



#601 Hormone Hangover: How Alcohol Wrecks Hormones, Sleep, and Longevity With Dr. Erika Schwartz

Dr. Wendy Myers

Welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. On this show, we talk about everything related to heavy metal and chemical toxicity, and the health issues caused by toxins. We also talk about anti-aging, bioenergetics, and more advanced topics on health than you'll hear on other podcasts. Today, we have Dr. Erika Schwartz on the show, and she's gonna be talking about how alcohol disrupts hormones, sleep, and increases cancer risk. I haven't done a show on alcohol yet for some reason, but on the show, we're gonna be talking about how no amount of alcohol is beneficial. There's way more downside than any perceived or potential benefits. The newest research is showing that alcohol actually increases the risk of seven different types of cancer, including thyroid, tongue, liver, pancreas, colon, and ovarian cancer.

We also debunk the myth that one glass of wine is healthy. That used to be the status quo. It's totally not true, probably funded by the alcohol industry, but really, what alcohol is doing is disrupting your hormone balance, disrupting your sleep, and your overall health. We really go in depth on how alcohol affects your hormones because Dr. Schwartz is a hormone expert. We also talk about how alcohol increases the prevalence of liver disease, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, Alzheimer's, and other forms of dementia and cardiovascular diseases. We talk about how alcohol lowers testosterone and all the other hormones in both men and women, including reducing thyroid function, leading to hypothyroidism.

We talk about how alcohol depletes vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, and B6, zinc, and magnesium. Lower zinc means lower testosterone for you guys listening. We also talk about how alcohol accelerates liver damage, which can lead to cirrhosis and liver failure. The liver performs 500 different functions. We don't wanna be using up the liver's biological life with alcohol. We want that function to go towards detoxing the body, not detoxing alcohol. We also talk about how alcohol disrupts sleep. A lot of people drink alcohol to try to relax at the end of the day. It might make you pass out and relax, but because it raises your blood sugar and other mechanisms are involved, it will actually spike your cortisol in the middle of the night, causing you to wake up.

You also get much reduced sleep. You get less deep sleep, less REM sleep when you're drinking alcohol. So, pretty much anytime you're drinking alcohol, you are causing worse sleep, not better sleep. Also, if you're stressed or you have trouble sleeping, low progesterone is probably one of the main causes. So it's really important to test and replace progesterone, beginning in your late thirties and forties, not just when you're thinking about that in menopause, like I did. Also, if you drink, detox is taking a backseat. You also can't lose weight if you're drinking as well. So we go into all that fun stuff on the show today.

Our guest today, Dr. Erika Schwartz, is the founder of Evolved Science, a world-renowned medical practice based in New York City. Built on the recognition that bioidentical hormones with a foundation of better health, and once hormones are balanced, the practice focuses on optimization and longevity through disease prevention, patient advocacy, and coordination of care. Dr. Erika is a pioneer in the use of bioidentical hormones for preventing illness and recognizing their direct link to overall wellness and their inner connection with diet, sleep, and stress management. Dr. Erika is the author of bestselling books as well as numerous publications in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Daily Mail, Vogue, Town and Country, in the New York Post. She appears frequently on TV shows, international podcasts, and social media. She hosts the Popular Redefining Medicine podcast. You can learn more about her work at eshealth.com. Dr. Schwartz, thank you so much for joining us on the show.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Wendy, thank you so much. It's a pleasure being on your show. I follow you, and I think everything you're doing is so good and so helpful, and women need a lot of help. It's about time. It's our time, actually.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I love doing shows like this to really help people make some more distinctions and help them make better choices, especially when it comes to alcohol. There's a lot of confusing information out there about alcohol. But before we get to it, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself, your practice, and how you got into health?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Well, my training is in internal medicine and critical care. My first job was to run a major trauma center outside New York City when I was 28, and then I went into private practice about five years later, and thought I wanted some contact and connection with the patients. I'd stayed there for about 10 years, and I realized I was totally wasting my time because, as an internist, all I was expected to do was either ping pong the patient out to a specialist or just do testing, waiting for something to go wrong. So, I realized that that was not what I was there for because there was like a whole piece missing. And that piece was the moment when you're running a trauma center, I knew what acute care is.

Obviously, I know when you get run over by a truck, you do need conventional medicine. But once you are out of there and you're okay, there is no one in the conventional system who knows that life is a continuum of health with small interruptions that should be diseased. And the more time you spend educating, helping, and treating people to stay healthy, the more successful you will be in caring for the patient. So, having thought that through at the advanced stage of 30-something, I decided to start learning about prevention. Wellness hormones were just one of these things that came out. It was very early because it was in the early nineties, and there was no place to learn. This is how I got into being. I wrote books, and I started educating people, and people started coming to me, and we still do the same thing.

The first book that I wrote that was a bestseller was number two on Amazon, and it was about hormones. It was called *The Hormone Solution*, and it was right in the days when that study, *The Women's Health Initiative*, went bust. Everybody in the conventional world was very scared of hormones and said, Oh, hormones are gonna cause cancer, heart attacks, strokes, et cetera. That was totally erroneous because it was wrong, and they took it back. But somehow, the conventional world never understood that they took it back. The principal investigators of that study actually reported back on the revaluation of the study showing how hormones are actually great for you.

