

Wendy Myers:

Hello everyone, my name is Wendy Myers of myersdetox.com. Thank you so much for joining me today on my podcast. I have a friend of mine, Dr. Vincanne Adams on the show today, and she's going to be talking about what makes our children sick, and the rising epidemic of diseases in our children. Leaky gut and dysbiosis, what that has to do with it, and the issues of GMO's and pesticides in our children's food, and why that's making them ill.

It's a very, very good podcast today, and I want to take a minute to talk about children's diets. So many people today are just feeding their children fast food, gluten, dairy, and this food is processed foods, genetically modified soybean oil, genetically modified corn. Gluten that has no nutrition in it, and the food today has very, very little nutrition. It's no wonder why our kids are so sick today, and this is just a warning call to anyone out there that has a sick kid, and is trying to get their child better, that diet is the starting point, the first place you need to look at in resolving your children's health issues, or improving them.

Really good podcast today on the show, and I've detoxed thousands of clients, I have worked with people all over the world. I have a free download for any of you guys that are wanting to learn about detoxification called, "The Top 10 Tips to Detox Like a Pro Checklist." Just go to [detoxforenergy.com](http://detoxforenergy.com) and download that totally free guide. I've distilled the top 10 tips that I've used with thousands of clients in detoxing them that you can just take home for free.

All right, yesterday Dr. Adams, Dr. Vincanne Adams is a professor of medical anthropology. She graduated from UC Berkeley UCSF program in medical anthropology in 1989, and she taught at Princeton University from 1992 until 2000, where she received tenure as associate professor. After coming to UC San Francisco in 2000, Dr. Adams ran the UCSF division of the joint graduate program in medical anthropology until 2012, and served as interim chair in 2012 as well.

She is currently vice chair of the department, she teaches core theory courses on the history and development of medical anthropology, reproductive health, and developmental studies, and social studies of science, technology in medicine, and ethnographic field methods. She wrote a book called, "What's Making Our Children Sick," with Dr. Michelle Perro, who was a pediatrician, so definitely recommend checking that out. We're going to talk about it today on the show.

Vincanne, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Vincanne Adams:

You're welcome, thanks for having me.

Wendy Myers:

Why don't you tell the listeners a little bit about yourself and your background and why you're in the health field.

Vincanne Adams: I am a medical anthropologist, I have a PhD in this field, which is a subfield of cultural anthropology. I have been spending the last 30 years documenting all kinds of things in the story of how politics and health and corporations and culture all get involved with either provisioning health, or impeding health.

Wendy Myers: Yes, yeah, and so you wrote an amazing book called, "What's Making Our Children Sick," and this is a really important topic, because so many children today are on medications. It's one in six children are on medications for hyperactivity, and just they're having so many issues, they're being so medicated, and are becoming more and more sick, tell us why.

Vincanne Adams: Ah, so what we talk about in the book, first of all we do agree with you that there is an epidemic. We call it an epidemic of chronic morbidity in our children. My co-author, Michelle Perro, is an integrated pediatrician, and I'm a medical apologist, and we started talking about writing this book. It's a great story about how it came about, which we can talk about later, but where she often said our kids are sicker than any generation before theirs.

That's true, they're sicker than we were as children. While we've taken care of a lot of the basic infectious diseases, and deadly childhood ailments, we also have grown a huge number of chronic morbidities that have to do with all the systems of the body. Whether you're talking about allergies, asthma, eczema's, allergies to foods, whether you're talking about gastrointestinal problems. Kids who are nine years old and have ulcerative colitis, it's crazy.

Then you go into the neurocognitive problems. The number of kids with some form of neurocognitive disease, whether it's autism spectrum disorder, or are all the way up to the mental health problems like bipolar are really on the rise. Given that we have all these chronic problems, the question comes up, well what's going on now that wasn't going on before? In the book we talk about the possibility, there are a lot of reasons that kids are sick in addition to the normal childhood ailments.

Our kids are exposed to a lot of toxic substances, endocrine disrupting chemicals that are in our environment, in the products we use in our households. We focus in on one pathway that seems to have been not so much overlooked, but under investigated and under explored. There are reasons that this area has been unexplored, and that area is food. We asked the question in the book, why has food not been more part of the medical agenda? Why is it that doctors don't talk much about food?

