

Overcoming Hashimoto's SUMMIT



Preventing Hashimoto's in Children

Guest: Dr. Elisa Song

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Inna Topiler: Welcome back to another interview, Overcoming Hashimoto's Summit.

I'm Inna Toiler and with me today is Dr. Elisa Song. She is a holistic pediatrician and the founder of Whole Family Wellness. With a mission to create a nurturing environment that integrates allopathic and natural medicine customized to each unique child. In order to help children thrive to their fullest potential.

She is also the founder of a very popular blog *Healthy Kids, Happy Kids*. Advice and Adventures with Holistic Mama Doc. Where she empowers parents to integrate the best that convention and holistic pediatrics have to offer for their child's health and wellness.

Dr. Elisa Song, so thrilled to have you, welcome.

Dr. Elisa Song: Oh, thank you Inna. This is my pleasure. It's such an important topic and not enough awareness around preventing Hashimoto's in kids and what to do for our kids with Hashimoto's. So, thank you for having me on.

Inna Topiler: Absolutely. And it really is. I think Hashimoto's in children just isn't talked about nearly enough. So, how common is Hashimoto's in children?

Dr. Elisa Song: I think that we really have no idea how common it probably actually is. Even more than Hashimoto's we can see signs of thyroid dysfunction earlier on. So, that's where recognizing the signs so, so, so important. I would say, the number of kids with thyroid dysfunction that I see is very high. And again, I have a specialized practice where I do primary care, but I also see a lot of kids for chronic conditions. So, in that population there may be a higher percentage of those kids who have thyroid dysfunction.

But it's not uncommon, let's put it that way. And the more I check, the more I see it. And the important thing to know is that your autoimmune antibodies, whether it's your anti-thyroid globulin, or anti-thyroid peroxidase antibodies, or any other autoimmune antibodies. Like ANA and anti-nuclear antibody.

Those antibodies can be present in your blood stream and immune system for years. Maybe even decades before you actually develop symptoms of the autoimmune illness.

So, I feel like in kids if we see those autoimmune antibodies, even if they don't have outright Hashimoto's and hypothyroidism just yet. It's such a great opportunity. Rather than being disheartened, it's such a great opportunity to say, "Hey, look. We can clean this up before they develop Hashimoto's." Because I know for a lot of mamas, a lot of grandmas, they don't want their kids or their grandkids to go through the same thing.

So, just recently I had a mom who she has Hashimoto's herself. And so, we decided let's just check the boys. The boys are nine and seven. They're TSH, free T-4, free T-3, reverse T-3, all of the things that we measure look okay. However, they both have positive thyroid peroxidase antibodies. So, they both have not very elevated levels. But that's a huge red flag. Okay, they're heading that direction. Let's jump on this right now.

And know some of you guys are listening, and saying well what do I think is okay, for those numbers? Because of course, we know with TSH there's a wide range. Maybe even up to 4 ½ is considered "normal." But of course in functional medicine we don't necessarily look at just the normal range. We want to look at what's the optimal. And it's pretty much the same for children.

For children I do like to see their TSH under 2 ½ or under 2. They just feel better, and more energetic, and more focused with their TSH is lower.

The other thing I actually pay attention to is the reverse T-3. And I don't know if you want to get into testing at this point.

Inna Topiler: Sure.

Dr. Elisa Song: But reverse T-3 I do think is really important. Because what is reverse T-3? It's going to shift your active T-3 hormone back into the T-4. And we don't want a lot of reverse T-3. Elevations of reverse T-3 are really caused by our lifestyle factors. Stress, anxiety. And so, I look at this a lot. Because I do see a lot of children where their TSH might look fine, optimal, but then I look at their reverse T-3 and they're at 18, 20, 22. Still considered normal. But that's an indicator to me, we need to look at stress and lifestyle as one of the potential triggers for their autoimmune reactivity.

Or their thyroid dysfunction. Kind of heading into that. And really focus on mindfulness and meditation. Which is just so, so, so important for our children and for ourselves.

So, that being said, the signs that I look for. Let's say there's not a family history of Hashimoto's, per say. I have a low threshold to check thyroid function test. I do check for thyroid function in my kids with chronic illness. Whether it's autism, or PANS and PANDAS, or other autoimmune illnesses that I might already be seeing them for.

But some of the signs, because they are different than with adults, right? With adults we think of the mama or the woman who is just not able to lose that baby weight. And you're tired. And you're hairs falling out. And you feel like you just have such brain fog.

