This Is NOT Normal!: Why We're Starting This Conversation Transcript

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Why the Podcast Is Called This Is Not Normal

The problem is that what we were trained, like I don't even think the word perimenopause existed when I was in medical school. So we weren't given the right tools in our training.

And today it's getting better and doctors are more willing to try prescribing hormones, the bioidentical hormones. The natural form are being used instead of the synthetic ones that we used before.

but it's still just down to a prescription. So here's your prescription for estrogen, maybe here is your prescriptions for progesterone, and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

There's so much more that goes into it. Welcome to the This Is Not Normal podcast. I'm Dr. Neb and I am nurse practitioner Nicole. If you don't feel like yourself anymore and you've been told it's just part of aging, you have come to the right place.

Let's uncover what's really going on because you deserve to love the way you feel. We are so excited to be launching our podcast. This Is Not Normal is the name of our Podcast.

And that means so much to us for so many reasons. So Dr. Deb, tell everybody why we named the podcast This is Not normal. Yeah. Well, it's the name of my book, but the reason that it is the book and the podcast is because that is most common thing that we hear people say when they come in to see us.

They say something along the lines of, I just don't feel like myself. Something's just not right. This doesn't seem normal. But so often they've already been to their doctor, they had labs and they have been told everything is normal and it leaves people feeling really dismissed.

Personal Health Struggles and Missed Diagnoses

Yes i couldn't agree more and what we like to do with signature wellness what's so important to us is to find the root cause of why they don't feel normal and help them to love the way they feel by balancing the hormones and restoring their gut and removing their toxins and optimizing their lifestyle And our podcast is going to talk all about how we do those things and interviewing people that can help you feel your best.

Because midlife is amazing. It should be a great time in your life. Your kids are grown up, and you've got more time for your career and your friends and family.

And it should a be great times. So we want this to be educational. We want it to something where you can come and learn what you're feeling, why you are feeling it, and what can be done about it.

And we want you to not feel alone, because this is very common. Even as medical providers, we kind of go through this ourselves, cause this exactly how I got into practicing medicine this way.

Because for about 10 years, really going all the way back to when I was still in college, I had symptoms of low thyroid. I was tired all the time. I were so cold, I carried a sweater with me everywhere.

Even in the summer in North Carolina, it could be a hundred degrees outside, but that air conditioned restaurant was just miserable. And oh my gosh, the refrigeration section at the grocery store.

That was before Costco invented those refrigerated rooms. and I swear that if I had to do that back then, you would have to step over my frozen body to go get your blueberries because I would've perished from hypothermia.

But every time I went to get my thyroid measured, they always told me it was normal. And even one layer beyond that, when I was in medical school, I had an enlarged thyroid.

Like doctors across the room who were teaching me would look at me and say, your thyroid is enlarge. I can see it from across a room. You need to go get that checked.

And my labs were normal. And what we were taught at medical school and what my doctor was taught is if your lab test is in the normal range, then it can't be your thyroid.

This went on for about 10 years until finally my lab test went outside of the normal range. Then I was allowed to have hypothyroidism. You know, there's Marcello Hernandez is a really funny comedian on Saturday Night Live.

And he has a funny joke that his teacher said, you know… I think, Marcello, I you have ADD." And he went home and he told his mom, but he goes, my mom would not allow me to have the AD.

I was not allowed to AD, so it's like I wasn't allowed hypothyroidism because my thyroid lab wasn' bad enough to justify it. So finally it was, and I was given Synthroid, which is the standard medicine everybody gets, Senthroid or the generic version, Levothyroxine.

And that made my lab tests look normal. So I thought I as normal now because that's what we were taught. If your thyroid lab is in the normal range, then you're normal And I still felt exactly the same for another 10 years.

Another 10 I had all the symptoms. I was exhausted. And by this point, I'd gone through residency. So of course I'm tired, right? Everybody's like, you know.

But my friends who also had kids, they weren't crashing and burning. They didn't plan their whole day around how they're gonna get a nap. they didn' hire babysitters to be able to take a nap.

Like it really, looking back, it was pretty bad. but I had no idea. I just thought I was a cold natured person who needed more sleep than everybody else.

i'd never heard of adrenal fatigue. But eventually things got even worse because I was getting so irritable. I Was flying off the handle at my kids over the littlest things like they'd leave their soccer cleats at the door And I trip over one and I feel like just picking it up and checking it against the wall And that's not me.

And I would scream at them for having the soccer ball in the house, and as soon as the words fell out of my mouth, I felt like the worst mom ever. Like I'd see moms screaming at their kids all the time and think to myself, oh, that is not the kind of mom I am.

Then here I was screaming to my kids. It was so confusing because nothing in my medical training helped me understand what was going on.

Perimenopause, Hormones, and Finding Answers

And this is what we see all the time is women coming in and they've got similar stories and these been to their doctor and their doctors reassuring them everything's normal or it's just stress or of course you're tired if you have four kids and it is very dismissive and a lot of times we are told like if we just get more exercise you feel better.