There was no difference in all causes of mortality between women who had been on hormones and women, and who weren't on hormones. They did not distinguish between the kind of hormones that people, that women were taking. It was just a mess, and it's still a mess because to this day, the conventional world is not very clear on it. So, I moved away from that and now I teach at the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, which is a 4M. I teach everywhere I can and I come on podcasts like yours or anywhere I can to help women understand the options that we have and improve our lives.

Dr. Wendy Myers

That's great. I know we're gonna touch on hormone replacement therapy and what alcohol does to your hormones and all that, but yeah, it's really a pity that there are still so many women and men out there and doctors that think that hormones and hormone replacement is harmful in some way or causes cancer. I've had a lot of friends that have recently consulted with doctors and they're trying to steer them away from hormone replacement. It's like, oh my God, I take hormone replacement and I should have done it 10 years earlier. I wish I had started testing and replacing 10 years earlier. You might not need all the hormones, but a lot of women in their forties, they need progesterone. They really do. But let's talk about alcohol before we get too distracted because I can beat that horse for a long time.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Listen, hormones are crucial. I think that understanding, like what you just said, that the earlier you start the better, the more you understand how your hormones work,

the more likely you are to enjoy your life. And as you go through, everybody loves the labels like perimenopause, menopause, whatever you wanna call it. I don't know why we don't talk about puberty, because that's where it all starts. What happens is that if your hormones are imbalanced, you feel great. You look great. Think about it. When you have a lot of hormones, when you are fertile and you have babies and they're not exactly killing you. They're keeping you healthy. They literally make you immortal. So, if your hormones are in balance and you understand what the balance is for your own particular hormones, you'll do really well.

Dr. Wendy Myers

So, let's talk about something like alcohol that throws off your hormones. I know there are a lot of women out there that are having that glass of wine every night or the guys are having their beers at the end of the day. Let's just focus on women first. What is that nightly glass of alcohol or that wine doing to your hormones?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Well, it's disrupting your hormone balance. What it's doing is it's changing your menstrual cycle. It changes the way your pituitary gland basically sends the messages. It actually affects every cell in your body negatively. And while we can get away with it in our twenties, we can't get away with it in our forties and that's when you actually start drinking more because that's when socially, like you said, the guys are drinking. You're drinking. You're partying and you don't realize that that's when you get into more trouble. What happens is that your hormonal balance gets completely thrown off. We hear about, like recently, the Surgeon General had asked for a black box warning for alcohol because it shows an increased risk of cancers.

It was seven cancers, not even one cancer, like seven, including ovarian cancer and colon cancer. So, that was one thing. But we've been reading scientific data on how alcohol affects your hormones, affects your body and speeds up the aging process for at least 20 to 30 years and nobody's doing anything about it. It's really interesting because for Americans, our culture has become about drinking. During COVID, if you think about it, liquor stores were what sold out. They were essential businesses. The gym wasn't an essential business, but the local liquor store was essential businesses.

It was just a horrible thing if you think about it, because it's all about money instead of being what's good for each one of us. So alcohol in no form does it help? Now we know that we have a very high increase in liver problems. It's called steatosis. All of that because you're an endesa. The thing is that that's really from all the alcohol we drink that's destroying our livers. Our livers are so important. That's where the hormones get processed. All the food we eat gets processed, the toxins from everything else we're taking and breathing and everything gets processed. Unless you help detoxify, and getting rid of the alcohol is one way to detoxify. It is really important. It's a huge way. If you're not detoxified, you're not gonna be able to make the correct hormones. You're not going to be in balance.

As you get older and need exogenous hormones that come from the outside, you're not your doctor or whoever the provider is who's prescribing them for you will not be able to get the right combination for you if what you're doing is drinking. Now, the interesting thing is I see patients all the time. I'm in the office now and new patients that I see sometimes will come in and say, just don't tell me not to drink. I love it. It's my relaxation. It's the one thing I could do for myself. And I say, listen, I'm not gonna start by telling you that you know how I feel because I tell everybody how I feel.

But the point is, once you start feeling better, you'll have to stop. And you do stop on your own because the reason you're doing it is because you don't feel good. And hormones are really one of the reasons you don't feel good. It's because alcohol is getting your hormones completely screwed up and out of your system essentially, and is throwing off all your metabolic processes.

Ads 15:03

This show is brought to you by Bon Charge, and I wanna take a minute to tell you about one of their amazing products that I'm absolutely in love with. There's something I've been doing for about 10 minutes a day, and it's wearing a face mask, but it's not just any face mask. It's this Bon Charge red light face mask, and it's essential to my nightly skincare routine now. Believe me, red light therapy really works. It's well established in the research to improve the appearance of your skin. How it does that is it penetrates deep into the skin to boost collagen production. It reduces the size of your pores, reduces inflammation, and eases the signs of aging.

