Uncover The Gut-Prostate Health Connection Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Background

Hello, everyone. Welcome again to another episode of the Prostate Cancer Summit. I'm with my guest, doctor Mark Stengler, who is in private practice as a natural plastic doctor.

He was voted 2021 doctor of the decade by the International Association of Top Professionals. Doctor Stengler served as the medical advisory committee for the Yale University Complementary Medicine Outcomes Research Project.

He has authored many books, many books, many of which I have right behind me. Mark has been one of the premier naturopathic authors. And, even as a I remember 20 years ago, 20 something years ago, as a student, before I even went to natural private school.

I read many of Mark's, books. So, doctor Mark Stengler, thank you so much for joining us today. Doctor Joy, great to be with you, Monica, for keeping you updated in all the world of prostate men's health.

Well, that's that's all I do. You know, I get excited about different things, but I stay in my lane always talking about prostate testosterone, erections and the interrelationship between all three.

Good stuff. It's good stuff. You know, I use you as a valuable resource. The imaging of the prostate and these studies, and it's good stuff. It's good. Endless. Endless.

Today we're going to talk about the association between the gut and the prostate. And you just wrote an amazing book on it called The Holistic Guide to Gut Health.

Discover the Truth about Leaky Gut balancing your microbiome and restoring whole body health. And as I prepare for this conversation, and obviously, as you said, my day is all day prostate related things.

I came across several papers. So we we know there's a gut brain connection that's pretty much at this point, a gut everything connection. I came across several papers on the gut, prostate connection.

And it makes sense, right? When you consider even the proximity of the prostate around the gut and the rectum. Right. What do you know? Where do these decisions feel?

The prostate through the rectum. Right. It makes sense that there is a connection there. One of the things that we find that may induce prostate related urinary problems is constipation.

Right. Maybe there's, you know, all this fecal matter pushing up against the prostate. So enlighten us. First of all, before you go there, are you done writing books?

How many books?

Why Gut Health Matters

I mean, how do you how do you manage? You are a naturopathic doctor. Busy clinic. You've hosted your own shows and summits. You also write like a madman.

How do you do that? Good question. I think you know, we all different gifts. When I was even a kid, I remember in primary school, we get assignments, not write, ten times longer than we needed to write.

I pay if the, you know, if a doorknob doesn't work in a at a door at home to my wife called the father in law. Okay,

so we all have our certain gifts.

That's right. Amazing and great books too. You've authored and coauthored with extraordinary, you know, coauthors like Paul Anderson, our colleague, and Kanter and so forth.

I think you are the perfect person to talk about gut health and prostate health and gut health and prostate cancer, because you actually wrote a a book that I forwarded, on prostate health as well.

So tell us a little bit before we go into that connection, why does gut health matter? Well, the gut, you know, anatomically it's the core of the body, but it really is physiologically as well.

You know, when you look back traditionally in all the ancient healing systems, right? You look at Chinese medicine, diabetic medicine, European medicine.

I mean, all of these traditional, forms of medicine, clearly naturopathic medicine, even here in North America last few hundred years. And, you know, the gut is so emphasized.

And why is that? Are they really onto something? And as it turns out, we found in science, you know, in all the mainstream medical journals, which actually my book, I went through hundreds of them mainstream medical journals in terms of the gut and how it affects all the different organs of the body, including, you know, men's health and hormones and testosterone and prostate.

And there's loads of information out there which most doctors don't know about. And so what they have found is there's this gut access access, access to all the organ systems of the body, essentially, you know, so we know for a fact there's an access directly goes bidirectional between the gut and the skin to the eyes, to the brain, to the throat, to the lungs, to the liver, to the joints, to the muscles, and, yes, to the testicles and prostate in men.

So what we know is, if you have good, good, if you have good gut health, you're more likely to have healthy organs where it's connected to. If you have poor gut health, you can be impairing the health of those organs, creating all sorts of health problems like hormone problems, prostate problems.

And so as holistic doctors like ourselves, where we are aware of that, knowing that we gotta look into the gut and see how it's influencing all these things going on with the immune system in cancer, you know, again, testosterone levels, prostate.

So that's the connection. And it's, you know, it's without a shadow of a doubt. Now there's really two connections we can talk about. And I'll take your lead on it.

But you know we have the small intestine itself. You know, these basically surface area of two tennis courts where absorption takes place back loaded with the immune system, many different components of the immune system, and of course, the immune system is, you know, what helps us fight infection, cancer and controls inflammation.

