



#630 Personalized Nutrition for Autism, ADHD & Neurodevelopmental Conditions: How Diet Transforms Brain Function & Behavior | Julie Matthews

Dr. Wendy Myers

Welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. I'm Dr. Wendy Myers, and on the show we talk about everything related to heavy metal and chemical toxicity, the health issues caused by toxins, and it's pretty shocking how many health issues have an underlying root cause of various toxins. We also talk about biohacking, anti-aging, bioenergetics, and more advanced topics than you'll hear on most podcasts. Today, we're gonna be talking about the ideal diet and nutrition for kids with autism, spectrum disorders for ADHD, and other kids with neurodevelopmental delays. We have my colleague Julie Matthews coming on. She has a new book out, and we're gonna be talking about that and her personalized nutrition plans for children with autism and other neurodevelopmental delays. So we have a lot of really good info.

We talk about the issues with gluten and dairy. We talk about food sensitivities and salicylates and oxalates and all these different things that can really have a profound impact on children's behavior. Even if your child doesn't have autism, if they're having some behavioral issues or they're having some hyperactivity or you suspect that they are, it's really important to learn about nutrition and its effect on your child's behavior 'cause it has more of an impact than you may realize. So we just

explore all those topics, including how to navigate picky eaters, which autistic children can tend to be, and some tips and tricks around that as well.

Our guest today, Julie Matthews MS is a certified nutrition consultant and published researcher specializing in personalized nutrition for complex neurological conditions, particularly autism spectrum disorder and ADHD for over 20 years. She received her Master's Degree in Medical Nutrition with distinction from Arizona State University. She's co-authored two research studies demonstrating the efficacy of nutrition and therapeutic diet intervention for autism spectrum disorder. Julie has a brand new book, The Personalized Autism Nutrition Plan. You can learn more about that at personalizedautismnutritionplan.com and her regular website, which is nourishinghope.com. Julie, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Julie Matthews

Thank you for having me.

Dr. Wendy Myers

You have a new book out, and so we're gonna talk about that. You talk about nutrition for children with ADHD and autism. It is super important to get their diet right. Why don't you talk a little bit about why you wrote this book?

Julie Matthews

Well, I've been working with families with autism and various neurodevelopmental conditions for over 20 years. Over time, I've just put together a way of working with families that was really able to help them personalize their diet and nutrition approach, 'cause I found that that was what was getting the best results. So I put it together in a book.

Dr. Wendy Myers

What are some of the underlying root causes of autism? I know there's a lot of speculation right now. My daughter had an autism diagnosis at one point, so this is something that's personal and important to me. And there's a lot of speculation right

now, like, oh my God, what causes autism? We know what causes it. What is your take on that?

Julie Matthews

Well, I think the important part is each individual is different and the areas that get impacted for them, what's underlying it for them is what we wanna use diet and nutrition to help support or heal or not aggravate further. That's what I look at, things like mitochondrial function, gut health, the microbiome, detoxification, inflammation, immune function, and those types of things because when we figure out what areas are really impaired in that individual or not optimally functioning, we can remove foods that irritate those systems. We can add nutrients and foods that help support them. That's really what's at the foundation of a personalized nutrition approach for these kids.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Why does diet help?

Julie Matthews

Because we can use diet for two things. One is to remove the areas that food might be inflaming the system, or feeding the microbiome in a negative way. We can remove problematic foods, and we can add nourishing foods that are going to help supply the nutrients they need for their brain to function and for their bodies to heal for epigenetic mechanisms that help their genes be as optimal as possible, function and express in an optimal way.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Let's talk about maybe a diet you'd recommend. Let's start with ADHD 'cause that's very common. A lot of children are dealing with that. There are environmental factors involved in the onset of that but what kind of diet helps kids with ADHD?

Julie Matthews

A lot of it is what's going on for them. So what helps one child with ADHD might be a different diet that helps another child. Generally speaking, my approach starts with a gluten-free and dairy-free diet. However, with that said, salicylates are a big factor in ADHD because we've known for decades that they can involve inflammation, inability to focus, and they can involve hyperactivity and irritability. Obviously, a couple of those are core symptoms in ADHD.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Can you tell us what the salicylates are and where you find them because they're in a lot of foods? It's tough to eliminate those.

