Introduction and Prevention Focus

Welcome again to this episode of The Healing from Lyme Summit. I'm joined today by Dr. Alexis Chesney. And Dr. Chesney is a fellow naturopathic doctor, Occupy stressed educator, author.

She's actually written a great book called Preventing Lyme and Other Tick Borne Diseases Control Ticks in the Home Landscape Prevent Infection using herbal protocols and treat tick bites with natural remedies.

So, Dr. Chesney, thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you so much for having me. It's great to be here. So, you know, we talk so much in the summit about different aspects of Lyme, a lot of its focus on treatment and God and everything else.

But I think the one thing we haven't really talked about is prevention. And I mean, you and I both learned this very early in medical school, that prevention is the best medicine if we can prevent people from getting Lyme in the first place.

And I know so many people who are tuning in, they've already been infected. They've passed that. But I see so many people in my practice and I'm sure you do too, that once they get exposed to Lyme, they never want to go out and Mother Nature again.

They don't want a garden anymore. They don't want to hike, they don't want to camp. And rightfully so. But you know, there's so many health benefits of being out in Mother Nature.

I'd hate to preclude anyone from ever experiencing it again. So I know you wrote this fabulous book on different prevention strategies, and I want to walk people through it.

What can people do to be able to enjoy being out in the world without having as much fear about getting reinfected again? So, you know, let's start maybe with just being around the home.

You know, what are some things that people can do maybe outside of their home to prevent ticks? Oh, great. Thank you. I'm so glad that we can talk about prevention.

I to what got me started with writing the book was that I would see patients come back after healing from Lyme or tick borne disease the first time having another tick bite and acute Lyme again.

And it just I would increase the length of my hand down to hand to them and talk about all these different methods. And so that's where the book came from.

So I really hope that, you know, my mission is to end Lyme through prevention. So. So thank you for having me. So back to your question. Sorry, what was your question again?

Yeah. So I want to start like the outside. Of the outside of the house. Exactly. I know, like from a conventional standpoint, you can call pesticide companies that come out and spray, usually pyrethroids or other types of chemicals which can have their own potential toxic effects.

And I mean, I lived in Connecticut for almost 20 years, and most of the people I knew, neighbors and patients, were spraying their yards on a regular basis.

But, you know, these chemicals stay in the ground for a long time. They can be potentially toxic to children and pets. And I don't know that that's the best strategy.

So what are some of the things that you recommend for people to do outside the home that can help prevent ticks? Sure. Yeah. Well, thinking about the landscape.

Thinking about just the geography of where you live. Right. So trying to do some simple things like keeping the leaves raked and debris out of the yard, not having something like a swing set or a garden that you're in all the time and the edge of a yard that abuts a forest, because it's really in that transition area where we see more ticks, keeping the grass cut low is not going to prevent ticks from being there, but it will help.

Yard and Landscape Tick Prevention

Also thinking about places of moisture and shade, those are going to be places that ticks like to be in. So just being mindful like what habitat do, ticks like and how can I decrease either creating that habitat for them or avoid going into that habitat or be protected when I go into that habitat.

There's a natural substance made by cedar side using cedar oil or there are other companies as well, and you can actually use that and spray that on your your lawn and your garden.

And that's very safe. But it does repel ticks. You do have to do it frequently, but it can it can make an impact. Also, some companies do use some essential oils that like you were mentioning.

So companies that might use pyrethroids, some of them, if you ask, will use some essential oils. And I have some patients come, you know, have the company come three times a year, you know, spring, summer, beginning a fall.

And that can make an impact as well. And then there are tick tubes, which I really love, and I've seen some great responses from my patients and learning about them, making them and putting them out in their yards.

Yeah, I know. It's a pretty simple process. Can you actually just tell people how to make it tick to be super simple? Yeah. Yeah, you can totally buy them, but it's a good project if you want to save money and you could even do part of it with your kids and make it a project at home together.

So what you do is you you save dryer lint or other materials like that and then save paper towel or toilet tissue tubes. You can also use PPC and use other substances as well.

But so we want to create these tubes that have a material in it that are going to be attractive to mice. And so what we do is we stuff those tubes with permethrin treated materials like cotton balls or the lint that you've saved.

So, of course, when using permethrin, you need to be very careful. So you go outside, choose to wear gloves, you know, get permethrin 0.5%. Permethrin is the best to use and spread out your materials, spray them down, takes about an hour or two to dry, depending on the humidity and then you can come back and when it's dried, it's safe to touch.