And then what we absorb through that area, the small intestine and then a whole kind of other categories, the whole microbiome, which I know we'll talk about.

Lovely. Before we even talk about that. You're one of the foremost experts. You you just wrote a book on leaky gut. And I think leaky gut can affect every element of health, including prostate problems, maybe even indirectly, to prostate cancer, unless you tell me more direct than I thought.

So tell me and tell us what is leaky gut about and how does it possibly affect every element of of health, including male health issues? Yeah, there's I think this concept of leaky gut, which refers to the small intestine where absorption should take place, right?

Absorb nutrients, but also act as a gatekeeper.

Leaky Gut and Its Health Effects

So certain things like toxins and bacterial byproducts are these are not absorbed, you know, into our bloodstream, going through our bloodstream, through the organs.

So it's really the major gatekeeper in the body. What gets in and out of we need the good nutrients to, you know, get into the body. But we don't want, you know, bad things getting into the body.

So the small intestine, it's an amazing organ. Like I said, surface area two kind of corpse. The way we have our belief projections and all that. Increasing the surface area is secretes many different hormones.

Like I said, it's the major area of absorption for our nutrients. So it's a critical, critical area. But what we've known for many years and is in all the mainstream journals now, when people under stress, they're eating poorly, fast foods, you know, unhealthy foods, American diet, the Western diet, you know, too much alcohol, pain medications, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, chemotherapy, radiation, many other factors.

They cause damage to the lining of the small intestine. So what happens is you start having malabsorption so you don't get the right nutrients absorbed, but you also create an inflammatory response right in the small intestine, which, you know, can give you digestive symptoms too.

And then they have this whole concept proven in medicine called translocation, you know, kind of a strange name, but basically means this you start absorbing toxins and bacterial byproducts once called LPs lipopolysaccharide, that shouldn't be absorbed in and it travels through the bloodstream and then it goes to organs, you know, joints, etc., and the immune system as it should.

It sees it as a foreign invader launches an immunity, it creates an inflammatory response. So you're depleting your immune system, you're creating inflammation.

And as we both know, tons of data showing chronic inflammation is a big problem for cancer formation. So these are some of the things that we run into.

And so the average person out there, you know, their small intestine health just isn't in great shape. And I've tested, you know, thousands of people.

There's tests you can do to test this, but you usually pretty much tell by their symptoms that they are chronic illness, high stress, not eating well, taking, you know, these different types of medications.

I mean, most of these people have some degree of leaky gut, some people more than others. So yes, it ties into your immune system, which you know is under constant surveillance, not just for infections, but immune cells, as you know, and controlling inflammation.

You don't control inflammation. That's not good for a lot of things, including cancer. Mark, what are you said? You know, we get we can test for leaky gut. But how often do you actually test for leaky gut?

I mean, a patient comes in with the main symptoms. What are those symptoms. And once they have those symptoms are you still going to test or are you going to just put them on a protocol right away?

Yeah, it's a good question. Well, common symptoms be like gas and bloating, you know, irritable bowel syndrome type symptoms. You could get loose toilet constipation.

You can be alternation abdominal pain. I actually in a book I talk about studies, very good studies where they show people with irritable bowel syndrome, the most common digestive condition, often do have leaky gut syndrome.

You have inflammatory bowel disease. You know, say like Crohn's disease. You're definitely going to have a problem with that. That's just a given. So you already kind of digestive problems, but, you know, people with

chronic health problems.

And when you're under chronic stress and you have chronic disease, I mean, your body responds in part by, you know, focusing on, on, energy and circulation to the brain and the muscles and the heart and all that.

And left to the core of the digestive system, you kind of like for survival. And then you get degradation of the small intestine, because in part it depends not only on your nutrition but on blood flow bringing the nutrients in.

And then on top of that, you know, a lot of people just have like yeast overgrowth in their gut. They have dysbiosis bacteria. It's over. Go in there sometimes parasites.

And so that you know just damages a small intestine. In addition give us a general overview of some of the natural approaches to overcome leaky gut in yeast and and dysbiosis and things like that.

Are you I'll give you an example. And we're going to and that's going to lead us into microbiome and microbiota and, and prostate. I don't prescribe a lot of probiotics.

Maybe you can lead me to a different direction. I prescribe, either prebiotics or three types of foods that you can find at Costco. Kimchi.