Julie Matthews

We can find them in, unfortunately, as you said, a lot of good foods too, such as berries, spices, apples, grapes, almonds and honey. It is often nourishing healthy food. Knowing when to avoid them is important because otherwise they are healthy food. But when they are affecting our underlying biochemistry, they can really be a problem for us.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And it seems prudent to do food sensitivity testing to see what exact foods you have, what sensitivities you have. You can do testing if you're sensitive to salicylate so that you're not eliminating all kinds of foods that you might not need to. What kind of food sensitivity testing do you do?

Julie Matthews

I look to look at IgG testing or other types of sensitivity testing. It could be a cell-mediated type of response as well. Anything that's gonna give us a clue as to whether something might be causing inflammation to the system or triggering an immune system response. There are a variety of different tests out there. Again, it depends how somebody might be responding or reacting as to which one might yield some of the best results. But usually something like that we found even in our study that families found that using IgE and IgG testing was very helpful in getting results with diet approaches.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah 'cause then it changes frequently. So you have to retest on occasion as well.

Julie Matthews

Exactly.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I know it's frustrating because you can be sensitive to blueberries or bananas or things that you're eating every day and your smoothie. I had a friend of mine, I did some testing on her and she was sensitive to nuts and all she eats is nuts. Every single day she buys gigantic bags of nuts and she's been doing that for years and your immune system does not like the same foods over and over and over and over. We're just not designed for that.

Julie Matthews

You're right. When we do an elimination diet, we won't always take out things like blueberries or bananas. We wouldn't think of it because they're not the most common things to take out. Now, nuts probably are, but if you look at some of those other foods you mentioned, and even an elimination diet wouldn't normally remove those because they're not something that most people tend to be. But if we eat them a lot, they could be something that might be more likely to cause us a problem.

Dr. Wendy Myers

You can do a food elimination diet if you don't have health insurance or you don't have the money to do it, or your insurance doesn't cover the food sensitivity and allergy testing, you can do a food elimination diet. It's not easy to do in my opinion, but it can be done where you can, you're removing the top 10 most common food sensitivities. Can you talk about anyone who doesn't know the difference between food sensitivities and food allergies?

Julie Matthews

This is a good one because a lot of times parents will go in and they'll see online, oh, someone's child did really well with a gluten-free and dairy-free diet. So they'll go to their physician and they'll say, I think I would like to test if my child is allergic to milk and wheat, for example. An allergy is different from a sensitivity, and more often we're looking at sensitivity. So an allergy is like when you have strawberries or peanuts and you break out in hives immediately or you can't breathe or you go into anaphylactic shock or something.

Those are more allergies. Those are very immediate, acute responses. A sensitivity is a delayed immune system response, and so that one might not be something that you notice right away. It might be something that over time you have constipation or headaches or maybe digestive discomfort or something that's more chronic. It's sometimes more difficult to notice 'cause it doesn't happen so quickly like an allergy would.

Ads 10:23

And now a word from one of our sponsors. A big hidden stressor on our health today is something we're probably all staring at right now, blue light. From our phones, our laptops, our TV, our eyes and our circadian rhythm are constantly getting attacked. That's why I started using Bon Charge's blue light blocking products. Let me tell you, they have been a total game-changer. So I'm wearing the Maverick blue light blocking glasses right now, and they even come with their own prescription. So these are prescriptions, and that's what's prevented me from using blue light blocking glasses in the past because I wear prescription glasses for reading, and so I need a pair of blue light blocking glasses that are prescription.

Bon Charge's science-backed blue light blocking products allow you to mimic ancestral light sources from night to day. It is super important to use these products when the sun goes down, because when you are looking at blue light, you're basically communicating to your body that you're staring at the sun and you release cortisol and you suppress melatonin production so you don't sleep as well or it takes you longer to go to sleep, and that's just a disaster for your health long term. Trust me, you will feel the difference when you start using these blue light black and glasses from Bon Charge. And right now, my listeners will get 15% off when you order from

boncharge.com and use my exclusive promo code, Wendy at checkout. The discount applies sitewide on all of their amazing products. So that's boncharge.com. You also get free shipping and a 12-month warranty as well. So go now and get this exclusive offer. That's boncharge.com with promo code Wendy to get 15% off.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think what stumps people is that they can get all throat clearing or you can eat foods that on that day, your immune system is deciding it doesn't like it. You can get an allergy stress response to foods and then you wanna pass out afterwards. All these are just sensitivities to the foods that we're eating. Can you talk about autism and diet 'cause we know one of the features of autism is that they have a gut dysbiosis, maybe poor gut bacteria? If you give birth by cesarean section and you're not repopulating that baby's gut, maybe bifidobacteria and whatnot, you're not passing your good gut bacteria to your child. If you have a c-section, your child can start having some gut microbiome issues or not enough different types of bacteria in their gut, and they have digestive issues as a result. Can you talk about that?