Bon Charge's red light face mask makes it so easy to take care of your skin. It's like a mini spa session every night that I'm doing. It can be used easily at home. There's no cord, so you can wear it while you're doing other tasks. Plus, the mask is totally painless and it doesn't heat up. Unlike some other beauty, anti-aging treatments, Bon Charge's red light face mask has been a game changer. It's part of my everyday skincare routine now, and I'm seeing such great results already from using this mask. My skin is more clear, it seems more plump, fresh, juicy, and my redness and dark blemishes are fading.

There's a very special offer for all of my listeners right now. My listeners get 15% off when you order from boncharge.com and use my promo code, Wendy at checkout. This discount applies sitewide, and you'll also get free shipping and a 12-month warranty. Go now to get this exclusive offer. That's boncharge.com and with promo code, Wendy, you get. 15% off. This is one of my secrets to super healthy young-looking skin. I'm trying to reverse the clock. I'm trying to do everything I can to anti-age and this is one of the secrets in my toolkit

Dr. Wendy Myers

What hormones specifically are thrown off by alcohol?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

All of them. We're talking about estrogen and progesterone, testosterone, which are the primary gonadal hormones made by our ovaries and adrenal glands. They're the adrenals. You have adrenal hormones, thyroid hormones, and then you have the hormones in your brain, which are really crucial. Depression is one of the huge side effects of drinking alcohol. If you're not exercising, you lose hormones at that point. But alcohol's even worse because alcohol is really getting rid of your hormones. It's just pushing them right out.

Dr. Wendy Myers

The reason I ask that question is because I know for beer, so to speak, the hops are very estrogenic. And that's why a lot of men, when they drink a lot of beer, they'll grow man boobs. They'll get a belly. They get this estrogenic layer of fat on them because

it's essentially feeding them estrogen. So, the guys out there that are drinking lots of beer, women too, you're feeding yourself these estrogens, which are counteracting your testosterone.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

If you think about it, hormones are made primarily in the gut, but the whole hormonal axis that comes from your brain and from your pituitary gland, the main gland. And it goes down all the way to your ovaries, to the end organs, as we call them. Every time you drink, starting with your hypothalamus, alcohol will affect how your hormone is processed and how it's being used by your body. So, you have to really keep that in mind and be cognizant of the fact, like your thyroid, for instance, alcohol changes your thyroid levels. It will affect the thyroid levels and will often cause hypothyroidism, meaning low thyroid. Now, the interesting thing is that we're now a lot more knowledgeable and we work more with estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone, but we don't pay as much attention to the thyroid.

The interesting thing is that most people need thyroid when they start getting to their forties because alcohol being one of the causes, alcohol literally drops your thyroid levels, and without your thyroid, you start gaining weight. Like what you were saying about the guys. They just start gaining weight. You become sluggish. You have fatigue. You don't sleep well. There are so many hormones that are directly affected by alcohol.

Dr. Wendy Myers

How does the body metabolize alcohol? How long does it take?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

It depends. It should get rid of it within eight hours, but it doesn't. It depends on the age. When you're young, you get rid of everything very quickly because you detoxify so quickly because your liver's clean and knows what to do. So, within eight hours or so, you should have gotten rid of the alcohol. It depends how much alcohol you drank and how old you are. As you get older, you can't detoxify as fast. The same glass of wine, let's say that you drank when you were 20 and didn't put a dent in

anything, will give you a hangover when you're 45 and your body will not be able to detoxify it. So, within two weeks of not drinking any alcohol, things should go back to the normal pre-alcohol level.

But again, the data on it is very ambiguous and ambivalent because there is data that says, yeah, we can turn back the clock and be fine if you stop drinking. The truth is the damage is already done. When the damage is already done, it's not gonna take you right back to where you were. And as you get older, and now I work on longevity and balancing all the pieces to make sure that each and every one of us that I take care of feels optimum regardless of what the chronological age is. But as you get older, and if you've been drinking your whole life, what's gonna happen is your liver's already, like we were saying, fatty liver, you already have it. So, to clean it up is gonna take me and you a lot more time than it would when you were younger.

Like what you said before, the earlier you start changing your diet, cutting back on alcohol, balancing your hormones, exercising, and sleeping regularly, the earlier you do it, the more likely you are to enjoy your life, and then become the source of wisdom that we all are as we get older, rather than basically lose your mind and not be useful anymore.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think people have to understand that every organ has a biological life. There are only so many years in it that it's gonna be functioning correctly. Our livers do 500 plus functions. There are a hundred million people in the US alone that have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, a hundred million people. So, you're already behind. One in three people, roughly in the US, are behind the eight ball as it is when it comes to liver function. The drinking will compromise that even more, and it contributes to it, of course. The point that I'm getting at is that if you are adding fuel to the fire to reduce your liver function, that's gonna have a huge repercussion in the foundation of your health and negative effect.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

You are right. Let's take testosterone for instance. Alcohol brings down testosterone levels. We see it a lot in men because you see the men coming in with low

testosterone in their forties, fifties, sixties and so on. If they're bringing it down, their testosterone levels are gonna be even lower and the low testosterone level will take you two. Heart disease will cause bone problems. I see people, and this is like lack of knowledge really because nobody's doing this intentionally. The doctors also have no knowledge that your bone metabolism is directly affected by alcohol. If your testosterone is low, your bone density goes down.

