Introduction and Naturepedic Background

Welcome back to the Sleep Deep Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Audrey Wells. And our next guest is Arin Schultz. He is the vice president of sales and marketing at Naturepedic Naturepedic is a pioneer in the mattress and bedding industry.

And what Arin does is develop and implement strategies not only for product innovation, but also to meet the sustainability goals of Naturepedic as a company.

He plays a key role in all educational initiatives, especially to highlight Naturepedic's mattresses, which are certified organic and nontoxic. Today, we're going to talk about exactly what that means and why it's important for your sleep and your health.

Welcome, Arin. Thank you. It's very nice to be here today. Same. It's great to have you. And I understand that you had sort of a personal connection with Naturepedic, and that kind of fueled your role.

Can you tell us about your experience with organic mattresses? Yeah, you know, I don't I'm not never in love with my title. Just sales and marketing always seems like I'm trying to sell you something in some form or another.

I mean, we are. And it's why we're in business is to sell mattresses. But, you know, I came on board here about nine years ago and, you know, my family was starting to do you know, I hit my my thirties and it's like the doors are starting to come off a little bit more and, you know, your knees creak a little bit more than they did before.

And you just want to start taking better care of yourself.

Why Organic Mattresses Matter

And, you know, an organic company sounded like something that I, you know, really kind of aligned with value wise. And it's far and above, I would say, one of the most prolific things that happened to us as a family and how we live today, the way we eat and everything else.

And you know, I'm a big proponent for education. That's been the cornerstone of Naturepedic since our inception. And anyone I can come across, I'm pretty probably pretty boring at parties just because of how pinpoint everything that people should and should not be eating or doing that are affecting them in some way or another.

But we've learned a lot along the way and, you know, always happy to open up some minds to to everyone's environment that they're in every day. And I think that has a lot of appeal for people who want to make more conscious choices to increase their health and their life span, even their health span.

You know, this idea of organic has come up in terms of food. I wonder how the organic term translates into one of the qualities you can get in a mattress.

Yeah, I think we're we're definitely catching on more in the industry in terms of mattresses and bedding. As you know, it's easy to think about organic food item because you're, you know, you're able to eat it and put it inside of your body.

You're able to put the, you know, lotion on your skin. But, you know, with a mattress, it's not it's more about the the air quality. A mattress is actually one of the biggest pollutants in your home for air quality and sleeping on organic materials really helps improve all of that.

You know, we don't make any medical claims whatsoever in nature, but there's a whole host of things that are in

traditional mattresses that are really harmful, free to you in terms of, you know, affecting your breathing to even cancer, causing chemicals in a lot of these traditional mattresses that we just don't have in any of ours.

You know, that's really interesting because I don't I don't think this is quite common knowledge. And you said that the mattress is one of the biggest pollutants in your home.

I can kind of get my head around that because I can think of a certain type of mattress that I got in the past and it had to sort of acclimate to my home environment.

And I remember there was sort of this feeling like it was off gassing. Does that make any sense to you? Oh, yeah. And we're very much in line with, you know, the off gassing part of it.

I mean, a traditional queen sized mattress has about 20 pounds or sorry, 20 gallons worth of crude oil inside of that mattress. And all that's leading to all that off gassing could be your tends to your ear or your nose and throat and a lot of the flammatory chemicals that go into it, you know, flammatory chemicals themselves are face value or are meant to keep your mattress from igniting.

But the thing that they don't is it caused a whole other problem that they weren't fully aware of.

Off-Gassing and Mattress Chemicals

Yes, it keeps it from bursting into flames. But what happens is, is you're breathing all these chemicals and they're causing a whole host of problems in your body.

And even if that mattress does catch on fire, you know, it's not again, not going to ignite, but it's going to release all these things in your home. And, you know, not to be too morbid necessarily, but most people in house fires don't end up perishing from the fire itself.

They die from the smoke inhalation. Mm hmm. And what kind of chemicals are you talking about coming off of a traditional mattress? Well, a lot of it is like flammatory chemicals, VOCs and formaldehyde is a big one. And arsenic is one that can be found in mattresses.

I mean, these are all like, you know, arsenic especially is a poison and they use it on mattress materials and vinyl is is very unhealthy, too. I know a lot of like waterproof pads are used with vinyl and stuff like that vinyl especially if you your kids happen to hang out in your bed or, you know, and taking naps in your bed.

Vinyl is a horrible thing, especially for young male children, and it causes infertility problems and reproductive problems. And, you know, there's the list goes on and on.

I have a sheet that has well over 200 chemicals that are found in everyday mattresses that aren't found in organic mattresses. Wow. That's really incredible.

And for anyone who's watching this and kind of panicking, thinking about the new mattress they just bought, I think a question that might come up is over time, do these chemicals sort of run their course?

