



#598 ADHD Superpowers: How to Help Kids Focus and Thrive Without Meds With Dana Kay

Dr. Wendy Myers

Welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. I'm Dr. Wendy Myers, and this show is all about heavy metal and chemical detoxification, and the health issues caused by toxins. We also discuss anti-aging, bioenergetics, and really more advanced topics in health on this show than you'll find on other podcasts. But today we're gonna be talking about ADHD in children and how to improve their focus and behavior naturally. There are so many kids affected by this. There are 6 million children in the US alone who have ADHD. So, this affects a lot of people and families, and I wanted to touch on this. I have friends who also deal with this, and 75% of these kids receive medication or behavioral therapy.

I wanna talk about some other options besides just medication because the medication, like Adderall, Ritalin, should not really be the first line of treatment, albeit necessary for sure for many kids, but there's a lot of potential side effects and long-term health issues that we're gonna talk about today on the show. Also, I wanted to touch on how ADHD can really be a superpower. A lot of these kids are neurodivergent. They have a lot of creativity, hyper focus, persistence, and that's why 30% of CEOs have ADHD. It's not just bad behavior. ADHD symptoms often stem from inflammation, and addressing diet, gut health, and environmental toxins can significantly reduce symptoms.

On the show, we'll talk about a holistic approach, focusing on nutrition, reducing inflammation, and supporting detoxification. We also talk about fixing the gut and how a leaky gut can lead to food sensitivities and increased inflammation that can

contribute to symptoms, and how the frontal lobe, which is involved in attention, focus, and executive function, is closely connected to gut function. We'll talk about how you probably need to remove inflammatory foods like gluten, dairy, artificial colors, and flavors for sure, and how reducing environmental toxins and switching to non-toxic cleaning, personal care products, filtering water, and supporting detoxification with ionic foot baths are great for children.

We also talk about Dana Hay's book, *Thriving with ADHD*, to really go into detail about this natural approach. So, there are lots of really, really good morsels in this show today. If you have a kid with ADHD or you suspect it, or even an adult, this show will be great for you as well. Our guest, Dana Kay, is a leading ADHD expert, board-certified health and nutrition practitioner, two-time international bestselling author, host of the *Soaring Child Podcast*, and the CEO and founder of the *ADHD Thrive Institute*. As a mother of a child with ADHD, she knows firsthand the struggles that come with parenting a neurodiverse child and the freedom that's possible once parents learn to reduce ADHD symptoms.

Dana has been featured in *Forbes* and on *Fox*, *CBS*, and various other online media. She's also been a guest at *Multiple Parenting* and *ADHD* summits and podcasts. She's helped over 1300 families find freedom from ADHD symptoms so that children with ADHD can thrive at home, school, and in life. You can learn more about her work; she even has a parenting group you can join as well at adhdthriveinstitute.com. Dana, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Dana Kay

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

Dr. Wendy Myers

Why don't you give us a little bit about your background and how you got into working with kids and parents, mainly whose kids have ADHD?

Dana Kay

Look, believe it or not, I was completely removed from the health and wellness space. I was actually an accountant in a past life. Please do not look at me differently. I had

actually planned to be in that field for my whole career. All I wanted to be was a businesswoman when I grew up, with a big office, and I had that. But when I had children, things changed, and if my concerns over my son's health hadn't grown as much as they did, I wouldn't be where I am today. I always knew that there was something a little bit different about him when his meltdowns became more dramatic. His energy always seemed so much higher than any other child his age. My gut really told me that there was something missing. Eventually, that caught up to school, and his tantrums became more severe, and his teachers started noticing the differences. And at the age of four, almost five, he was diagnosed with ADHD and immediately put on medication.

If I'm being completely honest, I remember feeling relieved with that diagnosis. It wasn't that I was a bad mom. It wasn't my fault, and that medication that the doctor had prescribed, I was thinking to myself, wow, this is gonna be the pill that's gonna fix our family. Things were great at first, but then his dosage increased, the side effects started to come out, and they became worse and worse. His doctor prescribed another medication to counteract the side effects of the first, and this continued until my son, who was now five, was on three very strong medications all at once. When the doctor suggested a fourth medication to counteract any new side effects that popped up, I just couldn't do it anymore. That's really where my career path changed. I went back to school. I did my holistic health science degree, multiple specific certifications in this particular area, and really learned how natural strategies can be just as effective for ADHD as well as medication. I learned how food can affect so many aspects of our lives.

Today, my son is 15, and he's thriving. He hasn't been on meds for years. He's doing amazing in high school. A straight-A student. For me, that's not an issue at all. That's not what I worry about. The most important thing for me is that he's happy. We now have this peace and calm in our house as much as you can have peace and calm with two boys. But look, once I learned about the importance of food and these natural approaches to behavior and focus, and once I saw these changes in my own family, I really couldn't keep this information to myself. I really didn't want any other family to have to go through the struggles that my family went through over the years. I've now worked with over 1300 families to help them get to the same place as me, but just so much quicker and without as much stress.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I wanted to talk about this because I know I have several friends who have ADHD, and back in the day, they were not diagnosed in any way, shape, or form. They were just problematic children. I think a lot of adults today self-medicate. They take stimulants and do those things to turn on their pre-front cortex, maybe it isn't working so great, so they can focus. I think a lot more people have ADHD than they realize. So, let's talk about what ADHD and ADD are exactly. Now they're calling it neurodivergent. What is that all about?