Julie Matthews

Yes, it's very common to have dysbiosis in autism. In fact, there's more and more really good research coming out on how children with autism have very different gut bacteria and gut microbiome than neurotypical kids do. Like I said, there's literally more and more research coming out every day on this topic. So we know they tend to have more pathogenic organisms. They often have less of the beneficial probiotics. The gut and the brain are connected. There's this gut brain microbiome axis, and each of those areas is affected by each other and affected by the food we eat. So our microbiome affects our gut.

Our gut affects the microbiome. The microbiome affects our brain. All of those things affect each other and they're each influenced by diet. The good thing is that diet is something kind of in the middle of that triangle that can help support all of those because since the gut and the brain are connected, when the gut can't digest our food, we don't have the nutrients we need for the brain when there isn't any good bacteria. We can't make all of the short chain fatty acids and things we need for a

healthy gut and a healthy brain. We might have pathogens that can give off toxins, like lipopolysaccharides that can negatively affect the body and the brain.

So those are just a few of the ways that we can see and we know the gut and the brain are connected and how we can start to support kids by working on the health of the microbiome and the gut.

Dr. Wendy Myers

What kind of things do you recommend for people to repopulate the gut? This is something that everyone needs to be doing, even if they don't have any diagnoses or health issues. What kind of things are you recommending for children to populate a healthy gut?

Julie Matthews

I think you have a good point. It's something we should all do because we evolved over many years of getting this good bacteria in the soil, when we were working the soil, when we picked some food and we ate it. We weren't sterilizing everything that we brought in. And so we would naturally get these and we also fermented our foods in order to have more to preserve them. That was the primary way, we didn't like vegetables all winter, so we had to preserve them.

So we had this natural bacteria coming in all the time. And so that was something that we should all be doing because that's how nature, I think, intended it. Fermented foods are a good way. I feel like those are great things that we can do. They got that nice alive bacteria on there. We can also have different probiotics. Now, when you get into probiotics, you get into a whole world of like which types of probiotics and who needs which probiotics, and do you have an imbalance in the gut microbiome? That might mean, let's say you have SIBO, maybe you don't want certain probiotics.

It does get a little complicated at some point. I would say just generally speaking, fermented foods and probiotics are generally good, but with a personalized approach. It's always hard for me to answer that question, any question really because my answer will always be it depends on the person and that doesn't make for very good advice for anybody. But that is true. If someone tries something and

they don't get good results, maybe they have a negative reaction. Then looking at is there something in those fermented foods they can't tolerate, or is there something in those probiotics they can't tolerate and get them? They need to personalize it further.

Dr. Wendy Myers

You can do all these general approaches. I'm chowing down on sauerkraut, kombucha, and all kinds of things and little nibblies all day. But some people have mast cell activation and their immune system is so triggered by every little thing. They can't handle the histamines and fermented food. So that's where you wanna work with a practitioner like yourself to personalize that and get that immune system calmed down. But based on your own research that you've done, that's the basis of your book and your personalized approach, what are some of your findings?

Julie Matthews

So we did two studies. We did a study looking at a really comprehensive diet and nutrition approach. It was a randomized control trial. We looked at a multivitamin mineral formula and essential fatty acid blend, Epsom salt baths, carnitine supplementation, digestive enzymes, along with a healthy, gluten-free, casein-free and soy-free diet. We took a lot of the approaches that families said were working for them and that the research supported. We implemented them one month at a time and layered them on top of each other and followed them for a year. And we found improvements in almost seven-point improvement in nonverbal IQ.

We found four and a half times the developmental age improvement over the course of a year. We found improvements in behavior, language, socialization, anxiety and mood, and the list goes on from doing this approach. So that was one study. In the second study we looked at 400 families that implemented a variety of different therapeutic diets and we looked at not only were they beneficial overall, but did they help improve specific symptoms. We found out that all the diets generally, if we put them all together, were very beneficial and they had a higher overall benefit than even nutraceuticals, such as various nutritional supplements and psychiatric and seizure medications.

