



#608 Everyday Toxins Are Causing The Autoimmunity Epidemic (And How to Protect Yourself) With Dr. Aly Cohen

Dr. Wendy Myers

Hello, welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. My name is Dr. Wendy Myers. I'm your host. On this show, we talk about everything related to heavy metals, chemicals, and the health issues caused by these various toxins. We also touch on bioenergetics, anti-aging, and more advanced topics in health than you'll hear on other shows. This is just an extension of my personal journey in health and my personal curiosity and passion for teaching you about your health and the true underlying root causes of your health issues, many of which you're not gonna hear at your doctor's. But today we've got a great guest, Dr. Aly Cohen. She is a medical doctor and she's written a new book called Detoxify. She's gonna be talking to us today about autoimmune diseases and toxins, which are one of the underlying root causes of autoimmune diseases. She spent five years writing this book. It's very, very thorough.

We talk about different toxins that contribute to autoimmune disease, her 21-day detox program, where she walks you through your home to get rid of the most toxic sources from things that you're using, your beauty products, cleaning products, et cetera, to shut off that toxin switch, the inflow of toxins in your body. It is a really, really interesting discussion today. It is very thoughtful and methodical 'cause Dr. Cohen has been researching this for a very long time. She's a rheumatologist, so she's an expert in autoimmune and really spent a lot of time, effort, and research writing this book to educate you about the underlying root causes of autoimmune and the

whole mechanisms by which we're gonna discuss how toxins cause autoimmune diseases. Tune in if you're dealing with any kind of autoimmune issue.

Our guest, Dr. Aly Cohen, is triple board-certified in rheumatology, internal medicine, and integrative medicine, as well as an environmental health expert in Princeton, New Jersey. She's on the faculty of the Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine, where she created and manages the environmental medicine curriculum for medical colleagues. Dr. Aly Cohen is the co-author of the bestselling consumer guidebook, *Non-Toxic: Guide to Living Healthy in a Chemical World*, published by Oxford University. She's also part of the Dr. Weils Health Healthy Living Guides. Her new book, *Detoxify: The Everyday Toxins Harming Your Immune System and How to Defend Against Them*, connects the dots between everyday chemicals and the epidemic rise and immune disorders and autoimmune diseases, and what we can all do about it. You can learn more about Dr. Aly's work at thesmarthuman.com and alycohenmd.com. Dr. Cohen, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Dr. Aly Cohen

Oh, my pleasure. Thank you so much for having me.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Why don't you tell us a little bit about your background and why you're so passionate about toxins and the health issues that they cause?

Dr. Aly Cohen

Well, I've been doing rheumatology as a conventional Western rheumatology for 22 years. Then I layered in integrative medicine 'cause I hadn't learned enough. I hadn't gone to school long enough. I guess haven't paid for my education long enough. Then I started to understand environmental health and chemicals about 15 years ago. And sadly, it was because my dog got ill. He was a puppy, and he got autoimmune hepatitis, and it just kind of opened up my world. And so now, 22 years later, from putting all of this stuff together and having seen what I've seen in terms of the explosion of immune and autoimmune diseases at younger ages without any family history, it really inspired me to put this all together, with the science, with the

evidence-based information and connect the dots between environment, lifestyle, and the increase in diseases that we're seeing across the board.

Dr. Wendy Myers

What does the data show? What's going on? What is causing this explosion, because autoimmune diseases are the fastest-growing subset of diseases in the world?

What's going on?

Dr. Aly Cohen

At this point, the numbers are variable in terms of incidents because it's so hard to diagnose autoimmune and immune disorders. We know that it's complicated in humans as opposed to animal and occupational studies, where we have a lot more data. Again, in human studies, it can be variable, but what we do know is that between 7 and 14% of the US population now has at least one diagnosed autoimmune disease. So we know that this is increasing over time. The numbers have shown this not only in the US but around the world. 1% of the US population and around the world has rheumatoid arthritis. The argument, oh, we're getting better at diagnosing, has been really pushed back because we only have 15 minutes with our physicians. The expanse of what we're looking at in terms of autoimmune conditions has really exploded.

