Introduction and Guest Welcome

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So if you just implement, you know, that one change starting out, maybe it. consistently having eggs and avocado and berries at breakfast. Or it could be overnight oats or a chia pudding.

Welcome to Take Back My Brain with Lori Hammer, where real healing starts in the brain. I'm Lori, a functional nutritionist and mom who's walked the path from anxiety and burnout to clarity and calm.

Each week, we're going to dive into brain-based tools like amino acid therapy, gut health, fasting and faith to help you reclaim your energy, emotions and sense of self.

Hello, everyone. Welcome back to the podcast, Take Back My Brain, and I am your host, Laurie Hammer. Today, I have a really fun guest and we're going to talk about poop.

Yes, you heard me. We're gonna talk poop, so get your notes. Make sure you share this because I know you know somebody that has issues with poop if it's not you.

So make sure you're going to share this podcast as well. But today I have with me Katie Kirkland. Katie is a certified functional nutrition counselor and a licensed registered nurse.

And she likes to talk about poop and health and all those kinds of things.

Katie's Health Journey and Functional Nutrition

So we're gonna dive into a bunch of fun stuff today. so Katie, welcome to the podcast. Hi, Lori. Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Absolutely. In poop? Well, you know, I think a lot of it came from my own health journey and my journey of, of regulating myself. Yeah. Yes. I feel like most of us practitioners in this space have our own journey that led us here and I'm no different.

So where did it start for you? Yeah, so I grew up very much in the whole weight loss diet culture. When I was in like sixth grade, my whole family went on Weight Watchers.

And so naturally I went weight watchers just because that was the household. But I like loved it. I loved learning about nutrition and I thought, oh, okay, the way to be healthy is to eat low calorie, low fat.

And, you know, I continued to eat that way into my teens and twenties and I found myself with all these health issues. And I was like, why do I have all of these issues?

I'm eating healthy or what I thought was healthy. Yeah, but I've found my self with acne and headaches daily and allergies and fatigue and all kinds of gut issues and also an unhealthy relationship with food, where I even went through some periods of disordered eating.

And I was so frustrated because I loved food and I love nutrition. I thought I would be doing all the things right to

support my body, but I just was finding myself feeling so broken and I remember thinking, okay, well, everyone else can eat whatever they want and they're fine, but I just got a lemon of a body clearly because I'm doing all the right things and i'm not feeling fine.

And I Remember having those feelings and just feeling very much like a failure But because I was so interested in learning about nutrition and health as a whole, I always on this constant quest.

There's got to be a cure-all diet out there. So I tried all these different approaches. I try being vegan. Intermittent fasting. being vegetarian, like I tried all these different things and some of them made me feel a little better for a period of time, but none of then just really felt like the answer.

And then when I learned about functional nutrition, I learnt that there's no one size fits all and that everything in the body is connected and all things matter.

Why Poop Matters and What Healthy Poop Looks Like

Those are phrases from the founder of the certification program I did, who's Andrea Nakayama, and it just resonated with me so much. And I remember thinking, oh my gosh, this is what I've been looking for.

I just didn't know what it was called. Just a huge light bulb moment went off for me when I found functional nutrition. I knew it was going to be how I nourished my own body and found healing in my body.

And also, I know it's the direction I wanted to take my career. That's awesome. So why poop? So, why poop? Oh, yes. I guess I glossed over that. We can learn so much about our poop, and it's also so essential for overall health.

It is such a foundation, digestive health and daily bowel movements. And I feel like it's also, it something that a lot of people want to know about, but maybe don't feel comfortable bringing up.

And, I think with my background as a nurse, when you're a, you see poop every day. Talk poop day in, day out. Yes. Yes, and so you get very comfortable talking about poop.

And so I like to talk about it because I think it's really important to talked about and we can learn so much from it. It's also such a huge opportunity to impact our health when we focus on it Right.

So let's dive into it, what is a healthy poop? Yeah, so healthy poop is medium brown in color. It should be soft and formed. You could think of a consistency close to soft serve ice cream.

Not too hard, not too loose. it should pass in one or a few pieces. If we look at a Bristol stool chart, which grades consistency of poop, where one is severe constipation and seven is diarrhea, it would be a three to four.