Diet, Microbiome, and Probiotics

I was so happy to see, you know, that they had jars of, of kimchi, a Costco raw sauerkraut they have at Costco, and, things like, other, other, other products that are that high in microbiome and probiotics.

I'm even okay with some kefir. And unless somebody is very severe, severe allergies to, and there's not a lot of casein. Keefer. What what's your approach to rebuilding the microbiota?

Is it? Do you prescribe probiotics? Are there some kinds? What are we looking for here? Well, I think you're right. I mean, first of all, we start with diet.

I mean, most people can, you know, benefit from diet improvements. In my book, I focus a lot on a modified Mediterranean diet. I do go over research showing the Mediterranean diet, does help help leaky gut and contributes to a healthy, you know, microbiome.

So obviously fruits, vegetables, you know, clean wild fish like wild salmon, sardines, things like that. Some nuts and seeds. There's some red meat, but it's very limited.

Mine's modified because American grains are so unhealthy. Even whole wheat products are so unhealthy. We don't include, non gluten on a whole grains, like, you know, quinoa, buckwheat, things like that.

Which are healthier. Talk a lot in the book about tons of studies on gluten sensitivity. And gluten allergy does mean everyone has a problem with it. But there's a many, many studies, showing a problem in creating leaky gut.

So something to consider. Is that a gluten problem in the United States versus that? Because the type of grain we have here versus Europe, let's say. It appears that way. Yeah.

So I mean, I think there's a couple reasons. We have a lot higher concentration of gluten. Number two, our food products don't have the restrictions for chemicals like they do in Europe.

Second point, I talk about glyphosate in the book roundup. And we know the American food supply is just loaded with it, you know, especially in the grains and the corn and stuff like that.

But now there is emerging research where people can find it on pavement. There's emerging research where it appears the body, when it reacts to glyphosate across, reacts to gluten.

So that just throws a wrench into the whole thing, you know, because, you know, glyphosate has, you know, a very long half life, you know, it's they it stays in the soil and stuff for an over 100 years.

So it's not something you just rapidly can get rid of. Right. Interesting. All right. So, microbiome. I'm sorry to answer your question. I meant that foods actually do have studies on them.

Fermented foods have station. They help with leaky gut obviously help the microbiome getting in the prebiotic foods. I've got my list here. Like artichoke.

Asparagus is very good. Beans are a good source. Chicory. Jerusalem artichoke honey is, peas are, you know, so there's prebiotic foods, and then, like, the probiotic foods you're talking about with the fermented foods.

And I often use like nondairy yogurt with patients. Macadamia nut yogurt, coconut yogurt, no sugar added. Those are great sources as well. Nondairy sources.

So do not dairy sources have the same, probiotic contents or similar to dairy sources? Some are absolutely. Okay. Yeah. Every morning I'm I shake. I usually have macadamia nut yogurt.

A couple tablespoons are coconut yogurt no sugar added. Put in some organic low glycemic berries and, you know, some vegetable protein powder. We're ready to go.

What are your thoughts on what are your thoughts on yogurt? I mean, I'm assuming that you're dairy free and you recommend dairy free to many or most of your patients for good reasons.

I don't find that patients that have dairy sensitivities have yogurt sensitivities. What are your thoughts on that? The reason I say that because if that's the way they're going to get some of their probiotic and there's pretty good quality yogurt out there, then go for it.

What's your order? Your thoughts on it? You're right. I mean, there's a lot of people who do tolerate yogurt. I think one of the reasons is yogurt. You know what the, good, bacteria, the good flora, it does stimulate, the, enzyme, which breaks down having a little fork.

Right? Yeah. It's like a blow. For the lactase enzyme in the gut, in the small intestine, which breaks down. So there are studies showing that yogurt actually stimulates the production of black taste in the small intestine.

Lining off you breaks down lactose. A lot of people think that, hey, we get enzymes from our pancreas to break food down. That is true. But in the border of the small intestine, you produce enzymes right in that brush order as well.

So so yogurt okay. In some cases. So yeah. So my patients can seem to tarry yogurt health problems get digestive problems on me because absolutely they can have it.

Is that it. It's a healthy foods. Been around forever since the beginning of humanity and tons of research on it. So but you know if you're a person with got problems irritable bowel syndrome, you got to play around, play around with and see if it's a problem or not.

Great. So let's segue into what's the what is the connection. The prostate microbiome the the the prostate gut connection. And what role does the microbiome play in that?

