Workshop Session #4 Key Summary Bullet Points: The Hidden Connection Between Gut Issues & Hormone Imbalances

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Workshop Session #4 Key Summary Bullet Points:
The Hidden Connection Between Gut Issues & Hormone Imbalances

1:22 The gut-hormone connection—the three groups of hormones that impact the gut:

1. There's hormones that the gut produces so part of the gut can communicate with another part of the gut.

2. There's hormones that the gut produces to communicate with the pancreas to communicate that there's food coming in and there will be sugar coming into the blood.

3. There's hormones outside the gut like thyroid hormone and adrenal hormones like cortisol that have specific influences on the gut.

2:06 There's ways that specific hormones affect the gut, and there's ways that the gut then influences other hormones. There's a big connection between the gut and the way that we metabolize our estrogens and get rid of them. There's also the impact of glucose metabolism via the pancreas and insulin.

2:52 There's hormones produced by the stomach, one is called *gastrin*, and it helps stimulate the digestive enzyme *pepsin* for breaking down proteins. The beginning of protein digestion happens in the stomach. Pepsin starts and stops the churning of the stomach. (The stomach is like a washing machine and moves all the food around with the stomach secretions so they can do their job and break foods down.)

3:30 *Gastric inhibitory peptide* gets stimulated when the churning is done and it helps the food move to next part of digestion.

3:43 Digestion happens in several phases. The upper part of the digestive tract handles breaking down nutrients.

3:52 Digestion starts with the mouth, teeth, and saliva (*salivary amylase* and *salivary lipase*) to break down carbohydrates and fats. The food is then sent to the stomach, which starts the protein digestion.

4:17 There's a lot of things we need to do with the foods we eat. We have to break down the fats, proteins and carbohydrates into their tiny constituents—they're like little beads that need to be small enough to slip through the openings in the gut and get into our bodies to nourish us.

4:45 The communication vehicle that the body uses to digest food is hormones.

4:50 There's two different important hormones or glandular secretions that come into play: the endocrine and exocrine glands. The endocrine glands are what we refer to as our hormonal system—they secrete their hormones into the blood. The salivary glands

secrete their secretions right into the mouth, where it has its action. The pancreas secretes some of its secretions right into the *duodenum*, where it's going to act and break down food.

5:30 There are some times when we have to give them warning. Hormones like *gastrin* don't just get secreted into the stomach, it also has to communicate with specific cells and it does so via the blood stream. In the blood stream, it circulates back around and tells the cells lining the stomach what to do.

5:58 When the food leaves the stomach we need to break it all down. The gall bladder and the liver need to get involved. When the food comes through there's little censors and receptors in the beginning part of the small intestine called the *duodenum* that communicate with the liver and gall bladder. The gall bladder secretes bile, which is needed for fat digestion.

6:48 As the food gets broken down there's different stimulating triggers that tell the next part, and the next part, and the next part etc. what to do. There's 26 hormones that come into play.

7:12 The hormone *secretin* stimulates the pancreas via the blood stream. It sends the signal to send digestive enzymes and bicarbonate.

7:30 As food moves into the absorptive phase, *somatostatin* gets released to slow everything down by stopping the secretions.

7:47 There's a couple hormones that give a signal to the pancreas that gives it forewarning that blood sugar will be rising.

9:00 Some signs your gut hormones are not working properly:

1. Feeling of fullness and discomfort like your stomach isn't emptying. (The emptying of the stomach is a hormonal control.)

2. When *gastrin* isn't working well, we're not going to break down protein. One sign away from the gut that you might is you're working out, but you can't build muscle because you don't have enough protein and amino acids being put into the blood stream to create muscle tone.

3. You might get sick easily because the immune system is off—you don't have enough of the amino acids to be able to create the enzymes and anti-inflammatory constituents you need for the immune system to work.

4. You may have hormonal imbalances—hormones like estrogen, progesterone, thyroid may be affected because there's not enough building blocks for the body to make them. Fats are especially important for making hormones.

Impairment in any of these pieces can show up as symptoms, not just in the gut but anywhere in the body. Most people don't realize it because they're hard to measure. There aren't diagnostic tests to see what your gut hormones are doing.