It's not a matter of diagnosing and getting better at diagnosing so much as it is happening, and we're seeing very confusing situations as well. Not every single disease fits and checks off every box. So we get a lot of in-between cases of mixed connective tissue disease and autoimmune, that's mixed. But essentially, we are seeing this explosion. The connection with the environment is not just Oh, we have more chemicals. There is a strong association between what we live, eat, breathe, put on our skin, use feminine care products, and various illnesses that we're seeing. I think what we're trying to do, you and I and all the colleagues who understand science, is share that with the public.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Can you talk about all the environmental chemicals and heavy metals that can be contributing to this, and how?

Dr. Aly Cohen

I use the examples in the book that have the most heavily weighted evidence all the way through the ones that are newer and we are discovering new research. So, for instance, BPA (Bisphenol A), which was one of perhaps the earliest, most well-studied of what are called endocrine-disrupting chemicals, has the ability to disrupt hormones and how they signal throughout the body and create different physiologic effects. We now know enough about that endocrine-disrupting capability. We also see the immune system capability of BPA to affect receptor numbers, to affect a whole bunch of cytokine release, homeostasis of the immune system in terms of balance signaling, and also direct effects even on the gut microbiome.

We can say this for other classes, not just the bisphenols, which BPA is just one of, but we also see that even with. Phthalates, which are thousands of them per fluor, alcohols, which are the forever chemicals, there are thousands of those. And then of course, heavy metals as well. Each chemical has its own properties, its own half-life, its own toxicity wrist in terms of neurotoxicity or liver toxicity in terms of what we've discovered. So, every chemical can't be lumped entirely together. But what I'm trying to share is that with each bit of information that we get for each chemical and human, along with other studies, it's additive, even synergistic in terms of health effects.

Ads 07:54

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 the 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 on 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

Okay, fantastic. Can you talk about how these chemicals affect the immune system and make it misguided? It misguides the immune system, so then it starts attacking innate tissues.

Dr. Aly Cohen

It goes to the mechanisms that have been theorized and studied actually in animal studies. We do know, for instance, one of the most common discussions is around what's called molecular mimicry. And so what it's really discussing is some of these chemicals that the human body has never seen in all of the 4.5 million years of evolution. These chemicals have only been in human existence for 75 years at best. I think that's hard for us to wrap our heads around, but when it comes to molecular

mimicry, our body hasn't had the time to evolve to recognize these chemicals as part of being different, being enemies. And if they have, they go after them, but they also have self-antigen capabilities where they're looking at chemicals that are very similar.

Two proteins and antigens are essentially in the human body, and the immune system gets confused. And so that is one mechanism. There are several others. There are problems with apoptosis or the kill switch in terms of turning off the immune system cells. There are different components of what's called the inflammasome, which is this cellular activity, the cytosol in cells themselves as a surveillance mechanism, recognizing foreign activity and basically revving up the immune system. So, depending on the chemical that's being studied and at what level, whether it's the cell or tissue of the organs, all the way to the communication and receptor numbers, there are various components of how the immune system is affected by various chemicals.

Dr. Wendy Myers

One prime example is autoimmune thyroiditis. I have whole charts of all the different heavy metals and what glands and organs they tend to gather in. And when you have a sensitivity to mercury, so to speak, or an antigen to mercury and that mercury is in your thyroid, your thyroid's going to get attacked.

Dr. Aly Cohen

For sure, and mercury in the brain as well. And so even though we're talking about some of the components of early dementia and Parkinson's and some of those aspects, you're talking about thyroid disease, there's no question that the environmental components can get stuck and have effects on specific glands. Iodine is one of my favorite conversations in my book because I'm talking about how iodine is protective. When I talk about selenium, I'm talking about how it's protective to the brain, even in terms of mercury, where there's a whole argument as to whether or not selenium can offset some of the harm of methylmercury.

But to your point, these chemicals can get in. They like different tissues. Lead likes bone, mercury likes muscle. There are various components of the human body that

we find different, varying levels of exposure. That's actually a way to target and be proactive through nutrition and through reduction of exposure. So that combination happens to be very powerful.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Do you recommend detoxification to help reduce or have autoimmune symptoms go into remission?