And that's the end of it. So would you be able to say, you know, after maybe six months to a year, are those chemicals evacuated from a typical mattress?

It's hard to provide a timetable. Exactly. It all depends on like, you know, again, it varies mattress to mattress and what materials are in there. And how much chemical is in use in that particular product.

You know, we've had like customers that have come to us and you know, they say it's been three months and I'm having to sing off gas in a separate room, you know, and I return it to the manufacturer.

I just want one of your beds because you guys don't use any of those chemicals. And, you know, again, over over

time, I would assume after a number of years, more or less, that's generally when a lot of those chemicals have more or less dissipated.

But at the end of the day, you're still left with petrochemicals that you're still sleeping on every single night, which, you know, you sleep hot in. And I'm sure you know, those afflicted with sleep apnea.

I mean, sleep is a very vital component to, you know, health and feeling better. And when you're sleeping hot, it's just one more thing to wake you up in the middle of the night.

Yeah. You know, I couldn't agree more because I beat my drum all the time about the importance of healthy sleep. And, you know, this is kind of a different sort of sleep related breathing problem than I'm used to talking about.

But one thing that comes to my mind is when you're sleeping on a mattress, you're doing so in close proximity to that material for hours at a time. So I imagine that exposure, frequency and the length of exposure can add up and be problematic. Yet the thing with, you know, it varies from person to person.

Some people are more afflicted by it right off the bat and have much more higher chemical sensitivity. Other people can, you know, it doesn't bother them as much.

Customizable EOS Mattress Features

But at the end of the day, it's it's not the amount of stuff in there, it's just how you're being affected by it. So yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. So tell me more about the features of naturepedic mattresses.

What kinds of things can people look at to sort of match to their personal tastes? Yeah, you know, so we have our EOS line, which we're probably the most proud of.

It's one a couple of Good Housekeeping Awards for product innovation and sustainability awards as well. And what's really nice about it is, you know, not everybody sleeps the same.

I, you know, I'm probably outweigh my wife by about 80 pounds and about six inches taller than she is. So she likes to sleep a little bit softer than I do.

And our EOS line actually allows you to unzip your entire bed and customize it to how you like to sleep on it and how your partner likes to sleep on it.

So you guys don't have to compromise. You get the exact feel that you want to have. And we also have 100 day layer swap on that mattress as well. So you get it and it's not entirely perfect.

You will swap out those layers for the first hundred days to make sure that you love that purchase. And our return rate is exceptionally low because of us being able to do that.

It's sustainable because, you know, ever since the bed in the box craze came on with mattresses and everything, the mattresses and it being thrown out into landfills is absolutely exploded.

There's 18.2 million mattresses that ended in a landfill every year. And it's enough to cover the state of a third of the state of Kansas every single year. That's how many if you lay them out end to end.

That's incredible. I could you know, I it seems like there's been a lot more advertisement for bed in a box or sort of these mail order mattresses. So you're saying that since the mattress is more easily attainable and because of the issues with them, they're being thrown out more?

Yeah, it's almost like, you know, buying clothes online. You, you know, you're buying it sight unseen. It might not be perfect for your body. You just return it.

And that shirt, more or less is going to end up in a landfill after you've, you know, worn it and everything. The likelihood of it being resold is slim to none.

And mattresses have a standard that we are not allowed to resell, mattresses that they get returned to us. They have to be thrown into a landfill. So, you know, we were very proud of our our policies and our return rate.

We make an amazing product. And, you know, our return shows for it. That's really great. Is there somewhere that people can go to try out a nature mattress?

Yeah. So we'll have 12 corporate owned stores by the end of 20, 2023. We have two in New York. We have two over in L. A. we have one in Bethesda, Maryland.

We have one in Chicago. We're opening a bunch in South Florida. We have a couple more in south of Southern California. We're opening. So by the end of 2024, we'll have 40 corporate owned stores.

But you can also go to our website and find our store locator. And we have a lot of independent retailers that carry our products across the country. But again, with the availability of being able to swap out the layers, it's it's to me, buying a product that's, you know, not a small dollar amount, but it's worth the investment, buying it sight unseen and having that comfort level of knowing that we're going to be able to take care of you.

And our customer service is second to none. So you can buy it with a little more confidence. You know, that's a good point. And something that I like to highlight for people is, you know, when you spend money on a mattress or a CPAP machine or even just a sleep evaluation in order to up level your sleep, it's really an investment in your health because of how much time we spend in a bed or sleeping.

It's a significant part of our day. And so when you think about how important it is to maintain metabolic health or cardiovascular health or neurologic health and how important it is to be comfortable, it kind of helps to ease the the burden of that cost because you're really setting yourself up to function better during the day and to live a longer life.

