

Episode 99 Transcript

Jaclyn (00:01.784)

Dr. Paria Vaziri is a licensed naturopathic doctor in San Diego, California. After she graduated from Bastyr University in 2020, she started her own telemedicine practice and since then, she's worked with hundreds of women to help them optimize their menstrual cycles, their digestion and their energy. And in addition, she's got a fabulous Instagram account where she shares so much educational content revolving around naturopathic medicine. So Dr. Paria, thank you so much for joining us on the Dutch podcast today.

Paria Vaziri (00:30.651)

Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to be here today.

Jaclyn (00:34.54)

Now we're going to be covering a topic today that is probably one of the things I get asked about the most, is microbiome, gut health, how it plays a role into hormones and just overall wellness for women. Now let's start with like the beginning. Why is gut health such a huge problem for people in America?

Paria Vaziri (00:54.939)

Yeah, I think, you know, when I'm working with patients, it's really the first place that I start because your gut is the cornerstone of your health. And I do think it's a huge growing issue in our society. And there's a few things that could be contributing here. I mean, for one, and I'm sure we're going to talk about this a lot today, there's how stress impacts the gut. And a lot of people in today's day and age are super stressed out. So we see the negative consequences that has on the gut, pairing that with the fact that a lot of people aren't meeting proper nutritional needs, they're not getting enough fiber in, they're not getting enough healthy foods in, fermented foods. And so all, and they're leaning more on maybe ultra processed foods, that's creating a negative impact on the gut as well. And then we throw in the final whammy of antibiotics being used a lot for, especially in younger populations too. You know, you have kids going in and for...

Jaclyn (01:41.176)

Hmm.

Paria Vaziri (01:47.193)

every ailment they're getting antibiotics, we're seeing this like stacked effect of things that are negatively impacting the gut. And in turn, people are experiencing a whole host of symptoms.

Jaclyn (01:57.966)

What are some of the most common symptoms that you're seeing in your practice?

Paria Vaziri (02:01.221)

Yeah, outside of the digestive issues, and I think a lot of people get labeled like the IBS diagnosis where you're experiencing bloating, irregular bowel movements. Outside of that, skin issues is a huge one. A lot of my like acne, eczema patients, it really comes down to the gut, having any type of mood or energy issues as well. So brain fog, chronic fatigue, poor gut health can exacerbate things like anxiety and low mood. And then another category that's often missed is people that are always getting sick. When I hear someone say, I get sick like multiple times a year, I'm always thinking something's going on with the gut. And then menstrual conditions as well, which is what I primarily work with. A lot of women struggling with PMS or like painful periods.

Jaclyn (02:49.582)

Well, I'm excited. I think we're going to get to talk about a lot of those topics in more detail today. know, just starting at the beginning, you know, it does seem like we're in a real, you know, transformational period when it comes to gut health because for so long you had gastroenterologists who would be diagnosing like Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, you know, kind of your diseases of the gut. And then if you were ruled out for those, you know, medical conditions, you were either first for a long time told you're fine, then you were told you had IBS, but really sent on your way without a lot of support. And I think because they're so like common issues, these are such common issues, there has been this upswell of research and just clinical investigation and observation to try to help these people because people can be suffering really severely, right?

Paria Vaziri (03:37.947)

Yeah, absolutely. mean, I think anyone struggling with gut symptoms, it's not pleasant. You no one wants to go through their day to day feeling super bloated, having stomach pain. With all that comes like this sense of like lethargy and fatigue where you just feel like dragged down and you know, food is so important and we're seeing people be afraid to eat certain foods that are really beneficial because...Fiber can hurt your stomach if your gut microbiome isn't balanced well and it can exacerbate those issues. So we're seeing a lot of people feeling uncomfortable in their day to day. And it's really fantastic that we're getting more and more data on the gut microbiome and how to support it and people are interested in it.

Jaclyn (04:15.086)

Now before we dive deeper in the microbiome, because that's where I want to go next, I do want to ask you, how did you get interested in naturopathic medicine? Tell us a little bit about your background and your journey.