So, we're gonna give you a shot once a month or medication to fix your bones, when in fact all they have to do is stop shrinking alcohol and tell them to start building muscle. There's something off in the way we think because we're just saying, okay, well let me get this fixed and we look at the bone. I chose bone as an example because it just came to mind. But if we realize that everything's connected to everything else, then maybe we'll start taking responsibility for the outcome. And by taking responsibility for the outcome, we can improve the outcome.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I go back to the conversation I had about the biological life of the liver. When you are taking Tylenol, when you're drinking a lot, you are shortening the life of your liver. I don't think people realize when they say they're drinking every day, they have a few glasses of wine a day and don't think of it. Maybe they're Italian or Argentinian or whatever. It's just part of their culture or what have you. People have liver failure. I've known several people who have died from liver failure in their fifties and it was from drinking. They just didn't realize the consequence of doing that because you don't think it's gonna happen to you. You don't, and that's someone dying from it, not even to mention how people's livers are deeply compromised just from that daily habit of drinking alcohol and they don't realize what it's doing to their bodies.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

You know what's so interesting, Wendy, which I find really, and because you live in that space, is that the conventional medical world doesn't say anything about it. They need to have the surgeon general put a black box warning on alcohol to say that it increases the risk of certain cancers. We know people are dying, like you said, I was gonna say even 40-year-olds who've died from liver failure. Everybody has their

own genetic makeup. Everybody has their own response to toxins. Everybody's different.

I remember working in hospitals when I was in my training and then running the trauma center and seeing 30 and 40-year-olds in liver failure, and that was because they were alcoholics and they drank every day. Now, nobody said, okay, you stopped drinking and we'll help put things back together. It was always either too late or they would find some pill or something or liver transplant or something else instead of actually helping people understand what their own contribution to their own demise was.

Dr. Wendy Myers

If someone is concerned about this or they're concerned about liver cirrhosis, which is the beginning stages of liver disease, what can someone do if they wanna go to their doctor and get some tests done to see if they have liver cirrhosis, if they've been drinking and they're concerned about it?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Well, if they're drinking, they should think about stopping drinking. But I think going to any primary care doctor and having just your metabolic panel done, blood tests will show you what your liver function tests look like. Now, let's go back to hormones since we wanted to talk about hormones. The same way as doing a hormone panel will tell us where we are hormonally, but there's a caveat here. The general metabolic problem panel will show you what the liver function tests look like, but the hormone panel may not. It depends when you have it done and how old you are. During your menstrual cycle and if you are on birth control pills, your hormone levels are the same levels of a menopausal woman.

I think that that's an important thing for women to know that birth control pills are dangerous because they put us in a state of menopause when we're in our twenties. The problem with that is that with menopause come a lot of other problems. Like we were talking about bones, right? Your bones start falling apart. You get osteoporosis, osteopenia, you get all these issues and you need to know that because just having

your blood tests done to see where your hormones are, you have to look at what you're doing in your life to understand what's going on with your hormones?

Ads 29:45

I wanna take a minute to give a shout out to one of our sponsors, True Energy Skincare. They have an amazing serum that I am cuckoo about. I've been using their facial serum here for well over a year for a reason. This is just by far one of my favorite products. It's very, very light. It's just a serum you'll put on under your moisturizer. And the reason I use it is because it's a frequency-based skincare. They have frequencies imprinted on this serum that improve collagen, improve elastin. Collagen is that support matrix in your skin that makes it look firm and juicy and we lose that as we age. That accelerates rapidly after we hit menopause. You lose 30% of your collagen within two years after menopause. I'm using everything I can get to improve collagen. This has over 2000 frequencies imprinted on it for skin nutrition, to help the appearance of your skin, the fine lines, the age spots, and it will smooth out the texture of your skin as well.

This has been my secret weapon that I've been using to improve my skin, look and feel healthy, like I said, for well over a year. And so, I'm not promoting this because they're a podcast sponsor. I'm promoting this because this is one of my secret weapons. I love this product and I use it every single night under my moisturizer. This has no toxic ingredients in it whatsoever. It has lots of nutritive ingredients as well. It's got fruit, enzyme extracts. It's got oat kernel extract. It's got oat beta glucans. It's got beach bud extract and it's got algae and chlorella in it as well. It has lots of great nutrition in this as well as the frequency enhancing aspects of it. Any old product can moisturize your skin. That doesn't impress me, but the results you get from this are bar none, and that is why I highly recommend it. They have a very good offer for my listeners. Go to trytrueenergy.com/wendy and get a very special deal for my listeners.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, that's affecting those hormone levels because there are also issues with a lot of toxins that are very estrogenic that we're all exposed to every day that wreak havoc on your hormones as well. But at least with alcohol, it's very controllable.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Yeah, well we'd like to think that.