Or you could still wear gloves and stuff the materials into the tubes and then just leave a little bit of emptiness on each side, keeping it packed in the middle.

And then what you do is you go out into your yard and find areas that mice like to be in. So, like, if you have a stone wall, they love that you can suck them in there around around a shed.

Or like I said, that transition phase from the yard, the grass to the woods, different places like that would be great. And there's a certain amount that you need per square foot.

And then we see the impact of that decrease in ticks in the yard. And so what will happen is it'll be, you know, this tube with the materials will be out in the landscape and the mouse will come along, bring some of that material back to its nest.

And because it's treated with permethrin, it won't hurt the mouse whether you are happy about that or not. People

always ask that, but it will kill the ticks on that mouse and the family of mice.

So it's really effective in that way. Yeah. So I've seen great things with patients reporting back a major decline in tick bites in the family after putting that into play and that I also recommend three times a year.

Some people recommend twice a year. But I just think about that time like, you know, that bookmark of the spring and the fall for that increase in ticks and trying to catch that and then also just throwing in another time during the summer.

Yeah, I love the tick tock idea again. It's so simple, it's so easy. And again, I used to do this when I lived in Connecticut. Again, I would just save the old toilet paper rolls because they're easy, they're disposable.

The only thing I didn't like is if it rained. It got kind of messy and sloppy. But you can grab gloves, throw it out. But I like the fact it's disposable versus like a PVC tube that you kind of have to clean out and then put new stuff in.

But, you know, it's kind of whatever works. And again, super simple, super easy beginning can be very effective. You know where my house was in Connecticut again, I was surrounded by tons of tons of trees.

I had a brick wall in the back of my property and I had a neighbor adjacent to me that uses to pile all his junk, all his branches, and leaves. He just wouldn't clean it up.

So I was very conscientious about picking and putting it like this in those transition areas. And, you know, I got bed before I own this house. I never got bit after the fact, so it seemed to have worked.

But again, you know, there's I think people maybe misunderstand sometimes. No, because they hear about deer tax and they think that the deer are the bigger spreader of these ticks.

And in reality, it's not the deer, it's the rodents. Right? It's like the mice and the rat and the other furry little creatures. So, again, detectives can just be a very inexpensive, easy way to help, you know, potentially reduce that tick population in and around your yard.

And I also used to use garlic oil. You mentioned cedar oil, and I found garlic oil also seemed to work pretty well. And again, it's safe for pets, kids, plants.

And I would just get a concentrated garlic oil. I got one of those big spray containers and you fill it up with water and then just walk around the property, spray around the periphery, all over the perimeter of the house and your plants.

And it kind of work your way out. And I found that it was last about, you know, six weeks or so, and then I would have to reapply. But again, it was relatively inexpensive and pretty easy to do.

So again, it's nice that we've got these strategies that we can use outdoors to hopefully help preventing you getting a tick bite. And certainly I worry about pets, too, right?

Because, you know, especially with dogs or if you've got outdoor cats, you know, they go outside to do their business or cats especially the who knows where they go when they're outside the home.

You know, they're at a much higher risk because they're low to the ground. They're brushing against, you know, foliage. And, you know, I'm kind of convinced when I got Lyme that I got it from my dog because I had a dog that was a little tiny five and a half pound Maltese that would sit on my lap and sleep with me at night.

And, you know, I wasn't much of an outdoor person, but boy, if it gets on a pet, especially like a dog with long hair, those ticks would be very, very difficult to find, if not impossible.

And then if they're on, you would be very easy for that tick to move from the pet to you. So this is also a good

strategy not just for you, but for your pets as well. Yeah.

And you know, it's been found that pet owners have are twice as likely to get a tick by the non pet owners. So and I hear that all the time and when I had a dog that went out, you know, it's just constant checking.

Things you can do though for pets is like with a dog, get a little permethrin treated dog shirt or a bandana because sometimes, you know, the sniffing around, they'll get them coming up their face.

You can also use the cedar side. The dog needs to be more than £20 and not to use the Cedar's oil on a cat, but for dogs it can work for those bigger dogs.

I'm curious, I know you talk about this book in your book, but what about plants, shrubs? Are there things that we can put a wrap around the house that are naturally tick repellents?

Not that I know of. That's a good question.

Tick Tubes and Outdoor Repellents

Yeah, I think about deer repellent plants, but and like you said, of course, it's important to note that it's not just the deer bringing in the blacklegged ticks to the yard, but also the mice and other animals.