Dana Kay

It is a spectrum, and I like that when you say neurodivergent, it shows that it's not just one thing. There is this range of symptoms, and it's actually one of the most common mental disorders affecting children. In particular, in the US, I think there are 6 million children who have been diagnosed. Three-quarters of them are either receiving treatment with strong medication or behavioral therapy. The symptoms of ADHD can range so much. When my son's ADHD symptoms were at their worst, he would struggle to sit still. There was a lot of emotional dysregulation. We were walking on eggshells all the time, just waiting for that next meltdown to occur.

Now, the standard ADHD symptoms fall into two main categories. We've got hyperactive and impulsive, and then we've got inattention, which is basically the inability to focus, or you can have a combination of both of those. So, like being unable to sit still or that hyperactivity, impulsivity, fidgeting, unable to focus, or pay attention. We've got excessive physical movement and talking aggression, and then that emotional dysregulation.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I saw a reel on this the other day that people can have oppositional defiant disorder that can be part of it, where they're just resisting just for the sake of it.

Dana Kay

That's a comorbidity that can be diagnosed alongside ADHD. I think that they estimate about 40% of kids that have ADHD will also have ODD. What I've learned over

the years, a lot of that ODD and a lot of that emotional dysregulation actually comes to the state that the body's in. Is it in a state of inflammation? And we'll probably dive into this a little bit more. I actually find one of the first things that improves when you actually start reducing inflammation in the body is emotional dysregulation, which is usually the hardest thing to handle as a parent. It's usually the first thing that improves, which makes you feel a little bit better about going down this path.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Let's talk about that first thing that happens when your child is diagnosed with ADHD. You're immediately prescribed medication. When you go to the doctor, that's the first thing that's given. Why is that medication prescribed, and why should that not be the first line of treatment?

Dana Kay

You're so right. When a child is diagnosed with ADHA, usually the first cause of treatment that most doctors suggest is medication. Many of them don't even tell you or tell the parents that making some other changes like diet, like natural strategies, like reducing toxin exposure, all of those things that you probably talk about a lot on this podcast, can significantly reduce ADHD symptoms. This is what happened with my son. Our doctor didn't mention any other course of treatment. The only one he told us about was medication. That's when I started going and down and doing this research. And look, it's like any traditional medicine path, doctors are looking to diagnose with a diagnostic code and then provide a prescription that is going to treat the symptoms of that diagnostic code.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Some kids may need that. They may need medication.

Dana Kay

A hundred percent. I am not against medication at all. There is definitely a time and place for it, and I say that a lot, but it should not be the first port of call, especially when you've got a four or a 5-year-old. Sometimes these natural strategies can be just as effective, if not more effective. These amphetamine medications have

long-term damage that they can do to the body, to the growth, where you think about kids growing so much from when they're born to the age of 18. With adults it is slightly different. They're done growing. A lot of these medications can stunt growth. They can change the brain and chemistry. They can suppress your appetite. You have an inability to sleep. And so for kids, all of those aspects are so crucial to their long-term growth and development.

Let's try things that don't necessarily have those side effects. Who doesn't feel better when they eat better? One of the things that I preach is that food should be first. It's what makes us thrive. I can assure that most parents and people out there know that when they eat bad food, they feel bad. And it's the same with our children. So, let's try these things first. And if they don't, and then a kid gets into middle school or high school and they're still struggling, then you can try medication. This is the only way, this is my way or the highway, it is really like we need to take this food first approach, meaning that rather than trying to find a magical pill that's going to fix our child, we clean up their body.

Instead, we clean up their diet. And in doing this, we're reducing inflammation and then the symptoms start to reduce because we're actually getting to the bottom of what's causing those symptoms in the first place. I often think of it like this. When you're building a house, a solid foundation is not optional. It's a necessity, isn't it? If you don't have a solid foundation, that house isn't gonna be very strong. It is exactly the same way with us. Diet is our foundation, and if our diet is poor, we can never function at our best. True for us as adults, but so true for our children as well, who are going through so much growth and development.

Ads 14:25

If you're taking protein powder, you need to stop and listen to this. The Clean Label Project recently tested 160 of the top selling protein powders in the US. They tested 83% of the market, which is 70 different brands and 40% of the products tested exceeded Prop 65 safety thresholds for lead. 21% had more than two times the Prop 65 safety thresholds for other heavy metals and toxins. 65% of chocolate protein powders tested over the Prop 65 safety thresholds, and 77% of plant-based protein powders tested above these thresholds as well. That's definitely not what you want

from products that are supposed to support your health particularly. It's something that you're consuming daily.

