

BEH PODCAST EPISODE 34

AUTOIMMUNITY AND YOUR EYE DISEASE PART2

Today we are doing the second section of three-part series on autoimmune issues and eye disease. Last week I discussed an overview of autoimmune disease from the perspective of Western Medicine. It's not an alternative view. Although, it's not a view that a lot of doctors use when they think about or deal with autoimmune disease. But the data to back up what I was talking about last week all comes out of UCLA and some very prestigious institutions who are looking at how our bodies are reacting to all the insults that are thrown at it. Infections, toxins and foods that are not good for us can all lead to autoimmune disease where our body makes antibodies that are destructive against our own tissues. In this second part, I'm going to talk about the relationship between the health of your gut and the development of autoimmune disease.

Before, I get into the gut, I want to talk about about how all these things that seem so distant from the eye can affect the eye. I mentioned last week how there is a way that the immune system overreacts. It's so challenged with so many things that it must deal with that eventually you get autoimmune problems. What we don't understand is why the autoimmune problem affects our body where it does. Sometimes autoimmune problems cause issues in their eyes, but for others, it affects somewhere else like their gut, thyroid, joints, skin or lungs. We know the underlying mechanism for all those things are all very common. But why one area is hit in one person, and why another is hit in another person is something that no one in integrative medicine, or western allopathic medicine understands.

What I've seen is that for people with these degenerative diseases, an autoimmune problem makes helping them much more complicated because laying on top of that is a second problem that's debilitating their eyes. That's not for everyone, but it is the case for a lot of people. The immune problem is not the cause of Macular Degeneration, Retinitis Pigmentosa or Stargardt Disease. They are not immune problems to begin with, but these immune problems are very common, and so it's very common to see people who have more than one thing insulting their eyes and insulting the health of their eyes.

The fortunate thing about the autoimmune diseases is that there are things that can be done to minimize your risk or help you heal if you are already deeply into it. That's the purpose of these calls, is to show you the simple things that you can do that can be very powerful.

I said I wanted to talk about the gut, and you know there's an increasing understanding of the importance of having a healthy population of bugs living in your gut. There are a lot of things that stand in the way of that. For example, a lot of things that come from the way foods are processed in the foods we eat are bad for our gut. One specific

substance are antibiotics. Antibiotic residues in foods affect the population of things living in our gut. Pollutants in water and air and just all kinds of things that can upset that balance and the gut.

The population of things in the gut is very important overall to our health. This may sound bizarre, but we are outnumbered by bacteria in our own body. We walk around with about 10-11 maybe more trillions of cells. Yes trillions. Trillion is a big big number. But of all those cells we walk around with, only about a tenth of them are human. The other 9/10 are the bugs that live in our gut, on our skin and everywhere else throughout our body. Some of those bugs are very very tiny and that's why they don't take up a lot of room. Between the viruses and the funguses and the bacteria and atypical bacteria, and the parasites, there are a huge number of them. And they're not all bad. If we had a sterile gut, we'd be dead.

Over the centuries we've evolved to have a relationship with the things living in our body and the gut is where most them live. They need us and we need them. There are some that do the job well and there are others that can cause imbalances, and others that can cause problems. There are essentially healthy bugs and unhealthy bugs.

The gut is important because it takes the food that we eat and separates the pure from the impure. It extracts what is necessary for our nutrition and lets the rest pass through and be eliminated. The gut has another critical function. It seems hard to understand why this would come so late, but this next thing I'm going to say the understanding of this has only come in the last 20 years. That understanding is that there are a lot of way that the body can put things into the gut. So, it doesn't just take what it wants and leave the rest. The body can use that continuous flow to get rid of stuff it doesn't want. It's a way for your body to get rid of garbage. In an ideal world, there would be a strong barrier between what's in the gut and the rest of the body.

One of the things that happens if the population of bugs in your gut gets out of balance is that the barrier breaks down and you develop what's called in a kind of slang way, "leaky gut syndrome". That's not an official medical term, but it is very descriptive because that's exactly what's happening. Things that should not be able to get into your bloodstream get into your blood stream, and some things leak out.

Leaky gut can be bad with a poor balance of healthy bacteria, because a lot of unhealthy bacteria are essentially weeds. They get into your body and set up shop in your gut. They're not well suited to live in your gut. But they can persist and survive because they produce toxins as a survival trick. The purpose of those toxins is to keep antibodies, white cells and other bacteria at a distance so that they're left alone to survive and persist in your gut. But those toxins can make you a little sick.