Dr. Aly Cohen

I'm not a cowgirl or a cowboy, certainly, but not a cowgirl like me. I very much like to use people's own physiology. I love anthropology. I studied that for years. And so what I really talk about at the very get-go is let's stop the flood of these chemicals into our bodies. I put in a just 50-question survey where people can go through and put a one or a zero and add up the numbers. And they're very reasonable questions. Do you vet your personal care products for safety? Do you dry clean your clothes? Do you drive in polluted areas with poor air quality into cities for commuting? Those kinds of simple questions just to get a starting point, because how the book is laid out is that it actually goes along with the four A's that I created for teaching. The first one is assess. You need to kind of assess to get an idea of what you're living in, what rooms and worlds you're walking through, and the exposure your body is seeing. Assessing is really critical to the whole process because you wanna stop the flood of those exposures when you understand where they're coming from.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think people are shocked when they realize all the different exposures that they have. Yeah. And the number one is the air. That's the number one exposure. You can't see it, you usually can't smell it, but that's the number one entry point of toxins into your body. I was shocked when I found that out.

Dr. Aly Cohen

Yeah, it is true. You can't live without breathing, and you don't always see what you need to see. And then I also would say, along those lines, would be water that is very unrecognized as a contributor to human health. We spent a lot of time, as you know,

on food, and food is certainly critical. We have to eat, and we talk about macros like fats, carbs, and protein, and how much per day, blah, blah, blah, but I really focus on the quality of anything you eat or drink or have in your air quality. Quality to me, sort of overrides some of the big macros because you can't do everything. I'm a realist, right? Color my hair. I go to lacrosse practice with the kids on turf. There's exposure. You're never going to be able to control, and there are things that you may wanna do no matter what. So I'm very realistic about even with the four A's being assessed.

The rest are avoid, add, which we'll get into, and then allow, happens to be number four, which is life. I really built that into this process, as you said. Do I detoxify in any real chemical way at the get-go? I do not. I really start with what we can all wrap our heads around, which is assessing, removing, not buying, vetting. And that is a huge reduction in terms of exposures to begin with.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Let's talk about add. What is that part of the protocol?

Dr. Aly Cohen

Assess, avoid is looking up, vetting, swapping what you want with different products that may be safer, getting rid of all the cleaners that we don't need, that kind of thing. The third is add, and as you mentioned, and it really has a lot to do with in terms of anthropology, evolution, and physiology. The human body has needed certain nutrients to function, detoxify properly, support detoxification processes like in the liver, in terms of upregulating stage two conjugation, which breaks down a lot of these modern day chemicals by adding in certain nutritious components, cruciferous vegetables, clean drinking water, less toxic foods, maybe organic is a good choice, washing produce, adding in exercise, which allows us to sweat and support that detoxification process, adding in sleep, which supports the lymphatic system, removal of chemicals while we sleep, and adding in actually supplements that are very critical that we don't get enough of from diet. I keep it very simple, and I add those into that section as well, because you want all hands on deck in order to really walk through life. You just wanna do it in a way that makes sense and is really reasonable for your life.

Ads 18:24

I wanna give a shout out to one of our sponsors today. It's Tru Energy Skincare, and this is the skincare line that I'm using, and they have an amazing product out. It's called the Energy Optimized Body Sculpting Stone that you see right here. I also love their refreshingly revitalizing hand in body lotion. I use this every single day. This is part of my nightly routine, using the sculpting stone and the body lotion. I love Tru Energy Skincare and the sculpting system. It's called the True Energy Body Sculpting System, designed to support lymphatic detox and fascia repair.

The protocol targets the acupuncture points to activate the body's natural detox pathways. So what I'm doing every night is putting the lotion on, and then I go over my whole body a few times with this stone. You go over your entire body and they have a little information kit to guide you on what to do. This stone is made of natural ion stone and it's energy-optimized with Tru Energy's proprietary biophoton frequencies. We sometimes refer to them as beauty frequencies, helping to communicate to the body at a cellular level to act as if it's young again. So it's sending new information and frequencies to your skin to improve collagen, improve elasticity, help with lymphatic flow, and help with flushing and detoxification of your skin.