What the study found was that Puori PW1 protein powder was awarded the number one cleanest protein powder out of 130 different brands. The choice is clear. That's why I love Puori's PW1 Wave protein powder. Every batch is third-party tested against 200 plus contaminants. They don't sell any product unless it passes these tests, and they make all of their third-party tests available via a QR code. You can scan this QR code and see exactly what is in this product and what this batch tested for. No other brand is doing that because they won't pass the test. Each serving gives you 21 grams of minimally-processed, clean, high-quality whey protein powder from pasture-raised cows' milk. So, no hormones, no GMOs, no pesticides, nothing to worry about. I personally love the bourbon vanilla flavor. You get real vanilla seeds from bourbon, vanilla from Madagascar, which is known as the best vanilla in the world. It's high quality. It tastes amazing. Even my daughter mentioned how she loves the vanilla flavor in it.

I worked with Puori on an amazing deal for you. You can get 20% off, or if you choose the already discounted subscription, you get almost a third off the price. But you're only gonna get this deal if you visit my exclusive link at puori.com/wendy and use coupon code Wendy to get 20% off this amazing deal of the highest quality whey protein powder that's been tested for 200 plus contaminants. You can bet this for quality. This is my number one recommendation for protein powder because the results are in. Puori is the number one cleanest testing protein powder on the market.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I wanted to touch on the medication just a little bit more because I think parents don't realize what they're giving their children when they give this medication. Adderall is exactly the same chemical formula as crystal methamphetamine. It's like a synthetic form of it, which is really, really scary. When you take that, and I've tried Adderall before, I had a business partner that had ADHD, and I was really tired one day. I'm like, let me try that. I felt amazing. But who wouldn't when taking stimulants like that? But I did not sleep that night. Long term, my concern is that kids are not

gonna get restorative, regenerative sleep. It's gonna burn out their cortisol receptors, maybe even set up the doorway to addictions, to stimulants or things like that.

But I get that need to turn on that prefrontal cortex that is basically just not functioning or maybe it's smaller than the next person or whatever that deficit is there. I get it, but I think people don't understand what exactly they're giving their kids. The Ritalin or Adderall and the long-term consequences of that really frighten me. I've definitely had a couple friends that have ADHD and are adults. They've been on Adderall for like 20 years and they're a mess after being on that medication and they can't function unless they take it. They just go into a deep, deep depression.

Dana Kay

You're exactly right. I think that it's a really important topic to talk about because as parents, we are just desperate to bring a bit of balance and peace back to our house. Like for us, it was this emotional rollercoaster. I would go to bed every single night feeling guilty about the way that I treat my son. I would wake up every morning dreading the day ahead because I was worried about what he was gonna do or how he was gonna go, what was gonna happen today. The medications don't fix symptoms. They're a bandaid, but they chemically override how the brain functions sometimes with serious long-term effects, as you said. And doctors rarely tell you what they are.

What you said with Ritalin, Adderall Vyvanse is another one. They work by increasing dopamine and norepinephrine levels in the brain. These are the neurotransmitters that are responsible for that motivation, focus and impulse control. And so, yes, they may be out of focus better, but it also forces the brain into this hyperfocused state. And as you said, it can deplete cortisol, and this hyperfocused state is not always natural or balanced. It artificially boosts that dopamine. ADHD brains often have lower dopamine levels, which makes it harder to regulate and focus, but stimulants push those dopamine levels up. This can lead to that dependency over time. They suppress the appetite. Many kids lose weight and have poor growth because of these meds because they've reduced the hunger signals.

That's what happened with my son when he lost so much weight. It affects sleep and mood. It increases alertness, but they disrupt sleep, increase anxiety, even cause

these mood swings. Some kids experience this emotional blunting where they seem less joyful and engaged. That was my son. It was like a shadow of himself. It caused this zombie-like behavior in him. That can definitely happen if you've got a dose that's too high as well. What happened with us, they wore off abruptly. They've got this rebound effect so many kids will experience focus at school, but then they'll experience crashes as the medications leave their symptoms. And that leads to so much more worse outbursts, irritability, and worse behavior than even before taking the pill.

It's important to understand that this matters for long-term brain development because they don't fix the brain. They just chemically override the symptoms. The brain then adapts over time, meaning that higher doses are needed. The body becomes more dependent on the medication for dopamine regulation and medications don't address the root cause like gut health, inflammation, and nutrient deficiency. They actually create even more nutrient deficiencies because the kids aren't hungry, or this nervous system dysregulation, which are all huge factors when it comes to the growth of our children.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think it's also important to not necessarily look at your child with ADHD or ADD as not necessarily a problem. No, it's just their brains work differently. About 30% of CEOs have ADHD. They're people that are doers. They might not be as good as sitting at a desk and being still and focusing on a textbook, but they have that energy to get up and go and get stuff done. It's not necessarily a problem. It is just a difference in how these kids function and learn. And it seems they need to be in a school environment that maybe fosters that versus forcing them to sit still in a chair, which seems very unnatural, especially for boys that have a lot of testosterone and energy.

Dana Kay

A hundred percent.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Plus A-D-D or A-D-H-D, it just seems like a recipe for disaster.

