Introduction to Eczema and the Podcast

When this first started happening and I had those two kids covered in eczema, we went to the pediatrician because that's what you do when you have sick kids, right?

And he said, here are two prescriptions for two different steroids. Put both on both. Wear gloves yourself because these are admittedly very caustic materials.

Mind you, like, I'm holding my newborn with one arm and holding the hand of my two-year-old and the other, okay? And he's saying, these are really, you know, scary chemicals, but go ahead and slaughter them double-time on both and throw in some bleach into their bath.

And I said, oh, and they have an older four- year- old sister. He's like no problem, just, fine. Everything is connected and I'm here to tell you how.

I am Dr. Laura Hanson with Connect My Brain. This podcast is for moms who are concerned about their child's development. The brain impacts our mind, body, and overall health.

I explain how your brain is wired, what happens when it's out of balance, and how early childhood development not only impacts your child but can affect you as an adult years later.

Want to know how to improve your life? Join me and learn about your amazing brain and what it can do for you. Hey, everybody. Welcome back to Connect My Child's Brain.

And again, I'm so excited. I have another guest, and I am so exciting to have her. We really know how to a conversation. So I know you're really going to enjoy this.

This is Andra McHugh. Yep. Okay, great. All right. And she does work with kids, and probably adults too, I would imagine, that suffer from eczema. First of all, thank you for being on the podcast.

We're so excited to have you. My pleasure. Thanks so much for having me. And this is such an important topic because I've really seen some unbelievable cases of eczema and what it means for the child, the parent, and, what you have to do to try to get around that.

You look at these kids and they're in so So I thought we would, first of all, you give us a little bit of background about yourself and then let's dive in to why does this happen?

What can you do about it and how can prevent it? So, Andrea, take it away. Well, thank you. Like you said, my name's Andrea McHugh.

Andrea's Background and Family Eczema Story

I host the eczema kids podcast, which you were just on. It's so much fun. And I have been helping families reverse exima naturally for five years. Before that time, I was a dental professional and helping dentists implement OSHA protocols and make sure that their practice isn't shut down.

Oh, wow. that, you know, and I'm working in a dental office every day, that's like, it's a really deleterious career. It's, a lot of radiation, lots of chemicals, even ergonomically, like really rough on your body, but the exposures that you take in from that sort of line of work I think put, you know, in large part put me into the boat, which I then found myself in, about almost seven years ago now.

I had two kids with severe, severe eczema. My third kid just came out of the chute with exema and it was nothing that we had ever dealt with before, that had any personal history with myself or my husband.

And with my newborn baby and my two-year-old at the time, they just both were getting worse and worse by the day. It just started with little spots with both of them and it just grew and grew until their whole bodies were bleeding and itchy and scratching and nobody was sleeping.

Our lives were miserable. I mean the suffering if no, you know, like this there's worse things out there There's childhood cancer and there is way worse thing but if you are in this boat and The suffering is so great, and you just look in your child's eyes and it's just misery and especially the baby is like wow and You know like we're still We shorted it up in really short order, but I've just still, neurologically, I'm dealing with the effects of this.

Having my daughter experience these types of things while she was a baby, she skipped crawling because her legs were so uncomfortable. And now, as a first grader, there just has to have been extra attention paid for her to learn to read.

And still, today, just experiencing the effects of this. I just really feel for people that are in this boat, and I do everything I can to truncate this suffering time so that they can turn it around and so their kids can live these happy, healthy, vibrant lives that were put here to live.

So that's what I… Well, do you feel like the exposures that you went through had a part in your children having eczema? Yeah, definitely. I definitely think that played a big part I guess, as you mentioned, like what causes this, you know, it's a lack of diversity in the microbiome.

It's the serine births, which causes a lot of the diversity of in microbiomes. The antibiotics, the lackluster soil that is now what we have to grow food in.

I mean, there's so many reasons. the pollutants and the microplastics and all the things. And, you know, what I had to accept as a parent, because I used to ask all of the time, why me?

Why me, not like just why is this happening? And that's an important question when you're going through it and there's something that you can do about it.

