

Radical Remedy - Dr Kristin Gut Health Transcript

0:00:01 - Chloe

Hey guys, it's Dr Chloe and you're listening to the Radical Remedy podcast. Today's episode is with my dear friend, Dr Kristin Reihman. You might remember her from one of our first episodes. She was one of Remy's doctors at the Family Hope Center and she is one of my heroes, mentors and just an all around total fucking badass.

In this episode, we really wanted to dive into the basics of gut health and how we want to assess somebody's gut to see what's going on and how we can start improving gut health and thus health overall. In this episode, we really dive into elimination diets, which is something that I would like to do with you. So if you're interested, after this episode, in doing an elimination diet, join our membership in school. The link will be in our show notes and let's get at it together, because I want to do one again and I really don't want to do one. So what I want is for you guys to do one with me so that I'm forced to be accountable, and then you'll be accountable, we'll be accountable, we'll all feel better. Cool, all right, let me know what you think and I'll see you in school.

Enjoy the episode. All right, everybody, I am super excited we have Dr Kristin Reihman here for her second time on the podcast. Dr Kristin is one of my greatest heroes. She was one of Remy's doctors at the Family Hope Center and she is an expert in Lyme, gut health, pediatric neurology literally just about anything. I respect her work, her intelligence, her drive so much and so.

0:01:38 - Kristin

Kristin, it's such an honor to get to chat with you.

0:01:40 - Chloe

Gosh, welcome back anytime if you're going to talk about me so nicely, Chloe. That was really sweet. I will happily gush about you any day. So today I really wanted to focus on gut health, because you are the master of gut health and sort of one of the things that I see is that there are so many ways that we can start to identify what's going on in the gut and start trying to figure out how to address that at home or how to advocate for better health with your practitioners. So I thought it'd be really fun to have you on so we could start diving into that, because I know a lot of people are dealing with digestive disharmony. So let's start with the foundations. Why is gut health so essential for optimizing our health overall?

0:02:24 - Kristin

Well, you know, as a Chinese medicine practitioner, you would agree with the statement that all healing starts in the gut. A lot of disease starts in the gut. 80%, or you know, 70 to 80% of our immune system is hanging out in our gut or in the gut-associated lymphoid tissue that lines the gut, also called the GALT, and it's there because the gut is sort of the first line of defense other than the skin. Like, if you think about the skin that comes to the mouth and stops at the lips, well, it continues after the lips as the gut, and the same thing happens at the other end of the tube and the skin. Right your anus becomes the tube and outside of that is your skin. It's all our first line of defense. We are it's.

You know, skin and gut are encasing everything that is inside of us and there needs to be a protective layer, sort of preventing foreign invaders from coming into both the skin and the gut. So we're putting foreign invaders in all day long. Right, we're putting food in our mouth constantly, most of us constantly. I try to get people to limit it to three times a day, but we're putting food in our mouth and that food needs to be. There needs to be some discernment and that happens by the immune system, at the level of the, at the level of the gut tissue. So it's it's key to our health, because it's it's a little bit of a battleground all the time. Yeah.

0:03:38 - Chloe

It's. It's definitely a battleground all the time. So let's go into some of the pathogens that are most commonly found in the gut. So I know that I work with my patients a lot and deal with a lot of issues with my son, remy, when it comes to his GI issues and his seizures and any sort of gut disharmony. But a lot of people talk about candida dysbiosis parasites. Can we just do a brief overview of some of these things and maybe some of the symptoms that they might present?

0:04:13 - Kristin

with yes, but first I want to say that it's normal to have bugs in the gut right. Most of our microbiome. We're covered from head to toe with different critters. We have a lot of bacteria that live on our skin, like streptococcus, staphylococcus and lots of different other species. We have a ton in our mouth, a lot of anaerobes. If we're not eating healthfully, because the gut starts in the mouth really, and we have all sorts of gut, we have probably two and a half pounds of bacteria and viruses and other pathogens like yeast and parasites, even in the tube. That is our gut right.

A lot of people used to think that the stomach was sterile. Turns out the stomach is not sterile. That's where H pylori comes from right, and pretty much every part of the body that we once thought was sterile or couldn't possibly host a living thing. We're now finding there's a microbiome everywhere. There's a microbiome in the brain, right, but the gut is where most of those critters hang out, or the vast bulk of them anyway, and it's hopefully a really wide diversity of genus and species.

The more narrow and the fewer varieties we have down there, the more narrow our diversity, the more problems people have and some of the studies that are being done now and a lot of the gut health tests that are being done are looking for diversity of the microbiome and trying to build in more diversity. You can build in more diversity simply with the food you eat. And that's where I want to kind of start, because I feel like it's less about the pathogens for most people that might cause their symptoms and more about what they're actually choosing to put in their mouths. But in terms of the pathogens that live there, you could have yeast there that are normal and then you could have an overgrowth of yeast and that becomes abnormal. It's almost like with toxicology the dose makes the poison right, the dose makes the disaster for you. So you don't want too many yeast, you don't want too many parasites, you don't want too much E coli, but a little bit of everybody there means you've got some genetic diversity and that's a good thing.

0:06:09 - Chloe

Awesome. I love that. Yeah, I think it's sort of that idea of everything in balance and trying to make sure that everything's functioning optimally. But these things are normal to have within our gut. So let's go through then, if we're talking about what we want to add into our food.