Retail Availability and Sleep Investment

So I couldn't agree more. And I think also with getting a good night's sleep, I mean, the one thing I think, you know, with having four kids and lack of sleep thereof, you know, your your lymphatic system, which, you know, you begin to wear well aware of, you know, stripping your body of all those toxins that you accumulate during the day if you're not getting good sleep.

That's why the next day you're you're groggy, you're irritable, you don't feel well. So that's why getting a good night's rest is vital to your health.

Yeah, that's great. And you know what? You're describing this customizable part I want to delve into a little bit more deeply. So you said you can unzip the mattress and then I'm sort of picturing adding in some padding for somebody who wants a softer experience is doing that.

Right. So, yes, so we do we have it's kind of like almost like building a sandwich in a way where you have your base coil layer and then we have our classic version and our pillow top version.

So classic is three inches of latex over coils and you can customize that latex or coil system however you are suited to how you sleep at night. And then our pillow top version allows for more customization.

So you have two three inch layers of latex on top of that coil system. You can also for those with latex allergies, we do have micro coils that are in place of those latex layers.

And then for those who just love latex and the feel of a latex mattress, we have an all latex bed as well. Interesting. One question I get asked a lot for people who are in the market to buy a new mattress is about the breathability or

the temperature of the mattress, whether it's it promotes cooling or not.

Are there features like that included? Yeah. And it's the beauty of just us using natural products. I mean, these things are in nature. We don't use fancy cooling gels or chemicals or anything to achieve these things.

Cotton, by nature, is very breathable, and we also use organic wool in our product as well, which is amazing for temperature regulation. I think a lot of companies miss out on that opportunity because it's readily available.

It's, you know, great for sleeping and it just naturally keeps you cool in the summer and warm in the winter. I like hearing that. You know, one thing that pops up for me is how is the longevity of how is the longevity of an organic mattress comparable to what you typically find in a in a furniture store or even at a place like Costco?

It's a good question. And something that we really wanted to achieve. Luckily, our company is owned by three engineers, so everything's been taken apart and put back together a million times.

So it's kind of like, you know, I can sell you an organic cracker. Is it going to be is it going to taste good is another thing. So we wanted to make sure that the product we were creating, not only was it good for you, but it was going to be a good product nonetheless.

So we actually have a 25 year warranty on all of our mattresses. And generally if you replace your mattress every 8 to 10 years anyway for a lot of gross reasons, but also for a lot of reasons of just, you know, after a while body impressions start to take place.

It's going to start, you know, messing with the alignment of your back. So it's kind of like just getting a new pair of shoes. And that's generally about how frequent you should be doing.

That is at least 8 to 10 years. Yeah, it makes sense. You know, a lot of people kind of have a preference, too, for their sleeping position, which affects what kind of mattress they buy.

What would you have to say to someone who says, you know, I really only can sleep on my back because I've had joint problem shoulders, hips, knees, neck or lower back.

Alternatively, there's a group out there that's more side sleepers. They want to continue sleeping on their side. What's what should they look for in terms of choosing a mattress from nature?

Yeah. Generally back sleepers are probably more prone to better sleeping on a firmer mattress, but again, varying body types. You know, I like to sleep on my back, but I like a really soft mattress.

Mattress Comfort, Cooling, and Durability

So side sleepers generally are better off just for avoiding hip and shoulder pain or better sleeping on a softer mattress is allowed to have that give their.

But what's nice about sleeping on latex is latex naturally wants to spring back because it's made from the rubber tree. Unlike like memory foam where memory foam just conforms around your body.

So even though you're sleeping on your side and it's have that give to it because it's nice and plush, it's also pushing back at the same time. So it's keeping your spine in that perfect alignment as you're sleeping on your side overnight.

Got it. And I noticed on the website that you also have mattresses for kids and for pets, which I was really happy to see as a dog lover. Are these mattresses just different sizes to accommodate smaller bodies or is there some other difference?

No. So, you know, we we, you know, tried to think of everything, you know, being a father of four and, you know,

you being a parent as well, the trials and tribulations going through potty training.

So we have our two on one mattress. We designed that well over ten years ago. And what that does is one side is waterproof and the other side is quilted.

So the waterproof side is meant for when they're going through all that nighttime training so they don't ruin that nice organic bedding you just had. And then when they get done with potty training, you're actually able to flip it over to the quilted side.

So they're going to have more of a traditional feel. And then we have another kid's bed that has like an independent coil system, much like our adult mattresses do, but it's on a firmer side, so it's better for like bone development, but that with the coils being independent, if you're having a reading your child at night or putting it in the bed and they fall asleep, you don't have to worry about rolling out of bed and waking them up because there's no motion transfer.