But, you know, that's one thing that comes up regarding that, but that's a good question. So plants that are deer repellent, are there specific things that you recommend?

So that is very now that I've relocated, I'm not thinking of an example. It's very dependent on the climate of the area. Yeah. And they're great resources out there for sure on that.

And I'll defer back to your book tour because I know you did have a list in here as I was reading through it. Yes, yes, there is. And there was a lot of them.

So I hate to put you on the spot, because I know trying to memorize like 40 different plants isn't practical, but definitely check out Dr. Chesney's book for that list. The plants.

And again, if you're thinking about, you know, re landscaping or you want to add other things, particularly if you do live in an area where there are a lot of deer, may not keep the ticks out per se, but if you can reduce the deer population and that's just another vector that might be in these ticks in and around your yard. So let's talk a little bit about preventing ticks on you.

If you do decide you want to be outdoors, you want to enjoy Mother Nature, what are some things that people can do to help keep ticks getting on them personally?

Yeah, so definitely tick checks. Most people know about that. I highly recommend that, but hopefully we're doing that and we can go beyond that. But just a note on tick checks with kids, I see a lot of tick bites like around the scalp hairline area or in yours.

So those are some big areas to keep an eye out for. And also thinking about tick checks visually, but also using using our fingers to notice, especially in our hair, you know, is this a mole or is this a tick, you know, getting used to the contour of our bodies?

And also visually, is this a freckle or is this a tick? And also for families, you can kind of line up and help each other out. You know, we brush our teeth hopefully twice a day or more so we can do these tick checks and we can just, you know, make it part of the every day.

Because that's one thing. People often complain about us time consuming, you know, but if you kind of link it to some other nice hygiene activities, it can work out pretty well.

And just thinking about those places again that ticks like to be in moist, darker areas. So, you know, under the armpits, under the belts or, you know, in the groin and all these types of areas behind the knee, you know, they can be anywhere, but they're more likely to be in those areas.

So that's the tick check and things on that. As I say, yeah, when I got bit, you know, again I didn't know I got that indigo and ticks bite you you know they got like a little anesthetic in their jaws.

You can't feel that bite and I got bit underneath my left pudgy can I can. I couldn't see it. It was someone else that saw it as I was getting ready to go to the hospital.

So like you said, it's important to understand that you can check yourself. That's great. But you probably need someone else to help you because there's so many parts of your body that you just can't easily see.

You know, the back of your arms, the back of your legs, neck, your hairline behind your ears. So if you've got a buddy, a partner, someone else that can help, do a tick check for you, that's is going to increase the possibility, if there is a tick there, that you might pick it up.

Absolutely. Yeah. And so some other ideas we can also when we come in from the outdoors, you know, we can link that tick check to that time, but we can also put our clothes in the dryer on high.

So six four ticks, 6 minutes in the dryer on high and that kills ticks. So that's helpful on any clothes if you wash it. Just to note, this is important if because usually we would want to wash our clothes before we put them in the dryer.

So if you wash them first, unless it's on very high heat and I have the detail of the temperature in the book, you know, it will probably make it through the wash.

And then I just think about, well, you could have some ticks then crawling around your washer and then you have to transport that to the dryer. And then you actually need an hour to try out those clothes, at least to really killed ticks because they become they lost the moisture.

Right. And so that that heat, that drying heat will kill them, defecate them. So so that's a little tip. And then also we've talked about Cedar oil. There's also something called Newt Curtain that's coming out that I'm very excited about.

It's been like years in the making, but when that comes out, hopefully will be quite, quite helpful because that is the only substance at this point that we know lasts three days.

There was a study showing 100% repellents of ticks for three days. Wow. So yeah, better than than DEET, actually, cedar oil and DEET were actually equal in 2022.

There was a study that was really actually kind of validating to me in a way that, yes, you know, it's a good choice to use this alternative natural option of cedar oil because it lasts just as long as DEET, which is only one or 2 hours.

So when you're using a repellent like that, you know, I think it's important to note, like it fades pretty quickly. So you need to reapply. Reapply, which is something just to keep in mind.

And then that's where Permethrin comes in, know, preferential treatment to clothing, socks and shoes, clothing, if you'd like, depending on your activity level outside what you're doing in their landscape and your risk factors for getting a tick bite.

So yeah, I do love recommending getting clothes treated for for protection too. Now can you treat the clothes with the Cedar Oil or do you just spray it over the top of your clothes.