Paria Vaziri (04:26.001)

Yeah, so when I was in undergrad, actually studied biology and I was really interested in going down the pharmaceutical route. It's kind of where I was leaning towards. Once I graduated, I took a gap year and I was working as a pharmacy tech. I was applying for pharmacy schools. But at the same time, during that gap year, I was actually struggling with a lot of my own symptoms. You I was 21, 22 at the time, but I had really bad anxiety. My hormones were all over the place. Like I had irregular periods. They were very painful. And I think the biggest thing that bothered me was my gut issues out of everything. I was constantly bloated. I just felt really uncomfortable. And I was going to a lot of doctors and it was pretty much the same things where it was like, okay, well, you don't have any digestive issues. You don't have any like diseases we can diagnose you with. So, try laxative or more fiber or like take dairy out of your diet, know, very just like basic things that I was getting told. And

Jaclyn (05:20.034)

Hmm.

Paria Vaziri (05:22.073)

At that time, again, I was 21, 22, and I felt too young to have so many health issues and to need to be on a revolving door of medications to manage them. So I started looking into my nutrition. I started looking into my stress, my movement, and I found a lot of healing through those avenues. And that kind of gave me the wake-up call of, okay, I think I want to shift gears and move towards this and not pursue pharmacy.

Jaclyn (05:47.646)

We're all glad you did. So that's great that you're here now. Yeah, it's really amazing because you know, just like you share in your story You know the way that it must feel as a patient to go in to seek help and then be really turned away Like no, there's nothing wrong You know that can be so frustrating and it's so many people I think probably resonate with what you share like I had to do it on my own I had to do my own research. I had to do trial and error, you know that it's really Another challenging aspect of this care is just the emotional of like trying to get help and not finding a good solution.

Paria Vaziri (06:20.433)

Yeah, and it's so frustrating. And I really empathize with a lot of people, because you don't know what you don't know to begin with. I didn't know at the time when naturopathic medicine even was I didn't know the importance of diet. I didn't know any of these things I know now. So it was super overwhelming. And at the same time, you're really trusting these healthcare professionals who are telling you nothing's wrong. But like you said, you feel

horrible on a day to day. So you're like, no, something is wrong. And, you know, no one's ever looking to get diagnosed with anything. No one wants that. But when you're

Jaclyn (06:27.619)

Mm.

Paria Vaziri (06:50.135)

suffering on a day to day, you kind of want some sort of answer. You want something that can point you towards the right direction for healing.

Jaclyn (06:53.87)

Mm-hmm. So when we start to dive into gut health, I want to kind of bring us back to the gut microbiome. Now, I think most people have heard of the microbiome at this point. Of course, it's everywhere. But tell us a little bit more about why it's so important for overall health. And I want to also talk a little bit about inflammation because you may know that gut health can be a contributing factor to so many other conditions like you talked about, the acne, the anxiety. You you listed a lot of symptoms that might be surprising to listeners, but I know there can be some specific connection points in the immune system is one really important one.

Paria Vaziri (07:31.077)

Yeah, definitely. I mean, your gut microbiome, you're thinking about the trillions of different species that are living within your intestines, mostly the large intestines when we're talking about the gut microbiome. And they're playing such an important role in your body to at the bare minimum, they're helping absorb nutrients, all the foods that you're eating, all those nutrients that you're taking in your guts helping absorb that. So that way you have proper levels of like iron, B vitamins, whatever it is you're consuming. Those gut microbiomes are actually producing anti-inflammatory compounds as a byproduct to things like short-chain fatty acids that play a big role in managing inflammation in the gut. that's really the goal here when we're talking about like taking probiotics and doing all the things we want to support those healthy microbes for producing these anti-inflammatory compounds. So there's a lot of really essential things it's doing. And I think when we're talking about inflammation, it's so important to talk about the gut lining itself because when you're looking at your digestive lining, that's housing over 70 % of your immune system. And it's doing a really important job of screening things that are getting absorbed in your body, making sure the right things are getting absorbed, the right things are moving through. And so for someone who, let's say, maybe you're eating foods that are creating inflammation in your body, like you have food sensitivities, or you're eating a really ultra processed diet, or maybe there's an imbalance in the good bacteria in your gut, maybe you don't have enough, or maybe you had food poisoning and that's kind of changed the terrain of your gut

microbiome, that can cause inflammation over time and that actually damages the gut lining.