One of the things that I often talk to my patients about in terms of diet, because it can be such an overwhelming conversation. I know for me I'm sure I said it on the podcast, maybe even with you on the last podcast I legitimately cried when I got my food allergy testing back, saying I was allergic to gluten. I cried. I'm from Brooklyn. I eat pizza and bagels and beer and that was. That was dark, you know, and now I don't even look at it as food.

So there's a lot in there that we'll unpack, also about gluten and whatnot, but really, what I always talk to my patients about is let's just focus on adding in more good foods and eliminating some of the inflammatory foods, and I think that elimination diets as you do so beautifully in through groups and through with parents for years and years I think elimination diets are one of the best ways to sort of get to the heart of inflammatory foods and things that

are causing challenges for the body. And I'm curious, actually, before we even go into what an elimination diet is a little bit more how do you find do you do a lot of gut testing for your patients, or do you find that elimination diets are able to isolate the challenges alone, or how are you? How are you doing that these days in your practice?

0:07:43 - Kristin

Yeah, I've never been a person to rely heavily on testing, and that's for a couple of reasons, I mean. The first is I sort of came by that, very honestly. I grew up as a doctor in the inner city, like working with patients who were either uninsured, underinsured or, you know, didn't even have papers to be in this country and didn't want any testing done, didn't want their name anywhere, country and didn't want any testing done, didn't want their name anywhere. And so I saw a lot of people who couldn't afford or couldn't access testing like the kind of gut testing you're talking about, which, by the way, isn't the standard test. You would even get in a hospital which is maybe O and P, ova and parasites, looking for a handful of different species of parasites in the gut very unreliable.

If that's positive, you've got an infestation. You know to beat all infestations, really you have to get to find anything. You really have to get some of those more expensive sort of off-label tests. You know that. You know that cost money and that your doctor probably doesn't know about. If you're seeing a doctor working within the system, if you're seeing a functional doctor, they may order some of those tests. The best functional doctors I know who use those tests and rely on those tests typically order three different tests at the same time. So you're using the same stool sample, but you're actually sending it to three different labs, because it's so variable what you might find, and that helps them get a bigger capture rate for what they're looking for. I'm not sure what the percentage is of what they actually find in terms of parasites, for example. Usually the bacteria, it's pretty easy to discern, but the parasites are harder to sort of pick up with those tests.

So, because I grew up without really relying on those tests, I used a clinical diagnosis, and to that end, I also used elimination diets, because, in my mind, it's really a much more effective way of determining what, for you, is causing your symptoms, not just saying everybody should be off dairy or everybody should be off gluten Although I personally believe everybody should be off gluten but find out for yourself, you know, use an elimination diet to find out for yourself, and we can certainly talk about the ins and outs of that.

The other thing I want to say, though, is that, for patients who do opt to get testing and for patients who come to me having already been tested, one of the other reasons I don't really rely on those things or order them much myself is because I've never really found them to change my management. And I'm a big believer in if you're not going to change what you're doing based on the results of the test you just spent money and time on to get, why are you doing it? Sometimes it changes management and then somebody wants to actually do something about their gut and if that's a reason to get the test, by all means. But let's be honest, upfront about what are we going to use this information for? And, by the way, if it's negative, it's not going to change that. I still think you need an elimination diet and maybe to get in the ring with some parasites if it doesn't solve all your problems in the first round. But if it's going to change for you what you want to do, then it's worth getting the test.

0:10:27 - Chloe

Totally. I think some people really like seeing that sort of technical you know, seeing it in black and white from a test and whatnot. But it is interesting as a practitioner, especially as there's this slew of, you know, functional medicine practitioners and all they do is testing and then a lot of supplements and it's extremely expensive. You know, for me as a practitioner I sort of find that if I'm looking at somebody through the framework of Chinese medicine, I don't need any of those tests and even something or someone as extreme as my son Remy. Like Remy, Remy

didn't get diagnosed till he was two and a half with his rare genetic disorder STXBP1. But his Chinese medicine diagnosis, how we treated him, both of us did not change with his genetic diagnosis whatsoever, and so that's a very severe, significant case, you know. And so it's sort of the same thing with you know, when you're addressing and isolating gut issues and trying to support that in people and reduce inflammation.

All right, so let's dive into. You know what a basic elimination diet looks like and for anybody listening, the good thing about elimination diets is that if you do this, you get to the end of it. You either figure out A that you don't have an issue with any of you do this. You get to the end of it. You either figure out, a that you don't have an issue with any of these foods and you get to keep eating them, or, b you feel so much better being off of these foods that it's worth it to give them up and find alternatives. So I highly highly recommend that everybody give this a try.

0:12:01 - Kristin

So listen up, yeah, and if you're still on the fence or if you're still sort of like, well, I feel pretty good, like I don't. I don't have any gut issues, I don't have any bloating, I don't have any gas diarrhea, constipation, not a problem, although, honestly, as I say those things, most people have one of those, at least one of those right, that they've normalized or they've had their whole life or their mom had, so they've normalized it right. So let me just remind you that you usually inherit your parents' diet as well as their genetics. So just because your mom had constipation or migraines or psoriasis doesn't mean you genetically need to have those things. You also inherited her lifestyle, right. Or you were surrounded by the smoke she was smoking or the you know casserole she was putting in front of you, tv dinners and all the other stuff. Gosh, am I saying too much about my own childhood? You may have some of the things your mother had, for sure, but that doesn't mean you can't get off that train by changing your diet.

