Thyroid Health: Key To Blood Sugar Balance Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Welcome

Hey everyone, welcome. Welcome to this episode of the Reversing Type 2 Diabetes Summit 2.0. I'm your host, Dr. Beverly Yates, ND. And right now, I'm so looking forward to our next guest, Dr.

Amie Hornaman. She is known as the thyroid fixer and has a lot of wonderful information to share with you about what goes on with the thyroid system, how it impacts our blood sugar regulation, the resistance, all those things we care about when we're talking about diabetes.

So, Dr. Amie Hornaman welcome to our episode. Hi, Dr. Bev how are you? And I am thrilled to be here. All right. I'm glad to have you as a guest. So let's get into it.

What's the deal going on with the fact that there's so much overlap, particularly with hypothyroidism and Type 2 diabetes pre-diabetes? What's the deal here?

So we have to start with the fact that the thyroid is the master gland and we know that it has control over every organ, every system in the body, including your your pancreatic release of insulin and your blood sugar control.

I have seen countless times and really I would say on average, I see insulin resistance go hand in hand with hypothyroidism in 95% of my cases every so often.

And I just met with a patient today that has undiagnosed Hashimoto's. Her free T3 is low, the active thyroid hormone and I looked at her A1C and insulin and it is perfect, beautiful.

But that is rare. And it is because she has been doing all of the lifestyle changes and things that she can possibly do to control her blood sugar for years.

Thyroid Dysfunction and Blood Sugar Overlap

So in her case, you know, she's the rarity where you you say, okay, there's actually not prediabetes here, but I would say easily in 95% of the cases of hypothyroidism and we see that insulin resistance and we can also see it when people are doing most I won't say all the things, but doing most of the things.

They're eating clean. They might even be on a ketogenic or carnivore diet and they're still experiencing high glucose, elevated insulin, high A1C and it's coming from the thyroid being off because of that that control.

So essentially the thyroid being hypo low and slow is causing their body to not utilize the glucose properly. The pancreas over secretes insulin. They get into this insulin resistance state at the cell level.

So that's where we see it go hand in hand with the thyroid. All right. That's great to know. So now as we continue to unpack this and look at the details behind the scenes, when you say the thyroid is off, give us a picture, if you would, please, of what it is that people experience so that they know, hey, it could be my thyroid that is hijacking the system.

Because you're right, there are people who are doing a lot of really smart things with health, but they sure it's, you know, not getting the results. Right. Right.

So these are the big symptoms that you want to look for that might trigger you into saying, you know, hey, I really do need to go get thoroughly tested and look at my thyroid function gaining weight and the inability to lose.

I mean, that's really a big one. Along with fatigue, those are the top symptoms that I see in here for my patients.

And then hair loss, constipation, mood swings, depression, anxiety, brain fog.

If you think hypo low and slow, everything slows down, so digestion slows, hence the constipation, your brain slows down. You're not processing things properly.

You're not remembering things like you used to. You're not motivated. You don't have that drive to go get things done. You can lose the outer corner of your eyebrows or hair thinning.

Your nails can become very brittle and break. I mean, there's a host of symptoms, but those are the big ones that I would say if you check that mental box off of those symptoms, like two or three of them, let's go get tested and let's check your thyroid function.

Okay, great. So you like myself, We know we're both fans of the whole concept of tests. Don't guess. So. that in mind, what tests should people get? Because what I've seen is like maybe one or two tests that are routinely ordered and it's not enough.

So take it away. And it's horrible. Do not go to your PCP and say you want your thyroid tested because what you're going to end up getting is one, maybe two tests.

Like Dr. Bev said, you're going to get TSH which is thyroid stimulating hormone and only if that is screen being flagged high will anyone stop and say, Oh, hey, you know what?

There might be something here, There might be a thyroid issue here. Next step you're going to get your free T4 tested, but T4 the inactive thyroid hormone.

So it's like, okay, let's look at it. But that's not the important test. The important test conventional medicine usually leaves off and they don't test.