When paired with the bioactive functional hand and body lotion, it enhances hydration. It combats dullness and brings out a healthy glow. The lotion is also energy optimized with the same proprietary frequencies, using a little green bead inside it that has all the frequencies imprinted on it. This powerful combo is ideal for those dealing with premature skin aging, cellulite, feeling bloated or swollen, and all the signs often linked to stagnant lymph flow and toxin buildup. You can get this duo at trytruenergy.com/wendy2. You can get this combo at that link.

Again, I do this every single night. I'm absolutely in love with Tru Energy Skincare because everything I do in my life is frequency-based. You guys know that, if you've been listening to this show, I'm obsessed with bioenergetics. I've got bioenergetic software running, but everything I do has frequencies imprinted on it, and everything that I use that includes my skincare. I cannot recommend Tru Energy highly enough.

Dr. Wendy Myers

That makes sense because most people don't take enough minerals, and are mineral deficient. Minerals help push out and displace heavy metals. So it's a really important thing to add to your diet

Dr. Aly Cohen

Oh yeah. And that's why a multivitamin addresses the selenium and the iodine. So I talk about just a very high-quality multivitamin as one of the four human fertilizer supplements that I think every human being should be on. And those metals that you're talking about really offset some of the harms, some of the support mechanisms, the C and B vitamins. The idea is that life is so busy. We're so busy, we don't always get quality nutrition. The food system actually, unfortunately, is at such a state that we don't even see the levels of nutrition in leafy green whole foods that we like to see because of the way they travel long distances to get to our supermarket.

Whether the soil quality is up to snuff, whether or not spraying offsets some of that nutrient value. Modern-day systems really work against human physiology in many ways. And so we have to think about adding that in a very reasonable, cost-effective way. That doesn't mean we have to sit there and try to find eight vegetables and fruits every day, which most people can't wrap their heads around or have time for.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Even you eat a super well-balanced diet, you're not getting what you need

Dr. Aly Cohen

That's unfortunate. I'm with you on that. Yeah,

Dr. Wendy Myers

Unfortunately even though it's all organic, you're just stuffing your face full of fiber and fruits and vegetables. It's just not enough. I like the concept of allow. That's really important because life gets in the way. I color my hair too. I know I've preached to you guys about high fives. I've preached to you guys about dyeing your hair. I've written articles about that like, don't do it. But, I get my nails done, but I do it with my

eyes wide open. It's a known exposure also, like going to Cheesecake Factory or going to a restaurant that we go to on occasion. You're getting lots of pesticides and glyphosate and seed oils and et cetera, et cetera. So, when you know you're having an exposure, I take lots of binders.

If I get my hair color, I take tons of binders and C60s sixties and citrus pectins and all that stuff. I didn't know about the exposure. I do things to counteract that. So even if you control everything in your life, you're fully 100% aware of everything that's in your mattress and then this and that, and you take every precaution possible, you are still going to get tons of toxins every day. So it's okay to make certain choices that might not be so savory. And I've had people call me a hypocrite before, and like, oh, you dye your hair. I'd leave comments on YouTube. I'm like, well, so what? If I breathe, I'm about balance. Getting toxins is about balance.

Dr. Aly Cohen

It's about balance, and because this book is really for the consumer, this isn't for biohackers, this is for consumers. This is every day people like you and I. The way I look at it, I guess biohackers could learn a lot from it too, if you think about it. But the idea that life is just variable even by access. Maybe you desire to get fruits and vegetables in your place where they don't even have those things. Maybe you're traveling, maybe you have to drink bottled water because you don't have your fancy stainless steel bottle.

