Why Women with PCOS Have 3x More Gum Disease (And What It Means for Your Hormones) Transcript

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Show Introduction and Guest Welcome

If you have PMOS that you are talking to your dentist and dental hygienist, and you want to have that conversation, do I have inflammation in my mouth?

What grade and stage do i have? In dentistry, we put it as what stage you had, where you're at right now. So are we at stage one, which is beginning, or are stage three, quite advanced?

And then we have our grades. And so the grades are based on how fast do we think this disease is going to progress. We have specific things that can increase or decrease where that's going be.

So for example, a woman who has pre-diabetes, insulin resistance, is gonna have a more severe grade because they're already prone for this to move along faster.

Do you feel like your hormones have turned against you? Trust us, you're not alone. We're Dr. Serena and Dr Heidi and on Hormone Heroines we explore all the root causes that are behind hormone imbalances and we teach you how to thrive through them.

Join us for real talk, expert tips and even a few laughs. Hello and welcome back to Hormone Heroines. Today we're going to be speaking with Christine Horton.

She is a women's health coach and dental hygienist with a special interest in PMOS, PCOS and serves as a programs and advocacy co-director for the PC OS Awareness Association.

As the founder of Fusion Health Coaching, she brings the medical, dental and lifestyle pieces together for a true whole person approach to care. Please welcome Christine this morning.

Good morning, thank you for having me. Yes, we're very excited to talk about this. I'm sure you know we talk everything hormones and we do a lot with PCOS and PMOS.

My two daughters have PC OS, so it's very personal for me and I know you live with P CO S also. Can you kind of take us back to when you realized your own care was missing something and like how did you?

Did that set you on this path? What else had gone, what had you gone through to get you to this point?

Christine's PCOS Journey and Perimenopause

Right, yeah. So I was diagnosed at 17, and so there's, you know, kind of traditional medicine that'll say do this, do that. I've kind been through the whole gamut with PMOS, PCOS in, in fertility journey.

Had what we would consider a lean PCO when I first was diagnosis. Later insulin resistance became a part of my story. But what really took me down a totally different path was when i started perimenopause.

Because even if you do not have a hormonal or metabolic condition, perimenopause can be a crazy time of a woman's life. But when you already have these underlying factors and then that comes into play, it was absolute madness.

And so it really took me down this path of trying to advocate for myself and figuring out like what could help me with the symptoms I was having, getting back to feeling like myself, all of those sorts of things.

So that was the time when it kind of all came together for me to head down the path that I have. On that note, you know, we keep saying PCOS, PMOS. Can you talk a little bit about the recent change in name and why it's such a big deal and so important to these new acknowledgments that are made in the medical field?

Right, absolutely. So in May 2026, it was officially renamed. They took 14 years, they interviewed women with PCOS or PMOS now, They looked at anybody who was anybody in the field, all kinds of medical associations, everybody kind of had a play.

And what they were really concerned about is PC OS stood for polycystic ovarian syndrome. When you hear that, automatically, whether you know a lot about it or you don't, it just really points towards ovaries and maybe a fertility something rather.

And there is a component for some women that that is true, but it's much bigger than that. And so that was really their goal when they renamed it. And I just want to acknowledge a lot of women have a lots of different feelings about it, some love the new name.

Some are very attached to PCOS because they've done a of work and they met a a community and whatever. But the name PMOS stands for Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome.

So what that does is it creates a picture of this is a whole body disease. This is not just a fertility, there can be that fertility piece, but it's talking about hormones and multiple hormones, and it is talking our cells convert energy to be able to use it and what that might look like.

And then we have the syndrome part which is always tricky in the medical world because basically syndrome means that it can show up different ways for different people and that can be so confusing but that's what we had with this new rename.

I have mixed feelings but I think overall it's going to a good thing just because so many women knew it as PCOS.

Why PCOS Was Renamed to PMOS

And so it's like, why are we changing this? What's the big deal? But by making this a lifelong, whole body condition, we have opened the door for so much more grant money, research, because when it just fertility, it is very narrow what is allotted for that, unfortunately.

Because statistically, one in eight women have PMOS or PCOS, but 70% are not diagnosed. And so that's what we want to change. And I'm hoping this name change is not only a name-change, but the kind of opening of the door to all these other things.