And that is exactly what every exhausted person really wants to hear. Like, if only I had one extra molecule of energy, I would go walk. It's so true, yeah.

Your story is so much of how Signature Wellness came to be and why you started the practice and what it's all about because when you have felt bad for 20 years as a medical provider without the understanding of what's going on, you're pretty empowered to do something about it and not let that be the case for anybody else.

We don't want other women to suffer this way. My story luckily is not as dramatic and didn't last as long, but I went into perimenopause really early after my second child was born and I still have such a vivid memory of the nurse hearing her crying as they were wheeling her into my postpartum room so I could nurse her and feeling the bubbling up of anxiety at the sound of my beautiful baby girl's cry.

And that was terrible. That was awful. I'm the worst mother. And I can't even deal with this child crying and she's like a day old. It spiraled from there.

The night sweats where I'd have to stack pajamas next to the bed and sleep on towels and the anxiousness and It was just the worst. But I was in my early 30s, so of course I couldn't possibly be in perimenopause.

That's not possible. Luckily, well, you didn't think it was possible? It's possible, yeah. It is possible! Luckily I learning, I in a practice where I'm learning hormone therapy.

I just in the right place at the time and got opened up to this world of understanding what hormones were because even as a women's health medical provider, I was never taught how to take care of a woman going through perimenopause or menopausal.

It's not in our training, it's in your OPGYN's training. So I wasn't equipped and I'm fortunate enough to go and get trained and my world opened. Once you know what you do, you can't go back to practicing medicine any other way.

And so we've been on a mission to help women love the way they feel ever since. And Signature Wellness is turning 20 in a few months, 20 years. Yeah. So the patient stories that we have heard and the successes and transformations of women being able to get their lives back is one of the main reasons why we said we got to tell this to everyone out there.

And I would not be here having a podcast. I've written two books. We've been on TV. Over a hundred times. Spoken all over the world to doctors. None of that.

Because I'd still be laying on the couch, staring at the laundry basket, waiting for the clothes to fold themselves because I had nothing left to give.

At the end of the day, there'd be spaghetti sauce splashed all around the kitchen. floor, dirty dishes everywhere. There was no way it was all just going to have to wait until the morning because I could not.

Not that like I didn't want to, but like, I COULD NOT. And for me, wasn't so lucky that I was in a medical environment to learn about this, which is why it took so long for my to get help.

But what changed for is I read a book by Suzanne Summers, like remember the Thigh Master and No doctor wants to get their medical information from Chrissy Snow.

Like, we don't want to our information for celebrities, but I had nowhere else to turn. And when I read the back of the cover of book, my husband found it.

He read back cover the book and it talked about like tired all the time and irritable and anxious out of nowhere. I never used to be an anxious person.

And now I was flipping out over the stupidest things and worrying about, like, it would be such a big deal. Then two days later, I'd look back and go, what on earth was I even thinking?

But I read the book because I didn't know what else to do. When I wrote all these stories about women who were just like me, and then how much better they felt when they got their hormones back in balance, It really allowed me to open my mind.

It was really humbling to realize, When we go through medical school, we graduate, and I'm speaking we, like I think this is pretty true for most doctors, We graduate feeling like we are the owners of medical information.

And if something was true, they would have taught me. But I am telling you, I deserve a partial refund because they left out a whole bunch of stuff that was really important.

What I remember most about that book, there's two things, but one is I learned about progesterone. So I've known about progesterone, it's one of the female hormones.

Why Comprehensive Care Matters

It's in birth control pills that, you know, I was given out like candy at the time, but I didn't know that there was a difference between the proestero that our body makes and the stuff that we have in the birth-control pill.

And the natural stuff, that were supposed to be making, is calming. Yeah. it helps you sleep soundly, It helps, You feel chilled out and not anxious and irritable.

and at that time I wasn't sleeping at night. I'd sit up at turn a little light on and be like, read my book, because I couldn't sleep. I had no idea. And I learned it from Suzanne Summers.

To be fair, she interviewed doctors in her book. It wasn't directly from her, but I didn't learn it at medical school. and it explained so much and then I also learned that there are other things that we can do to help your thyroid besides only depending on a pill especially since the pill doesn't work for everybody and that was a problem for me it made my labs normal it didn't make me feel normal But I'm very grateful that in the book there were links for where doctors could go to get trained, like real medical conferences based on science and research, not woo-woo.

I mean, I suppose this may be a little crunchy granola, but it's based on on real medicine. And but because it is not a lot of prescription drugs, the information is just not really getting out to doctors.

It's much better now in the sense that just really like as of the fall of 2025, if the FDA took the black box warning off of estrogen and that is starting to change things.

Yes. We're definitely seeing as people out there saying menopause is having its moment, everyone as a waking back up to the importance of hormone balance and looking at hormone balanced in a much more comprehensive way.

And I think it's We're so fortunate, right, to have found the training we found. We actually met, the first time we met was actually at this kind of medical training and we feel so much better in our mid-lives right now.