Dr. Wendy Myers

So, what amount of alcohol is reasonable to consume? In the 2000s you'd always hear like, oh, one glass of wine is very healthy for you. And I'd always had that in the back of my mind, like, oh, this glass of wine is not a big deal because it's actually healthy. I'm getting that resveratrol and those antioxidants and, oh, this is healthy. That study has been retracted. That study had no merit and actually showed that the alcohol was causing harm. So, can you explain that a little bit or expand on that?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

This is a funny thing that resveratrol has been connected with improving health. It's an anti-inflammatory antioxidant. It helps, and if you drink a few gallons of wine, you may get resveratrol a day, you may get enough resveratrol to help you. Also, the data on resveratrol is kind of weak anyway. We don't even know resveratrol really helps with inflammation and immune boosting, et cetera. But the interesting thing is that the studies were probably most likely studies that were sponsored by the industry. So, why would you trust them? The truth is that no amount of alcohol is good, no amount of alcohol. I'm sorry to say that. It breaks my heart to say it

Dr. Wendy Myers

It breaks my heart too,

Dr. Erika Schwartz

It breaks my heart because as a culture, we think that drinking together brings us together, that it makes us connect with each other. It has a lot of cultural value that's associated with it, but the truth is there is no value to our bodies. It's toxic. So, one glass is bad enough. Now the interesting thing is that when I say that, and I said to you before, it's like people will say it to me, oh, you temperate society. But I'm not. I'm all about being reasonable and common sense. You have to put it into perspective. When you are young, having a glass of wine at a party probably is just fine, or maybe

two glasses black out is not fine. At any age, doing 10 shots of tequila is never okay. So, it's about moderation and about accepting the reality that when you are young, you can do it, but when you get over 40, you best off stopping.

And if you stop, your body will be able to detoxify your liver, clean up the rest of it, and maintain your hormone balance. When your hormones start actually really leaving you, you are able to have them rebalanced correctly by the right practitioner obviously. But things can come back to normal. So, if you can stop drinking when you're in your forties, you're gonna do really well for yourself because you can actually guarantee that your longevity will increase. The amount of time that you spend healthy will increase your need to have a hip replacement or getting diabetes or getting obese or getting sick decreases literally at the same time as you stop drinking.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think people need to be aware listening to this show about learning how to detox. Well, when you have that glass of wine every night or that beer every night that's a 9113 alarm fire that your body and your liver has to deal with. Detoxing not happening. It's just focusing on that alcohol or the industrial seed oils that you had for dinner. You're putting detoxification on the backseat, on the back burner. So that's not happening if you're drinking day after day after day. And not to mention that you're gonna compromise sleep. Let's talk about that for a minute because I think people don't realize the negative impact they have on their sleep. That's a huge one because that's the foundation of your health. That's the foundation of detoxification that's happening mainly at night as well.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Exactly. That's actually a really important topic. As you get older, you don't sleep well. As you lose your hormones in perimenopause and menopause, you can't sleep anymore. And it's actually your pituitary glands way of sending messages down the pipe saying, make more hormones. Your ovaries are not making estrogen and not making testosterone, and that's why you can't sleep. It pushes up the cortisol level and you can't sleep. But this is the thing people think, and this is again cultural, that

drinking alcohol or drinking helps us relax and helps us sleep. That's a complete fallacy. It may make you or help you pass out and you'll sleep.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Oh, it does a good job of that. That's a great job.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

You'll pass out for two hours, but then you'll wake up and it'll be worse because the cortisol level has been up because now your body's trying to deal with the alcohol that you put in there, and you will have your palpitations. You'll get anxiety attacks, and you won't be sleeping well. So, the quality of your sleep is dramatically impacted and negatively by alcohol as it's removing your hormones that you need to sleep

Dr. Wendy Myers

I track my sleep with an aura ring and if I have a glass of alcohol, my sleep goes out the window. I don't get as much deep sleep. I don't get as much REM sleep. It's always negatively impacted and I've just done some experiments with many things that help sleep. I wanna look at things that negatively impact sleep as well. Alcohol also affects your blood sugar. If you drink alcohol, it's gonna raise your blood sugar and at some point, it's gonna crash. You get that cortisol coming up and then that's what wakes you up. So, forget weight loss if you're drinking. Oh no, not gonna happen. You're not gonna sleep. I mean there are just so many other factors involved here.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

I think what you're saying is really important about what happens as far as the cortisol level goes up, but also alcohol happens to be sugar. Nobody seems to get that. They say, oh, it's liquid sugar. People will say, I'm on a low carb diet and I don't eat any carbohydrates, but I have three glasses of wine a night. What do you think the wine is? The wine is sugar. Alcohol is carbohydrate. It's sugar, like you said, pure liquid sugar. So, what it does is it goes right into your bloodstream. Obviously, it's easy because it's liquid. Forget about your being knocked out. What happens is your blood sugar level goes up, your insulin level spikes, and when your insulin level spikes, because it's trying to bring down the sugar level that the alcohol has given you, the

sugar rush, right? As the insulin goes up, you are getting into a lot of trouble because that starts a cascade of hormones that should not be there.