Before the cedar again and just it won't last that long, just 1 to 2 hours. But sure, you can you can spray everything,

you know, with Cedar Oil if you wanted to.

Well, I know there's so many companies that make, you know, different types of essential oil products. You know, I worry about the just because, again, it is a potentially toxic chemical, especially if it gets on your skin and actually gets absorbed, and particularly for children.

And again, the fact that you have to reapply it potentially frequently, that's just going to accumulate over time, where at least with the essential oil products, if it gets on your skin, it's not likely to have any serious adverse effect unless you happen to be allergic to one of those oils.

It's generally safe. So whether it gets on the clothing, gets on the skin, I mean, I generally have people, you know, spray it over the top of their clothing unless they're going to be wearing like short sleeved shirts and they're going to be in an area that might be a higher risk.

But I think at least if it does get on the skin, we don't have to worry as much. Right? Absolutely. Yeah. And, you know, even I think wearing long clothing, right.

You know, long sleeved shirts, long pants, you know, talk them into your socks. And clothing is a good barrier, right, for ticks. So if you can create as much barrier between your skin and the outside world, that's just another easy thing to do, which I know it kind of sucks because of it's the summertime and it's hot and humid.

You're like, I don't want to wear long clothing. Well, I mean, that's your choice. But I think it does provide that extra layer of protection against a potential tick bite.

Right. Right. And then just keeping your eye out for them because they do crawl upwards. So they're they'll look for whenever that next piece of skin is open.

So it could be the neck, you know. So then just being careful with whatever is exposed. And ticks don't jump. Right. Right.

Personal Protection and Tick Checks

So you can have a sort of different tack with you know, foliage brushing up against you. And I also warn people like if they're going to go where some place where there's overhanging trees or bushes, because I think, again, we think so much about like the lower part, our feet, our lower legs and sometimes your arms, we forget about our head.

You know, if you walk under a tree branch and it hits your head, that could be just as easy to get a tick as, you know, walking barefoot through the grass.

Yeah, yeah. They do love humidity, so they're going to be closer to the ground. You know, they're not going to be way up in the tree and fall. You know, people ask that are they going to fall out of the trees on me?

You know, I mean, birds can carry them and myosin and such, so they can fall off of them if they finish their blood mail, perhaps. But yeah, they love to be in leaf litter and grass.

The humidity keeps them alive, so they are definitely being careful in those areas. So is there anything else in terms of personal protection for ticks that we haven't talked about yet?

Oh, well, the permethrin treatment. I just love to share some some facts because sometimes it's compelling for people to make that extra change. So if you just treat your shoes and socks with permethrin, it will decrease the chances of a tick bite by 73 times.

So that's amazing. Right. And that's for when we're thinking, yes, our feet are that barrier, right? Or our shoes can be that barrier if we're just walking through the grass now, if we're rolling around or, you know, we're gardening and

we're kneeling and that sort of thing, that's a good time to think about, Well, maybe I do want to get my hole outfit treated.

And so there was a study looking at some workers that did have full, full on gear with permethrin treated clothing and it decreases the rate of tick bites by 99%.

Again, amazing. Right? So I do see quite an impact from using that. But again, with Permethrin, we want to be careful if we apply it to our clothes, bring it out, bring the clothes outside, spray them down, let it dry, and then it's safe for us to touch and still repels the ticks.

And when we do it, it'll last six weeks. If you wanted to send out some clothes, there's a company insect shield. They're amazing. You can actually package up your clothes, send it to them, and they'll do it commercially.

So it lasts 70 washes. So a long time. Yeah. So I just I love, you know, thinking about combinations. And if this all is overwhelming to people, you know, just choosing one thing and saying, you know what, this year we're going to do this.

And, you know, I see patients year after year and they'll say, okay, this year we did the tick tubes and we saw a difference. You know what? Next year we're going to do the permethrin treatment of some outfits and use them when we garden, you know, make, make some practical goals.

That's not overwhelming, but that you can do to decrease your chances of tick bites. So you do all these great things to prevent it. And yet you're out and you look at your arm and you see a little tick, looks like it's embedded and like, okay, so, you know, my feeling is, you know, if you see a tick on you and it's not attached yet, I think you can safely pull it off and discard it.

And you probably don't have much to worry about because once it embeds on you, it will stay on you until it's had a full blood meal and then it falls off.

They don't hang around too long after that. So but if it's embedded, you know, talk us through what is the proper way to remove the tick. All right. So I actually love something called the old time tick twister.