Dana Kay

I love that you raised that, because I do definitely look at it as a superpower. There may be these challenges, but if you adjust your perception of what is a challenge and what is a superpower, it can change the way that you actually are as well. Some kids with ADHD have amazing creativity, amazing hyperfocus persistence. I think one of the most important things we can do as parents of children with ADHD is learn to focus on those positives and reframe ADHD. What I do in the work that I do is let's help our children with ADHD thrive in life. And that comes with a couple of different areas. One of those is looking at reframing it. Kids with ADHD hear negative comments all day long. I think that there was a study that showed that they hear 20,000 more negative comments by the time they're 12 years old compared to their neurotypical peers. So, we just wanna reframe it and we wanna fill up with positive affirmations. I love that you raised that.

Dr. Wendy Myers

What seems just very obvious, if a kid can't sit still in their chair, which I'm sure drives teachers nuts, and they just want to get medicated and shut up and sit down, but what makes sense to me is, I had my daughter, we interviewed at this one private school and they started the day with exercise and very specific exercises that calm down the nervous system so the brain could then focus the rest of the day. And I thought, God, what a concept, you know what I mean? Just for a child that it's not neurodivergent or doesn't have ADHD, they still would need that, but especially more so for a child that does have ADHD

Dana Kay

I think that unfortunately our school system is stuck in the ice age. It hasn't adapted yet our lives have adapted so much. You think about how much technology we've got, where parents are on our kids so much more, there are more sports, there's more pressure on them. And so, they do need this outlet. It's different from how I used to go and play in the street for hours on end when I was young. Now my kids get home at six o'clock because they've been at sports all afternoon. When they come home, they have to do their homework. They just wanna chill out and do a little bit of computer games. They're not out there playing. They're not out exploring their creativity. They're

not out there regulating their nervous system. They're not connecting to nature. And so our lives have changed, but the schooling system hasn't. It's still back in the days where technology wasn't around. It's still back in the days where there wasn't this pressure on our children to perform as greatly as they have to now.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I wonder, now that ADHD is so prevalent if there's certain special schools or school programs that cater to kids with ADHD

Dana Kay

They're few and far between, but unfortunately, what tends to happen is the kids that suffer the most, they do go to those schools and when you have everyone that's dealing with those issues, it can create a different level of environment. So, it's better not to just segregate it. Again, I think that's creating this stigma that ADHD is a bad thing when it's not a bad thing. It is a superpower. You just need to know how to boost that dopamine naturally. You just need to know how to help that body thrive as much as it possibly can. And you need to learn how to manage it in a different way. If you can do that, it doesn't have to be a bad thing. Unfortunately, with medication, it is blunting these superpowers because that's what's actually gonna help them thrive. We really wanna focus on that. We wanna focus on optimizing the body to be able to thrive in what it needs and give the body what it needs.

Ads 27:27

Are you taking collagen supplements? Well check this out. Our friends at Organifi have sourced the best collagen on the planet, and you can get it with 20% off savings today too. So, what is collagen? It's the most abundant protein in our body. It's everywhere. It's in your muscles, joints, hair, skin, fingernails, everywhere. It's one of the fundamental building blocks of life. Your body uses collagen constantly to keep itself refreshed and repaired. But as you get older, especially as women that are going into menopause, you can lose 30% of your collagen within the first five years of menopause, and that starts in perimenopause as well. Your body just stops making as much of it and you start losing it, especially as your estrogen levels come down.

That's why consuming collagen is such a great idea every single day. It gives your body a fresh supply to keep working at its best.

It's not only good for your hair, skin, and nails, but it helps to support your gut and metabolic health, immune system, cardiovascular strength, and all of your muscles and moving parts too. Collagen is nothing new. It's one of the oldest supplements out there. Collagen supplements have been around for quite a while now. But what makes Organifi so special is it's all about the quality. The non-organic collagen scare me. They're really problematic because they can be full of glyphosate, pesticides and other chemicals that you do not wanna be taking on a daily basis. Not all collagens are the same. It can come from many different sources and the source can drastically impact its potency and effectiveness as well.

Some manufacturers just go with the cheapest stuff that they can find and then add fillers and artificial flavors and they still charge you a lot of money for that. Organifi always goes the extra mile to ensure their quality is the best. They blend five collagen types from four different sources, and they taste and test until it's perfect. And then they go even further to test for things like glyphosate residue and other sneaky toxins that can get into the mix. After passing through all of these goalposts, it finally gets the Organifi seal of approval so you can rest assured it's the highest quality and non-toxic. I love that this company is a company that I can trust that their products will be safe and effective exactly as they say they will be.

In the supplement world these days, that kind of honesty and transparency is getting harder to come by. So, if you've never tried collagen, now is a great time to start. And if you're already taking it, now is a great time to switch to a better brand. Upgrade what you're doing right now so you and your entire body is gonna love Organifi Collagen. It is something that I take on a daily basis. It's been a part of my supplement routine for the past five years, since I went into menopause, and so I can't recommend it highly enough. Now let's talk about saving you some cash as well. Here's what you do. Go to organifi.com/myersdetox and put in coupon code Myers detox to get 20% off. Go to organifi.com/myersdetox and don't forget the Myers detox coupon code as well. You'll save an extra 20% off by putting in my special coupon code Myers detox.

