



Transcript: #335 Non Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) - How to Prevent and Reverse It with Julie Donaldson

Wendy:

Hello my name is Wendy Myers, welcome to the Myers Petox Podcast. On this show we talk about everything related to heavy metal, and chemical toxicity, and detoxification. And you can learn all about that as well on my website at myersdetox.com, where we have hundreds of podcasts and hundreds of articles on the subject. Today we have Julie Donaldson on the show. She is a brilliant practitioner, and she's going to be teaching us about fatty liver disease and why Non Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease is on the rise and dangerous, but totally preventable, and totally reversible. She'll talk about her techniques on this show today about how she reverses fatty liver disease and improves liver enzyme markers on tests. The supplements she uses and the protocols to have success in helping people reverse this condition. We also talk about the prevalence in children, and how that's growing, and how there's eugenic markers passed on from parent to child that can cause the child to be more prone and at risk to develop fatty liver disease. We also talk about a lot of different subjects related to blood sugar control and why poor diet and poor blood sugar control is a cause of fatty liver disease. We talk about all the liver's many different functions, and how they can break down when people have fatty liver disease, and so many more fascinating topics about liver health.

Wendy:

I know you guys listening to this show are really concerned about your heavy metal toxicity levels. The levels of chemicals and metals in your body and how that's impacting your health and you reaching your health goals, and living the life you want to live. And feel good. So I created a quiz called heavymetalsquiz.com. You can go there and take this quiz. Just a few questions about your lifestyle factors and diet. And based on those results we can determine your relative levels of high medium or low levels of toxins in your body. After you take the quiz you get a free video series including heavy metals and toxins testing, and generally the mistakes to avoid when you're detoxing and

a whole wealth of education for taking this quiz. So go check it out at heavymetalsquiz.com

Wendy: Our guest today is Julie Donaldson. She has over 37 years of experience in the healing arts. As a practitioner of metabolic typing, individualized nutrition, functional health testing by a Meridian Assessment and Massage Therapy, she brings a broad knowledge base with the partnership between herself and her clients. She's dedicated to the discovery of the whole person in the healing journey, helping clients to establish supportive core beliefs and daily practices to achieve their health goals. Her commitment to ecology and the environment is longstanding, and protection of nature's resources and the consumption of the cleanest most potent foods possible allows the continuum of healing to happen from soil to plate to body.

Wendy: A gardener and activist for soil replenishment, Julie maintains very high standards for our earth, food and lifestyle. Julie's own experience with illness and a need for integrative solutions contributes to a great understanding to what people are experiencing when they're ill, and how to achieve this balance. She's praised as an excellent listener and investigator, and she brings the compassion of a person who's been significantly ill to the table in the most meaningful way when she's working with her clients. You can learn more about Julie and work with her at truenaturehealthconsulting.com.

Wendy: Julie, thank you so much for coming on the show!

Julie Donaldson: I'm so happy to be here. Always good to be with you, Wendy.

Wendy: I love how you're such a wealth of knowledge, you're such an amazing practitioner and I love the way that you kind of just lay out the information so simply complex information. Today we're going to be talking about the fatty liver epidemic that's happening, and I think it's just so important to talk about, there's a lot of people walking around that have fatty liver and don't know it. But before we get into that, why don't you tell us your story and how you got into health?

Julie Donaldson: Sure. Well, it's been a long, long time. I've been doing this for several decades. I actually got into natural health practices through initially a lot of trauma in my life, a lot of loss. I lost three very significant people within months of each other when I was 20 years old. Started to suffer immobility and depression and no amount of talking was helping. I had my first professional massage and a lot of body mind connecting went on in that, and I got up off that with a lightened state of being. That was pretty profound for me. I was on a course to do clinical psychology and shifted courses to start studying first massage therapy and then nutrition and natural health practices, functional medicine, all of that stuff.

Julie Donaldson: A number of years later fell into a health crisis of my own physically, that, wasn't lifting, and was multilayered and quite complex. Fortunately through the support of a really talented practitioner, I was able to start turning that around.