So we have treatment options. We have protocol, all of these sorts of things that weren't in place when it was more of a focus of just ovaries and fertility.

Yeah. And I will say personally, I'm very excited about the changing name, but I guess it's not because of the name or feeling attachment to the named or not the names, just the fact that it is acknowledging the metabolic aspect so that more women can get diagnosed.

Because I don't know how many times I've had patients sitting with me where I am like, you have PCOS but you technically dont meet the diagnostic criteria because it doesn't really line up with what the condition is.

really playing out in people's bodies. And I feel like the metabolic aspect has been hugely overlooked and are the biggest pieces of the puzzle that needs to be addressed and treated to really get any improvement in the syndrome itself.

So I'm excited about that part. Yeah, absolutely. Yes. It is a big factor for most women. I think statistically it's 70 to 80% have that metabolic piece as a part of their story.

So it is a huge number. It's not like 2% that's part it, it most. Yeah, definitely. The mouse rarely comes up in standard hormones or PCOS care. Like we don't really think about it as connected, even though obviously it is, Even though it IS part of the same body and everything kind of goes together.

We have medical and dental. They've always stayed so separate from each other. Why do you think that is and how can we kind make it all part our treatment plans as doctors going forward?

Right, yeah. Unfortunately, it has been separated and in some ways I really understand because the mouth is very specific and, in medical training, there's so much that you guys learn about.

It's just really hard to have every aspect and be an expert and the moth is just a huge piece of it. And so I know when I've done rotations and I have been at Colleges and stuff where you collaborate with medical side and dental side And whatever a lot of medical are just like let's just leave it to them like I don't want to touch this kind of thing But as we move forward and there's more information You just cannot deny the fact that it is so interrelated and you can see changes in medical outcomes from treatment in the dental world which is Really exciting, actually, especially with a condition like PMOS or PCOS, because sometimes it can feel uncontrollable, like, what can I do about this?

And so it really gives back some control when there's these pieces that you can actually like find where you are, find out what your information is, and is that a part of your story?

What can you do to change what that might look like? Not just in your mouth, but for your whole body.

The Mouth-Body Connection Explained

So can you go a little bit deeper into that idea? What is oral systemic, the mouth-body connection, and what does that really mean for the hormone conversation?

Just dive into a bit more. Yeah, absolutely. So the mouth-body connection is how what's happening in the mouse affects the body and what is happening the in body affects mouth.

And so if we look at the undeniable research, we already have direct correlation between oral health and cardiovascular, oral and diabetes slash insulin resistance, Oral health and preterm birth or pregnancy complications.

Those are three that are well documented both on medical and dental side. But when we look deeper, it's even more so. There's now looking at the connection between a lot of your chronic illnesses like Alzheimer's or a got issues, leaky gut syndrome or all of those types of things.

What we need to remember about the mouth is that it's kind of like a window into the body. You know, if we have suspected issue that there's something happening in the heart, we can't just like pop that open and take a peek, right?

But the mouth, We can, Right? So what does the mouse look like and what are we seeing in there? Because it is very vascular and it can change very quickly to what's happening In the body.

So one thing that is kind of an overall factor in all disease is inflammation. And inflammation can come from a lot of different sources, but the mouth is a major source that we often don't look at, especially from the medical point of view.

And unfortunately, we want to start looking at that because that can make changes in our whole body when we do take a look. The tissues are very vascular and if there's any inflammation directly in the tissues, they become very thin when they're a little swollen, a They become very thin and so any bacteria that's in your mouth can then get directly into the bloodstream.

So that is a huge concept and it is such a game changer to think that all the different types of bacteria in the mouth could be in you blood stream that then can affect the whole body because it's a direct entry point.

It's kind of like having an open wound on your hand and everything you are in touch with, everything, you go, it's directly going right into your bloodstream, which that isn't exactly how it works, but I'm just trying to make a parallel with how game changing it can be for that.

And as far as the hormone part of it, we kind have this like triad between the mouth inflammation and our hormones. So with PMOS and for a lot of other women and men, we have issues with insulin resistance or pre-diabetes or diabetes, and there's a direct correlation.

If we do have factors happening in the mouth, they can change what you're going to see on that A1c for example. So if you have a high A 1c you go to the dentist and yes you do have some inflammation in the mouth and they treat that, it can actually effectively decrease that a 1 c.