You could certainly use a you know, just a regular tweezer. I just, you know, in the beginning of practice when people would come in, I just I just saw Mutilate to them.

And then that's agitating the tick. And then the tick can release more saliva that could have pathogens into your bloodstream. So and then the mouthparts are in the skin.

So I came across this tool, the time, the tick twister, and it just slides right under the tick. And then you twist it and pull up and it's pretty amazing.

It's usually the first try, you get it out, maybe second try and it's over and it has the the mouth parts with it. So I love that tool. There are certainly other types, but I would be careful.

I had a patient once come in and they got a twister from some someone else and that's fine. But they showed me, I say, look, I keep trying, that's not coming up.

And I tried. And the time the time was just too wide. So it just went right over the tick. So, you know, the time was thin enough. So I said, Well, let's try this one.

I don't know, hopefully this always works. So I used it and there you go. It worked. So it really grabbed that, that tick, the mouthparts there. So yeah, that's in my experience.

So know. And what are maybe some things not to do. Right. So getting the match out, getting the Vaseline out, squeezing a yeah, those are such good ideas.

Yeah. I had a patient not long ago, an older patient and again she found a tech and she did. She pulled the match out in a lit and then took the burning match.

And I'm like, No, no, no, no, no, no. Like, I don't know why these old ways tales kind of still perpetuate, but yeah, don't use the burning match. Don't slather them in Vaseline.

Yeah. You don't want to do anything that's going to kind of like scare the tech so injects more of it's alive in you and potentially more pathogens so you know, tweezers, the oh time tool is great.

I've used that with patients and be patient with it too. I know the old time tools pretty quick and easy if you're using really regular tweezers, you got to be patient with it.

But the thing you don't want to do is just don't yank it out. You know, those jaws are embedded pretty deeply and you're just likely to rip the take in half and you're not going to get the head piece out.

You want to try and pull the whole tech out in total if you can. So just be a little patient. Sometimes you have to just sit there and pull gently and eventually will kind of let go.

But it does take a little bit of time and patience for her. Yeah, because they're so mentally in there, they use a chemical like you said, to anesthetize us and then also to cement themselves in there so it can be hard to get them out.

So one of the things you talk about in your book and I'm totally in this camp too, is, okay, so let's say, you know, there is a tech there, you successfully extract the tech.

What are some things that people can think about doing? I mean, the standard protocol is, you know, to treat with doxycycline. And this idea behind a single dose of doxy cyclone's pretty much been disproven.

It suppresses the rash. It certainly doesn't prevent getting Lyme disease at all. But we know that that's kind of the conventional approach. And I know that we have other people in the summer talking about that.

But I want to hear about your approach using herbs for acute Lyme disease. And I know there's a lot of different ways to approach it, but maybe just talk a little bit about some of the herbs that are kind of your go tos if someone has acute Lyme or we're not sure yet, you know, they're in that early phase where it's too early to test, but we want to help prevent this thing, you know, getting any further than it is.

Yeah. Yeah. And, you know, I opened up having time on my schedule for tick bite clinic years and years ago when I saw this because I wanted to spend the time with these folks, like right in the moment where we can really effect change, right?

We don't have to wait a month or a year or ten years or as we know for a long time before we really take action. And, you know, everybody has a different preference and that's totally fine.

You know, if I were to get a tick bite, I know I would do the prophylaxis that I'd be right on it. And I know a lot of patients that would and some other people are fine.

Let's just watching and waiting and that's fine. But yes, you know, I created this particular formula of herbs that can kill Lyme and other tick borne diseases in the blacklegged the deer tick.

Right. So I created that formula thinking about, well, what can we do? We know the doxycycline one or two doses really isn't reliable. You know, maybe there's that three week option or different options people do with using something like doxycycline.

But we know that there's the round form of Lyme, there's biofilm. There are other things to think about. There are other you know, there's some businesses that could be transmitted that that is not treated with doxy, right?

So so I was thinking like in total anti what are these pathogens that this deer tick can carry and transmit? And instead of waiting until we can test or waiting for symptoms to come, let's do something immediately.

Tick Removal and Acute Lyme Response

So, you know, as soon as you have a tick bite, you could start depending on the tick. And in the book I'd talk about, you know, the profile of all the ticks and what pathogens they can carry.

And so then I created these formulas based on what pathogens which took care of it. So, you know, the main example being the black legged deer tick. Yeah. So, so yeah.