So, like I said, collagen's one of those things that I take every single day. It's one of the most important parts of my anti-aging protocol, the things I'm doing to fight off the clock. So for me, taking clean collagen is really important. It's hard to find, so I highly, highly recommend Organifi collagen.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Let's talk about diet. So, obviously in the United States and other westernized countries, the kids' diet is just horrifying, with all of the fast food, industrial seed oils, food colorings and all this stuff. I'm just so thankful that today, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. got confirmed to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services. So, hopefully we're gonna start seeing an improvement in the next coming years in our food, in more regulation of these big food companies that are essentially profiting from harming our health. Can you talk about that? What are the foods and the diet that kids with ADHD need to avoid like the plague?

Dana Kay

I like to think about ADHD like that's the number one thing that's driving ADHD symptoms. I just wanna take a step back before I go into what those dietary changes are. I think that this can be the driver of most disease and disorders out there, but one of the biggest stressors, and that's contributing to exacerbating the not so good ADHD symptoms is inflammation. It's important to start by reducing this inflammation from the start. Chronic inflammation has become just so prevalent over the years, and it's just linked to so many diseases and disorders. Inflammation is essential in our body for wound healing, but chronic infection itself can wreak havoc on the whole body and all the healthy tissues.

I really like to focus on how we can reduce that chronic inflammation by making lifestyle changes, and one of those is diet. It's not the only one. Where can we reduce inflammation as much as possible? I think with food, I always say, there are a couple of foods that are really not so good for inflammation. I will say the way that wheat is processed in the US is highly inflammatory, unfortunately. And so, gluten is one of those top foods that is contributing to that inflammation. It's driving that inflammation in the body. We've got dairy. Conventional dairy, unfortunately, is also driving inflammation in the body. There are some studies that show that kids that are

sensitive to gluten, about 50% of them are also sensitive to dairy. And so if you're just looking at a whole category, I'd say gluten and dairy.

Then we've got these things like artificial flavors and colors, which again, I love RFK Jr. I love the fact that red dye number three has already been banned, which is amazing. It's gotta go further though. There are so many artificial flavors and preservatives that are in our packaged foods these days. I know that there's probably parents out there listening, going, oh my gosh, how am I gonna take those foods out of my child's diet? It is stressful. All I say to the families is Rome was not built in a day.

You do not need to take everything out at once. I did back in the day when my son was five years old. I took out gluten, dairy, soy, artificial flavors and colors, and 40 food sensitivities that I'd seen on a lab test. Let's just say I ended up with multiple panic attacks on the floor in my bedroom, and that is definitely not what I teach to the families that I work with. I really like that it is adjusting our lifestyle and then when we can adjust our lifestyle slowly, it just becomes your normal. It is not stressful anymore. So, take that small, slow step, but let's focus on what we should be eating rather than what we're taking out.

It's not just about what foods to take out, it's what we put into our body. The best tip is to really focus on those whole nutritious, fresh fruits and veggies, grass fed animal protein like meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, that balanced diet. You wanna get plenty of healthy fats like avocado, coconut, olive oils, and then drink plenty of spring water. You're voiding some harmful chemicals in some of the waters. But also, water helps us detox and remove some of the toxins that are already there. If we can really focus on what to feed and then slowly reduce the things that are creating that inflammation, it is phenomenal to look at the changes that can happen in our children. I'll tell you, when I removed gluten from my son's diet, literally within two weeks, he was a different kid.

Dr. Wendy Myers

My daughter, too, has a pretty severe gluten sensitivity and her whole personality changes within 30 minutes of eating gluten. It's like it just does something to her brain where she's just super hyperactive. She gets really hyperactive and laughs constantly. She gets a lot of brain inflammation and is almost high from it.

Dana Kay

There's probably a reason for that. One of the tests that I do inside the business is something called a wheat zoomer. I have to spell it because of my accent. But, what this does, it actually looks at the different antibodies that your body has developed against gluten wheat, and there's two antibodies in gluten. One is called gluten morphine and the other one is called prod morphine. In dairy there is one called casomorphin. These actually act and bind to opioid receptors in the brain. If your body has developed antibodies against that, when you eat gluten, it actually triggers that response in the brain. That's why you see these neuropsychological symptoms that are coming out when you eat gluten.

But also these kids that have developed antibodies to gluten in this way, they actually are more prone to going through a gluten withdrawal process. Their symptoms can actually get worse before they get better. And so you just gotta stick through that gluten withdrawal. I love when I see those antibodies on a lab test. I know that's a little bit funny to say, but I know that those are the kids that are gonna have the best results when they take out gluten.