So that just brought a lot more passion to the whole story for me to understand how in many ways, unbeknownst to us, things are building in our bodies and we're being exposed to things that are contributing to illness in our bodies and we're unaware.

Julie Donaldson: It's been very important to me as I know it is to you too, over the years to help people understand how to be on the preventive side of getting in that kind of situation. Because, of course, it's always easier to prevent and, or quickly reverse, versus getting knee deep in a disease and being much more challenged to get out.

Wendy: Yes. You don't want to wait until you have a diagnosis to start thinking about your health. I don't wait for that wake up call where you're faced with mortality then begin thinking about your health. I'm sure most people listening to this podcast are pretty sophisticated and thinking about detox and have really advanced in their journey and knowledge set to go beyond just diet and biohacking. They're really focused on this. This is the last step in the journey for a lot of people, I think. So important to talk about the liver and liver health. Because, if your liver cannot clean your body, you're in trouble.

Julie Donaldson: Yes. Let's dive in about the liver. Just a quick description for our listeners on what this disease is. It is essentially the replacement of healthy liver cells by fat cells in the liver, which are nonfunctional. Fat cells do not have the capacity to perform the tasks that normal healthy liver cells are going to perform, and there are a multitude of those.

Julie Donaldson: The liver is probably the most diverse organ in the body and detoxification is right up at the top of its indispensable functions, correct.

Julie Donaldson: Then we have a lot of digestive functions that are going on through the liver. Amino acid conjugation, fatty acid and cholesterol synthesis, blood sugar regulation. A lot of people don't understand that the liver is absolutely critical to their blood sugar regulation. The liver is also producing bile, which is very important for fat emulsification and the digestive process, as it is important for bringing process toxins. The liver will store toxins in the bile to be removed when the body goes into a digestion process.

Julie Donaldson: All of these functions become compromised in a condition of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. Because, again, we have fat cells instead of healthy functioning liver cells that are super complex in what they do.

Julie Donaldson: Also, the liver has to store iron and vitamin D, very important in this whole scenario as well. It stores important enzymes for detoxification like CYP and GGT, which are needed for hormone, chemical detoxification, heavy metal detoxification. So clearly, this is not a good scenario when these fat cells begin to take over the liver, essentially.

- Wendy:** And this is not just a concern for alcoholics or people that are drinking lots of alcohol. You're typically faced with fatty liver disease after years and years of drinking alcohol. But what's on the rise is nonalcoholic fatty liver disease. Let's talk about why this disease is increasing in prevalence, especially in children.
- Julie Donaldson:** That is a really alarming situation. It's not surprising though, because this is now a development on top of diseases and conditions that we've seen developing in our population for decades now. Overweight conditions are right up at the top of the list. Blood sugar dysregulations, diabetes and all of this is on the rise in our kids. Last statistics were that over 18% of our children are now overweight. One in five teenagers and 25% of young adults are pre-diabetic. A large percentage of those very likely to become full blown diabetics. Again, especially if we're not working on the side of prevention.
- Julie Donaldson:** Diet of course is a big issue, and it's not just an issue for people who are always overeating junk foods. We are understanding about, fatty liver disease, the nonalcoholic form of course we're talking about again, can be caused by simple fuel overload. Over consuming any of our nutrients, including protein, not just carbohydrates and fats, which are ones that I think most people are more aware of in terms of contributing to these other major diseases that have been with us for a long time.
- Julie Donaldson:** We're no longer just talking about optimizing weight and getting diabetes under control. We are now seeing this liver problem, which is complicated also by toxins. We all know that they are ever increasing. For many decades, these other concerns have been building and our young populations, in all populations. But the increase is much more dramatic in young people than it is an older people at this point.
- Julie Donaldson:** And so, now we're adding on this layer of dysfunctional liver that happens over the course of time with this.
- Julie Donaldson:** Heavy metals have been researched, also in conjunction with this condition, and clearly this is something that you and I deal with all the time and are always educating our clients about. It's a real problem. Our bodies were not designed to process the amount of toxins and environmental pollutants that we're coming in contact with at this point. The connection with these toxins that is quite critical in this disease is that, they impair and destroy, if you will, our vascular integrity and the endothelial cells in the blood and the heart. Blood supply, both going in the liver has a rather complex blood supply system, unlike some of the other organs. So both going in to help the liver with its filtration and with its tasks, as well as nutrients coming out to feed the body, the muscles to energize, and help us live in an optimal way. These all become impacted by the presence of heavy metals and pollutants, impacting the integrity of the vascular and endothelial cells.