These are all the exceptions to what we try to do at home. So the 80/20 rule really works. And I will say this throughout the book, I actually was putting in things I discovered over the years. And so when it comes to nails, for instance, and I don't do my nails a lot, but when I do and I want people to know what I've sort of figured out, which is, don't use the lotions for the massage. Don't get that stuff they put into the water bath. Avoid it. Bring your own lotion. I even have a base coat. It's clear that you can score a one on all of the apps, like Think Dirty Yuca, EWG, you can bring your own stuff, BYOS, you know what I mean? And so I'm very much into bringing my water to dinner because I clean it at home with reverse osmosis and it's just a habit I've gotten into. I don't want people to get overwhelmed, but there are hacks for pretty much everything we do in a very reasonable way.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I do the same. I take my own water to restaurants, and when I get a massage, I bring my own natural organic oil. Yeah. I don't want their weird chemical oil soaking into me. But yeah, there are lots of little hacks you can do like that. Tell us about your 21-day detox and your immune system defense system that you developed.

Dr. Aly Cohen

The 21-day plan was put in an order of the four A's assess, avoid, and add and then, allow, and that sort of helps people do what they need to do for those 21 days and the 21 days are so simple that it's like day one, do this, day two, do this, day three, do this. One of the biggest hurdles I've had with patients over 22 years is really, most people don't know where to start. It seems so overbearing and overwhelming and I think that having read the book and it's at the end, but having read the book and gotten a feel for why we do what we're going to be doing or why we're gonna move in that direction, you want people to have sort of the let's get started and let's do this now.

I think it's made it very simple. It's gotten the most feedback from every swath of every demographic, every group of people that have read the book so far. It's just been out for a few weeks, but the idea is that we wanna keep it as simple as possible because it's such a broad topic.

Dr. Wendy Myers

There's a lot you can do in detox, as you might have gathered from my 600 episodes on this detox podcast. There are a lot of levels and layers you can go to, but you have to start somewhere. I never dreamed I'd be doing all the crazy things I'm doing right now. When I first started with detoxification, my beginning was just taking minerals. That's it. That's all I did when I first started. So you can start out very, very simple, like the outline in your book, and then you can build from there. But exactly, Rome was not built in a day. There's no pressure. You just need to get started and start learning about this stuff.

Dr. Aly Cohen

Once you own it, like for instance, I'm almost gamifying the process. At a certain point, I went from the beginning 15 years ago, when I was learning about the lack of regulation and chemicals in the US. I had never heard of that before. I learned about the drinking water regulations that are still back from 1974, Safe Drinking Water Act which covers only 91 cabin goals even now in our water systems. I started back then on the ledge so overwhelmed. I was so pissed at what I hadn't learned in med school and all those years in training and residency. I was really upset. I was freaked out. I started off very much on the ledge, and as life took over, as family and work and just obligations took over, you start to balance out what really fits in your life.

I think at this point I can say I've gone through this arc where I don't even do a lot of testing. Honestly, Wendy, I don't even in my medical practice, I always say we're contaminated until proven otherwise, right? I've done enough testing to know that we actually have a lot of stuff in our bodies, even with half-lives that are shorter than others, or changing some of these behaviors. There's going to be something in our bodies. The best way to keep working and spending your money wisely is actually on the ways to have success on the doing right.

I don't want people to spend so much money on the testing, which varies day to day, minute to minute, meal to meal, but really focuses on, Hey, I'm gonna buy frozen USDA organics, and they're not really that more expensive 'cause they're frozen, but they are so nutritionally packed. Let me do that and spend my money there. Get a massage for stress management that affects the gut microbiome. Let's get a reverse osmosis filter for three, \$400 with a plumber who's 150. Let's put money into the solutions, as opposed to the testing and fear.

Ads 29:51

I wanna say a couple of words about one of our Myers Detox Podcast sponsors, Qualia Senolytic. It's a cutting edge formula designed to help your body eliminate senescent cells, also known as zombie cells. These outdated cells hang around draining your energy and slowing your workout recovery, and causing all kinds of havoc and mayhem. Backed by clinical research, Qualia uses nine plant-based compounds that support joint comfort, sharper focus, and better aging naturally. And here's the kicker, you only have to take it two days a month.