So the first thing I want to say about elimination diets is it doesn't have to be expensive, because a lot of people are like oh my gosh, I can't afford all that gluten-free. No, no. I'm not asking you to go buy some weird packaged gluten-free, dairy-free, sugar-free, soy-free, corn-free version of your favorite Oreo, right? I'm asking you to eliminate all that processed foods and eat whole, real foods, simply and maybe without a ton of variety. And then people are like I can't survive on a lot less variety, for three months or three weeks, rather, and I'm like, well, really, what are you eating? Now it turns out not to have that much variety, right, it just is the food you're addicted to.

So for 21 days in the elimination diet we take out sort of the top allergens that can either create an inflamed and leaky gut, which sets the stage for other foods, creating a leaky gut on top of it and perpetuating the cycle. So there are only a handful of foods that can sort of cause a leaky gut out of nowhere, and those are gluten, pretty much all gluten, and that includes all the different, includes Ezekiel bread. I know you don't want to hear that, people, but it includes Ezekiel bread. It includes spelt and couscous and all the wheat-based things, or barley or rye-based things. That's gluten. It includes glyphosate, you know laden things. So anything with pesticides on it, anything that's not organic even organic food needs to be washed, or it's bringing in some pesticides, far less than if it's not organic, but still there.

0:14:25 - Chloe

Well, just a side note, Whole Foods now has signs up saying that their organic and non-organic foods are covered in fruits and veggies are covered in various different waxes and the waxes are different for the organic foods. But really, really disturbing and I look forward to doing a deeper dive into it. But there are actual signs up and one of the things in it. My boyfriend's a geologist and does like environmental toxicology in a lot of ways, and so I sent him a picture of it and he was like they're using I forget what it's called in there and I was like yeah, and he was like that's like a flame retardant or something. That's something that's used in gasoline or I

don't remember. But I was just like cool, that's cool, let's put that on our, on our fruits and vegetables.

0:15:08 - Kristin

I was aware of the new stuff. They're putting all over lemons and limes and mangoes at Costco, but I haven't been to Whole Foods in the recent past so I didn't know that that had migrated to the organic foods. That's highly disturbing. Yeah, so any non-food? They basically cook out non-food foods for three weeks, and that also includes GMOs. So GMO foods may not have a waxy substance on them, but they're genetically modified to do all sorts of things to your gut which are not friendly and your microbiome in your gut, which are not friendly. So it's important to get those things out too.

We take out vegetable oils because those are typically made rancid and oxidized in the process of creating them. We leave in the healthy fats, like coconut oil and olive oil as long as you don't heat it and avocado oil as long as you don't heat it, and you know ghee and lard from healthy animals. But we take out. We take out the toxins and we also take out the toxins and we also take out the things that can become like allergens or like toxins to the body if your gut is leaking and inflamed. So at this point many people are like oh well, good, my gut's fine. Let me just tell you. If you have not done a comprehensive elimination diet in the last year and then paid attention to what your body said when you added stuff back, you likely have a leaky gut period. Everybody has a leaky gut. Stress can cause a leaky gut. Hello, we just lived through a pandemic. Is anybody out there not, at some level, like still vibrating and going? Ha ha ha ha. You know there's a lot of stress.

I did three of these elimination diets in 2020. First, before I went down to work on the front lines in Georgia, because I wanted to have my full armor suited up. You know which was like a healthy gut, healthy immune system, and when you're not challenging your immune system that lives in your gut with all the things that are non-foods or that are allergens for you at that time, your immune system is free to go work the other parts of the building right. So they're not hanging out in the gulf. They're moving around to your spleen, they're moving back and forth through your lymphatics, they're getting into your tissues and they're finding other things. They're in your lungs looking for COVID and taking it down. So this was my top intervention.

That didn't happen on a global scale during the pandemic. This is what kept me up at night going why aren't we talking about just elimination diets for people? And it can be as simple as stop drinking sodas, stop eating gluten and sugar and dairy which, by the way, is really, really important for baby cows, but not for you, if you're not a baby cow Like. Let's get off the things that our body doesn't recognize as food and let our gut rest, let our immune system go back to work and do all the other important things that we're keeping it from by continuously feeding it stuff that irritates it. Wow, yeah, it's so important.

0:17:48 - Chloe

I am so horrified by some of the hyper-processed foods that people are ingesting and the chemicals that are going on, and I just feel like our bodies have no idea what is going on when we're putting these things into them, and I feel like that's got to be. You know, as you were saying, it leaves a leaky gut and you know it's potentiating so many of these autoimmune disorders and you know the stress that we're all under potentiates this whole storm and creates such a health disaster for so many people and creates such a health disaster for so many people. So do you have? So let's walk through it some more. So people go through these three weeks. They cut this out. Then how are you starting to add these foods back in and what sort of signs are you looking for as you're doing so?

0:18:38 - Kristin

So the first thing I look for before I add things back in is whether they've improved. So before we start adding stuff back, I want to know is your skin cleared up? Is your sleep better? Is your mood better? Is your brain less foggy? Do you have more energy? Are you pooping again, you know, are you basically at a next level state of vibrant health from where you were?

And a lot of people do this diet and say you know, I didn't actually notice any symptoms before I did this diet. I've never felt this much energy, I've never felt this much calm. You know my son I put. You know my kids, I've moved them through this diet at least 20 times and various of them, but probably as a group, we went through it probably 14 times before they stopped, before they left the house. And now they some of them just pull it out and do it when they feel crappy or they get a weird rash or they just want to reboot things, which is great. They've sort of been empowered with that tool.