And so there's a direct correlation right there, which is exciting because by changing one piece of it, it can affect the other ones. And again, is just something you can do.

You don't feel helpless like this is all happening. When you understand all these connections, It gives you more options for things that you could do to help with inflammation in the body or So the way you're describing it, it sounds kind of like a loop.

So just kind going back and forth. If it's kind a like loop style is what I'm envisioning when you are talking about this. Does improving one corner of it actually help the others?

So like when your going through the loop, if you improve this one, even if there's other things in this side of the Is it going to help just doing the dental part?

How much will it help? And then also, how do we incorporate that with all the other things we're doing? Absolutely. Yes, it's bi-directional. It helps if you work on any of these corners, 100%. The best example that I can give of how this is, is a woman who is taking care of her mouth like she normally does, and all of a sudden she decides she wants to have a baby and she gets pregnant.

And she ends up in the dental chair because her gums are just so sore.

How Oral Health Affects Hormones and Inflammation

And, she's changed nothing else other than she is pregnant. But, what that changes in that triangle is the hormones have gone way up. So, they make everything so sensitive, even though it could be the same amount of plaque in her mouth, it's the bacteria load.

Just the change in those hormones affect how her body is reacting to it. And it's really common, you know, over 50% of pregnant women do have a change in their gums or their oral health and many seek out help and are like, explain this to me because I haven't like changed a whole bunch of things, but this is like really not great.

Yeah. Can you give our listeners a few more examples like that? Because I feel like, you know, we're talking about hormones do affect the mouth and mouth affects hormones, but I think it would help people if we had a fewer examples.

So we talked about how, if there's inflammation in the mouse or more bacteria, it can affect your insulin resistance or your A1C. And we've talked how increase in pregnancy hormones can cause the gums to be more sensitive.

Can give us a more few examples of that. Sure. When we look at inflammation, I'm going to talk a little bit about like what, when I say gum, because gum disease, there's different types.

And I don't think people sometimes understand that. So we have gingivitis, which is the clinical name, and that's just inflammation in the gums. Then we periodontitis.

That's when the inflammation and the disease has moved into affecting the bone around the teeth. So from a medical perspective, if you saw a patient and they had an infection going on somewhere in their body, and it was destroying bone, would you be okay with that?

Would you think, you know what I mean? But in the mouth, we somehow, you know, don't even ask the question, right? And so that's what's happening with periodontitis.

It is destroying bone around teeth, and if it's left untreated, the teeth will be loose. You need bone to keep the tooth in place. So I think it gets very advanced.

But, in between time, it is all the other things that it affects. And that is why when we talk about What does the mouth affect in the body? The answer is everything.

Because inflammation is the basis of all disease, right? If you look at cardiac disease it's, you know, the building of the plaque in your artery. It's the breaking down of things.

that is directly related to what's happening in the mouth. It can be the same system. So if you take care of what is happening, it can improve that cardiac outcome as well.

That's why we really want to see between medical and dental a real meeting of, in an ideal world, 100% we would meet, but even doing referrals or physicians.

When was your last dental appointment? You really want to ask, what is your stage and grade for your periodontal condition? Because when you know what those things mean, you'll know, do we have something happening at all?

Do we have something just happening in the gums? Because when it's just in gumbs or it is gingivitis, it reversible. If it now affecting the bone, that's not reversible, if bone is being destroyed, bone destroyed.

We can't just, you know, make more bone. At this point, maybe someday we'll be able to have the technology that can do that. So, does that answer your question how like directly it correlated with like literally everything with that inflammation piece?

I think so, definitely. But one thing that keeps going through my mind, because growing up and even as an adult, we've always been taught that to fix your mouth, you need to kill all the bacteria, which as we know in our guts, We don't want to Kill all bacteria in your guts because they're still good bacteria.

So I'm kind of assuming it's the same thing. If we do kill bacteria In our mouth. Why does that backfire and what should we be doing instead? Right, yeah, absolutely.

Yes, it's true. Which brings us to another point if we want to talk about direct correlation. If you're dealing with patients or clients that have gut issues, you 1,000% want a look at the mouth because that is the beginning of the digestive tract.

and everything that you do, you swallow and it affects it. So if people are having leaky gut syndrome or any GI type things, You really want to look at the mouth and what type of bacteria are in there.