So you can start right in. And so what I recommend is this prophylaxis for, you know, three times a day for a month after a tick bite. And then during that time, you're also watching and waiting for symptoms, of course.

And if you developed a fever or rash or, you know, the symptoms of Lyme or another tick borne disease, please contact your doctor about that. And then, you know, I don't see it happen much, but then we would add, of course we could if we wanted to add, you know, a more comprehensive protocol, if we wanted to include pharmaceutical antibiotics, for instance, or if we thought maybe it's anaplasmosis, you know, if there's a high fever, worst headache of your life, you know, we have a lot of anaplasmosis in Vermont.

So the testing for that is accurate, right? Right. In the acute phase. So we can actually test and find out. And if so, we could decide if we wanted to add two weeks of doxycycline.

If it's if it's more looking like Lyme, we can't test until four weeks later, so we might decide, you know, let's stick with this prophylaxis or we might decide, well, there's symptoms.

So let's, let's also add an antibiotic at this acute phase. So there's a lot of decision making, you know, and I always include my patients in on that every step of the way.

But yeah, I think there's a lot to do opposed to just saying, well, there's a tick bite, you know, you're probably fine at all if you have any of those, so.

Well, I think we're all in agreement. You know, the sooner you get on top of it, the less likely you are to have any kind of residual long term effects from Lyme or any of these other tick borne illnesses.

And again, I've treated, you know, thousands of patients with herbs for acute Lyme disease. So you know, it doesn't have to be, you know, antibiotics only.

And like I said, it can be sometimes a combination. I think, you know, the idea with doxycycline to me is always a little crazy because how this became the gold standard, I'm a little confused only that doxycycline is not a bactericidal antibiotic.

It's what's called bacteria static, so it only stops the organism from replicating. And Lyme has an incredibly slow lifecycle. It replicates. Every one is 16 days where most bacteria blockades every 10 to 20 minutes.

So, you know, if you only take two weeks of doxycycline, you may have only gone through one replication phase of the Lyme organism, and that's not very much.

So it's still really dependent on your immune system's innate ability to fight infection. So if you're someone who's immune compromised in any way for you know, whether it's genetic medication or otherwise, you know, your natural ability to fight infection may be diminished.

And that antibiotic isn't really getting rid of the bug. It's only kind of keeping it at bay where, like you mentioned with IRBs, now we've got evidence that, you know, unlike doxycycline that only kills Lyme when it's and it's uncoiled skyrocket form round rounds goes into the round body or assist form the IRBs actually kill it even in that form.

So I would almost argue that IRBs are more effective than antibiotics in so many cases of use with regards to Lyme. And so I just want people to understand that you don't necessarily have to take antibiotics.

I mean, I think that's a case where antibiotics are very appropriate. And if that's your comfort level, then great. But again, there are so many different herbs that can be very effective in those early stages of Lyme and tick borne illness that, you know, you may not have necessarily have to get to a point where you take antibiotics.

Some people I work with are extremely sensitive to antibiotics or they've just spent so many months and years repairing their gut. The last thing they want to do is compromise that by taking the antibiotic and certainly the herbs are less damaging.

I guess we could say to the gut microbiome now what are what are some of your the Arabs, the specific herbs that you've got included in your formula? Yeah.

So I use Japanese knotweed. Katz Clark, Hooton and Krypto Lepus and that's what the blackleg and deer tick bite formula is made of right now. And so in thinking about creating that, you know, I was thinking about the pathogens, of course, like I said.

But then also, I mean, it's amazing, right? So three out of the four were recently studied at Johns Hopkins. And it's just very validating. You know, I mean, you and I have been doing this a long time, maybe longer than me.

And, you know, we have the experience in the office with the patients saying, yes, herbs work, but it's nice to have that validation. And I mean, I do appreciate research certainly.

And I'm guided by that in certain ways, but also just to validate our experience and then to have found out, well, gee, yes. So it validates the formula that I'm using.

But yeah, I mean, Japanese knotweed is incredible. I mean, it also will give you support for inflammation. It's an immune modulator. You know, it's it gives you neurological support.

So just when we think of symptoms that you could get from Lyme disease, right. Supporting these systems, not just killing and doing more than that, you know, we need the anti-microbial part, but then also supporting all of the systems that need support during that time.

That's that's a winner for sure. And then, you know, the Catskills also has those anti-inflammatory properties. The list goes on with all the actions that these are.