But when they were little and we'd go through this, there was often a lot of pushback, often a lot of pushback, and I had one kid who had really, really bad asthma and really terrible eczema. Those are both inflammatory issues, right, inflammation, sure, the root cause, but like what's under the inflammation? Well, it turns out for him it was the diet he was eating, because whenever he would do an elimination diet his skin would start to glow, he would lose all of his eczema. And this was a kid who I would be afraid, you know, of getting a call from the school nurse saying you know, we're calling children and youth because your child is covered with bleeding scabs. I never got that call but he looks terrible. I mean, he would scratch himself silly. And this is despite all the creams and occasional steroids and all the things. He had a really severe eczema and his skin completely cleared up. People on the soccer pitch were like who's in goal? I'm like that's Baxter. And they were like, oh my God, they recognize him, you know, just like glowing skin. So he would go off intermittently and always get better.

Then of course, things sneak back in and he'd get worse again. But I want to know are people better? Are things noticeably improved? I also want to know did you notice a blip, did you notice a worsening, kind of on day two, three or four during your elimination phase? Because during that period, as your body starts to heal, as your gut starts to heal and your immune system gets turned on again and your detoxification starts working again, you get a little bit of inflammation. That wasn't that. It's even above what you were used to. So you might see a note. You might notice a worsening of your previous symptoms. You might notice new symptoms.

The first time I did an elimination diet I had a headache and I've never I never get headaches. I've had like four in my whole life and I had a headache and it was pronounced and I was like, wow, this is. And I was a little foggy, I was tired. I just went to bed early. I woke up fine, but like I could tell there was a detox state for me and there are ways to mitigate that. You know we use supplements. We use lots of you know, above ground veggies of different colors to support the liver, a lot of water, epsom. There's ways to kind of get through that without it being terrible. But if you had that, that's a really good indication that you got enough gut healing done in the first few days, that your gut is now healing and it's healed enough at the end of 21 days to start reintroducing things and get good information. So when we do that, we pick one food at a time.

When I did it with my kids, I would always pick the kid who I expected to give me the most pushback and say, listen, if you don't fuss about this, you get to tell us the schedule for reintroduction. The first year we did it in the fall and they wanted everything in a Snickers bar back by Halloween. I'm not proud of that, but I agreed to that plan as a way to, you know, get everyone on board, and we did. We got everything back in time for the Snickers bar and I like to give people some empowerment around that right, like, give them some choices so you can add everything back in the order you want. I don't recommend adding back gluten in the

beginning, and the reason for that is gluten is a primary allergen for most people, whether they notice it or not, whether they want that to be true or not, whether they're from Brooklyn or not. In this country, it's really an allergen and the reason for that is gluten.

By itself, the protein in gluten, which is gliadin, can ratchet open cells in your gut, so your cells are supposed to be really tightly held together with these things called tight junctions, and gluten goes burp, burp, burp, burp, burp and opens them up so that anything you're eating, including parts of gluten, parts of oranges, parts of beef, parts of pork, parts of the eggs you just ate can slip through undigested, while the gut is, you know, doing this. Now, our cells are resilient. They stitch each other back together and they get tight again, but you have these intermittent breaches that over time it's almost like little boy who cried wolf. The body stops responding as quickly and you end up with a leaky gut. That's kind of permanently leaky and inflamed, not to mention the fact that you have particles of food coming into your system that your body, your immune system, sitting right there in the gut, says whoa, that's a foreign intruder. That is not food. We're expecting food to be broken down to the tiniest components, but this is a string of amino acids or a string of poly. This is a string of glucose molecules. That's not what we're recognizing as food. We're gonna recognize it as foreign, makes an antibody, directs it back to the site of the intrusion at the gut, and then perpetuates the cycle of inflammation by creating almost an autoimmune response in the gut. This is what celiac is.

So for people who have had their three-day blip, they've gotten through it and now they're better.

They're at a higher level of health than they were when they started. We start adding things back, and maybe we start with eggs and we say for three days you're going to have a couple bites of eggs every day. Now, if you notice a symptom, if anything is worse, stop the eggs right away, take it off your plate. No more eggs for those three days. Your eggs are off your plate. Moving forward for best results, we wait for three days and then we add the next thing. Maybe it's sugar, or maybe it's caffeine, or maybe it's alcohol, depending on who we've negotiated with. And you do that systematically, paying really close attention to your own body signals, because it turns out, once the gut is healed, you have a much lower threshold. Your body, I guess, has a much lower threshold for complaining when it gets something that's really not good for your body. And that's the beauty of this intervention is that you learn for yourself experientially what to eat and what not to eat for optimal results as a human.

0:25:02 - Chloe

When you eliminate these foods, does that mean that you have to eliminate them for life? Or, once your gut is sort of healed up and you take some time, do you ever try and reintroduce them? Or is that just a part of the next elimination diet? Or how do you find that that works out? Because I know for me and for Remy Remy did have a gut test at some point and everything that he ate regularly like blueberries, like all sorts of stuff that were like regular staples on his diet he was allergic to all of them. So my assumption was that he has leaky gut and all the foods he's eating were getting into his system and you know reacting so. So that was fairly impossible to get everything that he ate. But so is that sort of how it works in terms of causing this cascade of reactions to other foods once there's leaky gut? And then also can people start reintroducing these later on? Or do you find that, you know, a lot of times some of them are just non-negotiables moving forward. All of it.