Ads 37:47

This episode is brought to you by Chef's Foundry. They've got a fantastic line of cookware called P600. It's totally non-toxic. I think people don't realize that when they're cooking, most people's cookware is adding toxins to their healthy food. People spend so much money on healthy organic food and then cook it in toxic cookware. That includes cast iron, which I do not recommend. It adds way too much iron in a form that we can't absorb. People use aluminum cookware, which is very inexpensive, but it's used in most restaurants, giving us tons of aluminum. People are also using ceramic cookware, which can leach toxins into your food, and not to mention, the non-stick cookware that has many PFAS or PFOS, that is so toxic. It's one of the forever chemicals. So, you really have to pay attention to what you're cooking in.

That's why I recommend the P600 line by Chef's Foundry so that you can have peace of mind when you're cooking and you're not getting any nasty chemicals like lead or cadmium or nickel, or PFAS in your healthy food. You can get a special discount for

my listeners by going to bit.ly/myersdetox to get an exclusive discount, just for my listeners. I want you to be thinking about what you're cooking your food in, and I highly recommend the P600 line by Chefs Foundry.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Some kids, that's all they're eating like every meal. They're eating pizza, hamburgers and whatnot. It can be challenging, but I think it's also important if you have a young child diagnosed with ADHD, just raising a child who doesn't like unhealthy foods. You don't feed them to them. I know a lot of parents have been giving their kids junk food and everyone at school is eating Doritos and things like that. But it can be really helpful starting at a very young age. I just didn't give my daughter sugar. I never gave her any kind of sodas or anything like that. So, starting early develops their tastes. My daughter's a teen, she doesn't like soda, she's just never had it. I think those are really important. I know a lot of parents are too far gone and there are a lot of corrections to be made.

Can you talk more about food sensitivities testing because there are a lot of different foods that kids can be sensitive to, and how important is that if your child has ADHD?

Dana Kay

I like to take this a little bit of a blanket approach. The goal of helping a child with ADHD thrive is reducing inflammation in their body. We wanna try and determine what is causing that inflammation in the body. We want to look at a few different things. I'll go down a little bit of a path, but I'll address what you said with food sensitivities. Food sensitivities are currently the foods that are exacerbating inflammation. They're not necessarily like allergies, you can heal from them. Once you can heal the gut and close the holes in the lining of the gut, then you won't be sensitive to those foods anymore. I take this global approach for the period of healing of, let's do whatever we can to reduce the inflammation so we can allow the healing to occur. And that's where food sensitivity testing comes through.

If you were just to do a food sensitivity on its own, that is not the right approach because you actually need to look at why those food sensitivities there in the first place. And that usually comes because of something called leaky gut or intestinal

permeability. Now the gut-brain connection is super important when it comes to ADHD. Firstly, it's important for anything because 80% of the body's entire immune system is within the gut wall, along with billions of nerve cells and an extensive amount of gut bacteria. So, all of our children's health is quite literally connected to everything that occurs in the gut. But also, the gut brain connection means the gut is deeply connected to our brain. If our guts aren't functioning well, our brain won't be able to function well either. 95% of the body's serotonin, about 50% of the body's dopamine, plus some other neurotransmitters are produced in the gut.

These are the neurotransmitters or the hormones that help us manage our emotions. They balance our mood. They help our cognitive function. Now, as I mentioned earlier, emotional dysregulation is a common symptom of ADHD, but many parents don't realize that a lot of this emotional dysregulation actually starts in the gut where that serotonin, dopamine, gaba, all of that stuff is made, or bacteria produces those. Now the problem is not the emotions themselves, but the fact that the correct amount of these vital neurotransmitters are not being made as well. So, we can work to improve gut health, and we find that the emotional dysregulation symptoms solve themselves. The thing that I like to talk about the most is that the brain has many areas involved in gut function.

The main area is the frontal lobe. For those just listening, I'm pointing to the middle of my forehead. For those watching, you would've seen me point to the middle of my forehead, but it's the area of the brain that talks to the gut via two-way chemical messengers. The frontal lobe is involved in things like attention, focus, executive function, planning, organizing and problem solving. Do any of those areas sound like ones that are affected by ADHD? If you are familiar with ADHD, you're probably nodding your head because they are areas that most kids and adults struggle with because the frontal lobe is in the brain. Many people are under the impression it's the brain that needs care when in reality it's also the gut that's causing the problem.

Now I know that that's not directly answering your food sensitivity panel question, but I just wanna go back to explain that. I'll give a quick analogy. Have you ever felt butterflies in your stomach because you were nervous about something, maybe it was a conflict, test or whatever. That's a perfect example of the gut brain connection. Our bodies perceive whatever we're nervous about as a stressful situation, and then

our brains trigger those raw emotions in the gut that result in that nausea or those butterflies. But the reverse is also true. Our guts are talking to our brain. When we've got a breakdown of the gut, when we've got a higher level of bad bacteria, that's called gut dysbiosis, and that gut dysbiosis creates inflammation, and that inflammation travels through the vagus nerve into the brain. That's how that connection works.