So they're really important tests that you want to get free T3 because T3 is the active thyroid hormone. Just like we said earlier, the thyroid runs the show, it runs your body.

Every cell in your body has a receptor site on it for T3. So if you don't have enough T3, it's not you're not going to have a metabolism, you're not going to grow your hair, you're not going to think straight, you're not going to poop every day.

If that alone, that marker, that free T3 is vital to know how much active thyroid hormone you are actually making or converting and utilizing your body.

And then we look at reverse T3 and reverse T3 is the anti fibroid hormone. I always give analogy. So the analogy I'm going to give for this one is it's a bouncer at the club, So it's a bouncer outside of your cell door that beautiful active T3 is floating around.

It wants to get in and wants to attach to that receptor site.

Common Thyroid Symptoms to Watch For

But if you have too much reverse T3, it's standing outside the cell door, blocking it basically telling T3 like, you're not getting in today, you're not getting in the club, you're not getting in to do your job, and it's going to leave T3 in the bloodstream and you will you won't have a metabolism, you won't grow your hair, you won't have a brain.

And essentially reverse T3 is built into us as a survival mechanism because if you are injured, if you're if you're battling a trauma, you know, a traumatic disease injury, the reverse is going to go up because our bodies know you don't have to burn fat.

You don't have to think, you don't have to feel good as you're lying there fighting for your life. But all the more

reason to test it when you're not fighting for your life, when you're trying to live life and enjoy life because of reverse T3 is elevated.

It's putting your body in survival mode. So we want to test that every every, every single time. Do not let your doctor tell you that it's only tested in clinical settings.

We want to test it every time. And we want to check finally your Hashimoto antibodies. So that's TPO thyroid peroxidase and TG which thyroid globulin and those two antibodies test for Hashimoto's.

Well, okay, folks, so if you were taking notes, if you weren't right back and we listened to that, those are the tests. You really want to be sure that your thyroid is functioning and if it is the culprit, one of those will absolutely give itself up or more as the case might be.

This is really under tested, under, understood and underappreciated even from an endocrinologist. So whoever you're seeing, if they're not ordering this whole battery, you actually don't have a full 360 degree picture.

What is your thyroid doing or not doing for you? And you know what? That there's a rule that if your doctor says no to testing, it's time to get a new doctor because if you have to beg and plead your doctor to check your numbers, which it's no money out of their pocket to write a lab script for you.

So if you have to beg your doctor to write for a lab so you can see what's going on inside of your body, do you really think that same doctor is going to help you now? Yep.

That is a full stop. Might drop right there. That's the truth. Right now. You've hired them. You shouldn't have to beg for this. It's data, right? information. Okay, great.

I knew you'd make that point. Okay, so now versus aspects of thyroid, an issue they already know or suspect. They also have blood sugar issues, whether it pre diabetes, Type 2 diabetes, enzyme resistance, polycystic ovarian syndrome.

Perhaps they've had a history of gestational diabetes. Other things on their glycemic control spectrum.

Essential Thyroid Testing Beyond TSH

What are some things that are a myth that would be good to bust here that are common knowledge that's wrong. Now surrounding blood sugar and insulin, right.

Blood sugar, insulin and in the dance with the thyroid system, because I think people get lost on this one. The dance of the thyroid. Absolutely. So, you know, what I see in my practice, a lot of patients will come in and they might be doing a low carb way of eating right off the bat because they read or heard somewhere that this is going to help them lose weight.

And it's not. And this is where we say, okay, this might be a great nutrition plan, a great diet, a great way for you to eat and incorporate this into your life.

However, you're not going to get reward added for your efforts if your thyroid is off. So we want to do both at the same time. I never say, Oh, you know what?

Just for forget that low carb eating until we get your thyroid back online. No, no, we want to do it both at the same time. So we want to do things to address what we're seeing in your labs, whether it's an elevated A1C or an elevated insulin.

We want to address those things. We want to even address high glucose. You know, if you're throwing on a CGM and you're finding out that some of your Keto foods, which this was me, your keto foods are jacking up your blood sugar, well then you know, you got to cut those out because that's giving you data.