PMOS, Periodontal Disease, and Dental Staging

Because we do have, just like the gut, microbiome, oral microbiomes, and we want know through saliva testing often is how dental offices are doing it, what bacteria do you have in your mouth?

and at what level, because back when we were trying to kill bacteria, what we have learned is that we can kill

some, but the ones we kill the easiest are the good ones.

And so what do is we leave the really, really hard ones to treat when were killing all the rest. So in terms of what does that look like for anybody who's trying to have a healthy oral microbiome, you want to look at some of the dental products you're using.

If you choose to use mouthwash, don't want anything that has alcohol in it because alcohol kills. If it has a claim that it kills blah blah, blah percent of bacteria, that's probably not something you want to be using because our goal isn't to kill because we know we're easily killing the good ones and we are leaving the really, really destructive ones potentially.

Gotcha. So when bringing it to PCOS or PMOS and endocrine conditions specifically, how does the loop we've been talking about show up differently for these women, especially connecting the oral health piece?

Yeah, for sure. So women with PMS or PCOS already are prone to having oral health issues. They have about three times the rate of periodontal disease compared to a woman who does not have this.

On top of this, they already have high levels of hormones, androgens, testosterone, then we have the metabolic piece, so then insulin, high blood sugar, all these types of things.

And so it has the basis for already this firestorm for everybody. But for a woman with PMOS, it's just that much higher just starting out. Even in terms of just generalized inflammation in the body, a women with PMS typically has just standard a higher level of inflammation So what we want to do is look at different parts and something we haven't really gotten into, but is really important.

And I've listened to your podcasts previously, the lifestyle pieces, right? What are we eating? what are We doing for movement? And what does our sleep look like?

Because when we talk PMOS or PCOS, Those are huge and those are things that you can influence and they all go back to the mouth. So you want to make sure if you have PMOS that, you are talking to your dentist and dental hygienist and you wanna have that conversation.

Do I have inflammation in my mouth? What grade and stage do I? In dentistry, we put it as, what stage you have, where you're at right now, right? So are we at stage one, which is beginning, or are stage three, Which is quite advanced.

And then we have our grades. So the grades are based on how fast do we think this disease is gonna progress. We have specific things that can increase or decrease where that's going to be.

For example, a woman who has pre-diabetes, insulin resistance, is going to have a more severe grade because they're already prone for this disease to move along faster.

Or if we use tobacco in any sense, whether it's vaping or smoking or smokeless tobacco, I feel like I have to say all those things because some people are like, well, don't smoke, just vape.

And it is the tobacco and everything that's with it. It's not just the exact you know, smoking. So those are all things that really play in to what we're looking at for women with PMOS and their oral health, as well as their whole body health.

I am so passionate about women taking control and feeling like they're empowered and there's things they can do. To manage this because it is a lifelong condition.

It is A marathon and not a sprint and it doesn't have to be overwhelming But there's little things that you can do that can make a really big difference in Hormone health in your insulin resistance if that's part of your story, you know All the things all the drivers for all of the symptoms that don't want On that note, and to kind of wrap up today, I

would love it if you could leave women with like the top three things that they could do today to start improving these things, as well as, you know, is there anything else you want them to know?

Especially if they feel have felt dismissed or stuck and then let us know how they can reach you as. For sure. So the top three things that they can do right now is if they haven't been to their doctor or dentist in six months for their dentist, a year for the doctor, you definitely want to go there and start there.

And make sure that you're being heard. Find out, is inflammation a part of your story?

Top Tips for Women to Start Improving Health

Is insulin resistance part your of story. I feel going back to the rename, maybe some women will feel more comfortable talking to What is my A1Z? I don't even know about this A-1-Z.

Now I'm hearing about it everywhere. Like, what is it? Have we looked at it, can we look at? What does it mean? You know, all of those kinds of things to really advocate for yourself.

So that would be the first thing. You want to know where you're starting from. The second thing is, What brings you joy? Because we really need to focus, as women we get so busy doing everything.

We have kids, we have aging parents, We want to volunteer at our kids' school. And our stress levels can be just crazy high, and that just really affects everything else.