So right about in the middle on that chart. The food or the poop should be fully digested, so no undigested food particles in it. It should also pass easily and without strain or urgency.

Pooping should take no longer than 10 to 15 minutes, I would argue, on the shorter end. And then also, really important, we should be pooping daily. One to three times daily is ideal.

Is there any particular time of day that is more ideal for your body to empty? You know, that's a good question. I wouldn't say necessarily. I think what's most important is that it's more consistent.

So if you're pooping every morning and you poop every and then suddenly you are not poop in the morning, you were poop at a different time, that might be a signal to us that, oh, there's some shift that's happening internally.

Right.

What Disrupts Bowel Movements

But if your an every night pooper, then, and that is consistent, it might what your ideal. I mean, I like to say that morning is ideal because sleep should be really restorative.

It is a time of detox. So, if we had to pick a type, that would probably be the most ideal time to start the day off fresh. But I'm not 100% sure about that.

Yeah. I always learned that like morning was best because of what you were just saying. You know, your body has processed everything. Your liver is dumped and your bodies should, at that point in time, just kind of relieve everything, right?

And your transit time should be like 24 hours-ish. So the longer food is in our body, the more microbiome disruption we have. Am I correct on that? Yeah, yes, absolutely.

Because if our food is not passing quickly enough, yeah, it absolutely can impact the microbiome, which can then impact hormones and just this whole other cascade.

Right. So what are some things that can disrupt basically our poop schedule or how it looks? Yeah, I mean, there are a lot of things that can disrupt our poop.

Maybe like the top three, Katie. Yeah. I would say stress is a big one. Poop can be a really good indicator of how regulated or dysregulated our nervous system is.

And so if we are in a constant state of fight or flight, that is something that either cause constipation or diarrhea. It could essentially up regulate our nervous system and cause urgency and diarrhea or could down regulate and sort of shut things down and caused constipation.

So I would say stress is a big one. What we eat, absolutely is huge factor in our poop. specifically if we're eating a lot of inflammatory oils, high fat foods, and not the good fats, but these inflammatory fats.

Hey friend, just a quick break to remind you if calming your brain is the missing piece in your practice or in you home, my Mind Thrive certification course teaches you exactly how to do that with targeted amino acid therapy.

So it's real science, real results, no band-aids. Enrollment is now open. Link is in the show notes. back to the show. Like seed oils and things of that nature or deep fried foods can be really hard on the gut and on keeping our bowel habits healthy and regular.

And then something else that can impact our bowels, I would say medications and even supplements can have a big impact. There's a lot of medications, things like SSRIs, antihistamines, anti-acids, calcium channel blockers, those can lead to irregularities with poop.

Diet, Microbiome Diversity, and Probiotics

So if someone is on one of those medications so important for them to pay extra attention to what they're eating and how it is impacting and supporting their bowel movements.

Yeah. Is there any like one particular diet that is pretty much across the board helps with pooping or is it just kind of very person to person? Yeah, I would say.

To put it as simply as possible, eating a whole food diet that incorporates a rainbow colorful variety of fiber. So plant fiber, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, really important for a robust microbiome because all of those different, every different type of food that we eat feeds a different strain of bacteria in the gut.

And so if we're not eating a diverse diet of whole foods, that can really impact the microbiome, which can then impact how we are pooping, eating rainbow of colorful fruits and vegetables and how important it is for feeding the diversity of the gut microbiomes.

And I think kind of a simple way to remember how to eat for diversity of the gut microbiome to support healthy bowel habits is to think about eating a rainbow.

And so different colors of rainbow represent different types of fiber we're getting to feed all of our microbes in the microbiomes, the bacteria in microbiom.

The more diverse we make that, the more divers our microbiome is, right? So that's why when we're taking probiotics and those kind of things, there's some really great pairings out there right now with pre and probiotic together.

So the prebiotic is very specific to the probiotik, you know, feeding that. And ideally, as we rebalancing that microbiomes that we have better poop, We should be eating and like you said, the rainbow would be really amazing.