If the barriers of your gut have broken down, you are going to absorb some of those toxins. Very often when you get a case of food poisoning, these kinds of bacteria are the cause. When you get bad food, contaminated food or contaminated water, very often the thing that makes you feel sick, is not the bugs themselves, it's the toxins that

those bugs make. There's a very common food bacteria that causes food poisoning called Shigella. Shigella is one of the things you would typically pick up from poorly cooked chicken, or other poorly cooked meat. Once Shigella gets into your gut, it can keep away all the things your body would do to get rid of it, and so it becomes a sort of a permanent infection. The toxin that Shigella creates is notorious for causing arthritis. It's not that Shigella is a major cause of arthritis, but if you've gotten food poisoning, fever a lot of diarrhea, and swollen and painful joints, it's probably Shigella.

I just used that as example of extreme example of things that can happen at a very low level if your gut is not healthy. That where things going on can have an effect elsewhere in the body, at a great distance from the gut. The other thing that happens if you have a nonhealthy population of things in your gut, is that the barrier will be disrupted, giving you a leaky gut. Then you've got stuff getting into the bloodstream that was never meant to. What does the body do with garbage and stuff that's not supposed to be there? The body develops antibodies against it. Just going back to the talk last week, the thing that is at the root of a lot of autoimmune disease is an immune system that is overtaxed, overstimulated, reacting to all kinds of stuff and eventually it boils over and eventually it starts creating antibodies against your own tissues. Sometimes the mistake is accidental, those antibodies were originally created to attack something real, but it turns out this is kind of a lock and key phenomenon, that the key that was made to fit in the lock to the bad bacteria or the toxin happens to also fit certain cells in your thyroid, and now those antibodies start attacking the thyroid or other tissues. That's why you want to have a healthy gut.

There's a lot of controversy about the use of probiotics, but overall, over 50 years of research, the outcomes people experience says pretty strongly that there's a value to taking probiotics. That's why we include probiotics as part of the basic protocol. It's the simplest first thing we can do to push your gut towards being healthier. The data that's convincing to me is the clinical data, meaning that you take people with certain problems, certain issues with their gut, and you put them on probiotics, and those things get better. That's the kind of proof I'm talking about.

The causes of the controversy about the use of probiotics come more from the pure science, where you say, well we put in a probiotic that contained certain Bifidus bacteria and we don't find those in any great numbers in the stool. Therefore, the probiotic failed and it didn't do anything. That's a little bit nearsighted and a little bit of tunnel vision that the scientists have there. Yes, you might not find the sort of data you'd want to see, with finding the very bacteria that you put in the probiotics. But the data that measures outcomes is more convincing, which says that if people have problems, probiotics can help. They have even done double blinded studies where they give some people probiotics and other people a placebo and the people taking the probiotics show remarkable clinical improvement over the other people. So, there is good proof that they actually help you. I would not get caught up in the modern controversies that are floating around about whether you should take probiotics. I still see enough benefits that I'm still

recommending them. It's certainly an inexpensive and safe and potentially a very useful thing to do.

Coming back to our program, the probiotic we give people to start is JarroDophilus. We provide that product in the first months' worth of supplements in the program. After a 12-18 months or so, you may want to change maybe to a different brand. We have different brands that we can recommend if it's time for you to do that. If you're calling in and ordering supplements and you want a different probiotic, just let us know and we will substitute something else in for the JarroDophilus.

The final thing I want to say about the gut, is an issue that can be of concern in dealing with autoimmune disease is chronic infection. I just want to say that for most people, the issue with infection that they have is the issue with abnormal populations of bacteria in their gut. It isn't that they have syphilis or tuberculosis or chronic Lyme disease or hepatitis, or chronic herpes. There are other infections that fit that bill, but having a gut that's gunky and out of wack counts as a chronic infection. You've got consequences from an improper mix of bugs in your body and that's something that can be remedied, and that's something that can be reversed. The whole idea in approaching autoimmune disease is not to necessarily do everything perfectly, but to quiet down some of the things that are affecting your immune system and pulling you back from that threshold where things are so overstimulated that you're having symptoms.

I'm going to leave that there. If you have questions we can cover those in the Q&A session.