Oh, yeah, that's important. Yeah, yeah. It's it's saved a lot of evenings with parents of not waking their child up after spending so much time trying to put them to bed. I.

I can relate to that. And I'm also thinking from a pets perspective like having a waterproof side at the beginning when they're learning about learning to potty train and then flip it over for a while and then back to the waterproof side when the dog is getting old, which is kind of something to think about because their life spans are unfortunately so short.

What with our dog beds, it's even easier for cleanup just because we it's actually an independent, waterproof cover that goes on the side of the outside of the bed.

So you can actually take it off and throw it right in the wash to allow for easy cleanup with the pets. Love it. Love it. Now, I saw in nature pick also makes bedding as well.

Can you tell us more about that? Yeah, we have a fairly extensive line now, but come may know first quarter of next year, we're going to have three different sheet styles in ten different colors.

From a marketing perspective, my brain goes a little crazy trying to think of, you know, all the things that we have coming on board with that. But we also have duvet covers, duvet inserts that are coming online soon.

We're going to blankets, throw blankets, bathrobes. We're going to a line of pajamas later on in the summer next year. And, you know, really kind of all, you know, brings us together.

These are products really stand behind and put a lot of thought and care into their design. You know, you had mentioned before a little bit of a yuck factor when it comes to the age of mattresses.

And one thing I deal with is people who are very sensitive to things like dust mites or pet dander allergens in the environment. And generally I recommend an allergen cover to go around the pillow or around the mattress even.

Kids, Pets, and Bedding Products

Is that something that nature does as well with the allergen covers, or do you have any specific recommendations for that? Yeah, we currently don't have one ourselves that, you know, encases the entire mattress.

You have waterproof covers that are similar to the fitted sheet. You know, that's the if for whatever reason later on down the line that you want to replace it.

Let's just say your mattress feels great after ten years and you don't want to buy a new one, but you want to freshen up a little bit. The whole encasement, the outside part of our mattress, you can actually get a new one after that length of time.

You don't have to buy the inside part. You can just buy the outside part of the mattress to replace it. But we always recommend at least a waterproof pad on your mattress.

True to one protect your investment, but to to two, to eliminate or to limit the amount of dust mites and everything else that might get around your mattress.

Yeah, I think that's wise. And I'm all for protecting the investment for sure. Is there anything you want to leave us with as we close up here? Any special features that you feel like need to be highlighted, especially when you think about other mattresses being sold at furniture companies or online or in big warehouse stores?

Well, I think usually what I try and leave everyone with is, you know, the organic side of things. You know, we started with, you know, the whole host of scary chemicals there in traditional mattresses.

And we never want to shame anyone or scare anyone in general. I think the easiest thing to do is not panic for one, but two is just taking little steps along the way to make healthier choices in your life.

And, you know, organic is something that we are very in tune with here in Naturepedic and making those little choices from where you sleep to, you know, what you eat, what you're putting on your skin to, what your children are around, all of those things. Your home is your kingdom.

And it really just starts with those little choices to make, you know, a healthier lifestyle along the way. And ultimately, I mean, I just hit 40. I don't say I don't know what 40 supposed to feel like, but I feel pretty good, you know, so.

But in terms of other mattresses, whether it's Naturepedic I would try and find something that's certified, especially certified organic. You know, we go through a very lengthy process to make sure that our our materials are from the time that that cotton seed is planted to the time it's harvested, to the time it gets to our warehouse.

Nothing has been done to that. That would make it not organic any longer. And we have very strict policies on all of that. And that's what certifications really do for you.

And, you know, we are we were one of the first certified organic mattresses on the market and we're very proud of that. And, you know, it's a very good thing to look into mattresses that otherwise certifications are where it's at for all products.

Makes sense.

Certifications, Sustainability, and Where to Buy

And I really like the sustainability aspect too, not just in the production of the mattress, but to cut down on those making it to the landfills where that's just not a good fit.

Arin, can you tell people where they would go to find out more or are you going to buy a Naturepedic mattress? Yes, you can go to our website, which is www.naturepedic.com It is a wealth of information from our Learn section.

Our blog has hundreds and hundreds of articles in there to, you know, educate yourself more on a whole host of other topics and learn more about our products itself.

We're sold in a lot of major retailers across the country online. We're in Crate and Barrel, Pottery Barn, Restoration Hardware. A lot of our kids in crib products are in Target.

My baby's coming back soon is back now and baby list as well. But we're pretty much in almost every major retailer in the country. That's great to know.

And for everybody watching, really important to breathe well while you're sleeping well. Thanks so much for your

time and attention today, Arin. It was a great pleasure to meet you.

Happy to be here today.