At two o'clock in the morning, like you said, the cortisol, the adrenal hormones, all the hormones that should be going to sleep and being renewed and remade in the middle of the night are not, they're being actually demolished by the spike in insulin that the sugar that alcohol is, creates a new body.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And I presume that alcohol helps to make more GABA and that's why people like it. GABA is the hormone that is relaxing and it's part of the reason why people like it. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Well, we know about GABA, which is an aminobutyric acid. You also know about dopamine, serotonin, all the feel-good hormones that are made in our amygdala that are made in our hypothalamus pituitary oxytocin, which is made in the posterior pituitary, which is just like the closeness and warmth and feeling connected that you actually get when you're close to someone. When you're petting your dog or having sex with somebody you really love, or your child, that's when you release all these hormones. Well, all of that goes out the window the moment alcohol comes into the picture, because while initially because of the sugar the levels go up, they will drop a lot faster. They will actually create more toxicity and you know about them more than anyone else because it'll go right into your liver and create all these toxic byproducts that your liver will then have to sit there and get rid of while those hormones that we need so badly are not being naive.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Are there other things we can do to relax? I know that a lot of people have a habit of having that glass of wine or that beer when they get home at the end of the night. What are some better habits that people can employ to relax and sleep?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

I think that's such a very good question because again, it goes to our culture being so, if you think about it, 20 years ago, if anybody said anything about what I'm about to say, people would've said what? Meditation and breathing help people relax and focus on themselves. And that's something that we never focus on because if you take care of yourself, your body's not gonna crave the alcohol. You're right. Drinking is a habit. Drinking is not necessarily that we're all alcoholics, it's just the habit.

It's something that you do because everybody else is doing it, not because you need it. So, what happens is that if you create other habits, you can get rid of the habit of drinking and alcohol. Breathing to me is a really important thing to do because we don't breathe. None of us breathe because breathing is an eastern way of looking at things and Americans never breathe. So now we're starting to breathe. Breathing will rebalance and move us from being in a sympathetic mode all the time, meaning like in fight or flight all the time, releasing cortisol, making our bodies like go crazy all the time into parasympathetic, which is calm that we're seeking when we're drinking that glass of wine.

We're seeking it erroneously because it's not going to really help us. It'll just create a cascade of bad stuff going on. So, breathing is a very important way. The other thing is meditation. And you know, when you say to people, meditation to this day, I have patients, and I am blessed to have a really great group of patients who are very evolved and they're working very hard on keeping their health and focusing on optimizing their health. But sometimes when I say meditation, they'll be like, what? I can't meditate. I can't. So instead of saying meditation, one thing I say is just sit there sitting alone without a glass of wine and just breathe. If you could go for a walk in nature, it's beautiful. If you live where we live, it's the middle of Alaska basically.

It's so cold here, you can't do it now. But being in a calm space or creating a calm space is helpful because that's what the habit of alcohol is really trying to create. That's why we're trying to create that. And alcohol is not gonna do it, but trying to relax and stretch because people overexercise. That's another thing that happens more and more that people say, okay, I'm gonna exercise. I'm not gonna drink, I'm now gonna exercise. But then they overexercise and over-exercise does pretty much not a lot of good because as you get older, you'll get injured and injury is like the death of us because injury is the worst thing you want, the last thing you want.

Try walking, sitting, relaxing without alcohol and increasing the amount of water you drink. Instead of getting a glass of alcohol, why not get a glass of water and then not eating and drink at the same time. I think that that's one important thing that somehow we don't focus on, which is if you don't drink while you're eating, your body will have more digestive enzymes to process the food will help your liver detoxify things better. It will help your whole system from bloating and getting all kinds of unnecessary side effects and. It's gonna stop you from drinking alcohol.

Ads 47:12

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

I think it's important also to work on emotional trauma, doing that bio energetically or doing EMDR, you know, any kind of bioenergetic type of modality because that's the root cause of a lot of people's drinking and addictions. I really like supplementing with GABA. I think that's really important because we live in such stressful environments that we use up a lot of our GABA, that the breaks for the more

excitatory neurotransmitters. So, I really like the form phenyl gaba. You don't find that very often. That's the kind that works really, really well. That's really key to facilitating sleep and relaxation.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

I couldn't agree more. I think that it's really important to realize that when you're talking about diet and how you're eating and making eating a family affair, sitting down at the table and eating and cooking at home instead of getting all the junk that we buy outside because that helps not just for us to feel better, but it helps the connection. And when you talked about trauma, which I couldn't agree with you more, I think we're all suffering with intergenerational trauma. We're all suffering with so much that we're carrying. I think COVID started exposing it and we started paying attention to it a little bit. But it's people like you and me and then not too many of us really who are seeing it. I have a lot of patients, as I said to you, who are very involved and very smart, and they'll go and they'll do the mushrooms and the ketamine and they'll do all kinds of EMDR and all kinds of therapies to help them deal with the intergenerational trauma.

You need to deal with that, but not everybody can afford it, and not everybody even knows it exists. If you stop for a second, like I said, and just sit there alone, like journaling or doing anything that focuses you inward, you'll actually help yourself. You don't really need the outside world to help you. And I think part of this trauma that we're all suffering from is also helping us deal with forgiveness, being peaceful, being able to support the other person and not being judgmental and thinking like, oh, this person's behaving poorly because they're bad.

You don't really know what's going on in anybody else's mind, but you can focus on what's going on in your mind and forgive yourself. Be kind to yourself and break the intergenerational trauma cord that you have gotten from your parents, your grandparents, etcetera. When you're talking about GABA and other supplements, you go back for one second to hormones since removing them completely out of them. Let me also say something else. When your hormones are in balance, everything else works. And we can make everything, I shouldn't say everything else works. When your

hormones are in balance, you have the foundation to make everything work. So that doesn't mean that hormones are the only solution.