And when we compared the diets to the psychiatric and seizure medications, there were also significantly lower amounts of adverse effects in the diet group. We saw lots of wonderful benefits and improvements with very little downside to diet. And then we looked diet by diet, symptom by symptom. We looked at 24 different symptom improvements and we actually found certain diets helped improve certain symptoms more than others. So again, another way to start to personalize a diet approach based on what might be going on for that particular individual.

Ads 20:00

Let me ask you something a little bit personal. How do you get yourself out of a bad mood? It can be hard, really, really hard, and it only gets harder the longer that you're in that space. That's why I'm a big fan of today's podcast sponsor Organifi. They made an amazing product called Happy Drops, and they're little gummies that are super tasty and they can help make your bad moods better and your good moods great. I'm sure I'm not telling you anything new when I say the world is really stressed out right now. You can see it everywhere. Stress and mood related visits to the doctor's office are skyrocketing along with various prescriptions to match. And so if you are anything like me, you're looking for a safe, natural approach to rebalancing your happiness and your stress chemicals without worrying about the side effects.

Well, Organifi has given us exactly that. They're called Happy Drops, and they're my favorite new supplement. These yummy little lemon gummies are made with ginger, with gouda cola, and passion flour, all of which are shown to have positive effects on mood and emotional wellbeing. Plus, they have a real powerhouse ingredient, which is saffron. So why is that so cool? The compounds in saffron are shown to help your brain modulate its levels of serotonin. Serotonin's one of your happy chemicals and saffron helps your brain enjoy it longer. Saffron also relaxes you. There's many cultures around the world that drink saffron tea before they go to bed 'cause it helps relax them and helps 'em go to sleep. Saffron also contains antioxidant properties, which can help you protect your brain from oxidative stress. That's great for detox. Best of all, there aren't any nasty side effects. There aren't any bad ingredients and it's safe to use every single day.

Saffron's traditionally very challenging to find in the supplement world. It's difficult to plant and to farm. It's even harder to harvest, and it's one of the most expensive ingredients on the planet. But now thanks to the super food geniuses at Organifi, we can all enjoy a real dose of real mood lifting organic saffron for less than a dollar a day. I'm excited for you to try them. I think that everyone should. I love their happy drops. Just go to organifi.com/myersdetox and get your happy drops today. When you use my discount code Myers Detox at checkout, you're gonna save an extra 20% off. Again, that's organifi.com/myersdetox.

I want you to go out and try Happy Drops today. Like I said, I love them. I've been taking them on a regular basis to help me to go to sleep at night, to help me kind of relax and get in the mood. You've got nothing to lose but your frown.

Dr. Wendy Myers

That's profound. It's no question, diet can have a profound effect on everyone if they're eating the right diet for them. Everyone needs a personalized diet. You have a different diet depending on your diagnosis, depending on your health status, depending if you're super healthy. It constantly changes even if you find the right diet for you. And maybe you have some temporary improvements on that diet, that can still change. So that's always absolutely a moving target here. Your book includes a 12 step plan. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Julie Matthews

It starts with the first half of generally healthy things that most people will wanna explore, like taking out toxins in their food, food additives, things like that and adding healthy food to the diet, adding some basic supplements, those sorts of just general good nutrition principles. And then the second half, the second six steps are really going into very specific diets, low salicylate diet, low histamine, low oxalate, low FODMAPs, ketogenic grain free, all different types of different diets, and looking at which diets might benefit certain people so that someone can start to create a personalized diet and nutrition plan for themselves. So, as I said, it starts out with things that I think everyone can really benefit from that are pretty easy to do.

Taking out artificial colors, flavors and preservatives is good for everybody and not too challenging because you don't even have to change the foods you feed, just maybe the brand you are doing. And so if you're just getting started and maybe you haven't figured out, you know how you're gonna make big changes. Changing from one lollipop to another is usually a good transition for most kids, and you actually can make a very dramatic difference because those artificial additives can really create challenges with behavior and learning and all sorts of things. So that's kind of the general approach and it gets more and more customized as you go. It starts with the easiest, least restrictive things first. So you're not expected to make major changes to the diet in order to start to see benefits.