Why is it they know very little about the quality of foods? Not just from a dietitian perspective and a basic nutrition perspective, but what makes something more nutritious than another, and what makes something very toxic, as opposed to another such as the problem of pesticides. Then when we look at the relationship, we also look at what is it about our food system that's changed over the last couple of generations?

The one thing that we hone in on in the book, is the very, very controversial question of genetic modification of foods. I know you've had other guests who've written about this and have published about this, some scientists who've done work on it. Your listeners are probably familiar with some of the things that we say in the book around the onset of the introduction of genetically modified foods into our agricultural system, the use of pesticides in relation to those, and the outcomes in relation to health.

What's interesting, is that while there are a lot of books on the problems that genetic modification has caused to the agricultural industry in terms of weed resistance, the problem for farmers, and the problem with the quality of the food itself, there aren't a lot of books ... In fact, there's no real book that does quite what we do, which is connecting the dots between the integrative medical world that is making sense of chronic problems in ways that directly point to food, and then discussing what those ailments are, what the range of conditions are that lead to it.

Then going into the very controversial sciences of this, to talk again about what the evidence is.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, and when you talk about pesticides, what does that term include exactly? What do you mean by industrial food? Can you go into some of the the details to what changes have occurred in our modern food supply?

Vincanne Adams: Yeah, so in about the mid 1990s, well first of all you have to go back to the post DDT era. There was this shift in the big agrochemical companies to trying to really make use of the warfare chemicals, and to create home markets for them. Initially DDT was used, and agent orange was used, and all these other things. In the wake of resisting those, the Rachel Carson era to try to get rid of a lot of those really toxic substances, there was an effort at the agrochemical companies to try to cultivate better pesticides.

When I say pesticides, I mean both herbicides and insecticides. Herbicides kill plants and weeds, insecticides kill insect pests. One of the products that was early on discovered by Monsanto, was a product which you're very familiar with called glyphosate, which is a chelator, a metal chelator. It was seen to be very effective in killing weeds as a broad-spectrum, nonselective herbicide.

It was turned into a big herbicide in the era in the 1960s, I can't remember the first years that it was used, but throughout the 60s and 70s it was used. In the late 70s this one agrochemical company, Monsanto, hired an insect endocrinologist who specialized in figuring out how to turn the new technologies of recombinant DNA into things that could be used in the plant world and the agricultural world.

That is two kinds of products that emerged out of that era that eventually came on the market in the 1990s. The first was a way of modifying plants, so that they

wouldn't die from the spraying of glyphosate-based herbicides, the most popular of which is Roundup, which most of your guests know about. The other was to create a modification in plants that would enable them to actually become pesticides, that is insecticides in their own right, so that any bug that was ... That their insect pests would die upon eating the plant.

Those two kinds of modifications that we focus on in the book. One is the Roundup ready crops, which again changes the crop so that it can withstand the spraying of toxic pesticides. The second is the turning of the crop itself into an insecticide, so original ... This is an interesting story, originally when glyphosate Roundup ready plants were introduced, the assumption at a lot of these companies was that glyphosate was not going to be harmful to humans, because the human cells don't have the enzymatic pathway that the plants do.

Of course, we now know that our human body is made up largely of microbes, so we have a ratio of something like 1 to 1 if you're talking about nucleated cells, to 1 to 10 if you're about non nucleated cells, of human cells in relation to microbes that exist, and especially in our gut. Our gut micro biome is incredibly important to our health for all kinds of reasons. Now that we know that our microbes in our body are a lot like plants, in that they actually are impacted by things like glyphosate, there's this need I think to revise the science and look anew at these problems, so that's one way.

The other insecticide, the use of genetic modification to turn the plant itself into an insecticide, of course the scientists thought that, that also wouldn't be harmful to humans, because the human gut is much more acidic than the insect gut. We now know that the enzyme, the protein that gets put into those plants to make them insecticides, actually is pre-activated. The question of how much that activated chemical, that activated protein is impacting humans is still something that needs to be explored.

Now, we have a lot of research from the animal world, scientists have done research in the animal world that says that these things are harmful. There's plenty of evidence out there to show that they are harmful, and there's a lot of evidence that says they're not. We focus on the literature that says there is harm, but we don't have any real studies of these foods on humans.