The hormones are the foundation. Once you have the foundation, then you should really address everything else from intergenerational trauma. To your diet, supplements, exercise, stress management, sleep, and everything else. And the more pieces you address, the more likely you are to create a full picture of what works for you. I think that's really probably the most important message about hormones because supplements, as far as I'm concerned, I started using supplements about 20 years ago and being a conventionally trained doctor, I was told everybody said supplements are crazy. These people are nuts. Why would they use supplements? They affect every part of your body. That's crazy. So, it took me literally two or three years to understand that not only was that not crazy, but every drug we give people has affects every part of our body. Only it's called the side effect. It was so stupid.

I've been working with supplements and I think supplements are really crucial and critical to putting together the right picture, helping people like detoxify and balance hormones. There are a lot of very important pieces to the supplements, and you are the expert at supplements and we know that. I think it's so important to understand because back to that alcohol depletes your vitamin A, D, K, B1, B2, B3, and B6. They're all depleted when you're drinking. That's crucial

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, deplete zinc too, which you need to make testosterone.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Totally, and magnesium, it depletes really pretty much everything and we don't even know because there's no research there to show you how terribly destructive they are. So, you're right, totally right. I couldn't agree more.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I wanted to talk about one reason why some people might wanna drink it is just the lack of progesterone. When as women we get in our late thirties, forties, that progesterone really takes a nose dive and you're going to feel more stressed. You're gonna have a lower tolerance for stress, harder time calming down, and you're gonna have trouble sleeping. And I spent my whole forties looking for sleep solutions. I took every supplement. I was doing all kinds of stuff, and I just had a lack of progesterone. That was all. For the most part what it was. That's why I say I wish I would've started testing earlier. I always thought, oh, that's a menopause thing. The low hormones are for women in menopause. But, there are so many things working against our hormones today, including toxins and all the things that we talk about on the show.

Can you talk about progesterone and the replacement of that? I started taking progesterone creams which only give you like five or 10 milligrams. I would take that and I thought, that's not really doing, I don't really feel much different. I'm taking 600 milligrams of progesterone every night.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

This is like, oh, there. You take what's right for you, which means you have to figure it out with somebody who actually cares about you. But I give progesterone to teenagers. When they have PMS, we give them progesterone and they feel better. Progesterone stays with us for our entire reproductive life. Progesterone is the hormone that we make after we ovulate. So, every month, for half the month we have progesterone. If we get pregnant, we make even more progesterone. If we are not pregnant, we get rid of the estrogen and progesterone and get our periods.

Progesterone is a wonderful hormone. It balances out the effects of estrogen, testosterone and cortisol, everything else. The beauty of it is that we have access to it. It's been around. They have FDA-approved and compounded progesterone. There are a million ways you can get progesterone, but if you look at the science behind it, progesterone gets absorbed at the best in injectable form, which I would never recommend to anybody because why would you take shots?

The second way to get it in is you could put it in your vagina and it gets absorbed. And by the way, anything you put in your vagina really gets absorbed systemically

because there's blood flow and everything's connected. So, when your doctor says, I'm gonna give you something that is only local for your vagina, they're out of their minds because it's not true. It goes everywhere. So, progesterone intra vaginally gets absorbed. Orally is the next thing. The creams are the least absorbable, but they still get absorbed. You have to figure out what works best for you and then take it. I work in particular with a compounded form, and it's very easy to find a compounder to do it with a compounded form of slow release, which releases the progesterone over the course of the night, so it keeps you asleep so you don't wake up like at three o'clock in the morning and then you figure this out on your own, literally if you're taking it earlier or later in the evening. And the results are really magnificent.

I think progesterone is really crucial and we don't talk about it enough. You go and get it at the drugstore. And then there are a lot of formulations that you really need someone who knows the formulation that will work for you and knows how to try various formulations to get you the right formulation.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think it's really important to get it from a compounding pharmacy and there's the synthetic progesterone out there that you might get if you get a prescription from a doctor that is not really focused on hormones or just thinking conventionally and giving the Premarin or what have you.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

You know what, don't go to those doctors. If your doctor starts telling you that, tell them bioidentical hormones. They used to be called natural before they were called bioidentical because they are natural. That's what you want. And then if the doctor starts writing you for birth control pills or starts writing you for Premarin or Provera or Norges or whatever, any kind of non-progesterone or estradiol, just say goodbye and find somebody there. There are a lot of people nowadays who really know how to work with bioidentical hormones, so please don't use anything else.