0:26:00 - Kristin

So it really depends on the person. So for Remy, I would agree with your assessment and assumptions about what happened. Blueberries are not a primary allergen for him. I mean, maybe there was some roundup on those blueberries which would be a primary allergen, but blueberries themselves typically not a problem.

Most people, after they've healed the gut with the elimination phase, which is 21 days, can get back on most of the things they've just taken out. And if you add it all back at once and have a problem, you won't know which of those things actually needs to stay out. So that's why it's a systematic, slow reintroduction. Like I said, I don't recommend people get back on vegetable oils. Those things are toxic. I don't recommend they get back on gluten. That's not. It just doesn't have a healthy role to play on your healing team. Now, if you have zero symptoms, if you have a hundred percent vitality, if you're like a freaking rock star and you feel amazing all the time and you're eating bagels and Brooklyn pizza, by all means live your life. I'm jealous, jealous of you, but bless you and live your life, you know, and I hope that you're being honest with yourself about your symptoms, because if you're not, that stuff's going to bite you in the butt eventually.

0:27:06 - Chloe

Well, everybody listening. Like you know, it is sad giving up certain foods. I know the connection that food holds for so many people to their families, to their culture, to their comfort. Like it's, you know they call it, you know, comfort food for a reason. This is what we have been indoctrinated to. Let me tell you, there's nobody who loves their food in the world more than I do or more than Remy.

The two of us are like such absurd foodies. It's out of control and there is always a substitute for that pizza that's going to be just as good and is going to make sure that you feel really great. I often substitute pizza with bacon, you know, and avocados Like, and just just there's something else that's going to be delicious. So I know it feels like it's such a daunting thing to even think about, but really it's just shifting your mindset and really focusing on building health. I mean this is vitally important to every aspect of health in your entire body and brain. It's so important when it comes to depression, anxiety, cognitive function, immune support. I mean there's really nothing more essential. So at least give it a try, peoples.

0:28:25 - Kristin

At least give it a try. And if it's so daunting that you're like I can't do that whole thing, I know myself, I know I won't be able to do it, pick one thing that you know is not good for you. Like nobody drinks Diet Pepsi and thinks it's good for them, I think people do Probably not anybody listening to our podcast, but I do think some people do.

0:28:46 - Chloe

I bet there's some hidden diet Pepsi drinkers out there, I bet there are, I know, a lot of doctors who drink Diet Coke and Diet Pepsi and I'm always like what?

0:28:55 - Kristin

Yeah, yeah, well, I mean, your listeners are way healthier than most doctors. I'll just give you that. But pick the thing. Pick the thing that you know that's been kind of gnawing at you. Don't try to make all the changes. Just be like let me experiment with 21 days eliminating that and see how I feel you won't notice nothing, right, you may not heal your gut, but you won't notice nothing, and you may find that the nothing you don't notice is much preferable to going back on that diet, pepsi or whatever you know.

Just do a mini experiment and if you can't do it by yourself, find a friend, you know, call your sister or your brother or your mom or your dad or your friend or your co-worker and say listen, I noticed you and I both are drinking this thing and both of us talk about how we have headaches or how you know we're worried because we just got our bone scans back and we both have osteopenia which, by the way, drinking, you know, sodas contributes to.

Why don't we, why don't we go off it for 21 days as a challenge and do that together? So much easier in a group, and this is why I run groups, right, this is why I'd prefer I mean, I love

having these conversations one-on-one, because it's awesome to be one-on-one in rooms with other humans, but I love groups just as much, because you have all the like sort of aha moments that happen when you hear someone else basically speak your heart about their fears or about their challenges or about, or share a tip about, how they overcame the thing. That is also your kind, of your own obstacle. So it's very, very powerful. So find some accountability and do this with someone else.

0:30:21 - Chloe

Well, and I do think that that's one of the best things that has come out of COVID is the fact that we are all so comfortable and used to I mean, for better or worse finding community online so we're not isolated based on our location or our group or you know, for me as a single mom like I, can't get out and go to groups in Boulder and meet people. I'm sure there are lovely people right where I live, but it's so much easier for me to go to an online group and not have to find a babysitter or whatever and pay for that. So I think that that's one of the real blessings that has come from this, where you know you can find the support you're looking for anywhere in the world online now, and people were going through the same thing and, as a rare genetic disorder mama, you know that's something that I value immensely is, you know, my community of STXBP1 moms, or rare genetic disorder moms. So what are? So?

Two of my favorite things for healing the gut are different minerals, so I love B minerals, I love ion biome. Zach Bush is obviously incredible. Caroline from Beam I did a podcast with her and she's just phenomenal and she broke down a lot of the ways in which her supplements are able to help heal the gut lining. I'm also a big fan of bone broth but I know for some people with neurological conditions that can be sort of challenging. Are there any things, any supplements or foods in particular that you like to recommend that people are doing either while they're doing the elimination diet or just sort of after for general maintenance of the gut?

0:32:05 - Kristin

Yeah, no, you mentioned some that I love. I think ghee is an important one for people to know about. You know, ghee is clarified butter and it's so. The lactose and the you know the proteins have been taken out in the process of clarifying the butter and you can make it simply at home. You can just bring, you know, a pound of unsalted grass-fed butter to a boil, let it simmer, simmer, simmer until little bubbles come up and the little white things come up. That's the protein. You skim that out with a little strainer, throw it away. Skim it out, throw it away. Eventually you'll be able to see through that clear, yellow liquid to the bottom of the pan and then you're done. You just pour the rest of it through the strainer and that sits on your countertop and that's your cooking fat. It also is your slather-slather in place of butter fat.