11:07 The lining of the stomach secretes the *parietal cells*, which secrete intrinsic factor, which helps B12 absorption. If you have damage to the gut lining it will affect B12 absorption.

11:30 Many people who go to the doctor with complaints of burning or pain in the stomach when they eat are often put on antacid/acid-blocker medications, which stops the acid. But when you halt the flow of acid you interrupt the digestion of protein and minerals. This can create other symptoms elsewhere in the body with the immune system, hormones, skin joints, hair, and nails—pretty much everything—because your key building blocks (protein) are missing.

12:36 Estrogen is metabolized by the liver. There's three main kinds of estrogen (E1 *estrone*, E2 *estradiol*, E3 *estriol*). The first two are dangerous if too high and out of balance and can cause breast cancer, uterine cancer and other hormone-related cancers. Estriol isn't talked about as much and how beneficial it is to the body and it can counter effect the imbalances in the other two hormones.

13:23 The body produces all hormones through cholesterol. Cholesterol goes through some minor changes to create estrogen, testosterone, progesterone, cortisone, cortisol etc.

13:58 Pharmaceutical companies take a natural compound, and because they can't patent it and make money, they add something to it to make it different, a drug. But they sell it as the original compound.

14:14 It might seem like there's only a slight difference but there's more difference between progesterone and progestins (the synthetic form) than there is between estrogen and testosterone.

14:51 If hormones are necessary, the bioidentical hormones are the better option.

15:31 The safety of bioidentical hormones depends on how you're taking them, why you're taking them, in what form you're taking them, and what quantity you're taking. If you're 62 and taking enough estrogen and progesterone to make you look like you're 22 that's not normal.

16:05 How the gut affects estrogen metabolism: the liver takes hormones, we use them and then breaks them down to excrete. There's different metabolites—some are protective and some are dangerous. One of them protects bone. When the body breaks them down it's important that there's very little of the not-so-good ones and a lot

of the good ones. The gut flora/the state of your microbiome can shift the ratios of the different metabolites and make it more dangerous.

16:48 Women are often told not to take hormones during menopause because they're "unsafe," but it's the way the body processes these hormones that can be unsafe.

16:56 If you have a sluggish liver, if you're eating a lot of sugar and processed foods and your microbiome is messed up, if you're not chewing your food, if you're taking antacids so you can drink wine and eat crappy foods etc. all of this disrupts the microbiome and messes up the ratios of the estrogens and the way a person feels.

17:43 There could be a link between elevated cholesterol and poor B12 vitamin metabolism. Not enough B vitamins to make the conversion from cholesterol.

18:06 When someone has elevated cholesterol it could be because she is eating too much and metabolizing too much of it, and has plenty of gut hormone so it backs up.

18:21 It's common for peri and post-menopausal women to have high cholesterol and low sex hormones, so the conversion isn't happening the way it should. This conversion gets affected by the foods that we eat, our gut health, nutrient balances with magnesium and iodine, charbroiled meats, stress, GMOs, pesticides etc. Lots of factors interfere with this mechanism.

19:14 It's really important that we have the diet (eating whole, fresh organic foods), the lifestyle to support balanced hormones.

19:30 The conventional approach to hormones is to give one hormone instead of a balance of them, usually estrone or estradiol. Estriol is often left out. If you want to do it right, 80% should be the estriol.

19:54 Metabolite tests show the estrogen quotient. To have a safe metabolism of estrogen where you decrease your risk of breast cancer, you want to have a ratio where if you add up E1 estrone and E2 estradiol, they should be less than or equal to estriol. But this is not the case most of the time.

20:44 When taking hormones you put yourself at high risk if it's unopposed with progesterone and there's a wrong balance of the three estrogens.

21:01 Taking hormones can be done safely. But you have to work on the whole body. Just taking hormones without balancing the gut, getting stress levels down, and making sure you're getting all the nutrients you need leads to imbalance.

22:17 It's important to look at the root cause and ask, *why are the hormones out of balance?* And some women say "because I'm 50." But this isn't the reason.