It is simple, backed by science, and validated by research. You can try it risk-free with a hundred-day money-back guarantee. Go to qualialife.com/wendy and use code Wendy to get 15% off. You wanna try Qualia Senolytic. This is something that I've been taking. It's part of my anti-aging protocol, because getting older doesn't have to feel like it.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I agree with you 'cause I've done all kinds of heavy metal and chemical testing and it's, I think it's great. It can be great if you can afford to do some heavy metals testing. I'd love hair mineral analysis, but there are urine tests that can test 200 different chemicals and it's interesting info, but we all have it. We all have chemicals and I don't know if it's not terribly constructive to know exactly what chemicals you have, that we all just need to optimize our detox pathways and sweating and pooping and getting our lymphatic system flowing and minerals and just help our body's natural detox processes. It's gonna be just fine for sure

Dr. Aly Cohen

I even put in, believe it or not, I'm so conscious of people's money and how much they spend that I put in ICD 10 codes for people to use LabCorp and Quest and National Labs. Why? Well, I've never seen a book that gives ICD-10 codes, which are validated by practitioners for those tests to insurance companies to pay for them. So for instance, very basic, whole blood cadmium, arsenic, lead, and mercury. It is a very, very simple test. You can get at any major lab you need to have just the ICD-10 code that allows for that to be covered for that test.

And I'll tell you, if you hand that to a healthcare practitioner who's allowed to order labs, isn't that great that it's covered by insurance and not having to be out of pocket so you can put towards your massage and great clean massage oil. I think it's a better use of our funds when we understand the system and have practitioners that support us in our request.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And just out of caution, I think looking for lead and blood is great. That's a great way to see it. But I think people can also get false negatives 'cause the body stores this stuff in our organs, in our nervous system or fat. It could be in your blood, but it might not also, right? So you don't get just a clean bill of health just because all your results came back negative in blood. It's a great starting point. If it's free, do it.

Dr. Aly Cohen

I've been seeing a lot of arsenic in that test recently. I start working with you to change, how much rice are you having? Actually in the book, I have a case about a person who is eating rice three times a day. Some of it's cultural, some of it's food choice. Some of it's the water system. And so as you walk through a lot of the things that I'm pointing out in the book, you start to be aware of where these inputs are coming from. And you can start generally moving through them and reducing those exposures without any cost.

If anything, it's cheaper because you're removing things. So, I do agree with you. There's a lot of false negatives. There's also a lot of false positives in my world of rheumatology with a NA positivity. And so all of this, if you have someone who can work through some of these labs. It's such a shame when people are so worried for weeks and months before they can get appointments with someone who they think can explain these things. I worry about over-testing 'cause you always have to worry about who's interpreting those tests. That's always going to be the problem. Who interprets the tests that you get?

Dr. Wendy Myers

And the information you're getting or not getting for solutions. I wish there was more heavy metals testing in the medical world because it's such a huge chemical and metals are such a huge cause of so many health issues. I wish it was more widespread.

Dr. Aly Cohen

It could be. I was thinking about how to scale no matter who you are, how do you scale what you know anymore? I mean, there's the internet, and there's a lot of social

media that can get very, but I thought to myself, this is how I scaled what I do in my office for people who can't get here or fly here, or do you know what I mean? Pay for whatever I offer, I want people to be able, and so do you. We want people to have information that's not stymied by access. And I think when people can start with the very basics and, like you said, add on to things that maybe they're clinically = symptomatic with a heavy metal exposure. They're not walking, well, if they're clinically symptomatic and someone can figure that out with the help of very simple, basic tests, that's where you have real change. You know what I mean? So screening is a really good place to start, especially if it's not expensive.

Dr. Wendy Myers

It's great to figure out what's causing this, why do I have this symptom? I'm always interested in the root cause rather than just, okay, I like band-aids too. I'll take a bandaid to reduce my symptoms any day of the week. But ultimately long long-term, I wanna know what the underlying root cause is so I can fix that.

Let's talk about the food pyramid because that's something you talk about in your book, and I'm so happy. RFK Junior is talking about redoing the food pyramid, which is so long overdue. What are your thoughts on that?