But for a lot of kids, most of them are not overweight that I see with thyroid dysfunction. At least not initially. What I look at mostly is how their brains are functioning. A lot of them will present with poor focus, poor attention, the wiggles. Sometimes slower processing. A little bit slower to comprehend. Maybe anxiety. Anxiety can be a way that kids present with Hashimoto's and thyroid problems.

And then, of course the physical symptoms. Maybe similar to those that an adult has. Like constipation. Which is so common in kids. Really dry thin hair. Or dry skin. And being cold. Because most kids that you see, even in the middle of winter, they want to wear their shorts or they want to be barefoot. And so, to see a kid who's cold, who tells you their cold. Or their hands and feet are really cold. Or they are really bundled up. It's not as common. So, then I think, "Okay. Let's think about whether or not there could be thyroid going on here."

Inna Topiler: That's so, so helpful to know. That these are the signs. And it's so helpful, I think, for everyone watching to know that the signs are different than those of an adult. Especially with some of the processing. Because I think you would think the wiggles, or some of the ADD, you would be more of an elevated thyroid versus a potential slower thyroid. So, that's really great to know.

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. That's right. That's absolutely right. The other thing Inna, that I want parents to know. That in some kids that I see with hypothyroidism, it's not necessarily Hashimoto's. It could be a simple kind of dietary change. That could help many of your listeners for the summit. Are really wanting to have a whole foods, unprocessed diet. Which is awesome, right?

I love that. If we could eat all homecooked meals that would be amazing. But many moms and dads are cooking, when they cook at home, they are not using salt. Or they are using Himalayan sea salt or Keltic salt. Which really does not have enough iodine in it to support kids' proper thyroid functioning.

So, sometimes I will see for kids who really are eating so clean and heathy and at home, but they are not getting any iodine in their diet, really. And that can be why their TSH is starting to go up and up and up and up. And so, if you look at the diet, and go, "Okay, let's get in some more iodine rich snacks. Like seaweed or let's just switch over to iodized sea salt. And get in a little bit more iodine support for that thyroid." Then things can reverse.

Inna Topiler: That's so good to know. Now for those that do have Hashimoto's, and I'm asking for myself as well. I know that my antibodies were elevated. When I got pregnant they were definitely at a pretty low level for me. My antibodies have been as high as 5,000 at one point.

Dr. Elisa Song: Wow.

Inna Topiler: Yeah. And I've done a lot, and have talked about it throughout the summit of some of the things that I've done to help to bring them down. It really is very much a multifactorial approach. And when I did get pregnant they were down in like 200's. That's the lowest they've really ever been at that point for me.

But they obviously were still above zero. So, I do wonder can I pass those antibodies onto my son? And I'm wondering how early can you test? And is it

something that you would recommend? To test like a two year old or a three year old?

Dr. Elisa Song: That's such a great questions. Can those antibodies be passed? Well, technically, yes. Because of all of our antibodies as moms do get passed through the placenta, through breast milk. So, in terms of testing for a baby, if you have elevations of your thyroid antibodies while you're pregnant or you're nursing. Those antibodies are going to last in your baby's system anywhere from six to nine months.

So, when your babies are really young, in the first six to nine months of life it would be unclear whether or not those antibodies were the baby's actual antibodies. Or antibodies that were passed through the placenta. So, it's a really interesting question.

By nine months those antibodies have mostly dissipated and they are going to get some through your breast milk. What does that mean for the baby? Well it doesn't mean that that they have Hashimoto's right then, right?

At the point where you have stopped nursing, if you're nursing. And you're past that nine month mark of having had the baby. It could be worth checking the baby.

Now, all babies though, in every state in America in every hospital the babies are going to get a newborn screen. That checks for metabolic disorders that can be completely treatable if we know very early on.

And so, congenital hypothyroidism which is not Hashimoto's, but congenital hypothyroidism is a very serious condition. Because if it's not recognized, those babies can go on to have severe developmental delays. And so, if you're baby are born in the hospital, or even if you're a home birth your midwife should test the baby within that first 24-hours of life. That newborn screen.

It's a heel prick that your baby got and they put the baby's blood into these little circles on a piece of paper and they sent it off to the state lab. And so, you will know immediately if your baby has congenital hypothyroidism.

But that's not what we're worried about, really. It's rare, but identifiable in the newborn stage. What I think you're asking is what about later on? Should we be checking our baby's antibodies regularly? If we ourselves have Hashimoto's. I don't think necessarily regularly.

I don't necessarily recommend checking at two or three unless they are having some behavioral issues or sensory issues. Or maybe some cognitive processing concerns. If there's any concerns about their health, then yes. I think it would be worth checking the thyroid numbers.