Like if there is a mold issue in your home, like you need to get to the bottom of this. If you are not filtering your water, And there's so many things that you can do by way of EMFs and all, you know, do everything that You possibly can in your environment to making it the healthiest place that your children can grow up in because they're also just extra susceptible to all environmental influences.

Not to mention it's like hurting your health as well, but they really live the effects of a deleterious home environment or school environment. You know there are just so Many things you could do.

So, aside from that, once you've done all of that work and you're still experiencing symptoms, sometimes you need to let go of the why, right? Because myself included and all my clients have gone through this in a way, it's just you blame yourself.

It's like, oh man, had I done this different or this differently. not done this and not had done the exposure. I mean, they inherit our exposures, like even the things during your childhood.

And I had so many rounds of antibiotics as a child and, you know, ate on plastic plates, microwaved food and lunchables and all the thing. You know like my entire childhood and so I guarantee that's a part of it too.

When you make a copy of a coffee, right? Yeah, yeah. And so all of that comes into play. And that's why I just say like, when you're there, that part of the why, it's like okay, there's nothing you can do about that.

Like do not torture yourself over that, It doesn't do any good and we need to move forward. But there is a lot of

whys and so that is okay. The good news though, the silver lining is that there's so much you can do.

And I would say that we're even the lucky ones if this is happening in your home and your children are young, especially. You talk a lot about this and I've shared what you've share on my podcast so many times.

I'm probably just talking about it this morning. Especially before that eight-year-old Mark, if you undergo this work, and, you know, make your living environment into a healthy, heaviest place.

You clean up the diet. you get those supplements in place to address those nutritional deficiencies, the dysbiosis. Oh my goodness. I mean, that completely changes the trajectory of their entire life.

way less time in doctor's offices throughout their entire life. They will spend so much less money throughout our entire lives learning to label read and all these things as their children learning how to cook and just cut broccoli.

All of those things are lifelong skills. I literally, it's just so fresh. I have to share. It was just talking to a client and she was on my podcast because her seven-year-old daughter is now free and clear of eczema.

She was riddled with full body exima and it was suffering. And she tells people now, I don't have exema anymore. This is no longer a thing for me. and I was like, wow, how wonderful for you that you got it done before this eight-year- old Mark and that she's telling herself, like I'm healthy, am whole, i'm healed.

Why Eczema Happens and Environmental Triggers

Not that I am itchy. or that I'm different or anything like that, not messages of sickness, just messages, of health and it's such a gift. So yeah. Oh, I love that.

I loved you inherit the environment. Uh, love, that line. That was really good. And then now she has messages. Um, healthy. I would just say anybody out there listening that's planning to have a baby.

To me, this is the one message I really try to get out. There I think we are all under the understanding now that our environments are just not good and we just we need to take more precaution.

But if you're going to manufacture a life, man, take the time to get some lab work done and find out what's going on in there because you're passing on the environment.

That was really good. So we've got these kids that are just covered top to bottom and parents are trying like, I'm going to take gluten out. I am going take dairy out." What would be your guidance on, the food part and beginning to try to change your child's gut environment.

Yeah. Well, that's where we start, is in the kitchen, because it matters. And I mean, what monumental changes you can make. Just, I, mean that is where their energy comes from.

That is were, you know, their bones are built from, That's were their mitochondrial energy come from is just from the food that you feed them, right? And in a lot of cases, it's not real food.

And you could just make the biggest difference in the world by, yes, omitting while you're in this healing phase the known inflammatory foods, the gluten and the dairy and excess sugar.

Still, you can have sugar, but just, and then obviously the non-food things like food dyes. I know that your audience is privy to all of these things.

So, right, we take those out for a time being. I recommend with kids, 90 days, they can turn this around and just if you can give their gut lining a chance to heal.

repair and regenerate which it literally does and especially in childhood then my goodness like what a leg up but if

you can do that real whole foods gluten-free grains are fine you know all meats all vegetables all fruits Great, great, the choices are plenty.

I mean, there's like 20,000 plant species, you know, like there are so many things that you can't eat. And I really like to focus on what you CAN do. You can make desserts and you have honey and even sugar and maple syrup and all the things.