Dr. Wendy Myers

You can start with a little bit at a time, you know? I'm sure kids with autism don't like change, but I think it's easier to implement the earlier you begin establishing their diet and their tastes and things like that. But you discuss a lot of different therapeutic diets in the book. Which one do you find was especially beneficial for kids with autism spectrum disorder?

Julie Matthews

That's a really hard question. I would say gluten-free, casing-free. So dairy-free and gluten-free is a really good place that I usually suggest most people start. There's really great research on it. It's not too challenging, it's not overly restrictive. It doesn't require you to radically change the type of diet you're used to, so it's not completely grain-free. If you're used to bread and pasta, you can find gluten-free bread and gluten-free pasta. If you like dairy, you can find non-dairy versions of things like milk and cheese. It just is an easy diet for most people to get started with and it has shown really great results because we're reducing the foods that we know can create inflammation. Some of these foods even create opioid-like compounds. So they literally fit in that opiate receptor and so they can create challenges around mood and language and pain and cognition and things like that.

There's lots of great research showing the kind of negative mechanisms that these foods can cost, as well as the improvements when a gluten-free and dairy-free diet is implemented, and it was by far the number one diet implemented by families in

the study that we did. So we know lots of it is accessible to lots of families. Lots of families use the diet, so I do think it's probably a pretty good place to start.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And it's tough 'cause a lot of kids with autism, they're eating milk and cereal and macaroni and cheese and they only want to eat that. In my research I found that some autistic kids will only eat dairy and gluten or that's like what comprises their diet and it's the case of morphines and those glut morphines that they're probably craving.

Julie Matthews

That's exactly what it is. In fact, sometimes when people tell me something similar to what you just said, that's all my child eats. I think maybe that's the reason they would actually benefit from doing the diet because maybe they are making those opiate-like compounds and which can be very addictive. Sometimes they benefit immensely when they can get rid of those. Now, that's not always easy. I acknowledge that. That in itself does create a little challenge getting started with the diet. So just acknowledging that that's a fact that you're not alone, that's not necessarily a unique experience necessarily, but that you can get past that part if you get some tips and some support to do it and it can be highly beneficial.

Ads 28:51

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

It's not only good for your hair, skin, and nails, but it helps to support your gut and metabolic health, immune system, cardiovascular strength, and all of your muscles and moving parts too. Collagen is nothing new. It's one of the oldest supplements out there. Collagen supplements have been around for quite a while now. But what makes Organifi so special is it's all about the quality. The non-organic collagen scare 16 me. They're really problematic because they can be full of glyphosate, pesticides and other chemicals that you do not wanna be taking on a daily basis. Not all collagens are the same. It can come from many different sources and the source can drastically impact its potency and effectiveness as well.

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

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

Dr. Wendy Myers

I just got back from a Maha event in Washington DC. RFK Junior was in the room and I just felt so inspired and I just love his work so much. And one of the things that he's doing is trying to get the food dyes out of the food. And you mentioned earlier just getting out the food dyes from the food and probably not doing fast food that has tons of chemicals in it. It can be very tempting, especially with a lot of people that are busy and it's cheap and things like that. But these chemicals and food dyes, I think people just don't realize the tremendous impact they have on ADHD and autism and just a normal functioning child, how that can contribute to destructive behavior at school.

Julie Matthews

Exactly and it's, like I said earlier, not too challenging to do. Now it tends to be everywhere, so that makes it a challenge. And for some reason we load kids' foods with all the worst things like these artificial dyes. So it's unfortunately around them a lot, but it's not hard to take them out. As long as we're aware of it, and that is something that I do love about RFK Junior, is that he's really putting an important emphasis on that.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, he's doing absolutely incredible work. I'm gonna be talking more and more about that, the Maha movement and what RFK Junior is doing. They're reassessing baby formula, which is just so toxic. Some of them are 46% corn syrup and just shocking how outta the womb children are being fed soy formula and corn syrup, solids in their formula and just setting them up for metabolic disease for life.

Julie Matthews

Exactly, hopefully we'll make some good progress between all of us that are putting the attention on that now.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Are there any other tidbits from your book or other things from your book that you wanted to discuss?