Those products pass through the regulatory process without any studies on humans.

Wendy Myers:

Yeah, and that's just unbelievable to me, and I think it's really a testament to why we're seeing so many people that are sick today, so many children that are sick today, because we don't really know what the effects are of consuming these pesticides. There are a number of studies that had been done, but there's lots of people claiming, "Oh, it's correlation, not causation."

Vincanne Adams:

Right.

Wendy Myers: All that BS.

Vincanne Adams: Right, well, it is an interesting story. I mean we do know that some pesticides are toxic. We have plenty of information about those, the atrazine's, the chlorpyrifos, these things we know are neurotoxins. There are plenty of great researchers looking at these, and looking at the effects on especially farming communities and migrant worker communities. It's clear that there are health effects from those. Those, there's just a constant battle to try to get them banned from use, and from the areas where children are for instance.

The genetic modification issue has been really, really the ... It's like the last under explored territory, and a lot of people who do research on toxic pesticides don't touch the GM issue. They're too afraid of it, and there's a huge amount of controversy about those products. I've come to believe that a lot of the reason for this resistance to take on the GM debate, comes from the scientists themselves, in part because recombinant DNA technologies, or genetic modification technologies are widely used in the sciences for very good purposes.

Biomedicine uses this technology all the time to do things, to make products, and to do research on animals in ways that are incredibly profound and important to the march of modern medicine. There's a sense in which the rally against GMO is heard as a rally to get rid of all GMOs, rather than to just really narrow in, this is what we do in the book, is we try to hone in on this one little piece of the story about how it has changed our food, and how that is one of the pieces of evidence that we need to connect to these increases in chronic disorders among children.

There is enough evidence there to do that, and that's why we did, that's why we it in a book.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, and we know that glyphosate, it's a pesticide, it kills bugs, it's killing our gut bugs, and it's killing the healthy bacteria in our guts. That can lead to leaky gut, so let's talk a little bit about leaky gut and why this is a problem, and it's affecting children's health.

Vincanne Adams: I'm gonna try to channel my colleague Michelle Perro, who's the integrative pediatrician, who's really much more the expert on this part of the story than I am. We did write the book and so I'm familiar with what's going on. What we talk about in the book are two problems, one is this problem of what's called dysbiosis, which is probably familiar to many of your listeners again. It's this problem of having an unhealthy balance of bad bacteria to good bacteria in the gut.

Now we know that one of the causes of having dysbiosis is taking too many antibiotics, that's a well-known fact in the medical community. Well a lot of people don't know, but glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup is actually

a patented antibiotic. Now we don't have enough literature to say that is what's causing dysbiosis in human guts, but we have to start thinking about that as a possibility, and looking at that.

The pathways by which glyphosate is probably impacting the gut are many and Stephanie [inaudible 00:16:45], who you've interviewed, is really good at mapping out some of these. The work is controversial, Michael Antonio, King's College in London has been really good at mapping this out. There's long list of researchers you can look at and read about in the book. Dysbiosis is one problem, when you have dysbiosis, you have a problem of unhealthy gut bacteria.

This impacts your digestion, one of the disorders that can be aroused, or the theory goes, one of the disorders that can come about from chronic dysbiosis is the problem of leaky gut. Now leaky gut has again, it's a controversial diagnosis. Some medical professionals will say it doesn't exist, others will say it's definitely real. The person we rely on for this is a physician at Harvard named Alessio Fasano, who's been looking at the problem of celiac disease for many years.

What he argues, is that while celiac really only affects a very small percentage of the population, and usually is tied to, and it's always tied to a genetic cause, there is something called gluten sensitivity, which is emerging now more commonly. It produces symptoms that are very much like celiac for people. Celiac is a problem that when the lining of your gut is ... For people who have celiac disease, they have a genetic predisposition to overproduce a protein that bonds with the lining of a part of the epithelium, so that it holds open little gaps in the wall of the intestine, so that more things flow through to the bloodstream than should.

Again with the celiac, it's this genetic predisposition to overproduce something called zonulin that is the problem. What he says, is that when you have a compromised gut, you have raw patches, you have some other impact on the epithelial layer. You can have this condition where the gluten does the same thing to people, where it allows too much to get into the bloodstream. The argument, is that when there's all this stuff flowing into the bloodstream that doesn't need to be there, your immune system is triggered.