And when you're dealing with a chronic lifelong condition that already has increased inflammation in the body, you really need to take care of yourself.

So let's start with what's one thing that brings you joy that you could do on a daily basis, a weekly basis. And it doesn't have to be big. You know, sometimes people are like, I don't even have an hour.

It's okay. Maybe it's making yourself a cup of tea first thing in the morning. Like it can be really something very simple. But I think we need to get back to getting in touch with like just us as women, what brings us joy?

Like what do we, What could we do? So that's the first thing. We call that our one non-negotiable. Every day, somebody needs to do one, non negotiable thing that makes them happy and calms their central nervous system.

Yes, absolutely. And then the third thing that they could do right now is take a look at products they use. Oral products, makeup, hair products body products all the products just take look what's in the product you use and make sure that that aligns because they can very much be irritants and cause inflammation all those kinds of things which obviously we don't want.

So those would be my three things that you can do as far as where you find me. I am online, I have a website, it is Fusion Health Coach. I work with all women, but I also have special interests, obviously, with women with PMOS or PCOS, because I do have lots of knowledge and I feel like we can really talk and just know.

So that's where you can find me on social media. It is pcosglowhygienist. and I am pretty much on all socials. And for my work with PCOS Awareness Association as the co-director of advocacy and programs, I want women to know that that is a great source to find base information if they are looking for it.

Everything that you're gonna find on their website is ran through our medical team. So it is legit, real. You can trust it because one of the most frustrating things for me personally, and I know for a lot of other women dealing with this, is all the quick fixes online.

That if you just buy this if, you do that, if don't do this. If you eat this way, get on this then it'll all be taken care of and you never have to think about it again.

And I cannot tell you how much. I wish that that was true, but it's not. So I want you to know that that's a legit and their website is PCOSAA.org. And then I run two support groups for women, totally free.

One is personal with my business and the signup is on my website. Then the other one is with the PCO awareness association. Those happen monthly. You can sign up.

They're virtual. It's come and go as you are.

Resources, Support Groups, and Closing Remarks

Super casual, but it's just really nice to be in a room of women who just You don't have to explain, you know, the bone-tired fatigue, they know about that.

You have these terrible, whatever, acne happening or extra hair growth or whatever and what can we do about it? Everybody knows and it's like, yeah, everybody's shaking their head.

And then finally, in September, The PCOS Awareness Association always does PC OS Con. This year it is virtual. It is a one-day online conference with experts from all avenues of the world and the field.

And that is on September 20th. You can sign up to join us there. We'd love to see you. pcoscon.org is that website. So those are all the things that we have going on.

My passion is just getting the word out to women to help them if they are diagnosed, if the aren't diagnosed and they think it might be part of their story to to helped them realize that because we got to change that number.

We can't have 70% of women not be diagnosed. That's just not fair. Yeah, definitely. I love all the things that you're doing. You sound like you are part of the really busy woman statistic, but you were doing some amazing work.

Thank you so much for sharing all that with us. And we are more than happy to help you spread that word. Thanks for being on. It's been great. Yeah, thank you for having me.

I appreciate it. it's always great meeting others that are supportive of whole body health. As always, you can't out supplement a healthy lifestyle and there's no quick fixes to that.

So this has been another episode of Pormone Heroines. Thank you and we'll see you next time. Bye. You know how us women are always just pushing through it and then when we go to find help, we're often not taken seriously or told, oh, that's just far to be in a woman.

Yeah, We've lived through prioritizing everybody else and that our own health falls to the wayside. That's why we started blossoming longevity by women or women.

We created programs that meet women where they are, addressing the root causes and all of the struggles that come with every stage of life. Like our vitality program.

It reconnects you with your youth and your life so that you can thrive through the years. And with Clarity, we go beyond the skin to restore your health, clear your complexion so you feel radiant from the inside out.

With our silhouette program, we help you reclaim your strength, optimize your metabolism, and your body composition so that you can feel great in your own body again.

And with Harmony, We help rebalance your hormones to heal from within so you feel vibrant and ready to take on the world. That is why it's time to stop saddling and start flourishing.

Visit FlossamingLongevity.com today. Thanks for watching Hormone Heroines. If this episode spoke to you, follow the show and share it with someone who also needs to hear it.

And write a review. That helps more people find their way back to balance. See you next week.