Well, again, that's the beauty of herbs, is that, you know, they get so many different constituents in it that they don't really just do one thing. And the fact that so many herbs we use, like I said, they're antimicrobial, they're anti inflammatory, they support the immune system, they promote better circulation.

They just do so many different things. So we can really mix and match these different herbs to accomplish different goals. And I created a formula with allergy research called Phyto Tick Defense.

And again, there's a lot of overlap what you've used. Now, my formula's got the cat's clean, it's got a tune in it. I added Artemisia, I added cordyceps, I added lion's mane I added copters.

But again, you know, all these herbs, they work in different ways, but they're still covering the bases of dealing with Lyme and these other tick borne illnesses.

And again, they just they work really, really well. So again, I just want to impress on people tuning in today that, you know, you've got options. And if you're working with a medical doctor, they may or may not be well versed in herbs. Dr.

Chestnut are both naturopathic doctors, so herbs are a part of our medical training and we're very experienced in it.

So you may have to seek out a functional medicine doctor, naturopathic doctor trained in herbal medicine, if that's a route you want to go.

But just know that there are there are options out there for that acute phase. And again, you know, if the time comes, you're now past that tick by. You've done testing on yourself.

And if you know you've got antibodies, you know, you've had exposure to kind of depending on where you are at that point. You know, my experience, again, if we're able to get this early, I'll make sure I can say this correctly.

I don't know that I've ever had to give an antibiotic after that 4 to 6 weeks of being on herbs because they weren't it wasn't working off the top of my head.

I can't say that I have I mean, I have had patients where we've given them antibiotics. Sometimes we do antibiotics and herbs, but for people have just been on herbs in acute phase, I don't know that I've had to use antibiotics.

So my experience has been that again, they do what we wanted to do and again, I think if we can hit that early on, we're preventing this long potential nightmare of chronic Lyme.

So the I think the general rule in our world is treat until proven otherwise and whether that's with antibiotics or herbs, but get something on board.

And I do recommend for patients to save the tick if they can pull it off, send it to someplace like tick report dot com, get tested. It's not perfect, but at least it gives us more information to make our decisions on treatment.

Because if it comes back and we know that it carries Lyme or Bartonella or babies ear and plasma, okay, well, we might want to stay with this treatment longer.

Or maybe I want to change either the herbs or the antibiotics based on now we know specifically what you've been exposed to. So again, it just gives us more information to make those decisions.

Absolutely. Yes. I highly recommend tick testing. It can be so helpful. So I want to shift gears just a little bit and sort of the closing part of our talk and talk a little bit about this thing called Alpha Gal Syndrome.

You know, it's it's fortunately fairly not common, I would say rare, but it's becoming more common. But it's this this thing that after you get bit by certain types of ticks, you become highly allergic to meat products.

So can you tell us a little bit about what this whole alpha gal things about? Sure. Yeah, it's really fascinating. I don't come across that much. But, you know, in the world of tick borne disease, we're usually thinking our pathogens, you know, infections.

And this is not one right. And it's actually from the saliva of a Lone Star tick. So it's just it's just this sort of alpha gal is galactose. Alpha one, three galactose.

It's a sugar molecule. And so it can be transmitted through that lonestar tick saliva.

Herbal Treatment for Acute Tick Bites

So yeah, it's just kind of different, right? But it can create this for some people for a small amount of people, but still it can be life altering because it can create this immediate hypersensitivity reaction with IgG.

And so you can get scary things like anaphylaxis. You can go to that extreme or you could have things like vomiting and abdominal discomfort or itchy rash, hives, trouble breathing, going into throat closing lips or mouth swelling, anaphylaxis, kind of an experience.

Yeah. And even things like that can affect your blood pressure, low blood pressure or fainting. So. So, yeah. So

think about that. That's not usually the profile of symptoms that I see in my typical Lyme patient, right?

So it is very different. So it's helpful to kind of clarify what's what for people, but there is a test for it, so that's helpful. So it's alpha gal igg e a blood test, simple test, labcorp or probably any hospital lab.

Easy to get to see if somebody is having those symptoms and you're ruling out other things you know, of course, what else comes to mind? Food allergies, mass cell activation syndrome, you know, things like this.

But this might be on the list now also with tick bite history or someone that has a tick borne disease, you know, could this be going on? So the alpha gals found.

So it's beef, it's pork. Are there other food products that have the alpha gal protein? Yeah. So it's all mammal meat, except like, you know, not human or primate or ape. So.