Julie Matthews

I think that one of the key things is that if you're new, you can start with some of the more basic concepts and get some really great results. It's kind of like exercise, right? If you haven't exercised a day in your life, you can make really amazing, strong progress with a little bit of effort. And I feel like dieting is the same way. If, on the other hand, you've been doing it for a long time, you can refine your approach and get good results when you see some of the different things that maybe you hadn't been aware of before. So I think it's really accessible to everybody that tries to help people to start wherever you are. Whatever change you make is probably gonna be very beneficial for where you happen to be. So don't feel like if this is new and some of the things seem overwhelming, you don't need to start there. You can start with some of the basics and often get really wonderful results. And then when you see great results, then you can continue to go from there.

You get some hope and then progress. And if you've been doing this for a while, you can really start to refine the dietary approach that you're using to really start to hone the diet that's really going to address those underlying biochemical needs and conditions and underlying factors and really start to see some improvement there. So I would just say start where you are and make progress based on what is gonna work best for your child at that time.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Give us the name of your book.

Julie Matthews

It's The Personalized Autism Nutrition Plan.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Okay, fantastic. I love the cover. It looks gorgeous.

Julie Matthews

Thank you

Dr. Wendy Myers

For a lot of parents, like I said,, their autistic children tend to be very, very picky eaters and eat a narrow range of foods. Can you talk about how to navigate that where you're introducing new foods and they're being refused. I'm sure that can bring a tremendous amount of frustration or guilt. The kid will eventually eat, probably if they get hungry enough, they will eat, if you're taking away their macaroni and cheese. Can you have any tips there about how to navigate that?

Julie Matthews

Yes, it actually is an entire step in the 12 step program for this very reason picky eating is so common. So about 80% of kids with neurodevelopmental delays have picky eating. And with autism it's even higher. They have more picky eating behaviors and really need support in that area. So, I say to parents, start to notice if you can find any patterns. Is it a certain flavor? Is it certain textures? Texture is a big thing. So do they like smooth foods. Do they hate smooth foods? Do they like crunchy foods? Do they not like small pieces of food like rice? What is it they eat and what is it they don't eat?

Start with working within those texture needs and then going from there and looking at how to make it taste good for kids. We don't need to load it with sugar and things like that, but maybe it's a little attention to the colors or if it's combined with all sorts of other stuff, or if they like individual dishes. Or do they like a casserole? Not usually. They often prefer little individual dishes. And then looking at, okay, well maybe add a little bit of salt just to enhance and bring out the flavor. Or maybe you do add a little bit of some. Flavoring, some spices, some sweetness, whatever. It just makes it a little more exciting.

Maybe you do add a little bacon to the Brussels sprouts because now they're going to eat Brussels sprouts for the first time. Is bacon the best thing in the whole wide world? Maybe not. But if they eat Brussels sprouts for the first time, now we start to

have some movement. So I like to kind of work with what they like, expand little by little within the textures and things that they tend to like,

Ads 39:19

And now a word for one of our sponsors. If you cook with non-stick pans, there's a good chance that you are consuming plastic. It's not fearmongering. It's what the current research suggests. There's a 2024 study that showed that just one scratch from a Teflon coated pan can release thousands of microplastic particles into food during cooking, every saute, every egg, every healthy homemade meal.

These particles don't just exit the body. They accumulate in your arteries, in your brain tissue, and may contribute to hormonal imbalance to inflammation and cardiovascular risk. So there was one study that found a 4.5 times higher risk of heart attack or stroke in people with microplastics lodged in arterial plaque and others have identified plastic particles inside brain tissue itself.

This is why reducing daily toxic exposure wherever possible is such an important part of long-term health. And it's not just old or damaged cookware. Research suggests that even brand new non-stick pans can begin shedding particles from every use. This is one reason that I'm very, very mindful about the materials that I use in my kitchen. That's why I recommend the P600 ceramic cookware. I personally use these. The P600 is completely free from Teflon, PFAS and plastic based coatings. It's made with Swiss engineered, ceramic designed to be truly non-toxic. It heats evenly, it cleans easily, and most importantly, it doesn't add to your toxic load.

So reducing exposure doesn't require perfection. It's just about making smart upgrades where they matter the most. So, if cookware is something that you use daily, this is a very meaningful place to start. Right now, the P600 cookware is 50% off, and for a limited time for my listeners, you can take an additional 20% off by using coupon code Wendy 20 at checkout. Just go to chefsfoundry.com, use the coupon code, Wendy 20. Your body and your detox pathways will thank you

Dr. Wendy Myers

Yeah, I get that 'cause I don't really want Brussels sprouts without bacon.