Now what can happen is when we're eating poor foods, like the ones we talked about, when we are taking antibiotics, which happens so frequently, I think my son was on, I actually haven't counted, but probably more than eight rounds of antibiotics before he was the age of four. Unfortunately, with antibiotics, they're great for getting the virus or the infection that's going on in the body, but they can't distinguish between what's good and what's bad. And so they actually break down or kill off the good bacteria. Many people suffer lasting changes, but they also break the lining of the gut. Same with ADHD meds. They break the lining of the gut and they're constantly there. What happens is you end up with these holes or a breakdown in the lining of the gut. When you eat food, even the healthiest food, it can actually go through the holes in the lining of the gut into our bloodstream, and our body sees it as a foreign invader and it turns on this inflammatory response.

Even if you've got healthy food and it goes through that hole, you've started turning on this inflammatory response and it further breaks down the lining of the gut. So we wanna see what's causing that inflammatory response, and that's where a food sensitivity panel comes in to look at what's causing that inflammatory response. We can temporarily remove those foods and then heal the gut. But what people do is they do just one food sensitivity panel. We wanna know what caused that leaky gut in the first place, was it bad bacteria? Was it a parasite? Is there mold exposure? So many different things. We do some other testing along with that food sensitivity panel so we can heal, reduce that inflammation from other areas while we heal the lining of the gut and then we can add back those foods successfully. I know that that was very long-winded. I hope that answers your question.

Dr. Wendy Myers

No, that was a great explanation because that applies to everybody. I'm always thinking, what can I do for my gut bacteria? What are some things that parents can do? I think a lot of people fall into this category where they need to eat some healing foods and consistently repopulate the gut with good bacteria. So, what are your suggestions there?

Dana Kay

We obviously wanna find what's causing the inflammation in the first place. That's where the role of functional lab testing comes in. And so work with a practitioner to do that lab testing to determine, but if you can't afford it, and this is a topic that really gets me every time. I just wish these were covered by insurance because there would be so many more families that could be helped if a lot of these tests were covered by insurance. But if you don't have the budget for it, focus on the things that you control, and that's what you put in your mouth. That's the food that's actually gonna break down the lining of the gut, and just start eating a variety of foods that are high in fiber and nutrients that are really good.

There are some supplements that are really good, not only for leaky gut, but also good for kids with ADHA. One of those is a good quality fish oil for Omega-3 fatty acids because with all these packaged foods, unfortunately, what happens is we get an overload of omega-6 fatty acids and Omega-3 and omega-6 are meant to be in this one-to-one ratio, but now the bodies are so high in omega-6 that we need to boost up the omega-3s. There are a lot of studies out there that support that fish oil can support memory hyperactivity, clear thinking behavioral disorders, organizational skills in kids aged eight to 12, but it also reduces inflammation in the body. So that's what we wanna do is reduce that inflammation, then we wanna bring in a good quality probiotic.

Research suggests that taking probiotics that contain either certain types of bacteria or even spore forming probiotics, which reseed the gut rather than just certain bacteria that actually doesn't survive digestion. This can help support detoxification. It can help with anxiety boosting up that serotonin that I was talking about, and help with mood. It can also support the body against the damaging and mental effects of stress. Okay, now those are probably two really key supplements that kids with AHDH

can go on and on and on supplements, but control where you can. And that is like, let's reduce the things in our lives that are contributing to the breakdown in the lining of the gut. That's food. You probably talk a lot about detox and toxins here. Reduce those toxins and let's support the gut with those nutrient-dense foods, fiber-rich foods, and some base supplements.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, that was gonna be my next question for you, environmental toxins and their contribution to ADHD. Certainly, a lot of these different toxins in our food, like food coloring is shown to increase hyperactivity. I forget what to think. Yellow and blue are some of the big ones. Certainly there are many toxins that are gonna interfere in the gut functioning and the brain function. If you have a leaky brain, you may have a leaky gut. If you have a leaky gut, you may also have a leaky brain. Glyphosate that's in all the non-organic food has shown to have a negative effect on the gut bacteria. Why don't you expand on that a little bit?

Dana Kay

I think that that's a really good point. It is not just about food. We wanna take this blanket approach and control where we can control. But again, Rome wasn't built in a day. You don't need to do everything on day one. I still have some things in my house that could be better for me, but I'm not gonna throw every single thing out on day one because I don't think I'd be able to afford to replace anything. So, I actually like to use this trashcan analogy. I use a few analogies. I'm sorry that I tend to break it down a little bit to make it a bit more understandable, but we're all born with this metaphorical trashcan in our body. Our key through life is to keep that trashcan as empty as possible. We want to keep the toxic load on our body low. What happens is that the trashcan fills up over time, and it can for all of us. So, those inflammatory substances, like toxins that are coming from our cleaning products or our personal care products, food dyes or preservatives, we've then got pesticides, like what you mentioned, glyphosate.

We've got meds that contribute. They all contribute to that trash can. Now, our body is a wonderful thing. It is designed to work to keep emptying the trash can, just like we do in our house. We've got our trash can on Mondays. We take it out to the sidewalk,

the garbage truck comes along and it empties the trash can. But just think about it, if that trash can wasn't taken to the sidewalk or the garbage truck didn't come. What would happen in our house that the trash can would get so full it would spill out all in our house. Think about how disgusting our house would be. That's the same thing that can happen in our body. So, we are not all created equal. We are not all born with the same genetics. And some of us can easily empty our trash cans, meaning when they get too full, we can take them to the side of the road.