I don't know, do you know Dr. Shane Morris from Systemic Formulas? I do not know. Dr Shane is amazing and Systemics Formula, I use their line of supplements all the time.

He is so big into the microbiome and he has a test called blue poo. So you take the blue-poo pill and then you calculate your transit time and it's a really fun test to take especially like if you need to check your kids or whatever because it comes out blues of course the kids are so excited do i have blue poo today you know it kind of results too but he has a whole line of pre basic he calls them super foods and then probiotics that go with it and that really helps to shift that microbiome and i see really great results with that approach to helping people to regulate their balls, to have consistent bowel movements, their color changes.

I think for so long, Katie, and let me know if you agree with us or not, we have so many probiotics on the market, right? And they're like, oh, just take a probiotic and it'll fix it, it will fix.

And so, many of them are junk. If you don't have a good diet, the probiotc isn't going to create magic either, Yeah, yeah, it's so important. I like to tell my clients to just incorporate, try maybe one new fruit or vegetable or other whole plant food per week.

So it doesn't have to be anything dramatic, but even just a little exposure to something new is going to help support that gut microbiome. Yeah. Our body loves that diet variation.

Do you teach like keto or carnivore? What do you like to teach for diet? Do like people go in and out of it?

Avoiding Restrictive Eating Patterns

Or what would you, what do like? I don't subscribe to any one diet theory. I very much believe that there's no one size fits all. So my approach with most of my clients is simply a whole food diet and then paying really close attention to how their body is responding to what they're eating.

and potentially doing some eliminations to see if that creates any shift in the symptoms that they're experiencing. But really it all just comes down to eating as many whole foods and as diverse whole food as possible.

But I do also really focus on blood sugar balance as well. So including protein, fat, and fiber with every meal or snack is very much a part of what I teach my clients.

I love it. How do you, because you and I have both struggled with some disordered eating in our past. And so as we're teaching clients about their poo and about diets, about all those kinds of things, what are some things that you've discovered on this journey of yours that will help people to prevent that disorganized eating?

Because I think when we are teaching people, There's like labeled good foods and bad foods. Or if your poo is this way, don't eat this. If your poop is that way.

Don't need that. Then all of a sudden some people can get into, you know, this zone of like, I've got seven foods I can eat and that's all I could do.

How do we, how do you prevent that? Yeah, I think to some degree, it is thinking about food a little bit differently and working on a shift in mindset, focusing on more nourishment, eating for nourishments, and not because we're trying to achieve a certain result.

I know for me, when I shifted my mindset from, okay, i want to weigh five or 10 pounds less, to I just want come to its own balance, essentially, it became so much easier for me.

And so I think that's a big part of it. But at the same time, I also think it's so important that we give ourselves grace and we don't strive for perfection with our diet.

I know when I used to have this diet mindset, it was very much all or nothing. And if I ate one bad meal, I was like off the rails. Potentially that could lead to like binge eating for me.

I like to think of a time when I know I'm going to indulge, I get excited, and I prepare for that time by balancing my meals ahead of time. So a lot of it really is about intention.

So if I know that I have a birthday party coming up and I'm gonna indulge a little bit, I might be a bit more strict on what I am eating leading up to that, but then I also allowing myself to enjoy that food and eating it mindfully at the same time and not allowing my self to go to a place of guilt over it and then just moving on.

Sleep, Blood Sugar, and Family-Friendly Changes

And I think that's been a big game changer for me is recognizing that, hey, I can eat these foods, even if by definition they're not the most clean or even the more nourishing, but it doesn't have to derail me completely.

I think just giving yourself grace goes a really long way. Yeah, I agree with you on that one. And a lot of times people, they struggle with food cravings and all those kinds of things.

I teach amino acid therapy to cut those food craveins or to lift your anxiety, depression, the reasons why we may have some food issues, you know, to start with, right?

Yeah. So all things lead to that. I think all of that plays an important part. How do you feel about sleep and poo? Does the sleep affect how you poop?

Even an inconsistent sleep time, a disrupted circadian rhythm can jet lag the colon and lead to irregular timing of bowel movements. So yeah, sleep is hugely linked to elimination.