We want everyone else to feel this good. And yes, it takes consistency and yes it, takes you know making healthy choices and, yes sometimes it take prescriptions for hormone therapy.

But we want every one else, to love the way they feel because we love they way we feel. we can take care of the family, take care of the patients, take of ourselves, and take the vacations.

In fact, I would actually argue if you ask our team, they would say, please take a little bit of energy away from the two of them because they're a bit in double trouble.

But we have seen over and over again you know, women walking in the door and they feel kind of defeated because they're trying to do the right things, but the weight won't go down no matter what.

They're so flippin' tired and their trying chop their broccoli and there trying get to Pilates and like they are trying so hard and it's just so harder and then it hard to keep it up.

and then they're feeling like they don't have the discipline or like we internalize it and feel like it must be something

wrong with us when in reality it's just that your tank is empty.

And we've figured out the system. We know how to get all of those things resolved. The patient stories every single day that we get to hear of women saying like, you gave me my life back or a husband saying, You gave my wife back.

You give me the mother of my children back, she's back to herself. It's transformative, right? He's not hiding in the closet to choose food because she is going to murder him because he chews loud, or breathes.

Yeah, anything. And that is what, well, that's what fuels us is the, the the ability to transform lives. You can't stop doing that once you start. It's amazing to see women going back and loving how they're feeling and aging in such a beautiful way.

One of the other things that I really like about it is we really have the opportunity to create relationships with our patients because we don't have, you know, these quick in and out 10-minute appointments.

We really the luxury of sitting down, getting to know people, answering whatever questions they have. Being able to really talk through pros and cons of different things because it's hard.

There's so much stuff on the internet. You don't know what's what. I mean, back when I was feeling terrible 20 years ago, we didn't really have that. There were no influencers on Instagram talking about perimenopause symptoms, I had no idea.

But now, you don' even know to think. One day somebody says this, the next day, somebody say the opposite. And then, even if something is true, You dont know if it's true for you.

We all have our own health history and symptoms and hormone levels and unique patterns and family history. So, it all really needs to be personalized.

And working with somebody who can sit down and talk through everything and answer your questions and say, well, that's true. And here's where this is a great idea.

But for you, this why it's not so great for. Here's three other options that might be better. Because there are so many options, which can be good or bad if you're, you know, depending on if have a hard time making decisions.

It's good to have choices. But it's really important to be able to have somebody on your team. And that's where I find for a lot of women, they might have a provider.

I really believe that medical providers care about their patients and they want to help their patient. The problem is that what we were trained, like I don't even think the word perimenopause existed when I was in medical school.

So we weren't given the right tools in our training. And today it's getting better and doctors are more willing to try prescribing hormones. And for the most part, natural, the bioidentical hormones, to the natural form are being used instead of the synthetic ones that we used before.

But it still just down to a prescription. So here's your prescription for estrogen, maybe here is your prescriptions for progesterone. That's just the tip of that iceberg.

There's so much more that goes into it.

Closing Message and Call to Action

Yeah, that's probably one of the biggest complaints I think we get when women come to see us and they say, I went to my doctor, or I to went my nurse practitioner and I only had seven minutes in the room and that they just wrote me a prescription for a patch and a pill.

They didn't check my labs. I don't know how I'm supposed to take this. And they didn't think about anything else or they're complaining that they are not sleeping and that their anxious and they left with prescriptions for anxiety medicine and sleep aids.

And that's not great either. It's the system. Again, it's now that we don't care. Unfortunately, the systems we're in. So if you have strep throat or you're acutely sick, that is not a bad system, they can diagnose it and treat it pretty fast.

when you're trying to harness all the, this, I don't feel like myself symptoms. because sometimes the list is really long. Then you need time to understand that.

And so that is such a gift that we have is time and a team of people to really make a difference and listening and caring and following up and tweaking and modifying because it's sometimes not just a straight road to the finish line of it.

It's just simple. Sometimes we to make concessions and changes and That's a really important, when you're choosing who to work with, that's really, really that knowing they're going to get back to you quickly and knowing that they are going work you.

So we want to make sure that women understand you don't have to put up with this. You don' have feel this way. Help is available. And we wanna make sure that you understand what is available because if you're getting like a little teeny-weeny sliver of what's possible and you still not feeling good, we want you to know there is more and not to settle.

And sometimes it means you have to find another provider, but at least we you know what to look for, where to finds them, how to judge if what you should be getting because we've just seen it so often and it doesn't have be that way.

So we're really excited to be launching This Is Not Normal podcast and we are going to come to you frequently with great guests and great information so that you can really take back control of your life and love the way you feel.

Thank you for listening to This is Not normal. If today's conversation helped you realize that do not have to put up with feeling this way, follow the podcast, leave us a review and share it with someone who needs to hear it.

And if you're ready to take your next steps, then schedule your free discovery call at signaturewellness.org. This podcast is for educational and informational purposes only and is not medical advice.

Always consult your physician or qualified healthcare professional before making changes to your diet, lifestyle, medications, or treatment plan. The views expressed by guests are their own.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call your local emergency number immediately.