Julie Matthews

That's right.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I just really don't or they have to be charred or something. But yeah, the bacon really makes or breaks the brussel sprouts.

Julie Matthews

Exactly.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Some kids will really make their parents' life a living hell if they're making them eat something they don't want and I know that there's something to be said for when kids can be naturally inclined to reject foods that their body doesn't want. Where's the fine line though? 'cause I know there are a lot of people out there that are very intelligent. They won't eat foods that they're allergic to or they're sensitive to. Where is that fine line between like, say forcing your child to eat a new food?

Julie Matthews

That is I think maybe the million dollar question. I don't find forcing your kid to eat food works and I'm not a food feeding therapist or behavioral specialist or anything, but I think we wanna keep that bond and that trust with our child. So forcing them to do things probably isn't gonna be successful for a lot of different reasons. So if you can, find other ways. Maybe it is getting a feeding therapist who can work on more of a play level or some other way of getting them to try new foods, try new textures, things like that. The thing about craving for food and foods they like a lot versus foods they don't like.

So we often crave foods that aren't great for us. But then again, sometimes we, as you said, intuitively know to avoid foods that are problematic. So how do we know what voice to listen to? I think it's a little bit of, does it make sense? Some things I think are pretty obvious. If they're craving a ton of sugar, that is probably not a good thing.

There is probably something in the microbiome or just neurotransmitter wise that they are craving the foods that aren't really good for them. But if it's something else, then I guess I would say also looking at symptoms. So this is where it gets tricky.

I had a client once that craved apples. He was eating like, I don't know, maybe 5, 6, 7 apples a day.

Dr. Wendy Myers

I bet his liver was happy with that.

Julie Matthews

Well, this is where it gets a little tricky, right? Like at first you're thinking, oh, he's eating fruit, he is eating fiber, he's getting these things. But then, like you said, there could be other things in there. Is that sugar feeding yeast or is that all that fructose a problem? Or are there salicylates in those apples? That's why they're craving them. So I would look a little further. Are you noticing negative symptoms that you're trying to improve? Can you find any pattern to these foods they're eating?

A lot of that might hint to, like if you're seeing they're eating a lot of these foods, let's say salicylates, and they're getting a lot of common symptoms of salicylates, maybe they're craving most foods and it's a negative. So that's where I try to put it together. In my book, I have lists of all the common symptoms associated with the most current food compounds and I try to put those things together and figure out if it's a good thing or not a good thing.

Dr. Wendy Myers

That's great. It's so important to have a manual like this. I mean, not even for your child, for yourself as well. We all need to learn about nutrition and how food affects us and what foods are to avoid, et cetera. 'cause even with dairy, there's a lot of nuance there where people can be absolutely lactose intolerant like myself, but I just can't eat milk. But I can eat fermented dairy. I can eat butter, no problem. I can eat whey protein. Those don't pose any kind of issue for me, but the milk just destroys me unless it's raw. 'cause raw milk has probiotics in it to help digest the lactase, the milk sugar. So there's a lot of nuance when it comes to dairy. You don't have to throw the

baby out with the bath water. But again, it takes some education to kind of figure all that out.

Julie Matthews

It's that personalized nutrition approach. You just did a perfect job explaining it, and sometimes in order to figure all that out, it is best to just remove it and then add the different kinds in and see, is it this component of the milk, is it that component of the milk? Or when I try any of those things, are they a problem? Those kinds of things. So I do like a diet like that where you can remove them so you can see, do I see an improvement now that I've removed them? And then you can add them back and you can say, do the negative things come back. And maybe they do for some things, maybe they don't for others. And then you can personalize. What's gonna work best?

Dr. Wendy Myers

I think it's important to mention also that with vaccinations, there's a big controversy with autism, but one thing that vaccinations do is they improperly train the immune system and people start having immune issues, like food sensitivities, food allergies, eczema and, and other various problems because the immune system hasn't been properly trained or it's been messed up in some way. It's because of the vaccination. I have friends and they have a lot of allergies and a lot of problems with food. You need to be aware that this can be an underlying root cause, but so can glyphosate.

Glyphosate is a herbicide that's in pretty much any grain, non-organic grain that's gonna destroy the gut microbiome and cause leaky gut and can also lead to gut dysbiosis and food sensitivities as a result. So, it doesn't really matter what the underlying root cause is, but it's just something to be aware of. You still have to learn how to navigate the food sensitivities and do testing on a fairly regular basis and figure all that out.