So you're going to be changing your diet and your lifestyle over here while at the same time we're going to be optimizing your thyroid. Then you get rewarded for your effort, you get a little bit of a bang for your buck, right? You're doing all the work over here.

You're changing up your diet, change your lifestyle. You're exercising because you've heard Dr. Mad tell you that this is going to help lower your glucose.

Lawyer insulin, how balance you out. You're doing all the things, but you're not getting rewarded for it. So it's very easy to slip into what I call like screw it syndrome, where you go, You know what?

I might as well just eat the pizza because nothing that I'm doing is working anyways. But you want to do it both together, so you want to continue with your lifestyle changes, your diet changes.

I love me berberine. I love I love Berberine for bringing down a balance in our blood glucose and insulin. Maybe throw that in the mix as well. But then over here, let's get into optimization of your thyroid and then it's just a beautiful dance together.

Absolutely right. You will have those partners all synched up so they can actually dance and not to step on each other's toes and fall over in a heap.

I like that. I like that. Yeah, exactly. All right. So in that journey, what are some other myths that people might not quite appreciate, particularly as it applies to women's health or perhaps women's health, some issues that can go on around sleep, insomnia, anxiety, the overlap with thyroid issues along with blood sugar control.

Hmm. Okay. Yes. Sleep. Sleep is a big one. We know that if you don't sleep or if you're getting a minimal amount of sleep, or maybe you're a night owl and you're like, Well, I just don't go to bed until 1:00 in the morning.

You are missing out on rest and repair and you're going to throw off your blood sugar. There is a study done and it's stuck with me forever. I saw this study probably ten, 15 years ago where they took twins and they put them in a sleep lab.

And so we know, you know, DNA genetics, all the same, control their environment, what they eat, you know, the amount of activity that day, everything was control because it was in a lab.

So they put these twins in a sleep lab and they controlled for everything, of course. And the one twin, what they did was they woke him up out of REM sleep.

So they didn't totally wake him up, wake him up, but they just kept him out of that deep REM sleep. And what they found was really within 3 to 5 days, that twin was developing insulin resistance.

It was moving into full blown diabetes. So that is how impactful sleep is to control of your blood sugar. It's absolutely amazing. And so many of us don't you know, we chalk it up to I'm a night owl.

I don't need that much sleep. Well, that doesn't that's not dictated by you. That's dictated by your body and your creator.

Blood Sugar, Thyroid, and Lifestyle Myths

So, yes, you actually do need sleep and that's huge for for inflammation, for blood sugar, control, for weight. We know that people will gain weight when they are not sleeping.

And it's directly tied back to that that blood sugar and insulin response. Yeah, definitely, Definitely. I feel like there's a lot of things around metabolism that really aren't well explained.

Understood. People sometimes tend to either sprinkle fairy dust and have magical thinking or they make stuff up.

It's complete bullshit. It's not accurate.

So here we're talking about the science and the facts and what actually is going on behind the scenes. Okay, so now that we've had a chance to peek at what Sleep does and its importance with metabolic health, with thyroid health, blood sugar control, right.

What's the situation for the thyroid when someone is chronically stressed and how that might affect blood sugar? Everybody on the summit, I'm sure for any of these episodes, has already heard about the intimate tie between cortisol and stress response hormones.

Right. And blood pressure release in response to cortisol. What's the deal for thyroid in that moment? Okay, so, you know, I mean, the body's just so beautiful and so interconnected.

It just it just it so we have stress equals an increase in cortisol usually. So most people under stress will overproduce cortisol. Now that elevated cortisol, as you've talked about, increases blood glucose.

So now your blood sugar is out of control. We know that there is a direct correlation with walking around with high glucose levels. Obviously, you're going to have an elevated agency and then oftentimes we see elevated insulin levels.

Now I like insulin fasting insulin to be below a six. So if you're over a six, to me that is insulin resistance. Some people have cut off at five, some people have a little bit higher.