So just thinking of pork, beef, venison rabbits. Yeah. I mean, the list goes on really for for meat. And it can even come up like some people, like I think of barbecue, you know, the typical like barbecue foods.

And so, you know, it can come up. Some people are sensitive to having it airborne. They can be affected. But yeah. Anyway, just a fun tip unfortunately.

Well, and where do people where are the the Lone Star ticks typically live. Yeah. So as it might sound, definitely in Texas and then it's sort of definitely east of the Rockies and then more southern United States, but they are finding their way up.

I have not had a patient bring in a Lone Star tick yet in Vermont, but apparently they are in Vermont and New Hampshire, which is a large portion of my patient population.

I have had patients get a tick bite from a Lone Star tick in York. So, you know, it's sort of it's coming up north as well. Yeah. Yeah. I said I've only seen a handful of cases in my own practice.

It's kind of an odd thing. And again, it happens overnight. You know, all of a sudden people eat these meat products and they have often the cases I've seen have had like severe anaphylactic reactions that were very serious and very dangerous.

And now they all ended up in the E. R. with, you know, really bad symptoms. And again, kind of perplexing. And, of course, you know, it's so easy to write off that it's just due to some other thing because there's a lot of things that can cause anaphylaxis, but it's because beef as a whole, I think beef specifically because beef by itself is not a common food allergy, we see some of the things that can cause anaphylaxis.

Usually, I think of like peanuts and tree nuts and beef as a whole is relatively low on the list. So when I hear about anaphylaxis to meat products, the first thing I would think about testing for is this alpha gal to see if that's part of the problem for people who might have this.

Are there any solutions? Are there any possible treatments for it. It's really just avoiding the foods. Yeah. And over time people get better, it seems, and everybody seems different.

Like the extra severity of the reaction or the number of foods that they're affected by. And also the confusing thing is it can change a little bit over time. So.

Alpha-Gal Syndrome and Closing Remarks

So, yeah, it's a little hard to pin down sometimes for people. And just another note is, is that thinking of other items in one's life that can have alpha gal like body products or, you know, gelatin, right?

So gelatin is in capsules of supplements right now. Carrageenan that's also actually has alpha gal and that's in a lot

of foods. So yeah, if you're on, say, a bovine or porcine kind of like a thyroid supplement or medication, these are also going to have alpha gal that you could react to.

So I think for some people it's navigating through seeing, you know, what is it that they're reacting to and trying to really narrow that down and then avoid until they get better.

But you know, what have you seen? Have you seen any other helpful remedies or anything? Yeah, we've actually been doing low dose allergy therapy in our practice.

For people of Alpha Gal, again, this is just a handful of people, but so far it seems to help. Nice. So, you know, will will recheck their blood levels, will see their blood levels drop over.

Time now again it's hard to say. Would that naturally have happened over time anyway? Again, I haven't seen 50 alpha gal patients to say for sure, but we do see their blood levels drop telling me that they're probably less sensitive.

Obviously they're avoiding the foods so they don't trigger the reaction while we're trying to treat it. But you know, this is a potential option for people who do develop the sensitivity as a way to kind of desensitize them against that.

And again, it just takes a little bit of time, but for something that can be that serious and life threatening. And of course, we usually have people who carry an EpiPen on hand because you just never know we're going to be exposed until you can get to a point where you feel confident that that that allergies under better control but low dose allergy therapy.

There's a lot of environmental medicine doctors out there that do this treatment. And so for someone who has this, this might be a potential option as well.

Great. Great. Well, Alexis, this has been a great discussion. You know, it's so important that we talk about prevention because, again, anything we can do to help keep from getting to that point of having, you know, either acute or chronic Lyme is so critically important.

And I think the piece about Alpha gal is just really interesting. Again, it doesn't affect that many people, but for those who do, it can be really devastating and just having that awareness that it is possible, at least for those Lone Star tick bites.

I know people are going to want to pick up a copy of your book. I mentioned it Preventing Lyme and other tick borne diseases. It's just a great resource and I know you walk people through more details about things they can do in and around your home and personal care to prevent getting a tick.

If people want to connect with you, what's the best way people to find you? Yeah, my website would be great. DrAlexisChesney.com. Great. Well, again, I appreciate you being part of the summit, sharing your time with us.

And I know people will be excited to connect with you. So again, I'm just really appreciative that you spend some time with us on the summit. So thank you again.

Thank you. This was wonderful. It was great talking about prevention. One of our natural Catholic principles that we share. Thanks so much. Take care.