And so you go from having this gut lining that's supposed to be very protective, it's supposed to help manage inflammation and make sure that things are moving smoothly through the system, that starts to malfunction. And now you see like this chronic low level grade of inflammation because your intestinal lining is damaged and then...you know, we can get into all the nitty gritty of how like the gut bacteria impacts that too, but I think the more important thing here is making sure you have a good diversity of those microbes in your gut and then making sure that gut lining is really well protected.

Jaclyn (09:37.048)

So what are some of the things you can do to make sure your gut lighting is really well protected?

Paria Vaziri (09:41.189)

Yeah, that's a great question. I would say the food you eat are really important here. They're really making an impact. A lot of people are not getting enough omega-3 fatty acids into their diet. We're seeing this big skew between omega-3s that are anti-inflammatory and maybe too much omega-6s in the diet that are more pro-inflammatory. So bringing in omega-3s like salmon, walnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds, that's gonna help support the gut lining incorporating foods that are really beneficial for the gut, like fermented foods. Fermented foods are like your food source or probiotic. So instead of taking the pill, you can eat fermented foods to really foster a good healthy microbiome, things like sauerkraut or like probiotic yogurts. And then one of my favorite ways to get more anti-inflammatory benefits in is thinking about all of your like red and purple pigmented fruits and vegetables, because they're so high in antioxidants.

Jaclyn (10:31.501)

Hmm. That's great. And those are fun to try to get into your diet, like eating the rainbow, diversifying what you're eating. And really, know, food is medicine. It's like it's either benefiting you and healing you or it's not serving you, right? So making healthy choices can be a huge, huge difference. Now, when you're looking at someone who has kind of more chronic inflammation, maybe autoimmunity or, I know, red skin or the skin reactions, like what are some of the things that people would say to you that would make you think, really should take a look at the gut first.

Paria Vaziri (11:05.435)

think of people, one of the phrases I hear a lot is people tell me I just feel like this generalized puffiness. Like I feel in flames, like I don't feel like I've gained weight, I just feel

puffy. And sometimes it goes away, sometimes it doesn't. Joint pain is another one these people will notice a little bit more aches and pains around. As you noted, the skin issues is a big one too. Acne, eczema, eczema is a huge one that I see. And that's a big red flag for me. And then I would also say

Jaclyn (11:12.736)

Hmm.

Paria Vaziri (11:33.433)

anyone really struggling with lot of cramps with their menstrual cycle. Obviously there is reproductive conditions like endometriosis, for example, that can cause cramps and like unpleasant periods. But I would say for someone who comes to me and they're like, you know, have to take a few painkillers every cycle. I'm like, okay, what's causing inflammation in your body? Why are you experiencing more cramps than you should?

Jaclyn (11:50.926)

Mm. That's interesting. Yeah, it's interesting because when I talk to patients, many don't really have a good sense of like whether their digestion is good or bad. I don't know if you find that too. Like I remember because I work with couples primarily doing fertility work that as I'm doing a review of systems with both partners, I'm speaking to the male partner and I say, how's your digestion? And he says, it's fine. And his wife's like, it's not fine. And he's like, it's fine. It's like the same as my mom. And she said, he only goes to the bathroom like once every four days.

And he's like, yeah, but that's the same way that my mom was and the same way my brother is. And so he had normalized dysfunction and needed that education. Is that a barrier for a lot of people in your experience of just thinking that, oh, yeah, loose stools or urgency or whatever the symptom is is just some other shade of normal?

Paria Vaziri (12:44.581)

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I see that all the time in my practice where I'll ask people, how's your digestive health? And they're like, it's great. I have great digestion. And I'm like, let me ask you a few questions. proud of you too. See, I do like to ask that though, because it gives you an idea of that, how much do they know about digestive health? Like, what is their experience with it? And to your point, a lot of people, and I think it's, I mean, I don't want to say it's

Jaclyn (12:54.2)

I know you can't ask, how is it? That's a setup. You can't ask how is it, gotta ask the details. Yeah.