Sleep, poop, and blood sugar balance are three very foundational concepts that I work with on every client. And so, you know, if someone is only sleeping five hours a night, but maybe they are pooping every day, like I'm going to be focusing on sleep before I am too concerned about the consistency of their poop.

Right. Got to get them sleeping for sure. Right, yeah. And I know there's a lot of people listening and they're like, oh yeah, I really want to change my diet.

You know, all those kinds of things. Yeah. Since you work with so many people and you're a young mom yourself, you have littles in your house. What are some things that you can share to help people kind of transition into this more whole food diet and kind just having a healthier lifestyle for their family?

Yeah, yeah, I think it's important to remember that it is a journey and none of us got here overnight. And so even just one small change at a time can make a big difference.

I would also argue that is probably the most sustainable way to change your diet and lifestyle rather than just a total

overhaul overnight because you want it to be something that can work for your family.

So I like to have my clients just start with one meal typically. And a lot of times I liked to start at breakfast because I think breakfast really sets the tone for the day.

So if you just implement, you know, that one change starting out, maybe it's consistently having eggs and avocado and berries at breakfast, or it could be overnight oats or a chia pudding or, a smoothie that you make every day with some good protein and fat in there and fiber.

So I think that's a really good starting point is breakfast. Because also we know that when we start the day with a blood sugar regulating meal like that, it makes the rest of the days much easier.

So does, yes. Yeah. Yeah, so that's one thing for sure. I also think, you know, we can have all the right intentions, but sometimes life is just crazy, especially when you have a busy family.

And so I think anchoring on on just a few of your personal non-negotiables. And so for some people that might be breakfast, for other people, that may be ensuring that we have some vegetables on hand.

So even if everything else feels like it's not falling into place, but if we can just anchor on a view and non negotiables for you and your family, That can also be really impactful.

Yeah, absolutely. Just keep it simple, right? Keep it. Yeah. Keep is simple. Hydration is another thing that I think can be something people can anchor on because it doesn't take much time to grab some water.

Right, right. So true, so true. Anything else you want to leave the audience with? I would just say, I'll reiterate sort of what we just talked about, but I will share a specific metaphor that I love to share.

And I'm not sure if you're familiar with Dr.

Small Steps Toward Long-Term Healing

Dale Bredesen, his 36 holes in the roof metaphor I really love. I'll share what it is for anyone who might not be familiar, but he studies Alzheimer's and he has found that if you can patch just half of the metaphorical 36 holes in someone's roof, someone who has Alzheimer, he he has found that you can reverse cognitive decline with Alzheimer's.

And I think that really applies to just about any health issue that people may encounter. What I love about it is that, you don't have to patch every single hole.

I know it can feel really overwhelming when we have all this noise out there telling us what to do, what not to for our health. But I like that we can think about just taking it, patching one hole at a time.

And even if you don't feel different from just patch that one whole, know that it still makes a difference in the long run. Because when that hole when you then patch another hole and it adds up those compound to help shift the inner train of the body to one that can promote healing rather than one has allowed for disease to take root.

And so I just love that as a metaphor to remind people that every small decision you make for your health matters, even if it doesn't feel like it's making a difference.

Right. Sometimes it just feels overwhelming and you're like, I cannot still believe I'm on this journey, but it all does matter. And the other side, it's not so much fun.

I mean, sickness and diseases is not fun, so I guess I would rather spend time and energy on maintaining my health. Absolutely. Yeah. Well, Katie, thank you so for being with us today.

This is a great conversation and I love your mission and just appreciate you being here. Thanks so Awesome, and thank you everyone for listening. Make sure you like, subscribe and share because I know you know somebody who really needs this episode, so make sure that you share that with them.

And God bless you and I will see you in the next episode. Thanks for listen to Take Back My Brain. If today's episode helped you connect with hope or direction, I want you to follow the show, leave us a review, share it with someone who needs it.

And if you're ready to start your own healing journey, explore our courses and our coaching programs at lorihammer.com backslash store. So until next time, remember you cannot medicate away a nutrient deficiency and healing your brain isn't just possible, it's powerful.