Especially in this day and age there is so much substitutions. it's like my favorite recommendation is fat bombs and they have like what three and four ingredients the recipes are all over the internet you can make it i love your idea of let's get into the kitchen i mean you could actually turn that kitchen experience into a math session.

Okay, let's get out the measuring cups. And this is what a quarter cup looks like. I think just even ideas like that would make it easier for kids to learn fractions, you know?

If you made it visual for them, tactile, right? So I like that too. I'll tell parents, keep bacon on hand, sugar-free bacon. Everything is now readily available and cook it up by a couple of packages and snack on a piece of bacon, you know, that's good fat and it doesn't have sugar in it if you get the sugar free one.

Make meatballs and you know, put them in the refrigerator and ants on a picnic with celery and nut butter and raisins. And there are so many things, but I think, and maybe I like having these conversations with other professionals because I'm sure you go through this as well.

I know I do. That the food is the hardest part for families because there is so much things that you can just grab and go in a package. And I do, I like other professionals almost like backing me up on why I'm not the only one saying this.

You know, we've got to be back to the real food and we got be okay cooking. And we can't do everything so quick. I also like recommending you have a meal prep day and you make it a family event.

So what do you tell parents? Well, first of all, do experience parents feeling like I'm never going to be able to get my kid not to eat this stuff? Do you experience that?

Yeah. And I mean, one, I have four children. They're 11 and nine and six and four now. Oh, goodness gracious. and so they're in it and they do the dance and the swim and I work and we homeschool like I've never asked any of my clients to do something that I haven't done and you know like the meal prep day I used to think about that and even when they were babies it's like That sounds impossible.

I've always worked like I never even have like one hour or even, you know, like just not in the middle of the night. Like that doesn't exist for me, but that's okay because honestly, especially in case of eczema, the histamine aggregates, for every day that it's in fridge.

So that sounds even within your interest. Oh, say that again. Say that. Again. That's very good. Yeah. Like you wouldn't. So every day that your leftovers are in the fridge, like we love leftovers.

Leftovers are great, but eat them within 24 hours because every that they are rich, the histamine level aggregates. It increases every single day and especially meat products is a big deal.

But also, you know, just the nutrition goes down. So all right so now define histamine for the audience just in case they don't know that word. Well histamines is a compound so there's like natural food chemicals like nitrates and histimines one of them is just they're ubiquitous and they are available and you should be able to tolerate them but there are certain food practices and certain foods that have higher levels of histamin like processed meats like dried fruits, things like this, that if you are experiencing eczema, you're having a hard time breaking down those food chemicals and it's causing an immune assault instead.

And then you're seeing a reaction go downstream. Because eczema is an internal issue, right? It's a gut lining

issue. It is a lymphatic issue it's the digestive issue there's so many things going on unfortunately and then it shows up on the skin.

and we call it like the itch that rashes. So that ith component of eczema and the red component is a really histamine-dependent type of condition.

Food, Gut Health, and Histamine Management

And when you can, we first lower the histamine load by just doing normal things like not eating processed meats and not eat leftovers like six days after it's been made.

We're eating real whole fresh foods and we're increasing in a lot of cases, like quercetin is a natural antihistamine. That's what benadryl is. It's an antahistamine.

it's helping kids break down histamine, but in the case of benedryol, it also comes with consequences, you're stunting your growth. And I've certainly given my kids benidryel a handful of times.

There's You can only not sleep for so long, and I 100% understand that. And I understand the spring is a really low season. But if that's where you are, corcidin is also a natural compound.

It's naturally found in onions and grapes. That's an incredible antihistamine that is really available everywhere in supplement form. So there's things you can do.

You can also take DAO, diamine oxidase. It's just also help you break down the histamine depending on how severe your case is. But the point is, it's something to be aware of.

And, you know, salicylates fall in that same category, oxalates. This is where people get in their head and it gets really complicated and it feels scary and then meal time feels intense and scary.

I want it to feel the opposite. Honestly, no. If you can just do real whole foods, if you really want to up-level, make them seasonal, just so it has that extra…

Oh, sure. Yeah. Then, you know, like then you're aligning the circadian rhythms. You're just helping the body get back to neutral. Like when you are this far off into dis-ease.