Paria Vaziri (13:13.083)

taboo, but like most people don't like to talk about digestive health. It's not like a topic you bring up like, I haven't pooped in four days, you know, and all this. Or that I'm always talking about it. So it doesn't come up. People don't really talk about it at all. And, you know, we have some of these frameworks in place where you hear, it's normal to have one to three bowel movements daily or like one across the span of three days. Anywhere from that range is normal, but I think it's abnormal if you're going through days without having a bowel movement. I think you should be having one daily.

Jaclyn (13:15.266)

Of course.

Jaclyn (13:18.806)

Unless you're an apathetic, that's all we talk about. Yeah.

Paria Vaziri (13:41.595)

And then there's the other layer of people don't know what a healthy bowel movement looks like either. So I always ask them and then we start getting into the questions and they're like, you know, now that you mention it, it's always loose or I'll actually go like every two to three days and I get a little bit bloated, but like I've always been like this. And it's like, okay, we need to look at that a little bit more. But it's also interesting because I have a small subset of people where I ask them about their digestive health and everything checks out, no symptoms, nothing going on. But in the back of my head, I'm like, all of your symptoms sound like it.

Jaclyn (13:59.374)

Mm-hmm.

Paria Vaziri (14:11.161)

Let's look into it anyway, and then we start working on whatever's going on in their gut, even if they're not symptomatic and all those other symptoms they came with clear up to. So the gut's interesting.

Jaclyn (14:20.438)

Yeah, it's a really interesting point. know, there's a lot of, especially when you get infections like H. pylori, like some people are really symptomatic, some people are asymptomatic with that. And so that certainly has a big impact on health. And there's many other conditions or like, I think about like deficiency dysbiosis. You might not actually have a lot of symptoms and that's when you have just a low volume of microbes, beneficial microbes in your gut.

A lot of people walk around with that, it's, you know, it still can be inflammatory. It's tied with leaky gut or hyperpermeability if you want to use a more proper term. So yeah, I think you're right. A lot of people that think their digestion is normal, that doesn't rule out if they have a lot of the signs and symptoms elsewhere that, you know, you shouldn't be doing a check of the gut.

Paria Vaziri (15:06.523)

Yeah, I 100 % agree. And I agree with you on the insufficiency dysbiosis too. Over the years, I've actually been surprised by how common that is because I think we hear a lot about like overgrowth, but a lot of people I work with have just tapped out gut, but there's not a whole lot of good microbes growing.

Jaclyn (15:15.522)

So common.

Jaclyn (15:23.17)

Well, let's maybe talk a little bit more about that because that's not something we've covered on the podcast. So people might be hearing that for the first time today. let's talk a little bit more about what is that deficiency, dysbiosis.

Paria Vaziri (15:32.881)

Mm-hmm. Yeah, so usually when I'm running stool tests, I see it as someone who doesn't have a whole lot of growth in their gut to begin with. So a lot of low levels of keystone species like lactobacillus, for example, or some of your bifidose strains. And so with that, some of the common symptoms I start to see is sometimes they have issues with how regular the bowel movements are. Sometimes it's normal. I usually feel like it airs a little bit more towards the constipation side. These are my people that always feel really like run down to you. see a lot of nutrient deficiency I see issues with getting frequently sick. And I do see more of like that inflammatory picture that comes up with it too. So it's really interesting because a lot of the symptoms can closely mimic an overgrowth of bacteria and you don't know until you get in there and you're doing the stool testing and you're exploring the microbiome more and you're getting more data.

Jaclyn (16:25.44)

Yeah, I want to bring up acromansia too. That's another cornerstone, like keystone strain that's really critically important in the gut. That is one that tends to be the first to disappear when things go wrong. So when you see insufficiency dysbiosis, if you're using a lab, a stool test that looks for acromansia, that's another one to take a look at because normally if there's inflammation in the gut, that'll be one of the first things to go. It's like a very sensitive

strain and it's really important we know for things like healthy metabolism and a lot of other reasons.

Paria Vaziri (16:54.575)

Yeah, absolutely. That's one of the big ones I look for too. Such an important one to figure out how your intestinal lining is doing.

Jaclyn (17:01.334)

Yeah. Now I want to shift and talk a little bit about hormones and gut health. And this is a great transition point because we do know that certain conditions like pregnancy is a big one, actually really causes a lot of modifications to the gut. know, pregnancy actually will strip the gut's diversity pretty significantly once you get into the second trimester, which is fascinating. But it kind of speaks to that interplay between microbiome and hormones. So let's...just start by talking about that. Like maybe let's talk, because I think we can go in two directions. Let's talk about how does the gut affect our hormones.