Wendy: We know that cadmium hardens the lining of the arteries leading to high blood pressure, and then inability to flex and respond to stress or fight or flight or what have you, and then lead in mercury and cadmium can build up in the kidneys and promote high blood pressure, which will put stress on the whole blood filtration process of the liver.

Julie Donaldson: Exactly. As part of working with and assessing someone's risk or current status with this, these are all major considerations that we have to be looking at.

Wendy: And what kind of testing should we consider for both adults and children? If someone is curious to find out if perhaps if they kind of identify with any symptoms of poor liver function, what kind of testing could they do to identify fatty liver disease?

Julie Donaldson: There's some great fairly standard testing that can really help us understand a person's potential early onset and/or risk factors for developing the disease. And again, in this industry, one of the greatest things we can do for people is help them understand that regular testing, no matter where they are, we'll talk specifically about this disease. But just to make the point that regular testing and understanding what our burdens are and where our stresses and imbalances are occurring in our biochemistry is invaluable to preventing and/or reversing disease.

Julie Donaldson: We want to be looking at definitely blood panels, fairly standard, the CBC, the metabolic, the lipid panels. In each of those panels, there are things that we want to be looking at. Because again, if there is damage to the immune function in the endothelial cells, we might see that show up in those panels. We want to be looking at liver enzymes, which are going to come through the metabolic panel. Our ALT and our GGT are a couple of the red flags that show up when this diseases is setting up and progressing.

Julie Donaldson: And then of course in the lipid panel, we're monitoring what's happening, especially with triglycerides. Because in this disease, triglycerides are going to elevate, and we want to be keeping those triglycerides under about a 100 in order to be in a healthy state. When they start to move over the level of a 100, we're looking at again, this storage of these fat cells and ineffective breaking down of triglycerides into useful fatty acids and glycerol, which these things are going to be used in the bloodstream to fuel the body with energy. And instead they start to be stored in the liver elevating the triglycerides.

Julie Donaldson: We also want to look at methylation markers. Because again, we're in this consideration of what types of toxic exposures we may be dealing with. And I think it's important to state, not to frighten people, but again, to educate that children not only receive toxins and heavy metals from the environment, they very frequently receive them from their parents in conception and in utero. We've done some work around helping to educate people about how to clean

up their bodies before pregnancy and how to prevent a lot of problems through that means.

Julie Donaldson: I think that's really critical to think about here. If there are parents listening who have concerns about their children to take this quite seriously in terms of, what the exposures might have been and how they might help support their child to move them.

Julie Donaldson: So, methylation markers are going to, and we're talking biochemical markers, we're not talking genetic information here. Genetic information is useful, but it's not going to tell us what the real time function is of any pathway in the body. It's just going to tell us that we were born with potentially a weak area, and that exists from day one and goes to the last day that we're here. It doesn't necessarily mean that that variant is turned on and is malfunctioning.

Julie Donaldson: We look at that in the blood also with markers like histamine, homocysteine, copper, zinc, and try to get an understanding of whether someone is properly breaking down and screening their toxins. And if not, how we might support those functions in the body and bring them into a place where that switch is no longer turned on, that can become turned off.

Julie Donaldson: We also want to be looking at vitamin D. Because, if we have deficiencies in vitamin D, that can be a preset for the development of diabetes. Because vitamin D is something that helps prevent insulin resistance, which of course is what diabetes is.