It's not dairy anymore as far as I'm concerned, because it's just the fat from the cow or from the milk, and it's delicious with some Celtic sea salt or some finishing salt on there. It's a great way to get your healthy fat. It's also loaded with a short-chain fat called butyrate. So butyrate is something people pay a lot of money for in capsules. You can also eat it in ghee. Butter has it too. It's the fat that makes up butter and that butyrate is actually an anti-inflammatory molecule. It's a helpful signaling molecule in the gut and it actually feeds your colon cells. It's a preferred fuel source of the cells of your colon, your large intestine. It's made by a healthy microbiome, so certain bacteria will make butyrate for you. They won't make butter for you, but they'll make butyrate for you, and that butyrate feeds the colon cells from the inside. So it's a wonderful way to sort of support gut healing.

I also love probiotic foods. You know things like sauerkraut and kimchi. They don't have dairy. They don't have dairy. They don't have alcohol. You know people, a lot of people, like kefir these days and kombucha. Those are wonderful foods, but you have to make sure you're not sensitive to dairy and alcohol. Also, kombucha is made with black tea, which has caffeine, and you know raw, cheap sugar, which is sugar.

So you kind of have to introduce those four things after an elimination diet to make sure you tolerate caffeine, sugar, alcohol and what was the last thing? Maybe just those three, maybe those three things. You want to make sure you can handle them right. You want to make sure you're not sensitive to those things. Most people aren't. Actually. Those things get back for most people. Okay.

But the sugar thing I want to mention because a lot of people on an elimination diet will gravitate towards the gluten-free grains, like rice and gluten-free oats or quinoa and amaranth and millet. Or they'll gravitate towards the root vegetables, like you know beets and carrots and potatoes and sweet potatoes and French fries that they bake themselves in coconut oil. God bless you, good for you. All those things are still very carby. They have a lot of sugars, natural sugars, in them. Fruits are the same thing and one of the things that people don't realize. I think about those healthy foods. Or even you know fine to eat on the elimination diet, but if you eat them in a huge, in large amounts. Or even you know fine to eat on the elimination diet, but if you eat them in a huge, in large amounts, you will overgrow the population of your gut, your microbiome that feasts off of sugars and that is notably the yeast population.

So you talked earlier about those feelings of giving up your favorite foods and comfort foods. Right, comfort foods are usually carb-based foods. Not many people think ghee is a comfort food. I mean I do now. I do now. Yeah, if you think ghee is a comfort food, you probably don't have a yeast overgrowth.

But if your comfort foods are things like pastas or pizzas or muffins, or bagels or donuts, or fruit or rice or potatoes or French or potato chips, those are all feeding your yeast.

And if you have, you know, consume those in any quantity you know over the course of your life. Chances are you've overgrown your yeast population and those little yeasty beasties secrete over 480 chemicals that get into your bloodstream and drive your behavior either towards more carbs or towards you. Just fed us now. We're going to make you feel really happy and goofy and silly and maybe give you the yeasty giggles you know, like the craziness that comes out of us and our kids after we've eaten a lot of sugary foods, even sugars that are natural, that we wouldn't necessarily think are sugar. So I think it's important for people to hear that, because they often think I can't give up, I can't do this elimination diet because I won't have all the foods I need, or if I do, I'm going to gravitate towards all the carbs. Those people don't always heal their gut, I'm sorry to say, because they're not reducing their yeast population, which is another source of inflammation and creator of leaky gut.

0:36:43 - Chloe

Do you think yeast get affected by the full moon also similarly to the parasites? Is that something?

0:36:48 - Kristin

that you see, if someone's getting really goofy over the full moon, or they're having more seizures around the full moon, or they're having more cravings or just eating like crazy around the full moon, they're not sleeping well those people. I tend to think parasites before I think yeast, because the parasites really do have a life cycle that involves a full moon. They're moving between our other organs and our gut to mate during the full and sometimes the new moon. So while there's probably always a yeast overgrowth, if there's a parasite overgrowth, I don't necessarily go after the yeast before I go after the parasites. Interesting interesting.

0:37:20 - Chloe

You know, it's impossible for me to talk with you without talking about parasites. It always comes back to the worms. Chloe, it's my feverish. It's like you want to die and I'm like it's like that train wreck that you can't look away from because it's so fascinating to me.

0:37:36 - Kristin

Just embrace it. I have my patients send me texts with pictures of their you know worms in their poop when they're doing cleanses. I want to see it. First of all, we have to honor what's leaving us. Right, it's like bless and release you. You've served a purpose. The parasites in the yeast are overgrown because we have become toxic. Right, it's not like bad luck. You know we are living in a very toxic world. It's like if you leave out the bags of garbage in your kitchen, the rats will come. Right, if you are filling yourself with inflammation and toxins and you're living in a place where you're sort of leeching things in from your environment you're living in New Jersey where you know there's like mercury in the breeze right, there's a lot of ways that we pick up toxins and we become toxic. If we're not doing something regularly to support detoxification, the rats will come.

0:38:26 - Chloe

Yeah Well, and improving your digestion is one of the most foundational ways to support detoxification, so really optimizing your gut, what are some of the ways that you and like? What are some of the fruits and vegetables or vegetables, probably, more particularly that you like to support detoxification? I mean, I would imagine dandelion greens. Those are a little tricky even for me to get ready to eat, although I feel like pickling or kimchi dandelion greens would be really awesome, so I might have to try that soon.

