too.

Yeah, yeah yeah, it's kind of tastes disgusting too, but that'll mildly acidify the stomach and it stimulates digestion. And then you can kind of achieve the same thing with lemon water too.

So you squeeze a lemon or lime, either one. It's fine. Squeeze that in warm water before meals and it'll gently start to stimulate, gastric acid secretion.

Other things that you can do is really strengthen that vagus nerve so the rest and digest. This is something Jason is a full on expert in. I brought him into our community many times to teach this.

But just remember, at the end of the day that hydrochloric acid production is a is parasympathetic driven. So again, it goes back to if you're eating in that stress mode, fight or flight, then your acid is going to shut down.

So some things that you can do is deep breathing before meals. It doesn't even it's not like you have to deep breathe for 30 minutes before you eat. 2 to 3 minutes of diaphragmatic deep breathing can help you get into that parasympathetic state.

Gratitude or mindful eating rituals. I mean, I know people over the years who pray every time before they eat, and I just think it's a beautiful, mindful habit to get into.

Well, there's probably a reason that it got established that way. Right? That verse that we're giving thanks and we have this gratitude and we pray, right.

Like even if you're not religious, then you can still have gratitude and you can still say thank you, right? And and really feel like the gratitude that you have for this meal or that is about to nourish you, and the gratitude farmers who who farmed the food.

And so the other piece, and I know you explain this so well, you have a phrase that you like to say, and you have to remind me what it is, but it's about chewing.

So chewing thoroughly, like, until it's liquid. And so what is it you always say? Yeah. So, you want to you want to chew your liquids and drink your solids?

That's right. You drink your solid. Yeah. And what that means, by the way, because it sounds very confusing, is that if you're eating liquid food, you even chewing.

So let's say you have an a smoothie or soup, right. And you're it doesn't really require chewing, but the act of chewing actually will help stimulate digestion.

Right. So even with a soup or something that doesn't need chewing, you can still masticate a little bit and that will help. But then of course, you eat something that requires lots of chewing.

You actually want to chew that until it's liquid, right? And like that would be ideal. That's hard. It's hard because this bolus naturally starts to this bolus of food will naturally start to push the back of your tongue where you're ready to swallow, and you have to consciously push it forward and chew it again, which which makes it important to take smaller bites.

In fact, I remember I had a I was at a friend's house. This was gosh, I was probably this is probably 1994. I was 14 or so and she was into yoga and I didn't even know what yoga was at that time. I thought she was very strange.

And, it's clear to me now that she was a student of our Veda. And in the Vedic tradition, because when I had a meal at at their house, she would make me chew my food.

I think it was 20 or 30 times. And I'm like, what's wrong with this lady, you know? And she would watch me and she'd be like, and she was so nice. But I was just like, this is so weird.

You know, I don't really need. And it was liquid at that point and I'm like, I'm still chewing. And I'm like, I don't need to to any more. And and so that was my first introduction.

I knew nothing at that point. And it would be years till I figured I would figure out the genius of what she was sort of trying to teach me, but, but that's that's really where it comes from is sort of the Vedic, traditions.

And there's, there's a lot of wisdom to that, just that the slowness, the pace of eating, coupled with, by the way, you know, something we didn't mention really yet is saliva.

Right. So saliva, the longer food stays in our mouth, the more we break it down into these small little pieces, the more it's coated with saliva, which has enzymes and is chemically altering and breaking down the food so that by the time it gets into our stomach, if we have low stomach acid, we've done so much more work so that the stomach acid that we do have can actually go to work.

Yeah, I think we should talk about some of the nutrients. So there's even nutrient co-factors for stomach acid production. So there's all these lifestyle things you can do.

You can also make sure that you're eating foods that are rich in these nutrients. So I mentioned earlier that zinc is really important. And it's like this vicious cycle because it's needed for HDL production.

And it also HDL is needed to extract it from food. So it's like this whole thing. But deficiency is really common, in people who have chronic bloating and gut dysfunction.

And so eating more foods rich in zinc, chloride is a big one. So this is a main ingredient, hydrochloric acid. Chloride is a main component of that. So this is where do you get chloride from seaweed from sea salt from celery, from beets.

These are all great sources of chloride. So eat more of these. And I have to say Jason, I wish I loved seaweed. It's one of the things every time I eat it, I'm like, this is the most disgusting thing.

And some people love it. I don't know how I've learned to love it and I don't. I didn't when I was a kid, so I keep trying. I try it again, like two weeks ago.

And it was just what? I still don't like it, I don't know, but B vitamins are also really important, especially B1 and B6 and niacin. So these vitamins support energy and enzymatic pathways needed for gastric secretion.

So, eating foods rich in B vitamins or taking a B complex even is going to support your hydrochloric acid production. And the other piece that I think is kind of one of those double edged.

So protein needs to be adequate. But you also need so you need protein adequacy to trigger hydrochloric acid. But you also need hydrochloric acid to break down protein.