Dr. Aly Cohen

The food pyramid to me, I was trained by Dr. Andrew Weil. He has the anti-inflammatory pyramid, which is great. It's based on the Mediterranean diet, and I agree with all of it. Plant-based is the best way to work your way up in terms of saturated fats, dairy, chocolate, alcohol, those kinds of things. It's great. I looked at Mark Hyman's Pegan diet, and I was thinking about that as well, and then I kind of sat back and I thought, what are we missing here? We're missing detoxification at the base of the triangle of the pyramid in terms of very simple exercise, sleep, just some of the things we talked about, sauna, nutrition, meditation, those kinds of things. We're missing drinking water. Even above, I put that above detoxification because I think it's such a big deal that it's such an unrecognized contributor to health issues, and water can be fixed, for many people at very low cost.

And then, food packaging was there. So I think without understanding all the contributions and inputs where food packaging plays a role as well in terms of what choices we make and what we eat out of, whether it's canned foods that has BPA or we switch to frozen, we switch to fresh, how we understand PFAS and the per fluo alcohols in our food wrappers, how we store our food in plastic or glass. I think that's part of this big conversation when it comes to a food pyramid. And then I really did emphasize USDA organic whenever possible down the side, because I want people not to say, oh, that's just for the rich, or, I can't get that.

Well, turns out every big box food store in this country literally has its own. Organic produce in the frozen section. It's so lucrative, it's so popular and lucrative that people really do have more access to things that USDA organic produce. And it's so important because it's the only certification we actually have in the food system that actually has value. So, that's how the food pyramid came around. It was really just like, well, what would I really wanna share with people in terms of an image that really solidifies all of what I'm trying to say, and people can work through it. So that's how I came up with that.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, and you can get that in your book. What is the name of the book again?

Dr. Aly Cohen

Oh, I'm sorry. It's called Detoxify: The Everyday Toxins Harming Your Immune System And How To Defend Against Them. It has 50 patient cases. It has its symptom survey, so if you're starting off with symptoms, you can also do this 21-day plan and try to feel how you're moving along, how your symptoms are abating, because that's exactly what I talk about with some of the patients that I talk about in the book. I hope people find it. There's a lot of stuff in it. It's really what to do about the problem, not languishing and anguishing over the problem as much as what to do. And I think that's what's been missing in the toxin market, so to speak.

Dr. Wendy Myers

You said you'd spent five years writing this book. I interviewed for your last book as well. It was many, many, many years ago. You've been very busy writing this book.

Dr. Aly Cohen

This was non-toxic. As I like, look at all my little post-its for the next book. That was the second, the first one was a textbook with Fred Vum Saul and he pulled in all these incredible researchers. He is the guy who was responsible for getting BPA outta baby bottles in 2012. Some of your audience might remember that removal, but it didn't go out of anything else. Unfortunately, it was toxic enough to remove BPA from plastic baby bottles, but how does it not come out of canned foods and everything else we're exposed to? Needless to say, it took five years to really utilize what I teach high school and college students and I teach three medical physician training programs now on this material.

I thought, what is the trial and error of what people are receptive to? I had to make it so simple that an eighth grader who, by the way, has great questions, eighth graders could read this book as well as anyone who has a scientific background and still get the same value from it. And so it had to be simplified and that is no easy task. I worked through it and it came out at the right time. Who knew? We're getting all this attention now on toxins and every day you see something like, oh, I don't know if you live within six miles of a golf course, you have higher rates of Parkinson's. That's a lot to do with that water system issue. We're getting a lot more media attention for the problem. I think it's also, if you ask me, it's because more people are sick than they've ever been. And I think that will bring your attention level up a bit in terms of finding, you know, root causes and solutions.

Ads 40:34

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

It's true, and people are desperately looking for answers. A lot of people are not getting answers or underlying root causes from their doctors. They're going online, they're going on social media, and they're looking, they're searching for answers. It's how I found detoxification as well. I was not satisfied with the solutions that were presented to me. I love it that someone in the conventional medical community is talking about this and publishing and that there's so much more widespread awareness about this problem.