Well, it's very interesting. Like we said, there's the gut prostate axis. It has been identified. And so in terms of the prostate inflammation, I haven't seen studies on cancer, but prostate inflammation, you know, BPH and prostate you know.

Inflammation. It's one of the leading causes to prostate cancer. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. As well as which you're very well versed and one of the best chronic prostatitis.

Yeah. You know we get that inflammation which you know very well may not be bacterial in terms like a bacterial infection. So, yeah, you're right. I mean, you're you're in the area there.

So you have changes in the microbiome. So basically you look at it, your prostate has its own microbiome. People are shocked to find out. But like our eyes actually they've they've shown research has its own microbiome.

Our sinus has its own microbiome.

Gut Health, Prostate Cancer, and Supplements

Our skin has its own unique pi program. So you can influence the microbiome of the prostate through the food you eat and how your gut health is. And so that is, you know, the connection.

And so what kind of diet would you propose for a man with prostate cancer? Was it a, a microbiome healthy type of diet? So I'll tell you in my practice, and man, once you get into talking about diets and cancer, it opens up a can of worms because people are very emotional about their food.

Right. And there's like these diet wars and so forth. I'm constantly in some debate, though. I'm a lover, not a fighter. I want to find even in my politics.

So, like, how can what do we all think alike? What do we all have in common? What what is it that we all want for that for for our gut. From our, government? That's not the question.

The question is, why can't we get better candidates for for. You know what? This that's for the next. Let's do a summit on that. I think that'll be very, interesting and appealing.

Actually, this summit is going to be published right around, election time, so. Oh, interesting. Yeah. How one affects the other. So. One of the things that I incorporate in my dietary approach is things that promote microbiome, healthy gut bacteria.

I mean, not now. That's a significant part of my dietary approach. And again, things like kimchi and sulfur, I allow yogurt for people that have zero intolerances.

I just want to get the probiotics and the healthy flora in and keep them there healthy and avoid things that will, you know, that are detrimental for that.

I think that the data right now is overwhelming. What's your approach? What do you what do you what's your dietary approach for that? Well met with the prostate cancer, which I do see.

I definitely don't have drink pals milk. I mean, yogurt is one thing, but I don't have a drink called milk. And we do restrict the red meat. You know, there is some research on that.

Of course, we can get into there for reasons why, how it's cooked and all this kind of stuff. But again, not to sound like a broken record, but, hey, what is the most well researched diet in history with studies on it?

It is the Mediterranean diet. Yeah. So the Mediterranean diet has I. So I thought that was a trick question. I, I was like the Mediterranean diet. But I looked at your face, I was like, is he gonna come with some other died that no one knows about?

Yeah. The Mediterranean, of course it is, right? It's not the carnivore diet. It is pretty good. Now, I would love for the carnivore diet. Diet to be as good as they say.

I would love to just, you know, chew on steaks. And. Oh, right. Right, right. Oh, absolutely. But again, the modification, because the American grains are such a problem, I hate to say it, but they are.

Look what they are. They're high glycemic. They spike your glucose and your insulin levels and as you know. Well, and it's you know, it's in any cancer textbook mainstream, you know, insulin is a tumor promoter.

So I like the modified Mediterranean diet because we're getting the cancer fighting phytonutrients from not only just to fruits and vegetables, but look at all the spices and herbs in the Mediterranean diet.

Now, you don't have to go too crazy with it. I find for most patients they can follow a mediterranean style diet. You know, they can still get small amounts of meat in there and poultry and, they usually I find we have to kind of shift over to more clean fish, you know, cold water fish.

Usually something we got to do over time. But for most of my patients, I give them handouts on a modified Mediterranean diet. And the majority, not all the majority of it are able to do it.

You know, they find a workable. I don't find it's too difficult, you know, to prepare meals or even eat out and stuff like that so that I like. And there's tons of research on the Mediterranean diet for, you know, lowering the risk of certain types, many different types of cancers, including prostate.

So I haven't seen so much on the Mediterranean diet. You have prostate cancer. You just follow a good Mediterranean diet, you know, cures prostate cancer.

But it's one of the things which obviously has an impact on the immune system and prostate cancer. Yeah. And inflammation. It keeps inflammation low. That type of diet of course.

So what what supplements would you recommend in a patient with prostate cancer. And would you recommend probing. And if you would, what are the kinds of types that you I mean, you could do give it an overview, the types that you keep in a refrigerator or no.