The body needs extra supports to get to back neutral, so seasonal eating helps a lot. See, and I love that. Let's expand on that one. So another word, too, when your thinking about histamines is just inflammation, right?

So that's probably a more common word is inflammation. So there's lots of inflammation going on and that is a big problem. But I love the point you just made about seasonal food and how that helps your circadian rhythm.

Let's define that, I'll add some, you add something. I think that seasonal part is really important. I get my fruits and vegetables from a local farm.

So it's what's growing right now. And where are you in the world? I'm in Denver. Okay, you're in Denver. I am in Atlanta, Georgia. One of the things that happens in a grocery store, like if you go into Whole Foods, You literally there's all these little signs by the fruits and vegetables, right?

The majority of them are from California. So I'm in Atlanta, Georgia, and we're bringing in from Calif. And we want them to look really good in that little basket.

That means that they're picked before they write, which means they are not nutritionally dense and they've been on a truck. coming over here. And the other part of that is we want to get everything all the time.

So even if something isn't like, like butternut squash is a fall vegetable and we want to get it in the peak of spring.

So it's not what you mean by these ideas of seasonal, right?

I do, I mean- Okay, now connect the dot to circadian rhythm. Explain what that is and then why does that support people getting into that proper rhythm?

Yeah, I do want to tell, we go to the regular grocery store, like I shop at Sprouts and Costco, okay, to make it through, and it's totally okay. But the foods that are organic, they will be seasonal foods.

You can't get the non-organic You can always get non-organic kind of everything, but you can only get like the organic ones when it is relatively seasonal.

And I'm just saying that is good enough. That is pretty good. But if you start to align with this way of eating, which is how nature intended, you will feel better, your whole family will be better because we are circadian beings.

We are very affected. I mean, just as we were speaking of our internal environment, obviously we're very effected by that. But we affected by what is going on outside of the door.

And if it is summer and it's hot and the days are longer, our bodies naturally need you know, that's when everything is in season. It's a naturally high carb season, right?

And so this doesn't mean hot dog buns, it means there's more fruits and vegetables available, and so your body needs the extra energy naturally to get through the whole day, the extended day.

Winter is a insulating season it's the higher protein, higher fat season that when you know, you can eat more like red meat, and you eat those thicker stews, And you need to insulate your body from the cold.

Whereas spring, then when spring comes around, the harvest is very austere. It's a harder season to feed kids if you're really working this. it's more vegetarian based, ideally more beans, things like that.

Your body needs to shed that mucosal lining. in time for summer. So you need to eat like a kind of clearer, cleaner diet during that time. Oh, I love this.

This is great. Yeah. Again, so set yourself up for Summer, because if you don't shed that mucosaline, if don t kind cleanse your system in a way during the springtime, and this is when all like religious fasts go on, right?

Because an observance of these circadian rhythms, then by summer, If you do not do those things, you are going to heat up All of that mucus, it's going to harden and you're going, you just go down the cycle and then winter is going be harder for you.

You're gonna have more sickness come that time. And then in the spring, your gonna be more mucousy as well. It's just… Wow, that is good stuff. I know.

What is exciting is just as mere mortal parents, this is the thing that you have control over. It's like, it maybe feels intense initially, but it's liberating.

I found it liberate. And it was like wow, everything is available to us. It is so medicinal. You know, the ginger and the turmeric that's available in the spring.

That's exactly the time that your body really needs those things. And the, you know the extra the broccoli and greens and fruits that are available. In the summer, that is exactly when your needs them to cool it down.

It's when you eat the watermelon and cilantro you need to your cool your down, and then the same thing for every season. It's a miracle, actually. It really is.

Yeah, I love the way that you describe that. That is fantastic. I would just connect a few more dots so people really

know. Sarcadian rhythm is also about the light and the dark.

So we're talking about fuel that we need to run our body. when the sun's going down, we're supposed to go to sleep. When the Sun's coming up, were supposed get up.

And then during the night, there's different times that different parts of your body are really being rejuvenated and you need that fuel to make that proper transition.

So if you're having any trouble sleeping, here's a perfect approach to look at how your eating and how that might be impacting your sleep, which is how you heal.