0:39:01 - Kristin

Well, anything bitter so dandelion greens are not that palatable by Remy because they're super bitter probably, and bitters have a really powerful impact on the gallbladder. So they help the gallbladder to secrete bile, which is a thing that sort of, you know, binds up, helps, binds up toxins in your gut and also binds up, you know, puts out bile salts, which are important for, you know, peristalsis and moving things along. There's a lot of reasons to kind of keep the bile flowing, not just digestive, but the other thing that I would say, things that support the liver. You know, like the cruciferous vegetables, like broccoli and cauliflower and Brussels sprouts, the sulfur containing foods like onions and garlic and leeks. Those are also really powerful and important for helping the body digest food and also supporting the liver for detoxifying what comes through it.

The liver is doing the mainstay of detoxification of the body and the gut is doing the lion's share of actually moving things out. So the kidneys can process things too and you can sweat things out. You can, you know, breathe things out. You can move things out through your nails and your teeth and your saliva and your hair. However, the gut is responsible for really 80% of moving things out. So we really want to support that sort of unsung hero of detoxification as many ways as we can, and we do that by supporting the gallbladder, supporting the liver and then making sure the gut is healed and healthy and not inflamed so it can just do its job.

0:40:31 - Chloe

Oh man, it's wild to think what so many people are dealing with in terms of their health challenges and in terms of their diets, and how disconnected we've become from our bodies. I was looking it up last night, I think. Let me see, I have it in a note here 42.5% of US adults age 20 and over have obesity, including 9% with severe obesity, and 31.1% are overweight. That was from 2018. I'm sure that that has only increased since then, especially with the pandemic, and somewhere around 20% of children are overweight.

And so you know, it is not a judgment call on anybody in terms of, like me, judging anybody and their weight and what they look like, but to me as a doctor, and I'm sure to you as well, it is a reflection of your health and, you know, your ability to honor and care for and love your body through the choices that you're making day to day with your diet, with your lifestyle and with, you know, really respecting yourself. You know, and I know that a lot of these bugs are powerful and they get into our minds and these habits, so they're hard to break. But really I'm just. It breaks my heart to see our society in such a health crisis, a state of health crisis, and so much of it comes down to all of these hyper processed foods and toxins that we're just ingesting without even really thinking about it.

0:42:04 - Kristin

I mean, the toxin thing is hard for a lot of people who don't, who live in a, who can't afford to move from their toxic neighborhood, for example. I mean, think about all, the, all the places, all the stories we've heard about underserved communities, which is where kind of the dumping happens, or where they put in a chemical plant or where they put in a water waste treatment center. That's toxifying the neighborhood. There's so many people who can't afford to move from their location and are inadvertently getting sort of saturated with toxins and toxins. The body will create fat stores to store toxins that it can't process. So fatty liver is a perfect example of this.

A lot of people have heard that term now because more and more people are being diagnosed with fatty liver. They may not be overtly obese, but their liver is obese. Their liver has stored and created a bunch of fat stores because it's just overburdened with toxins and it can't move through them fast enough. So it creates a little fat store and shoves the toxins in there. Most toxins are fat soluble Roundup being a notable outlier and non-fat soluble it's water soluble, which is terrifying because it means it gets in the groundwater and comes raining down on everything. But most toxins are fat soluble and the liver is shoving them into little pockets of fat for later processing.

If we're never changing what we're putting in our mouths which is the part most of us have more control over, as opposed to where we're living or what they're dumping on us or what they're raining on us from above then we're missing the opportunity to unburden that fatty storage of toxins from the liver and help it recover and help it catch up. You know, let it move through the backlog and then catch up and be on top of the toxins coming in. You know there's a greater this was a shocking study. I saw this maybe 10 years ago. There's a greater correlation between toxicity and type 2 diabetes than there is between obesity and type 2 diabetes. It's not just about the sugars, it's about your body. When it's intoxicated with toxicants, when it's loaded with poisons, it can't become metabolically flexible again. It's like losing the capacity to handle all the sugar and handle the challenge of the sugar, whereas if you weren't toxic you might be obese but not diabetic whereas if you weren't toxic, you might be obese, but not diabetic.

0:44:22 - Chloe

Yeah, it's mind-boggling, you know, and I think it's something that we see. You know, we were both called to it in terms of really trying to find ways to support other people, because we've been smacked in the face with the epidemic of neurodevelopmental and chronic health issues in our kids, which I know, I say all the time, but 54% of children now mental and chronic health issues in our kids, which I know, I say all the time, but 54% of children now have a chronic health disorder. That means that 54% of children are likely going to be on pharmaceuticals for the rest of their lives unless there's some sort of intervention, and literally an elimination diet is the type of free intervention that can change that trajectory for your child for the rest of their lives and also empower them to take control of their health and see how they feel when they're feeling healthy. I have so many patients and so many people who tell me, like you know, like you said, like they're just used to, oh, my family's always had chronic diarrhea. It's just, you

know, like we're Jews, it is what it is. We got the itis, we got whatever you know like and it's like, no like. There. There are ways to stop that and support your digestion and learn what healthy actually feels like.

But I think we're so inundated with stress and toxins and all of these distractions that we don't even have the time or the energy or the know-how to check in with ourselves and really assess how we're feeling day to day.