Julie Donaldson: We also want to consider the use of the hair and tissue mineral analysis, because it is an easy to do relatively inexpensive tasks to give us a good assessment of what kinds of heavy metal burdens we're looking at as well as what our mineral uptake is, because minerals are hugely protective in this condition as they are in many conditions.

Wendy: Let's talk about how this condition can be reversed. How can fatty liver disease be reversed? I'm sure the same techniques will help to prevent it. But what are some of the management techniques that you employ to prevent progression and increase the chances of reversing this condition?

Julie Donaldson: Great question. In this disease, at the very top of the list in terms of reversing, and you're right, absolutely, prevention. All of these techniques we're going to talk about are essential for prevention. But, the reversal of this disease can really only happen up to a certain point of progression. Once there has been too much progression, we don't have that opportunity anymore.

Julie Donaldson: All of these are really critical, but absolutely most critical in managing and reversing is the regulation of blood sugar. Blood sugar regulation is one of our major homeostatic mechanisms. It's something that helps to keep all other metabolic functions intact and working at an optimal level. It is the number one goal.

Julie Donaldson: That always brings me to nutrition. Again, I am always focused on individualized nutrition. Clearly there are lots of things in the nutrition world that are wonderful for almost anyone, but when you're working with very specific disease, you want to understand how an individual's body is metabolizing their food, and help them develop a plan of eating that approaches that and optimizes that. Because again, if someone thinks they're eating healthy and is overeating carbohydrates, even if they're healthy ones, or overeating protein for their body's needs, it can be a contributing factor here. So we've got to really hone in on what the nutritional needs are.

Julie Donaldson: Exercise, absolutely critical as well. The research shows that five times a week, 20 to 30 minutes. It does not need to be, intense or excessive. It just needs to be regular. And of course, we all know what the benefits of exercise are in terms of moving toxins, helping the body to circulate, nourishing the cells, et cetera.

Wendy: And using up excess blood sugar that's floating in the bloodstream.

Julie Donaldson: Exactly.

Wendy: That's what I'm always thinking when I'm exercising. I'm burning all that sugar I just ate.

Julie Donaldson: Yeah.

Wendy: Or whether it's rice that broke down into sugar or what have you.

Julie Donaldson: Exactly. Our bodies were meant to move and our bodies were meant to be outside under the sunlight. All of these things are becoming quite compromised in our current way of living. They just are.

Julie Donaldson: Clearly also exercise is something that's going to contribute to the optimization of weight. Blood sugar and imbalances in weight are always going to go hand in hand with each other. And it can go both directions. We don't want underweight any more than we want overweight.

Julie Donaldson: I will tell you that I had the beginnings of this problem in my health crisis, and I was underweight. Higher cholesterol and having issues in fatty acid synthesis don't necessarily always go hand in hand with someone being overweight. So, exercise and diet should be combined to individualize for someone to help them do the right thing for their body to either bring weight up or bring it down. Because hypoglycemia is something that is very frequently followed by hyperglycemia. And all of these things can be optimized through these processes.

Julie Donaldson: Then we have detox. We want to be using binders to pick up things that our bodies are not effectively breaking down and getting rid of. We want to be doing things like sauna therapy, and you clearly have amazing resources for people for

units in their home where the whole family can participate. Parents can teach children how to utilize something like this. In other countries that starts right out of the gate for small children. It's again, not something that we do as much of here.

Julie Donaldson: Using whatever individualized protocols of detox support are appropriate for that person. Again, our testing is going to help us understand where the system is failing to move things, what cofactors might need to be added to support the body to do a better job with it, and what types of foods might be most helpful for that person given what their burdens are.

Julie Donaldson: And then we have, a wonderful set of things that can be super helpful specifically in this condition to help reverse it. One of the major problems with the disease is that we have cellular fibrosis going on in the liver. Rather than having nice, plump, pliable, cells and tissues, we start to get hardening. And, clearly there's also a lot of cellular death going on. If fat cells are taking over and healthy cells are dying, we can also have problems with moving that debris out of the way. The elevation of the enzymes in the liver that are red flagging us for cellular damage.