Dr. Wendy Myers

That was my first foray. I went to a doctor that said that they do bioidentical hormones, but when I went to the pharmacy that I had, they gave me Premarin

Dr. Erika Schwartz

You know why? The insurance companies will substitute because there is progesterone and estradiol that is FDA-approved and they're bioidentical formulations. The pharmacies will substitute with non-human identical, like pregnant horses, urine Premarin, they will substitute it because that's what the insurance pays for. So be careful. Make sure you're careful and you know what you're doing and work with a provider who knows what they're doing too.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I didn't realize that the pharmacy might substitute that. You've gotta be very, very careful because they're not making that discernment. That's why it's really important to get it from a doctor who's working with a compounding pharmacy to get that actual real bioidentical hormone.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

There are like estradiol, estrogen, and Divigel patches that are FDA approved that are the right thing. Then you have the progesterone. In Europe it's called Utrogestan, which has been around for a lot longer than we've been around, but it is progesterone. Make sure it says micronize progesterone. And if that's not what it says, you don't want it.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think it's so important, like I mentioned before, testing early, even if it's just for baseline, just see where you're at. If you're in your late thirties, you're in your forties or certainly in menopause. I don't advise doing menopause without hormones. There are a lot of problems women have. I started finding that I was pulling muscles. I'd go on a walk and I would pull a muscle in my butt. This was like a year or two after I had gotten into menopause. And every time I'd go to the gym, I would injure myself and I'm like, what is going on? It was just a lack of estrogen. You start having a lot of musculoskeletal issues and pulling muscles easily because of a lack of estrogen.

Replacing estrogen and taking BPC 157 peptides has helped to stop that problem so I can live my life and go to the gym

Dr. Erika Schwartz

And look the way you do. You look like you're 35 years old. But this is the thing, we work with peptides and I teach in the peptide courses at A4M too and peptides are amazing. We need to realize that some of the hormones are peptides. Oxytocin and insulin are peptides, and so you want to make sure, like you said, the BPC 157, which is an amazing peptide work to put things together. As I said, the more pieces to the puzzle, the more likely you are to come up with a great response result.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Let's talk about what you mentioned about some health issues related to drinking alcohol. Can you give us a little bit more like some other health issues related to alcohol consumption? I had a friend of mine who was 49 years old. I've known him since my teens, and he was a sommelier. He sold wines to restaurants. The guy was a picture of health. He worked out two hours a day. He was in all respects very healthy, ate amazing food. He died of colon cancer at 49, and it was just all that alcohol that he was sampling and trying and becoming an expert in.

And certainly there are other factors involved too, but I think there are a lot of different health issues that can come with drinking a lot of alcohol. What are those?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Everything. Alzheimer's disease. If you keep in mind what you said, which is exactly the way to look at it, alcohol is pure liquid sugar. So, once it gets into your system, what it will do is reap the havoc that you are trying to avoid by not eating a lot of bread and not eating junk. So, I had a patient actually who died in her fifties because as far as I'm concerned, she was on hormones and she was doing really well. It turns out that every night she would eat like a whole box of candy and have like a couple of glasses or five glasses of cognac or something like that, which is like a really heavy-duty alcohol. That's why she died. She died because she was doing herself a

disservice by not realizing that taking hormones and exercising and doing everything else was not enough.

What diseases will alcohol cause? Every disease you can think of, starting with obesity. 43% of our country is obese, and that should be on everybody's diagnosis. It should be that they are obese because they're the root cause of diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, Alzheimer's, dementia, and all the problems with cardiovascular disease. And then you look at the cancers and how the whole thing started with alcohol, about the black box warning that there's seven kinds of cancer starting from thyroid, tongue, liver, pancreas, colon, ovarian, and all of these cancers that are directly related and connected. The risk is increased with the drinking of alcohol. So, I don't know how much more we need to pay attention to realize that we can protect ourselves and should be able to protect ourselves by getting rid of alcohol.

Ads 1:06:57

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

I saw that study come out. It really kind of hit home, and I just decided, you know what? I just don't need alcohol anymore. I don't even really like it that much. I've never been a big drinker, but I was having a glass of wine here and there, maybe every week or two, and I was like, you know what? I can live without that. And about two or three months ago, I'm like, I'm done. I don't want any more alcohol. It affects my sleep and there's no benefit whatsoever. There's no benefit that's worth all these other factors that we talked about. I just don't need it in my life. I don't want it. I'll have it maybe occasionally if I go out to dinner or something like that. I'm just fine.

Dr. Erika Schwartz

New Year's Eve, get a glass of champagne by all means. You're going to some to a wedding or to some celebration, have a glass of something, but don't have something every day. Don't destroy what you're putting so much effort into, which is your health because you are destroying it with alcohol.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Well, Dr. Schwartz, thanks so much for coming on the show. That was really, really good. I love tying the hormones and alcohol. I think a lot of people don't realize how they're destroying their hormones and undermining their health in many different ways by trying to relax at the end of the night. Why don't you tell us about your clinic, how people can work with you, and whatnot?

Dr. Erika Schwartz

Well, you can find me on Instagram as @drerikaschwartz. The clinic is Evolved Science. You can find that on Instagram too, email, or call us. We do a lot of telemedicine. We take care of our patients. We love them and we really show care. It's all about caring, really. At the end of the day, if you have a provider who cares about you, you'll thrive.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Go to eshealth.com. Erika, thanks so much for coming on the show. Everyone, I'm Dr. Wendy Meyers. Thanks for tuning in every week to the Myers Detox Podcast. I love bringing all these experts on to really help you make those distinctions that you need to make so you can make better health decisions for yourself so that you can live that long, healthy life that you deserve. Thanks for tuning in. God bless.

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