Paria Vaziri (17:38.117)

Yeah. So one of the, there's a few different ways it impacts it. I think it's, since we're already been talking a little bit about the inflammatory side of things, we can kind of tie that back in where there's going to be ongoing chronic inflammation that's going to be putting a stress on your adrenal system and cortisol output. Cause when we're looking at inflammation, when there's inflammation in the body as a protective as one of the mechanisms to help combat it, the body releases more cortisol. And so when we're thinking about cortisol, that's one of our stress hormones, but it's playing so many other roles in the body too. So one of the things that it does is it's playing a role in our circadian rhythm. If it's in healthy and in check, it has a good influence on our sex hormones.

But if let's say you're constantly in a state of high cortisol, maybe it's low, maybe of a dysregulated pattern, that can actually impact that general sense of safety your body has and we see the negative impact it has on progesterone levels. So we see this like downward stream of okay, there's inflammation, it's messing with your cortisol, that could be messing with your sleep, all of that's impacting your progesterone and you're having someone who's experiencing a lot of mood symptoms, sleep issues, all those like hallmark symptoms in their luteal phase, maybe there's issues with fertility because their body's not producing enough progesterone. So I think that's one of the key things that we start to see in terms of how does gut and inflammation impact your sex hormones.

Jaclyn (18:59.83)

Okay, and what about when it comes to estrogen metabolism and hormone breakdown? The gut plays a role in those pieces as well.

Paria Vaziri (19:06.797)

Absolutely. There's a thing called the estrobalm in your gut, and it's just a collection of bacteria that actually impact the way that you're detoxing estrogen. So when we're thinking about estrogen, it's going through several pathways to get metabolized out of the body. First two pathways are happening in the liver in phase one and two detox, and then from there, the liver shipping off these estrogen metabolites into your gut, and your gut's playing a role in clearing out those excess estrogens. So some of these bacterias can produce this enzyme called beta-glucuronidase, and if that enzyme activity is too you can actually kind of recirculate those estrogens back into your body as opposed to clearing it out effectively. So now we're seeing like this double whammy of like estrogens kind of mounting up, progesterone is low and you're having a lot of symptoms.

Jaclyn (19:49.56)

So what do you need? you need low-bedical chironolase? Is there anything else that you need to help to move estrogen out of the body? Okay.

Paria Vaziri (19:55.141)

fiber. Fiber is your best friend. think I don't know if you remember seeing all the viral contents around like the carrot salad that people are talking about. Yeah, it's really the fiber in there. That's so beneficial fiber really helps bind up those excess and fiber helps move things out of your gut. So it's so important.

Jaclyn (20:01.792)

yeah.

Jaclyn (20:11.53)

Yeah, and when I work with patients when it comes to fiber, I know the goals I set are quite high, but I'm a little bit of a fiber perfectionist. Where would you lay on for like the average person that's thinking about just hormonal health in generally and like maintenance? Where should they fall on how many grams a day of fiber?

Paria Vaziri (20:29.605)

Yeah, I would say something to start working towards is 30 grams of fiber a day. I would say it's more in the moderate range, given the fact that I think like 90 % of Americans are not meeting close to the fiber needs, it's a good thing to start towards. I always like to tell people too, it's gonna make you feel maybe a little worse before better, so start slow. Don't jump from maybe having like five grams of fiber a day to all of a sudden 30 grams. Like start slow because it can make you feel a little bit bloated at first and then just slowly build your way up.

Jaclyn (20:58.51)

That's great. And I really think about the diversity of fibers too. So one thing that I see a lot when I set this high fiber goal for people is that they'll just use foods that are rich in fiber to the point where it's overuse. It's like chia everything, like chia pudding, chia on your salad, chia this, chia that. And then they get bloated and they get really uncomfortable and it's not working for them. I just want to note that fiber – well, fiber is also prebiotics too that feed our good microbiomes. There's another reason why it's bulking, but it also is fuel for our microbiome, that getting diverse fibers can be really helpful because you're really giving, it's almost like giving that diverse diet to all the gut microbiome.