I really like right around there. If you're above that in your insulin, that's an issue. So what we see with that elevated cortisol is not only is it pushing up your blood sugar and your insulin, it's creating an inflammatory environment.

And when we're talking about the thyroid, the thyroid cannot work well when you're inflamed, The thyroid does not work well at all with high blood sugar and high insulin.

So we see that that back and forth plate, Right. We said earlier the thyroid is the master gland. It's going to disregulated throw off your glucose control and your insulin control, but backwards that elevated insulin, that inflammatory state that you're in is also going to downregulate your thyroid production of T4 and T3.

The other thing it's going to do with high glucose and high cortisol. So now you've got a double whammy going on. It's going to push up your reverse T3, So it's going to push you into that survival mode that we talked about earlier that we don't want you to be in unless you're lying in a hospital bed fighting for your life.

I don't want you walking around with elevator reverse T3. So we know that that high cortisol, high glucose goes right back to the thyroid and it stops that conversion from properly happening of T for 2 to 3.

O Okay. So with that then we can understand why it is people will find themselves in these situations where they might have this relentless creeping weight gain despite otherwise healthy habits.

Because, you know, we're in a moment internationally where so many things have changed for people metabolically. We've got to have better information out to the general public about what the heck is going on.

We do have ramps later. All right. So with that in mind, are there any myths around the whole concept of simply eating less and moving more? That 1950s advice worked in a much, in my opinion, from what I can tell, more a simpler environment.

And in today's world, you know, 50, 70 years later, it's like, whoa, okay, yeah, complicated. Help us break that one down. Oh, goodness. So that's what I was told during one of my sickness diagnoses over my thyroid.

Did you eat less and exercise more? And I think that that's the the kind of pat answer that we get from conventional medicine when we walk and we say, Hey, doc, you know, I'm gaining weight. I don't know what's wrong.

I'm doing all the things I well, just eat less and exercise more. Now we are in a kind of our own pandemic of obesity in this company, in this country.

So it's not out of line to say, hey, some people really do need to eat a little bit less and freaking move. Just go for a walk, for God's sake, get off the couch.

Get out of your desk. Right. So there is that that segment of the population where e less exercise more might apply. But if you're listening to the summit, it's probably not you.

You've probably already done the things and you're taking control of your health and you want to take control of your health. That's why you're here. So the eat less and exercise more promise I'm going to apply for you.

And in fact, it can actually create a stressful environment. So what I'm seeing a lot of ladies, you guys are notorious for this. What I'm seeing y'all doing is over fasting.

Sleep, Stress, and Metabolic Health

So not only are you eating less, you're not eating enough because you're trying to do this intermittent fasting thing which has its benefits, but you're overdo it and you're doing these nomads or, you know, 20 hours of fasting, 4 hours of eating, you're not getting enough calories.

You are in a severe deficit to where your metabolism is going to shut down. You're not getting enough protein to preserve your lean muscle tissue and give you a metabolism so that eat less and exercise more can actually be a detriment.

Same thing with exercise more. You know, we see these women going to the gym. I was one of them back in the day. I did 2 hours of cardio. I thought maybe going to the gym twice in a day was a great idea.

Amy No, too much stress. Oh, yeah. That was back in the competing days. I'm not that crazy anymore. But, you know, you get into that that desperation mode where you're like, you're going to do anything because you don't understand what's going on with your body.

So maybe more exercise will work, right? And then all that does is push up your cortisol, which then pushes up your glucose. Yeah, it really is like that.

There is such a thing as doing too much of what seems to be a good thing. It seems like for most of us as humans, for women, for men, for boys, for girls, you know, teens, young adults, older adults, seniors, little kids, whatever.

There's a balance. And if we get out of balance, this is where the trouble lies, right? Yeah, exactly. Okay. So one of the things that I remember learning in naturopathic medical school and I think anybody who has the health and the medical background around the thyroid is that we have the messaging, that it's the master gland and that as such we can think of it as the conductor of the symphony.

However, if the conductor is struggling, the other members of the orchestra are also going to struggle. Struggle, right? Any anyway, I'm not going to sound good.