When your immune system is triggered chronically over long periods of time, you can start developing these problems, possibly even autoimmune problems. You have a constant state of inflammation, and this sets the body up for a whole bunch of things going wrong, including when these things get to the brain, and the brain gets inflamed. It's not like we're trying to say there's one theory, the cause of all these problems.

We talk about a lot of patient cases in the book, the kid who has chronic eczema over 90% of his body and the doctor says, "Ah, it's a minor case, don't worry about it, use more steroids." The mother says, "No, we want to get to the root cause." We have story after story of parents who were so frustrated with not

being able to get to the root cause of their kids problems. The kid with can't eat anything, has an allergic reaction to every food that they eat. The child with ulcerative colitis at nine years old, I mean that's an incredible problem.

This is the kid who was on antibiotics for the first two years of his life, didn't develop a micro biome, now has a compromised gut, and is having a hard time digesting anything. Then a lot of stories about kids with neurocognitive problems who for one reason or another probably had a problem with their gut, and then had other things happen to them that triggered a problem in the brain as well. That's our book.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, so with all these scientific advances in technology, one would think that our children will be healthier than previous generations. How is that not true? What's an important thing that people need to consider?

Vincanne Adams: Yeah, I mean it's important to remember that we do have medical advances that are profound and important. I mean I work at a medical institution that's amazing, I mean they can do transplants, they are going to cure cancer, they are going to figure out how to get in there and change those genes and ... I mean it's amazing how much has come out of our modern medical system, but we do in the book talk about how the emphasis on pharmaceutically driven medicine, where we now mostly diagnose by treating.

They figure out what's wrong by giving a medicine and seeing if it works. Where every single problem that's presented is offered a medical solution, even if it's just a Band-Aid instead of getting at the root cause. Where pharmaceutical companies are known, they want everyone over the age of 40 to have at least 10 drugs that they're dependent on, right? There's this push toward a pharmaceutical medicine that has been very good and very rewarding and very effective, but it's also missing the boat on a lot of chronic problems.

We're very good with acute problems, we're very good with surgeries and accidents and trauma and other things, and molecular medicine is just amazing, but we've missed the boat on the preventive end of things, on the holistic end of things. The model that we are talking about in the book for a medicine that could pay attention to something as basic as food. We eat it three times a day as Michelle always says, why wouldn't we think of it as the first line of offense and defense in terms of our health?

It's the first probable source of problems and the first probable solution to problems. Believe me I spent many years working on Tibetan medicine, that's been my main life's work. Tibetan doctors get this right away, food is the first and last thing that they go to for treatment. Along with other medicines if needed, so we need to pay attention to food, and we talk about food focused medicine as being something that we need to pay attention to.

We also talk about a medicine that moves away from pharmaceuticals, to thinking about the whole ecosystem that we live in. We call it eco-medicine, which is this idea that others have talked about as well. That you can only, your gut health is, you're only as healthy as your gut is healthy. Your gut is only as healthy as the soil that your food comes from is healthy. If we're destroying our soil through the use of agrochemicals that are requiring us to use artificial fertilizers and chemically toxic fertilizers, chemical seeds that have been modified to become like poisons, and to be grown with things that are harsh chemicals that are toxic to our body, then we have depleted the basis upon which our health grows basically.

We talk about the need to think about this as an ecosystem, where we need to live symbiotically with the soil. Not new information for you or your listeners, but we put it together in the book in a way that we think will help parents, who especially moms, we have a whole chapter devoted to what we call the warrior moms, who are out there taking care of their kids health. Up against huge resistance from the communities that they live in, oftentimes even from within their family members.

We nod to them and say, "Let's pay attention to them, let's support them." They can buy this book and give it to their doctor. They can buy this book and give it to their friends, but we also wrote the book as a part of an academic community. Myself, I was writing in part to try to reach out to my medical colleagues and say, "Let's reopen the box and think about this again, let's take a second look at this and not throw the critique of GM out with the bathwater."

Wendy Myers: Yes, yeah, so what models of health and disease will lead us out of this mess? I mean what opportunities are there for change, or activism even on a larger societal level?