Paria Vaziri (21:39.621)

Yeah, I agree. if you're someone that's struggling with fiber intake, I would suggest going for the things that feel a little bit more gentle and soothing on the gut. Like avocado is one of my favorite fiber sources and most people tolerate it well, a lot easier than maybe like beans and lentils, for example, but you can also try to find ways to make your fiber more digestible. So like if you are consuming beans and lentils, try sprouting them and pressure cooking them. That'll help make it a little bit easier to digest. And cruciferous vegetables are really beneficial for hormone health, but they can't a little bit tougher for someone that has a lot of gut stuff going on. you know, make sure you're eating ones that you're steaming really well. It's well cooked. So there's a lot of things you can do to kind of lessen the impact it has on the gut while still getting the benefits.

Jaclyn (22:21.998)

Another addition I would add to that is making sure that you're really chewing thoroughly and not rushing when you eat. I actually have a colleague, Jillian Tita, who does a lot of digestion work and she really, she did this program that was around like stress and digestion and it was basically how to fix your digestion by fixing your stress level and a big element of it was just mindfulness around eating because so many people eat in front of the TV, they eat during a meeting, they, you know, they eat off their kids' plates, whatever, versus sitting down and really making eating the main event and focusing on that and slowing down and making sure you're chewing your food. And that can really go a long way because I always think about it like rest. You have like fight or flight on one side, that sympathetic nervous system. Then you have rest and digest on the other side. So if you are in a stressful environment, you're not getting the same innervation and blood flow and enzymatic activity activated within your gut. You need to be in a relaxed state to eat. So I would just throw that little piece in too because in our culture, it's hard to slow down and make time for eating. can feel like you know, like a nuisance instead of like something that's an enjoyable experience. And that's unique in our culture compared to lot of parts of the world.

Paria Vaziri (23:37.297)

Yeah, I agree. We see other parts actually taking their time, like their meals are an hour or two hours, whereas with us, it's like, okay, you get five minutes in between meetings to just scarf down something really quick and you're doing a real disservice. One of the things that I actually tell my patients that I feel like are really go, go, go, and maybe they don't have that full time to sit down. I'm like, just take a few minutes before you start eating and do some belly breaths, because that's going to stimulate the rest and digest mode. And if you want a little bit extra, try taking a bitters tincture beforehand too. That'll get the digestive juices flowing. So there are small hacks you can do if it's really hard for you to sit down and be able to focus solely on the food. There's ways that you can kind of mimic that rest and digest and optimize digestion from that way.

Jaclyn (24:19.448)

Well, great suggestions. I have to tell just a funny story as an aside that we were, know, Mark Newman and Noah Reed and I, like some of the people on the Dutch team, we were in London last fall for an event, educational event we did with our partner in the UK. And we were walking in the streets of London. You know, there's pubs everywhere. It's five o'clock and there were all these people out, hanging out in the streets, in the buildings. Like it was just packed. And Mark was like, is there some kind of event going on? I mean, what's happening? This pub must have something fancy going on and then you get to the next pub and it's the same. And so he asked our host there and he's like, no, this is just what people do is that they spend time together and like have a pint and have a snack after work. It is, it's like that slower pace that really should be what we're doing here too.

Paria Vaziri (25:09.049)

Yeah, yeah, I mean, I feel like it's such a foreign concept for us here because everything is so go go go and that could be a whole different conversation, but it really is doing a disservice to our health how fast paced everything is.

Jaclyn (25:17.166)

Totally. Yeah, so you mentioned cruciferous vegetables, like broccoli, kale, cabbage. You mentioned some fermented foods. Are there any other food choices that you think about that are helpful for supporting hormones and supporting gut health?

Paria Vaziri (25:37.903)

Yeah, definitely. So I would say allium foods are really helpful too. A lot of people are eating them already. So that's like your onions, your garlic, your shallots. Those are gonna be really beneficial for liver detox. They're also really beneficial for your gut too because onions actually and shallots I believe are both prebiotic fibers. So they help feed that good bacteria in your gut. So you get kind of that added bonus. We talked about omega-3s

already and some of those fermented foods. Those are really gonna help shape the train of your gut.