Julie Donaldson: A number of the things that we end up using and I have used very successfully for people are things that are going to help soften and reverse fibrosis, before we get to the point of cell death, helping to heal that cellular membrane. A couple of these are phosphatidylcholine, which creates healthy cell membranes, is comprised of phosphorous, fatty acid and glycerol. And, it is something that also increases hepatic mitochondrial respiration. Not only can this be very healing to the membranes of the cells in the liver, but encourage mitochondrial activity, which is going to produce ATP, just an energy source for everything. Every part of our body, every cell.

Julie Donaldson: It also has antioxidant qualities along with vitamin E. Super antioxidant and is going to support the healing of that fibrosis as well. Reishi, which is one of our medicinal mushrooms is fantastic in this condition. It's also antioxidant. It is, something that is immune modulating. So it's going to help in that area we were talking about of damage to the vascular system and the endothelial cells. It is something that is what we call adaptogenic as well, which helps on the mind body level, on the stress level. Stressful liver conditions are very often associated with high emotion, anger, frustration, depression, a lot of sense of being spun up. And Reishi has a fantastic adaptogenic impact upon, so hitting a lot of different areas.

Julie Donaldson: With vitamin E also, I often like to add either some type of bile support, because it does encourage bile production. So I'll often add ox bile or bile acids or something like that in tandem with vitamin E.

Julie Donaldson: Selenium, one of the most powerful minerals in this condition. And a lot of us know that selenium and vitamin E are kissing cousins. They help one another and they're better absorbed when they're taken together. So there's some

synergy that we really want to be looking at here as we design a program to help someone heal from this condition.

Wendy: So can you talk to us about your thoughts on coffee enemas and liver flushing for helping to reverse fatty liver disease?

Julie Donaldson: Yes. The coffee enema is something that I recommend very, very regularly. Because it is to support the body in increasing bile production. We didn't necessarily hit specifically on this earlier, but bile is critical in this scenario because it is emulsifying fat and carrying toxins out of the body. And if we have low bile, we're also not breaking down cholesterols. Cholesterols are rising.

Julie Donaldson: Oftentimes, unfortunately people are, being given drugs to lower them that destroy their CoQ10 levels. CoQ10 is another thing we might end up using. Adequate bile production is critical to the emulsification of the fats in the diet to the synthesis and the breakdown of cholesterol is to be turned into useful nutrients to be sent out into the body for fueling the body and for proper detoxification through the bowel. So, coffee enema is phenomenal for supporting in that arena.

Julie Donaldson: There are so many foods and herbs and things that can also help in that department. Foods like artichokes, beets, beet greens, milk thistle, dandelion, they are a multitude of wonderful supplements that are going to nourish and help the liver do what it needs to do and to have again, really rich and clean and supportive blood flow coming in and going out.

Wendy: And then what about liver flushes, like the Andrea Moritz and other different versions of liver flushing? How do those help reverse fatty liver disease?

Julie Donaldson: My opinion on liver flushes is that we need to stabilize people before we do liver flushes. I believe in them. I believe they are very important. My clients are doing them. But for me in this situation, and especially with an understanding of how far the disease may have progressed, we want to do all of those basic stabilizations first, and be sure that we have some adequate methylation response going on in the body. Because sometimes in a cleanse, we can throw things into the system that the system is not prepared to handle.

Julie Donaldson: So, it has a place and it's up to a very skilled practitioner to understand the person's status and what needs to be done before they take on something like that. But, when it's time, it's a fantastic move to make, and people typically feel fantastic with doing it. So it is a recommendation that I make at the right time.

Wendy: Agreed. Because if someone has multiple health conditions, diagnoses, they're very ill, they have an active infection, you need to be careful. You don't want to be doing this liver flush which can be very taxing on the body. You're just releasing a lot of stuff from your body and people need to be ready for that for sure.