Vincanne Adams: Well, two different things. I mean we talk in the book about three levels. One is what you can do in the home, Michelle's very good at talking about what can be done, cutting out certain things like gluten and dairy right away. Figuring out what ... I watched her in practice, and as part of my method I do the ethnographic method. I went in and I followed her, I shadowed her around in her clinic and met with her patients.

We talk about the way that she diagnoses is different from most doctors. She does all of these tests of urine, blood, looking for toxicities in the blood, looking for toxicities in the ... Toxic chemicals in the urine and blood, but also looking for sensitivities to food, which is not something that most doctors do. Then focusing on eliminating those things that kids seem to be sensitive to, and eliminating the toxics from the environment, and then re-building a healthy gut micro biome.

Of course, using the notion of dysbiosis and leaky gut are two key ingredients in that process. Then we also in the book talk about needing to make change on a societal level. Here's where we really do think activism is needed. We need the



scientists to get on board, I call them the reluctant constituencies. Yeah, we need to think about what can be done at a societal level, because these are problems that ...

Organic food is not something that's really mainstream in the US, it's mainstream in a few wealthy pockets of the US. Those are the lucky people who can have access to organic foods that aren't genetically modified, but there's a lot of political resistance to this, and there are huge swaths of food deserts in the country where organic food is just not available. We like to talk about it as a real public health crisis. The fact that we don't have good food, and our children across the country are eating foods that are making them sick, is leading to major health problems, chronic morbidities that are ...

It's compromising a whole generation, and so we need the work that you're doing, we need activism, we need people to pay attention to it. We also need the scientists to get on board, we need them to be in there doing the research and changing the conversation at the national level and in the offices of the NIH, we really do.

Wendy Myers: Do you talk about vaccines at all in the book?

Vincanne Adams: Well, only very delicately. We did encounter patients, mothers of kids who did talk about that as possible causes of what they were seeing with their kids cognitive decline. Of course, there's a large rhetoric about it in relation to autism, but we don't take it on. The book isn't about that, and it would take too much work to go into it and open it up and really diagnose. What I will say, is that Michelle has dealt with a lot of kids with autism spectrum disorder.

I interviewed them, and they talked about how much better their kids got when they changed their diet, and followed the protocols that she was advocating, to make their guts healthy again. Getting off of GM foods, getting onto organic really did help them in a lot of ways, but also eliminating the things that weren't working for them. We do talk about autism, but it's just such a controversial issue, the vaccine issue.

The possibility of connecting the relationship between a compromised gut and overload from vaccines, giving too many, too early, too close together, is not something that we could establish without writing a whole other book.

Wendy Myers: Yeah, exactly, yeah, it's a big can of worms. I was just curious.

Vincanne Adams: I actually, to be honest, I work in a country, and Michelle and I weren't quite on the same page with this. I used it a lot of work in countries where vaccines weren't available, and I mean I'm an advocate of vaccines. I think we need vaccines, it's a huge public health tool. I would definitely be interested in moving the conversation on vaccines forward around how much we really need,

and how to space them properly, and how to make sure a kid isn't immuno deficient before they got them.

Wendy Myers: Yes.

Vincanne Adams: I think that we've shut down the conversation on it, because everyone's called an anti vaxxer, and that's just really a shame.

Wendy Myers: Tell us where we can find the book?

Vincanne Adams: The book is available on Amazon, it's called, "What's Making Our Children Sick." They can read more about us at the Chelsea Green website, which is Chelsea Green is our publisher. It's in bookstores, local bookstores, Barnes & Noble is carrying it, and most of the major chains have it. If they aren't, you can go order it through the bookstore if you're a bookstore supporter, which I love, but Amazon's also great.

Yeah, and then you can reach Michelle and I through information on the website, our contact information.

Wendy Myers: Well fantastic, well thank you so much for coming on the show.

Vincanne Adams: You're welcome, thanks for having me Wendy.

Wendy Myers: Everyone, you can learn more about me, Wendy Myers, [myersdetox.com](http://myersdetox.com) where I open up a conversation about how to detox heavy metals, very important topic for children as well. We get a lot of toxins in our food, a lot of heavy metals in our foods, and on our supplements as well. We need to learn how to detox them from our body. You can go to [myersdetox.com](http://myersdetox.com) to learn more about that. Thank you so much for listening to the show.