Dr. Aly Cohen

It's a tool. You know, Wendy, like the way I look at Ed Medicine as a way it should be, is that, look, Western medicine's great. I use all of the drugs that are available, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, all of these diseases and conditions have benefited by the fact that we have medications if we need them, but not everyone needs them. Think about the tools from integrative medicine, some of the functional medicine tools that we have available. A lot of that is the same philosophy about diet, nutrition, and lifestyle. And then here you have another tool that I'm hoping people will embrace. Why don't we start with getting rid of some of these chemicals that may be influencing our health conditions? Let's use that as a tool set to remove them and see what's left, see how we feel, see what our conditions do, and our inflammation levels. I just think that having all these reasonable evidence-based tools is how we get better solutions, not just band-aids or quick fixes or things that we unfortunately choose out of desperation.

Dr. Wendy Myers

If I had rheumatoid arthritis or I had a pain syndrome, I want pain pills. I want steroids. Well, you have to go through the pain to make decisions.

Dr. Aly Cohen

There's a triage component to anything. I agree with you.

Dr. Wendy Myers

You need to be able to manage your symptoms so that you can live your life while you're investigating the underlying root cause. It takes time not only to find the

underlying root cause of your health issues, but to address them successfully. It can take quite a bit of time to detox and make all these changes in your life to stop the influx of toxins in your body. It's just not an overnight process, but a necessary process nonetheless.

Dr. Aly Cohen

For sure. And look, we love our stuff. I love my hair coloring. I would've stopped decades ago. We love our stuff, and most of it doesn't necessarily smack you in the face and say, hey, I'm bad for you. So it's a matter of these subtleties. We now know, basically over time, the chemicals are inside us. They get into our bodies. We have levels available, but we don't always show clinical problems. It's certainly not genetic and transgenerational effects from exposures, which we really should be aware of, especially in pregnant women. We should be getting this in the hands of obstetrician-gynecologists.

They already have a position statement. We know that this is a topic that's infused into reproductive medicine, into endocrine society, into pediatrics, but it's not becoming part of daily conversation in these offices. I think that's where the training comes in and where we need to infuse this in medical schools and make it part of the culture. I think that would help our current situation a great deal.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Like I said, I'm so happy with the work that you're doing and that so many people are doing things. I've seen just this explosion in the last year or two, with so many more people talking about toxins and health, influencers talking about it, it's just really exploded, which I'm just thrilled about. People are paying more attention to it. Again, why don't you tell us where we can find your book and just give us some more info we can learn in it as well.

Dr. Aly Cohen

Okay, great. So while the book is available, I'll hold it up just for fun. It's available, obviously, online on Amazon. You can get it on Amazon, Barnes and Noble Bookshop. There are a couple of smaller book sellers that are actually online too. So yes, it's

online, and you can always go to thesmarthuman.com, which is my handle for TikTok and Twitter. Instagram is @smarthuman, but on the website, I actually even have small courses, one on heavy metals, one on EMF radiation, and I'm loading up more courses. So if people are interested in even taking a little bit of a deep dive on some of these individual topics, I have that there. Then I'm in Princeton, New Jersey. If people wanna come in, I'm still seeing patients. I love my job and my patients. So you can always see me in person. I do telemedicine online, and that's alycohenmd.com if people wanna reach me.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Well, Aly, thank you so much for coming on the show. I love having super knowledgeable people come on here, lay out and simplify this whole process 'cause it can get really overwhelming. I certainly felt overwhelmed in the beginning for sure. When you start learning about everything in your house, that's potentially problematic; it can be very overwhelming. So it's great to have a systematic, simplified approach like you lay out in Detoxify. So thanks for coming on the show.

Dr. Aly Cohen

Thanks, Wendy, for embracing me and your village. It's just wonderful because what you're doing is also sharing and bringing this to everyone's attention. So thanks for what you do and for having me on. I appreciate it

Dr. Wendy Myers

I have tons of fun doing this and love it, still very passionate about this topic, even after 12, 13 years. Everyone, I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. Thanks for tuning in. I do this show because I wanna help you make those distinctions, even if you just learn one or two things that can help change your life. That's why I do this. You deserve to feel good. You deserve to be healthy. You deserve to find out the truth and the underlying root causes of your health issues. So thanks for tuning in every week. There's way more to come. I've got, I think, a year of podcasts recorded right now, so we've got a lot more info coming to you. Thanks for tuning in.

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