Jaclyn (25:55.874)

Mm. That's right.

Paria Vaziri (26:06.949)

The red and purple pigmented fruits and veggies, I think, are some of my favorite. I mentioned that earlier, but you know, some of those purple pigmented ones like pomegranates, for example, actually help support boost of acromansia in the gut. So getting more of those foods in can be super helpful. All sorts of berries in your diet. Beets are another one of my favorites. I am obsessed with red beets. think they're just, they're probably my favorite vegetable. They're so good for the liver. I roast them in the oven.

Jaclyn (26:29.496)

How do you like to cook them? How do you like to cook them?

Paria Vaziri (26:33.915)

But sometimes I get, don't know if you've seen the pre-packaged ones at Costco, they have like organic pre-packaged ones. That's kind of my thing. Yeah, yeah, because I mean, beets can stain. Sometimes it's not fun to cook them because they're so pigmented. Your entire hands look like it's a crime scene. But I do love them so much and they're fantastic for hormonal health.

Jaclyn (26:37.462)

Mm hmm. Yeah, like the love beats are. Ha

Paria Vaziri (26:54.031)

I would say just the more you can stick with whole foods, you really can't go wrong with having a variety of different whole foods, vegetables, fruits, especially seasonal ones, because the more they're in season, the more nutritious it is. you know, mother nature is smart too. So certain foods and certain seasons are actually more protective. Like for example, in the winter season, we have a lot of like orange foods in season, a lot of our squash, like pumpkin and things like that. Those are high in nutrients that are very supportive of our immune health. So I just really think that you really can't go wrong with all the Whole Foods.

Jaclyn (27:27.894)

I love that you mentioned that and I love that you mentioned like seasonality because I think that's another thing that well intentioned people struggle with is do I eat fresh, frozen, do I eat you know canned or preserved or like the beets that come. It's like there's always a sacrifice right like those beets that you buy at Costco they're wrapped in plastic well now

do I have to worry about PFAS or whatever could be in there you know and I think it's very very challenging. How do you address that with patients because we have like

Do we need to eat local? But what if our local is not organic? Are there some pieces that you provide to your patients that really help them understand how to prioritize or how to maybe lessen the stress around that?

Paria Vaziri (28:09.349)

Yeah, what I always tell my patients and how I go about my day to day too when it comes to food choices is make the choices that are the best that fit your lifestyle because there are some people that have really great access to local foods and they have all the time to prepare really fresh nutritious foods and that's amazing. mean, in an ideal world, we'd all be doing that. I'd have several hours a day in the kitchen to prep like really healthy foods.

And then for some people it's like, I don't have time to maybe roast the beets. So the convenience of getting the prepackaged ones are helpful because you still are getting the health benefits and it's still way better than eating out all the time or eating ultra processed foods. So I try to tell people that the stress around making the right food choices can sometimes cause more harm than the foods you're eating because sometimes even that stress can be so debilitating for some people that they're just like, I give up. I'm just going to eat whatever because what difference does it make? But every small

Jaclyn (29:03.533)

Hmm.

Paria Vaziri (29:06.001)

positive step you make is huge. if you don't have access to an abundance of fresh foods, frozen fruits and veggies are usually frozen at the peak of their nutrition. And there's nothing wrong with incorporating that in your diet. It's better than leaning on, you know, processed foods, in my opinion, that are ultra-fruits. Yeah. Yeah, I agree. So make the choices that fit your lifestyle and reducing stress around eating is huge.

Jaclyn (29:22.998)

or even probably out of season produce, honestly. Like, yeah. That's a great tip and I have to say like things like frozen blueberries are delicious to eat frozen. It's a completely different experience than a fresh, know, fresh blueberry. yeah, that's a great point is that when you're, you know, same thing with vegetables too, like a lot of them they're frozen out. You're right, the peak harvest time and that actually can preserve a lot of nutrients and there are studies where in some cases frozen has better nutrient, you know, composition compared to fresh because of the time between picking.

Paria Vaziri (29:44.219)

Okay.