Julie Donaldson: And one of the things that I've seen unfortunately too many times on this level is again, because the liver is the major storage space for CYP enzymes, if there are a lot of petrochemicals and/or a lot of excess estrogens in the body, this is something that can get really dumped out. And the enzymes are not there in adequate supply to actually work with the situation because CYP is absolutely critical for those. You and I have talked about these before. Estrogens, plastics, petrochemicals, perfumes, kind of all in that category. So that's something that I'm always cautious about and wanting to see that the liver is beginning to do a better job with all of its tasks before we throw a cleanse into the mix.

Wendy: That's very, very good advice. So let's talk about transgenerational toxicity. If a parent has fatty liver disease, can they then pass this on to their child or how likely is her child to get it that they conceive?

Julie Donaldson: Good question. The passing on of toxins and of course of genetic information, are a couple of different things. The passing on of toxins is something in some cases that might be easier to deal with. There is one genetic variant that is a very high predictor for heritable fatty liver disease, and that is the PNPLA3. It is most predominant in the Hispanic population at about 49%. It occurs in about 23% of Caucasians and Europeans, and about 17% of African Americans. The predictability of sharing the disease with that gene variant is about 72%, which makes epigenetics even more important.

Julie Donaldson: This is where we have to really focus in on families helping each other with honest information. Understanding what the risk might be for the genetic preset, but also, if a parent has developed the disease being very, ready to be honest about that and help their child understand how to prevent the development of the disease. Of course, in families, people are often eating the same way. If parents have had bad eating habits and develop some of these conditions, the burden is on them to help their children understand how to get outside and move, how to get in the kitchen. All the studies show that children who are in the kitchen with their parents creating healthy food, have healthier lifestyles across the entire span of their lives than children whose families are just getting the food on the table and they're sitting down to have it.

Julie Donaldson: Education conversation, moving, being together. All of these things are in that territory of epigenetic curiosity that we want to be looking at to help prevent this from moving down the generational line.

Wendy: Yes. Very, very good advice. We have to be responsible and teach our children to eat healthy. It can be really challenging. You get a lot of pushback from your family, but you can lead a horse to water, but you can't always make them drink. I always do my best to gently advise and nudge my family, my child as best that I can, and then hopefully that will stick. Like my father did with me. My father was always educating about health and exercise and diet and making healthy food. And today I'm doing the same thing with my audience as well. So it does work.

When the child doesn't always seem like they're listening, it is making a huge impact on them.

Julie Donaldson: What I'll say to parents, my kids are now long gone from home and grown. They had their rebellion around this information as well, but it sticks. It returns to them in a time when they have a lot more responsibility for holding their entire lives. And they go back and they remember. So don't be discouraged if you're in a phase. And children are, of course, social beings and they're outliving in a culture where foods are very unhealthy. And they like those things and they want to have them like other children do. I don't think there's a kid in the world who isn't like that and doesn't go through those phases. But if you are sharing and you're walking the talk and talking the walk, they're going to remember it, and they're going to have memories of the participation that they had with their parents in other times, and it will come back to benefit them for sure.

Wendy: Absolutely. You work with clients to help to reverse fatty liver disease among many other things. You're a very gifted health practitioner. Tell us where we can learn more about your work and work with you.

Julie Donaldson: Thanks, Wendy. I appreciate the compliment, especially coming from you. I am at www.truenaturehealthconsulting.com. There is a tab for articles on my website. There is a detailed article about fatty liver disease there, information on my services. I am very happy to receive people who might need to investigate this and go forward with an intelligent plan.

Wendy: Okay, fantastic. So guys, check that out and thank you so much for tuning in to the Myers Detox Podcast where we talk about all different things related to heavy metal and chemical detoxification, and all the different health conditions that are promoted and downright caused by heavy metals and chemicals. So thank you for tuning in. I'll talk to you guys very very soon.