Wow, that was really good. Okay. So the last point that I want to kind of focus on outside, now, do you work with people telehealth? Do you, oh, wonderful.

Okay, because this, it's all tele-health, that's great. I just think that this is a very powerful resource for us because there are so many kids that go through this And tell me if this still goes on.

I had one parent say this to me, this was quite a while ago, but their child was covered in eczema and the pediatrician actually told them to rinse them off with diluted bleach.

Have you heard of that? Yeah. When this first started happening and I had those two kids covered in eczema, we went to the pediatrician because that's what you do when you have sick kids, right?

Right. And he said, here are two prescriptions for two different steroids. Put both on both. Wear gloves yourself because these are admittedly very caustic materials.

Mind you, like I'm holding my newborn with one arm and holding the hand of material than the other, okay? And he's saying, these are really, you know, scary chemicals, but go ahead and slaughter them double time on both and throw in some bleach into their bath.

And I said, oh, and they have an older four-year-old sister. He's like, no problem. Just, fine. And because it kills staff, you know, bleach is antimicrobial, like to the nth degree, right?

Seasonal Eating and Circadian Rhythm

So that's why they say that. And if you have eczema, yes, your going to have an increased staff count. Like that, the skin has another microbiome and yes it's obviously out of balance and staff is winning the war in that case.

It's not a hygiene issue. It just is, and you need to understand that, but there are natural ways to go about that. And the symptom management piece is really integral as far as eczema goes, right?

Because these kids are miserable. So that's a big step. That's step two. I started making herbal oils because the lipophilic properties of oil, like so fat likes fat.

And so when you infuse oils in this way, this slow method, the antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, skin regenerative properties, of these herbs actually go into the tissue.

So we put the oil on, let it sit, then take an Epsom salt bath, I mean, it's a sincere therapy, right? We're remineralizing, we're detoxifying, and you have to bathe your kids anyway.

So we do that. And sometimes we add in a little baking soda that helps with the pH. You don't want to do it too often because you'll dry them out. If you've gone off the ladder, then you can also add some eczema-safe essential oils like frankincense or sandalwood, something like that, and just also give their nervous system a boost.

But the bath itself will help them as well, so you do that. And then you follow that up with, we have a comfort spray.

It's got some Chinese herbs in there that deal with staph and yeast and also calm the itch and help prevent infection, but they are natural and bioavailable and nothing bad will happen to you days, weeks, years from now after using them.

And then we seal that up with the most like viscous moisturizer that you could possibly imagine. It's tallow and castor oil. Just because these kits need moisture in the desperate way.

Because, you know, when you have eczema, your skin barrier is too thin. Hence, it's clearly not doing its job. So we need to boost it in that way and then if needed you can also incorporate wet wraps just to get you through the nights and things like that.

But that symptom management piece is a big part of it just while you're in that boat when you when your healing and it's so worth it and I guess just like the diet stuff like you are already feeding your kid you know multiple times a day and to actually just cut up some cucumber versus grab some crackers out of the cabinet.

It's just not that big of a difference. And I would say that the same applies. Like just slathering some oil on them, that is also really helping their nervous system.

That's calming them down as it can actually be a really lovely ritual and giving them a bath. Even when you have to bathe them every night anyway, it's not just that much extra.

Then it pays dividends. immediately that night you can get more rest and you know prepare for the day so Wow, and did you make these oils? This is something you create.

Oh, I'm so proud of you. This I used to teach my initial clients how to do it all because that I started this and I just did coaching You know that was not my intention to start a skincare brand and i was showing my clients, how, to, do all this, they're like this takes weeks and it's really hard and there's so many ingredients.

Can you just make it? Can I buy it?" I was like, yeah. Good for you. That's wonderful. If I'm hearing correctly, you've got a protocol to ease the discomfort, create the balance, kill the staff, re-moisturize the body.

But the heart of it, is you've got to work on the gut. Is that correct? Yeah. Yeah, I mean, ultimately, there's a dysbiosis happening. So, right, these things, what you feel your body with, you put on outside, everything that you're putting on your skin, your digesting just the same as anything that your eating.