Right. Because there's there's some that they say, well, you know, on the shelf doesn't matter. Keeps it. It's, you know, so what should we be looking for and what would you prescribe.

And are we there yet? You know, we're already prescribing a boatload of supplements, curcumin. But we all kinds of things that may have some level of anti-inflammatory or anti-cancer, medicinal mushrooms.

There's only so many. They will take. Right. How do probiotics in your mind fit into the whole thing? And if and if it's something that should be part of the protocol, what what should we be looking at?

Yeah, I do, I do not make a part of the protocol unless the person has obvious digestive issues. I mean, if they got your bowel syndrome, elaborate, tremendous gas and bloating, or we do test stool tests where, there's big problems, then I'll.

I had them in for a period talk, but I don't propose one of my top supplements, probably similar to you. Look at your materials. Definitely a big fan of of high potency, high absorbable tumeric.

Definitely a big fan of the medicinal mushrooms. More focused on making sure patients get therapeutic amounts of versicolor, known as Turkey's kale, as well as my hockey.

There are other ones, but as I've documented throughout the years, I mean, you have hundreds of published studies on these. By far the most. They're the most. Well researched.

And what I like about them is they have the data demonstrating they're safe during chemotherapy and radiation, not only safe, but they reduce side effects during chemotherapy and radiation.

And so I've had similar patients like you, although, you know, you get a higher number of these types of patients better prostate cancer. But you know, a lot of them are, you know, getting conventional treatment, which is indicated, you know, they're getting localized, radiation.

They might be getting, you know, surgery. And then, as you know, more and more now we're getting some of these younger men or men or, you know, much older, much older, you know, over 65 or under active surveillance.

And so we'll do those things. I do a lot of high dose intravenous vitamin C at our clinic, you know, has good research on it multiple ways. Yeah. So those are some of the key ones.

Make sure they're vitamin D levels not deficient, which usually is about 70, 75% of people get them up to range. About 50 I've documented seems like in terms of cancer, you get the protective effects of vitamin D and your serum levels around, you know, the 42 mark.

I've seen in data now 40 to 42 something where you get the protection from vitamin D. Beyond that, no one's demonstrated to me, you know, you got to get the upper end of the range.

Higher is not better. It's not better.

Final Takeaways on Integrative Care

An interesting way. I did find some research people with the on the higher end the vitamin D. And again it's not conclusive, but they might develop, some muscle weakness problems.

So how should I tell patients? Look, just conservatively shoot from the range, shoot for the 50, you know, give or take, you know, ten points. Yeah. Yeah. Me too.

Doctor. Mark Stengler, the author of The Holistic Guide to Gut Health. Mark, final words, members of this summit. Well, the good thing about you, Geo.

And in the summit that you're hosting is you're making people aware of the multifactorial approach that needs to be done for the prevention and treatment disease, including prostate cancer.

And so when people take that multifactor approach, you know, the stress reduction, the exercise, the diet, using the evidence based supplements, right?

You saying conventional testing techniques, which you're very good at, you know, getting information out so you know, what's going on, what's going on and what kind of treatment you need when you do this kind of integrative approach.

Without a doubt, we see the best results. And there's been studies on done in various different types of cancers and in those studies people do better, usually long length of life and quality of life.

With that integrative approach, I you forget the gut health, the gut health 100% in conventional medicine, even though it's starting to be recognized because of the microbiome, you're still way behind on the leaky gut in the small intestine.

You know, it's in the literature. So why people watching your series? They know they have to address the gut health. They have good immunity, good protection, against cancer and be able to fight cancer more effectively.

You know, all health starts in the gut. That's a natural ethic principle. I remember, some of our elders, teaching us it said, look, when in doubt, treat the gut.

If you haven't, if you know nothing else, if you don't know where to start to treat the gut. So for the listener, if you have IBS, I always say IBS is no B. S.

if you have IBS, irritable, irritable bowel syndrome and symptoms of that, take care of that. I know you have to take care of many other scenarios with the prostate cancer itself, but you always if you have these symptoms, make sure your gut is healthy.

It's it's it's a critical, important part of my practice as well. Mark, thank you so much for being on. Thank you, Geo, I appreciate being with you. My pleasure everyone.

Thank you for listening and I'll see you next time. Our next episode of This Prostate cancer summit. All the best.