But others with certain genetics, they mean that their detoxification pathways are not working as properly as possible. They're not able to empty as easily as some others. They can't empty their trash can because their detoxification pathways are not working properly. Just like my son's, that's exactly what happened with us. When that gets too full of all of these inflammatory substances and we can't detox properly, the trashcan overflows in our body allowing that inflammation to spread. So that's why we like to take that global approach on food and toxins like the glyphosate you mentioned, because when you've got an overflowing trash can, it's overflowing and it's stressing the body. It's causing these various behavioral, emotional, and physical symptoms.

You're probably wondering, well, how do I know my trash can is overflowing? Sleep disturbances, chronic fatigue, emotional dysregulation, and skin problems. A lot of kids are suffering with eczema, rashes, frequent infections like reoccurring colds or infections, and sensory sensitivities. You wouldn't connect sensory overload with an overfilling trashcan, would you? But it is so true. It causes behavioral symptoms and inability to focus. There are many things that we can do to reduce that load on the trash can. One of those is those environmental toxins, maybe switching to non-toxic cleaning products like using natural alternatives.

We can put a filter on our tap water, natural care products, and choose organic foods. I think that people are gonna need to pause this podcast and probably get a piece of paper and write down all of these things. But I know, Wendy, you are all over this stuff. I'm sure that you've talked about it over and over again. You're the queen of detox.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I could see where an ionic foot bath would be super helpful for kids. A lot of them may be too young to do infrared saunas, but ionic foot baths, any kid can put their feet in there, they're gonna pull out a ton of toxins. Sneaking out a binder on there like my Citra cleanse, or I love my vital C, which is like a kind of a C 60 type binder. I think those would be so helpful for a kid with ADHD or any kid to really effectively and easily detox their body.

Dana Kay

Yeah, you're a hundred percent correct. That's definitely some of the suggestions that I make. Even just a simple detox bar, getting magnesium flakes, getting your kid to soak in the bath, which you're probably doing anyway, magnesium flakes, 20 minutes, a few times a week. That's gonna help reduce the exposure and bring in some binders like you mentioned. And it's amazing what can start to happen and that can help that kid to thrive. They can start to feel less foggy in their brain. I love this conversation so much.

Ads 55:22

For anyone listening who really wants to detox their body, go to heavymetalsquiz.com. I created a quiz for you. It only takes a couple of seconds and it's based on some lifestyle questions. You can get your toxicity score and get a free video series that answers all of your frequently asked questions about how to detox your body. Check it out at heavymetalsquiz.com.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Tell us about your book. You have a book about this to help guide parents. Why don't you tell us about that?

Dana Kay

The book is like a labor of love for me. It's called thriving with ADHD. It's a guide to naturally reducing ADHD symptoms in your child. Years ago, I wanted a book on ADHD that clearly spelt out exactly what I needed to do to support my son with ADHD naturally. But I could never find it. I was just Googling for something, for anything that might actually help us get some relief from his challenging symptoms, but I struck

out again and again. That's why I wrote that book. It is that labor of love. It was my first book. It became an international bestselling book on child's health, which for me is probably the biggest thing. I still can't believe it. It's my life's work and it's the guide that I really needed when I started this journey with my son, but I couldn't find it.

I feel that it's a bit different than other books out there because I'm not only a practitioner, but I'm also a mom who totally gets exactly what the families are going through. That's available on Amazon or you can buy it much cheaper on my website. It's like \$5 on my website or it's like \$20 on Amazon. So, that's thriving with ADHD: A guide to naturally reducing ADHD symptoms in your child.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And what is your website?

Dana Kay

My website is adhdthriveinstitute.com.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Okay. Fantastic. You also work with parents. You have a program where you can also help coach them, correct?

Dana Kay

Yes. It's called the ADHD Thrive Method for Kids. It takes this blanket approach of trying to reduce inflammation in their body so we can help those kids thrive. It doesn't just focus on diet. It doesn't just focus on toxins. We do functional lab testing. We help that gut-brain connection. We help with the detox that we've been talking about today, but we also focus on things inside the family. We have a parent and child therapist who works alongside us. We really focus on parenting specifically for ADHD as well, which is different from parenting a child who's neurotypical. So, we really take that holistic approach to help that child and to help that family thrive.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, it's like such important tips, and I hope that this podcast really helps to open some parents' eyes and guide them that there are other alternatives or things that need to be done in addition, not just medicating your child. You have a whole range of things that you need to do, which would benefit the health of your entire family and yourself as well by adopting a lot of these things that we're talking about. Thank you so much, Dana, for coming on the show.

Everyone, I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. Again, thanks so much for tuning in every week to the Myers Detox Podcast. I love all these interviews that I do every week. I learn so much, but it's really more to help you make those distinctions that you need to make so that you can live the life that you deserve, that long, healthy, disease-free, medication-free life. That's my goal for you, and that's why I'm doing this show. Thanks for tuning in. God bless.

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