So it's one of these things. It's a cycle. But Gaston is the hormone that triggers hydrochloric acid. And it's released in response to protein in the stomach.

Right. So this is really important to eat protein with each meal. And I you know, we see it again and again and again that people underwhelming eat the amount of protein that they need to just support maintaining muscle mass bone mass but also to support hydrochloric acid secretion.

It's a it's a problem. Yeah. So, is there anything we're leaving out. Because it will probably be up here. And I just want to make sure that people really like this land because it seems so simple.

Well, I would say don't over drink water during your meals because it dilutes hydrochloric acid. So that's another big one for natural things you can do.

Natural Ways to Support Stomach Acid

And I think you know, if you find, if you find your hydrochloric acid is very low, if you know, it is, using digestive enzymes can support using tadka or ox bile to support.

I mean, there's a many things, but also, I don't know, do we need to talk about doing a betaine HDL challenge? Yes we do. This is this is a really, really helpful tool to figure out if you've got low stomach gas because because again, part of the reason that this is helpful is because we can't there's not always an obvious test for the tests aren't great and the tests are expensive, not not accessible to people.

I mean, you can put like a little camera down there and a little sensor and it can monitor, hydrochloric acid levels, but most people don't have access to that.

It's like the Heidelberg test. But but the easiest, most affordable way to do this is called a betaine HCL challenge. And this is one of the first things that I teach when people come into my community, who with any health problems whatsoever, we teach between HDL challenges.

So who shouldn't do it? Betaine HDL challenge just talk about that. First, there's only a couple of people who are fully contraindicated from doing this.

And there will be somebody with Barrett's esophagus. Talk to your doctor. I mean, there are varying versions of Barrett's esophagus. And and, you know, some people have long segment, short segment with and without dysplasia.

You just want to talk to your doctor about this. The other thing would be gastric cancer. Like, if you've got an esophageal cancer or stomach cancer, you're not going to want to do this.

And if you have an active bleeding ulcer, I'm not talking about ever. History of bleeding ulcer, but current bleeding ulcer, hydrochloric acid could just irritate all of that.

That's probably the only reason that I can come up with from a Western medical standpoint, that would make sense to suppress hydrochloric acid is those three scenarios.

That's it. Which is which is which is like a, a caster wheelchair or a crutch. Right? Like it's a temporary solution because we have a bigger problem.

It's not going to fix the actual issue, right? Yes. So as long as you're not in those categories, by all means try a betaine HDL challenge. Even if you have a hiatal hernia, you can try it.

And if it if it's not comfortable, just don't proceed with it. But basically, you know, many supplement companies sell betaine HCL. That's what you're looking for.

Betaine HDL, hydrochloric acid. And the way that you do this is you choose your largest meal of the day with the most protein. For most people, that's dinner.

That's kind of the standard American way that we eat. But, you know, you could do it with breakfast if that's your biggest meal of the day or lunch. But basically you're going to have you're going to take one betaine HCL partway through eating the meal.

One cannot eat the one capsule, not before you start eating and not at the very end. The best way to do this is maybe a quarter of the way through your meal.

Take a betaine HDL and this is like what, 500mg typically or yeah, three 300 to 500 depending on the maker. Generally you'll have pepsin with it which is going to help stimulate that hydrochloric acid production.

And so then what you do is you just observe. And what you're looking for is a warmth, a feeling of warming in the esophagus or a feeling of mild indigestion or heartburn if that happens after taking one capsule of betaine HCO, that means you're probably making enough hydrochloric acid, and you probably don't need it.

I would suggest do it one more time just to make sure it wasn't something you ate that irritated you. Try it again the next day at your biggest protein meal.

If the exact same thing happens, you probably don't need hydrochloric acid. You just tested your level. It's fine, but let's say you don't feel anything.

You finish your meal and you carry on like you normally do. There's no warming sensation there, so no indigestion, heartburn, no upper gi feeling. Well, this means you really needed it.

So the next day, at that same largest protein meal of the day. Now you take two capsules and you wait and observe and see what happens. If nothing happens the next day, you take three, and the next day you take 4 or 5, six, seven, eight, nine.

We've had people go up to 14. I would say stop around 14. That's a lot. If you still don't feel a warming or a heartburn or a indigestion sensation, you're not making hydrochloric acid and you need it.

So this is what you do. Let's say you find let's listen, do eight, for example. You get two eight capsules with a meal. And on that eight capsule you feel irritation, heartburn.

Now you know your best dose was one less seven was when you felt fine. So now you've tested. You've tested up

to your upper limit. You've discovered eight was too much.

You drop down and now you know you need to take seven with every meal you eat that contains protein. I would say 6 to 8oz of protein, whether it's, plant or animal source of protein.

Now you start taking it with every meal. Now that you've figured out your ideal dose, what happens over time is it stimulates you to start producing your own hydrochloric acid.