But I want to. I talked your ear off before we got on, so we only have a little bit of time left. So I am going to go back to parasites, because I know I need to do a new parasite cleanse. Anytime I do a parasite cleanse I get like the worst Herxheimer response, which is sort of similar to what you were talking about. When people go on the elimination diet, I get like wicked headaches. So Herx response is basically when you're killing off some of these parasites or candida or whatever and you start having flu-like symptoms. I have a very hard time with it, which I'm sure is a strong indication that I need to push through it. But so I'm curious what you are using for parasites these days, and maybe I will see if anybody in my school group wants to do a parasite cleanse with me so that I can have emotional support through it.

0:46:35 - Kristin

I love it. I love that you lean into your healing team. Well, the first thing I would say, Chloe, is don't do it before you do an elimination diet, because, remember, 80% of the toxins, including the toxins, are going to get kicked off by these dying worms or thrown off while they're fighting. You are supposed to come out through the gut and if your gut is not up to capacity, up to snuff, because it's inflamed for any reason, it's not doing its job properly. It's going to be harder to get rid of those toxins. You want to make sure you're pooping at least once a day when you're on a parasite cleanse, so this is to get the dead bodies out. You know, most people take a day to digest food. You eat corn a day later it comes out in the toilet. Well, if you think about that, if you have parasites in your upper gut, which is right below your stomach, it takes about a day for them to get from there. Once they die to the toilet and while they're going, they're being digested by the microbiome. Those toxins are being released into your body. It can feel really lousy to do a parasite cleanse and, by the way, we're not killing all the parasites, we're killing some of the parasites that are in your gut and easily killable.

10% of your parasites live in your gut. What 10% of your parasites live in your gut? Do the math. The other 90% live elsewhere. So there's some in your liver, there's some in your gallbladder, there's some in your eyes, there's some in your sinuses, there's some in your womb, there's some in your bladder, there's some in your joints, there's some in your skin. They live everywhere. Some of them are microscopic, so you're not going to see like a big worm outline on your skin, although you can find pictures of that online. But you know 90% of them live not in the gut.

So before you take them on, heal the gut. That's my first stop. Before you take them on, make sure you're pooping every day. Or learn how to do enemas and get comfortable with enemas so you can flush those things out. Get the dead bodies out every day. Number three consider using not the smallest whiff of a dose, but the largest stomp you can imagine. So I used to do parasite cleanses with one item and if someone had a herx I'd back down and do less and less and less, kind of like I do with my Lyme treatment. I don't do that anymore. I go all in, I go big or go home for parasites. So I usually use three different remedies at once and for people with seizures I use steroids on day two, three and four. Because if we get any killing in the brain I don't want those parasites causing so much inflammation that more seizures happen. And with that protocol I've been able to get away with killing parasites and seizure people and, by the way, most people with seizures have parasites as part of their seizures.

0:49:00 - Chloe

Well, there's even been a lot of reports of people with cancer clearing the cancer with antiparasitics. So that's probably a whole different topic, but it is fascinating to think of how prevalent they are and how many different underlying disorders they might actually be behind. So maybe we'll just have to do a full-on parasite episode at some point.

0:49:20 - Kristin

I think I feel like that's coming. My parasites are helping me to the task. It's our destiny, Kristin. It's our destiny, Chloe. I can't wait for that. I'm already thinking of the headlines that we're going to use for it.

0:49:32 - Chloe

But wait. So what are the three things you're using? And then I will call it quits so that I can respect your time.

0:49:38 - Kristin

You know what, that I can respect your time. You know what. I start with what's in your medicine cabinet. Like a lot of people who are in this space and kind of, you know, weekend warriors of health and like trying different supplements for different things, have a variety of things, so wormwood cloves, black walnut, neem, mimosa, pudica those are kind of the most common things you'll see out there when you look up. You know you look at ingredient lists for parasite cleanses. But if you go to your health food store and say where's the parasite cleanse, the little old lady at the front desk will be like right over there, oh, she should probably walk you over and show you what works for her.

Do you ever do diatomaceous earth? I do. I don't think of it as a mainstay, though. It's really about that's really good for slicing and of that's your insurance policy for not, you know, making too many more parasites, though it's a little bit of an illusion. Like they come, they're there, they do get rid of all of them. They come back. You got to kind of do it.

So every full moon I consider throwing myself on a parasite cleanse for five days, and probably five times a year I do. Would I like to do it every month. Yeah, no-transcript. It does paralyze some larger worms, it does not kill them. So for people who don't want to have to like wrestle anything to the ground as it comes out, don't use that one. And then there's, like you know, mebendazole, albendazole, alinea, biltricide, ivermectin there's a lot of other ones. I use three. I use some combination of whatever you have or have access to or feel comfortable with, three different bottles twice a day, usually for five days around the full moon, sometimes for 18 days around the full and new moon. And then I repeat, wash, rinse, repeat until people feel better.

0:51:35 - Chloe

Wow, all right. Well, guys, we're going to do another episode just on parasites sooner than later, so get ready, get your vomit buckets nearby. It's going to be glorious. Thank you so much for all of your wisdom today, Kristin. I always love chatting with you and I'm really grateful that you came back to talk to my peoples.

0:51:59 - Kristin

Anytime. Chloe Happy to be here. Good luck everyone with your elimination diets and parasite cleanses.

0:52:05 - Chloe

You got this. If you want people, I am going to try and set it up in my school thing, probably around the time that this episode comes out. So check it out on school and hopefully you can do it with me and Remy and that'll be fun.