Jaclyn (30:03.584)

and getting to the supermarket and then being purchased and cooked. So that's a really, really cool point. It's really getting it from like picking to deep freeze and then deep freeze to your plate with very little time in between. That's great. So I want to shift gears a little bit because I know that you use a Dutch test and we've talked about gut testing, but we actually haven't talked about hormone testing yet on the Dutch podcast. So tell us a little bit about when you think about using the Dutch test with patients.

Paria Vaziri (30:30.705)

So, most of the patients I work with are hormone patients. So I feel like at some point in time in our work together, we'll do a Dutch test. I also feel like a lot of people come to me just curious about the test and they really want to do it. So sometimes I have people that don't really have symptoms and they want to run it anyway. Usually how the timeline works is I like to first start to optimize all the foundational things in their health. So there's sleep, there's stress how they're eating, their digestion, and then we'll do a Dutch test and see, once we shift some of those lifestyle things, where are your hormones landing now? And what information is that telling us in terms of more investigative work we might have to do? So usually about a couple months in, I'll start to do Dutch tests. And someone comes to me with a lot of hormonal symptoms. They're like, I have so much PMS. I have the most painful cramps. And I'm like, okay, let's just get in right away with some hormone support. Let's do the test and see what's going on.

Jaclyn (31:26.958)

Now are there any kind of favorite parts of the Dutch test or like markers that you really love to look at?

Paria Vaziri (31:32.773)

Yeah, I love the entirety of the adrenal testing. I love seeing what people's cortisol are doing all throughout the day. And because it's always interesting, because some people will come and have some idea of what their cortisol might be doing during the day you might get the opposite. So I love seeing that. And I do think stress is one of those things that makes such a huge impact on the body. And it's not just the stress, it's the whole circadian rhythm. And you get that viewpoint on.

Jaclyn (31:46.589)

haha

Paria Vaziri (31:58.096)

the Dutch test to what your melatonin is doing, what your cortisol is doing throughout the night and before bed. So all of that makes such a big difference with your hormones. So I love looking at that. And then I feel like most people have some type of issue with their liver detoxing estrogen. So I love looking at those pathways. Most of my patients that struggle with high estrogen symptoms, it's not really how much estrogen the body's producing, it's how you're clearing it out. So it's always fun to look at that too.

Jaclyn (32:25.038)

Those are definitely really juicy rich things to be looking at. HPA axis is funny because you're right with that cortisol curve. Sometimes it comes back with dysfunction and the patient's like, I don't really feel stressed. Don't know where that's coming from, but it can be a real eye opener and as a provider, it can help you ask more questions and dig a little bit deeper to figure out, the cortisol is definitely dysregulated. is it emotional stress that you're just very resilient around from the outside perspective or is it?

Paria Vaziri (32:52.005)

Mm-hmm.

Jaclyn (32:53.88)

blood sugar imbalance or is it infection or you know what could be happening that's causing this to be out of balance.

Paria Vaziri (32:59.119)

Yeah. And, yeah, and I think going back to what we'd said originally about the gut too, I think a lot of people go about their day to day normalizing the amount of stress they're under and normalizing the symptoms of stress. And a lot of people have a lot of, like, they have a disconnect with their mental emotional state too. some people don't really realize until we start having those conversations and I'm like, okay, well, how are you feeling before bed? How do you feel between meals? Are you irritable? Are you shaky? Like what's, what's going on with you? And people will start to piece together. Okay. Maybe my stress is a bit higher than I actually thought it was.

Jaclyn (33:37.026)

Well, it's been really wonderful talking with you today. I've learned a lot about gut health and really appreciate your approach to care with patients. So thank you so much for spending time with me today. Do you want to share a little bit about the best way for listeners to learn more about you or to follow you?

Paria Vaziri (33:51.993)

Yeah, absolutely. So you can go on my website, drpria.com and doctor spelled out, Priya

spelled P-A-R-I-A. I also have an Instagram that you can connect with me on, dr.pria is how you can find me. Both ways are a good way to connect and start working together.

Jaclyn (34:10.318)

Well, thanks again, Dr. Priya. And if you enjoyed today's podcast, I encourage you to subscribe to the Dutch podcast for anywhere that you're listening to the podcast today. And make sure you follow us also on social at Dutch test. Tune in every Tuesday. We have a wonderful episode geared up for you. Everything about hormones, reproductive health, and all things functional medicine. So thanks so much. Join us next week.