Yeah, I'm going to sound good. Okay, we can all agree on that. All right. So what are some things people can do to get themselves to a place where they feel like they are checking the boxes?

We talk about the lab work we've talked about now, about not under exercising and overeating. We also talked about under eating and over exercise, especially for women.

Right. Where they're not taking in enough fuel and they're pounding themselves into the ground. Therefore, the quality of the blood sugar is up like they're doing the things.

So they think. But in this case, the things aren't giving them results. Right. What are some tips you can share about getting things back to balance? Hmm, Yes. Okay.

So the things that you can do that don't require, let's say, medical intervention, the things that you can do. I am a huge fan of all of the minerals and the nutrients that the thyroid needs.

You know, we all need vitamin D, we all need magnesium. We are magnesium deficient society. So you need a multitude of mags because there's different mags if why not just mag citrate that'll make you poop, but you need more mags in mag citrate.

So you want to get that magnesium blend in there, You want to get your vitamin D, you want to get a little bit of selenium. And I'm not talking about going to town on 200 300 miles of selenium every day.

I mean, eat a Brazil nut or two and that's literally all you need to get your selenium in.

Supporting Thyroid Function Naturally

And then finally, iodine. I know this is controversial when we're talking about iodine in the functional medicine community. We have half of the practitioners over here.

Well, I would say actually 40% say, no, no, no, don't use it. I'm 60% say iodine is great. I go by this science. Your body needs iodine. Every cell in your body needs that you need it to convert T4 to T3 You need it to bring down that bouncer at the club that reverse T3.

It is fantastic for thyroid nodules, for fibrocystic breasts, for uterine fibroids, for growing your hair, for having energy, for fighting off viruses.

Oh, iodine. And you want to just use the right amount of iodine. And that alone can often help get people's thyroid back online without needing to go into thyroid hormone replacement.

Now we can use things like black cumin seed oil as well, which also has an impact on balancing your glucose and insulin. So we've actually seen black human seed used with Type 2 diabetes to help better control glucose and the insulin response.

And guess what? It takes down inflammation and it takes down Hashimoto antibodies. So it really is a beautiful thing. Just sometimes doing those simple supplemental interventions is all you need before you have to move into maybe, you know, finding a specialist to give you the proper thyroid hormone replacement.

Oh, okay. Okay. So these are straightforward things that people can do. They can assess. First of all, do I have the problem? Secondly, I remember meeting myself to a pulp and I'm still not where I need to be health wise.

And in three now I can take charge of it. And here are some things I can actually do for myself, or I can work with other health professionals who understand this and can guide me to where I need to go, that the standard approach might be completely inadequate here.

And this is a classic one we learned. And you know, what was that over 30 plus years ago when I was in school and it's still an issue thyroid. It was an issue three decades ago and it continues to be an issue.

It does. It does. And it's even growing now because we're in a more toxic environment than we were 20 or 30 years ago. So now more than ever, we really have to keep an eye on our thyroid and how they're functioning and do something about it.

All right. Perfect. Perfect. All right.

Where to Find Dr. Amie Hornaman

Thank you so much, Dr. Amie Hornaman for being my guest here on this episode. I appreciate your insights and wisdom that people would like to connect with you.

Where can they find you? You can go to dramieHornaman.com if you're interested in working together, if you're interested in diving into any of the supplements that I have, I do carry Black Cumin Seed Oil in the form of Hashimoto's FIXXR because I use it all the time with my patients.

And then you can also find me on The Thyroid Fixer podcast on all social media under @dramiehornaman All right. Would you kindly spell out your name so that people get that right?

I will, yeah, because we don't want to type it in wrong. So it is. A M I E H O R N A M A N All right, great. Thank you for that. I really appreciate you.

All right, friends, you know what to do. Please share these episodes with anyone that you know who cares about their health or who could benefit from this information.

Maybe you already about you're already knowledgeable about these things, about thyroid. Share it, spread it. Let's make sure everybody is well informed.

All right. Thanks, folks.