Julie Matthews

I think that's where it comes down to figuring out what underlying factors are most at play for that person, and then figuring out what diet is gonna support. That is the best for them, right? So if they have more of a burden detoxification system, maybe

there's certain foods they really need to avoid. If it's more, they tend to have more inflammation and immune system things, maybe it's something else. And that's why it does take a little bit of individualizing it because everybody's going to be different in those ways.

Dr. Wendy Myers

When you're working with clients, what kind of things are you doing with them first? What does that look like when you're working with a parent with a child with ADHD or autism or SD and whatnot?

Julie Matthews

Well, I just meet them where they are. So, if they're brand new to all of this and they wanna start with, I just need to take out all of this school birthday parties and the blue frosting and things like that, or, I really think my child's eating way too much sugar. We can start there if it's that, oh, well, we wanna start with figuring it out by figuring out what might be underlying their situation and the best approach to that for them.

We'd start exploring it there. If they say, I have certain symptoms that are really bothering me. Well, there's, as I mentioned earlier, certain diets or foods that are more commonly associated with certain symptoms. We might start to look at, oh, well, let's look at what your diet looks like and let's look at those symptoms. Does that seem like those might be coming together and we wanna start there? So I kind of just meet them where they happen to be and whether they wanna get more technical and scientific and quantitative with testing, or they wanna start more with the basics or with symptoms. We just kind of work from wherever it is they wanna start.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Are you doing any kind of functional tests with the children as well?

Julie Matthews

Yes, sometimes we do organic acid tests or stool tests for the microbiome and gut health things like that to look at what might be going on. Definitely they are beneficial.

Dr. Wendy Myers.

Well, why don't you tell us where we can find you. What is your website and how can parents work with you?

Julie Matthews

Well, probably the easiest way is just go to the book website, which is a bit of a long list, personalizedautismnutritionplan.com. They can find the book anywhere. But if they go to that website, they can find how to work with me and how to get the book. Practitioners can learn things, parents can learn things. So that's probably the one first stop to get whatever they might need.

Ads 50:55

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

This is so important because as the autism rates have increased over the years, I mean, they've just dramatically increased. Even in California, 1 in 12.5 children in certain parts of California have an autism diagnosis, and it is just really heartbreaking. I know for myself, when my daughter had a diagnosis, she had to go to a school for two years.

To draw out her language is \$4,000 a month. It costs as much as Harvard. It's just a tremendous burden on parents and families and it's really tough. So my heart really goes out to parents that are dealing with this and finding ways to cope, finding ways to mitigate symptoms, and definitely diet is a big part of that. It's a big first step.

When you're talking to your doctor, they don't have any training in nutrition. You might get some testing done or whatnot, but they're just not gonna be able to guide you on nutrition at the depth that someone like yourself, where you're very much focused on that. They're not gonna get that from their doctors.

Julie Matthews

This is true. Again, there's some wonderful doctors out there and some that even are pretty well versed on diet, but you are right. They don't have the time. If you've been to one of these appointments, just going through the test results could take the entire appointment. So even if they have the knowledge, they just don't necessarily have that capacity. Again, I don't wanna bash people because there are wonderful ones out there, but I was just at a conference the last two weekends and I heard multiple times that doctors even just from a nutrition perspective are lucky if they got two hours in their entire training. And so it's just not something that they typically got unless they seek it out separately.

Dr. Wendy Myers

And it's not their fault. It's just not really part of their training. What are a couple credits gonna do? It's really nothing. But it's as far as education and knowledge basis is concerned. I think I just want to make people aware that this may not even be suggested to change the diet and it may not be on their radar. You just have to be aware of the person you're talking to, their skillset, and that your doctor's not gonna have all of the answers. This is a very, very complex condition, but you've gotta get the diet down. You've gotta figure that out. I love that you have this book that lays out a very clear, in-depth plan with research behind it.

Julie Matthews

Well, thank you so much.

Dr. Wendy Myers

Well, Julie, thanks so much for coming on the show. Everyone, thanks so much for tuning in to the Myers Detox podcast. I love doing this show and helping you on your journey, helping you upgrade your knowledge and make those distinctions so that

you're able to live the life that you want to have, and enjoy the health that you deserve and that your children deserve also. So thanks for tuning in and I'll see you guys next week.

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