So you'll be cruising along and you'll be taking seven with each meal. And then, you know, a few weeks later, you might feel that warming heartburn sensation again.

Now you decrease to six and then you keep cruising along. And when you feel it now you decrease to five and so on. So you taper up, you taper down. And so that's how you do betaine challenge and stimulate production.

The big mistake people make, Jason, is they get to that upper limit like they take eight and they feel heartburn and then they stop altogether. But no no no no no.

You got to go down to seven and keep going. We've had people in our community who got to 14 and literally took 14 cals with every meal. They were so committed.

And then they've tapered down, down, down, down, down to like two one. And sometimes some people, depending on age and other factors going on, sometimes you just need to take one with every meal.

And we don't recommend you open the capsules. You want to keep it encapsulated. You don't want to open this and put it in a smoothie. You're not going to taste good.

And it's also going to maybe irritate esophagus, you know. Yeah, yeah. And people always say, well, what do I have a hiatal hernia. Well give it a try because some people can tolerate it.

If you have a hiatal hernia, just make sure your biggest meal isn't at dinner. Make your biggest meal earlier in the day. And don't lay down after. Because when you lay down, gravity is no longer helping keeping the contents of the stomach down.

And Jason, if I was queen of everything, if I could just get every single person who comes through my doors to do this with basic health problems so much faster, I can't tell you how many times I see I run an organic acid test on somebody, and I see all of these neurotransmitter deficiencies and all of these nutrient deficiencies.

Come to find out, they still didn't do a betaine challenge. And we're still on this hamster wheel of prescribing more supplements to try to solve an issue that could be solved if you just restored your hydrochloric acid.

Betaine HCl Challenge and Practical Next Steps

Well, it reminds me of, in my days as a, as a manufacturing engineer and, imagine a production line. Right. And you have the raw material at the beginning and at the end of the line, we have quality assurance, right?

So we're looking at the final product, whatever it is. And we say, okay, well this isn't meeting our standards. You know, it's there's there's things going on till we get a figure out of the 15 proper processes in this in or 15, aspects of this process, where is it screwing up?

And so we can go through that and we can identify 4 or 5 different areas that probably need some work. Right. We need to tune the machinery, whatever the case might be.

If we forget to check step one, and if that is where the real problem is, we can make all these adjustments downstream, but we're still going to get poor product production at the end because step one was messed up.

So no matter how perfect you deal in all these other parts of the process, it's that step one where the big issue was and you got to correct it. Right.

And so I think this is again why why I wanted to focus on this, this topic with you because it's overlooked. It's so missed in so many communities, even in our own.

It's like we can't we're not the king. And queen of everyone, of everything, right? So people, at least where you describe this, people will still bypass it.

I know, I know, basic, so basic and so easy. The one thing is I would suggest you know it. You should do a gut test and you should find out. Do I have each pylori at a at a high level?

That would be, I guess the, the other thing is it could make your H pylori worse in the beginning. So it would be good to do some testing to begin with to see what's your status.

I think that's a caveat. We need to definitely throw out there. Absolutely. And there's other aspects too that may need may need to be supported and worked on as well. Right.

So it's not a one or the other. This is a piece of the puzzle that we can't overlook while we're doing other things as well, and as well as changing lifestyle and some of our habits, too.

So, Lord, this is fantastic. I know you do a lot of this work with your community, so maybe you can tell people where to find you and maybe how to even work with you in this capacity if they feel like you need to.

Thanks, Jason. You can go to. And by the way, I think you have a you have you got, all event coming up that day. Yeah. So you can go to. Right. You can go to laurafrontiero.com.

And there you can book a call with, with one of our coaches, and you can talk about whether this would be a good fit for you. We always start foundationally, digestion and supporting gut.

So we run a gut test. Everybody who walks in our doors, this is the very first step. And then we move on to other types of testing, talks and testing, organic acids, adrenals, food sensitivity testing.

But we want to do some gut work first, because oftentimes that clears up things that what you would test for. And, you know, we just bring you back to gut basics anyway.

So so we really like to start there. You know, we open the doors to our energy recharge method, gut restoring program a couple of times a year. That's going to be coming up.

If you have interest in that, just send an email to Laura at laurafrontiero.com. We can get you set up. I don't have the website active for that yet. And we'll, we'll we'll actually, be reminding everybody of that too.

So we'll send out a notification for people that, that might be interested in that. Yeah. And Jason's talk co-taught with me in that program a couple of times.

It's a it is. Yeah. It is not endorse at anymore. Like I joined this part of it because it was such a fantastic program and because of the success stories are so evident.

There's so many people that get results. Absolutely. Thank you, Jason, for the opportunity to talk about this. I, you know, always jump at the chance to collaborate and support your community in any way that I can.

I just, you know how I feel about you. You're one of the best. And that's why. Well, thank you so much for coming on and shedding light on this very important topic, I appreciate it.

Thanks. Take care now.