22:28 The hormones are supposed to decrease, but they're also supposed to stay balanced so you stay feeling good.

22:34 The normal, healthy way to go through menopause: The periods keep getting further apart and eventually they stop. But this is not the common way.

23:20 If your body has all the right nutrients and you're healthy you won't have a miserable time going through menopause.

23:35 The thyroid has an intimate relationship with the sex hormones. It's important to ask, *why is the thyroid not functioning?* 80-90% of all thyroid conditions are autoimmune condition, which come from leaky gut. Another reason the thyroid could be out of balance is stress—the adrenals are out of balance. (Too much or too little cortisol in various pathways in thyroid metabolism impacts the flow of active thyroid hormone and the ability of the cells to pick it up.

24:44 Too much stress equals too much cortisol. What are your stressors? Eating stressful foods, chemicals in the environment, hidden infections like Candida.

25:15 To get to the root you need to layer it backwards, thinking of the body like a pyramid. So you start at the top with the symptom: The hot flashes might be caused by a thyroid imbalance, the thyroid imbalance might be caused by the adrenal gland imbalance, the adrenal gland imbalance might be caused by a gut imbalance related to diet.

25:38 You can take something to temporarily "band aid" the hot flashes, as long as you're looking for the root. But if you're just taking hormones, herbs or vitamins without looking at your diet and lifestyle and how it's impacting your gut you're not going to get better long-term.

26:03 It is possible to balance your hormones without hormone replacement by balancing your gut microbiome. A big part of your success is your willingness to make the changes necessary.

27:56 If someone has cancer, diabetes or anther serious illness, you don't know how much time you have left. NOW is the time to make changes as quickly as possible.

28:58 How to determine if hormonal issues are rooted in your gut. Signs to look for: Belching, burping, and gas after meals, joint, skin break outs, acne etc. These symptoms are not normal—something is out of balance. We should be asymptomatic.

31:47 If you have hot flashes pay attention to what else is going on in your body like indigestion.

33:47 So many people are blindsided when the they a cancer diagnosis, but they don't realize there's been so much that's led up to that point in most cases.

35:03 Your predisposition to illness starts from the time that you're conceived. It's helpful to go back to your personal history. For example, did your mom use interventions for conception? How did she eat? Did she smoke?

36:11 A lot of people want to give too much credence to genetics, but it's important to give a balance to genetics. Genetics will create a weakness in an area; diet and lifestyle stressors will cause it to express.

36:25 You could go through whole life and make it to 110 with a gene that predisposes you to cardiovascular disease, but if you're happy, you eat well, you exercise and you're doing fulfilling work, you may never get it. Where your sibling, who has different lifestyle habits, could have a heart attack.

37:09 Focusing on being happy, optimistic, exercising, keeping environment clean, eating organic foods, doing work that you love, take vacations—it does pay off.

37:57 95% is epigenetics and 5% is genetics—there are certain genes that turn on.

38:40 Steps to rebalance your gut and hormones:

1. Remember, your digestion doesn't begin in your digestive tract. Your digestion begins with your mind and soul. Your mood and stress levels play a huge role. Start every meal by taking a few deep breaths and expressing appreciation for the food in front of you. Saving grace before a meal is not just a religious thing—it's a health practice.

2. Chew your food to smoothie consistency before you swallow. If you see bits of nuts, seeds, vegetables etc. in your bowel movements, you're not chewing your food enough.

3. Breath in between bites to help you slow down. You'll naturally feel full when you take your time eating.

4. Eat only REAL, whole foods.

41:59 Dr. Ritamarie shares her personal gut healing story. (She was told to just take ulcer medication and drink lots of milk. She discovered that she had food allergies and candida.)

45:56 **"**The pain threshold"—the level of pain for staying where you're at has to be greater than the level of pain for making a change. How good do you want to feel?

47:57 Final take-home message—where to get started:

1. Look at what you're eating. Take out the foods that are not real.

2. Nourish your body with water.

3. Why down your WHY. What's your big why? What do you enjoy doing that not feeling good keeps you from doing? Do you have grandchildren you can't play with because you have too pain or not enough energy?