Right? It's just circulating throughout your and your liver has to detoxify from it. And so we're just doing everything we can to unburden the liver, to open up those detoxification channels, the proper ones, because right now the toxins, Like the good thing is they're coming out, but they are coming to the scale.

That's not what we want to have happen. So it all works together. Then putting the environment back together and then these kids are in need of supplements because like we mentioned earlier, it's just too far.

It's too for diet and symptom management alone to get them back to baseline.

Eczema Symptom Relief and Skin Care Protocols

We need to put in some extra nutritional supports to help them get back. Wow, this was just fantastic. So if you had to, let's say we're speaking to someone that's thinking about having a baby, what would be your number one recommendation to them?

And then follow it up, how do we get in touch with you? Because I think that's great that you're available remotely, that this is something that somebody could really get some one-on support with.

So what's the number one thing you would say to a young mother or young woman thinking about having a baby? And, then, How do We Get in Touch with You?

I would say, I mean, you mentioned it earlier, like you got to get yourself right. You could do a GI map that would be very enlightening and you need to do detox in some capacity because no matter what things have accumulated, just every year that we're here, things happen and they just…

cider body, and the best thing that you can do for your future health and for you child's future is to get the microplastics out, to those heavy metals out and get any traces of mold out of your body.

And it doesn't have to be these crazy water fasts or anything like that. You can be really gentle while you're still doing calories. You know, a kitri cleanse would be a really amazing thing for you to do because once you are pregnant and nursing, you can't do any sort of detox practices.

So the very best thing you could do was something like that. I mean, if you didn't even want to any testing, And you could just eat khichri for a week, which is like rice and split yellow mung beans with some spices and take vitamin D and omegas.

And I would say that would give you a huge leg up and a much bigger chance of birthing a healthy, happy child. Well, I am so grateful that you have been on here.

Okay, so how do they find you? You can find me anywhere you listen to podcasts at the Eczema Kids podcast and all the skincare and the program that we spoke to is all at eczemakids.com.

Oh, that's great. Thanks so much for being on my podcast. I've so enjoyed getting to know you. You have such a great personality and I love your smile.

It's easy to be with you, you know that? Well, thanks everybody for tuning in. And we've got some events coming up. If you'll bear with me, I want to start giving the dates out because all I ever say is June.

But in June, We are going to offer two free little workshops over at the office and one on the first weekend. See, here I go again. Oh, I could just look at a calendar.

I don't have to go too far. So June 6 is a Saturday from 12 to 1. parents are invited to the office, we're going to talk about primitive reflexes. And this is just an hour, there's no cost.

I really want to give you some background about Primitive Reflexes, There's a lot of people that talk them, and there are a few people who offer suggestions.

and I'd love to just give a one-on-one so you can get a deeper dive into understanding them. And then the last Saturday of June the 27th, we are offering a babysitting club course, no charge, one hour, and any young person that or, you know, it could be any age, that you want to work with a child that has a special need We're going to give you some strategies about how to help them.

My goal is to let parents have a date night. And so many parents go, I don't know who to leave my kid with. So we thought, hey, let's put it out there and see if we can help.

Just go to connectmybrain.com, go over to the resource tab, and under events, you can register for either one of those or both.

Preconception Health and Closing Resources

We'd love to have you by the office and we hope that you will attend. Make sure if you find that this podcast is speaking to somebody you know, that you share it with them.

Of course, subscribe and know that we're trying to build a community where we can make sure we put some great resources into your hands. We will put all of her information in the show notes.

I'm going to also put you in as a trusted resource. So we will a direct link to your website on our website so that parents can have a quick access because this is a very common issue.

And parents need other ways besides bleach water to help their kids. So thank you. Thanks again. Last comment, would you like to share with the audience before we wrap it up?

Oh, the power really is in your hands, no matter who you work with, that you really can reverse this. And whether it's yourself or a child that's struggling, I mean, nobody was…

sent here to live in itchy, scratchy skin, and their 100% is a way out. Great. Well, thank you so much for being with us today. Really appreciate it. Thanks for listening.

I hope today's lesson will help you or someone you love. Do you have a question or just really want to talk to somebody about brains? Connect with me over on Facebook or Instagram at Connect My Brain.

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