I typically start with the thyroid numbers. The TSH, the free T-4, the free T-3, and the reverse T-3. And I may or may not add those thyroid antibodies right away. Just depends upon what the TSH is doing, how those kids are doing. But for sure, once kids are entering the pre-puberty, puberty where hormones just go crazy. Including your thyroid, right? It's not just your sex hormones. But all of that can really shift quite a bit. And I think at that point checking thyroid function test and thyroid antibodies can be really helpful. Because it's at that stage if they are showing those thyroid antibodies, already, even if their thyroid's looking normal.

You really want to make sure that they understand how to keep their bodies healthy and their immune systems healthy. So, they don't swing over into having outright Hashimoto's.

So, I'd say testing when they are older. And then really, what we want to make sure is that we try to prevent them also, from developing Hashimoto's in the first place. And I would say Hashimoto's and the larger picture of autoimmunity. Because when you have one autoimmune illness, very often, it's not uncommon to see other autoimmune illnesses. Either at the same time or down the road.

Many women with Hashimoto's are going to also have positive ANA's. Which a lot doctors will say, "It's just a little elevated, we don't really know what to do with it." But that's a way of saying, okay your body still under attack, right? Your immune systems still really stressed. So, we want to make sure all of those antibodies, if we can really shift down to negative.

Inna Topiler: Yeah. Yeah. No, that's great. And then what are some things we can do to help to prevent passing on Hashimoto's. Because I think a lot of people that are watching this, either may have children already or are looking to have children. So, if there's things we can do to prevent that would be really wonderful.

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. So, I think for prevention. It's really important to know, what are the underlying triggers for autoimmunity and Hashimoto's in the first place? And I'm sure you have tons of speakers on that. On the summit. But in children, especially, one of the biggest triggers and underlying factors

for autoimmune progression really, really goes back to the gut. And we know that gut dysbiosis or an imbalance of your gut microbes and certain bacteria which can increase your susceptibility to autoimmune reactions. Can definitely be one of the triggers for that switch over to autoimmunity.

And then, of course the resulting increase of intestinal permeability or leaky gut, right? So, when we think about how do we prevent? We want to make sure that we really think about, well how do we make sure that mama's gut pre-pregnancy and during pregnancy is optimal as possible? And how do we make sure that baby's gut from the moment that they are born is as healthy as possible and we keep their gut really healthy?

And the thing for mama's, I really encourage mama's if you can in that in that preconception stage really get a look at your gut. With a functional stool test. And make sure your gut is really clean. Doesn't have any of these abnormal microbes like klebsiella and citrobacter that can predispose us to autoimmunity. That you're clean of yeast as much as possible. I know so many women have suffered from chronic yeast concerns. And it can be so challenging.

But trying to really shape your gut microbiome. Eating those awesome fermented foods. Really making sure that your diet is rich in phytonutrients. Like those colorful fruits and vegetables. Because your thyroid needs all of those different minerals for optimal support. And stress.

I can't emphasize enough how important it is to really use this time during pre-conception and while you're pregnant to really prioritize you, right? Prioritize mindfulness. Meditation. Getting enough sleep. I know if you have another toddler running around, it seems like it's impossible to do that. But carving out just five, ten, fifteen minutes a day. Because that will really, really help your thyroid function optimally. Which the baby needs during pregnancy. And you need, right? So you don't burn out after the baby's born.

Now, some of the factors that we know that can increase the likelihood of gut dysbiosis in babies, even right from birth are not just with the state of mama's gut microbiome. Which is really important because we actually know that babies don't just get mama's gut bacteria from passing through the vaginal canal. But also through the placenta. And also, through breast milk.

But babies who are born by C-section we know that their gut microbiome is going to be not as optimal as a baby born vaginally. Babies who are formula fed, their gut microbiome looks different. Even within the first week of life.

Than a breast-fed babies. Babies who receive antibiotics. Or antacid medications. That is going to directly disrupt the gut microbiome.

And of course, the diet that we eat. So, when your feeding your baby from the beginning, making sure that you're not having the standard American diet. Kind of the white diet. The processed diet in your baby's life. But starting off with all of those colorful fruits and vegetables. Those healthy animal proteins.

I would say that I do believe that babies need animal protein, just to get really good sources of Zinc and amino acids. And, maybe when they're older, if you are vegetarian or vegan listening to this. It is possible when their older.

And also, all of those great healthy fats for the brain. Fats are really needed for proper hormone functioning.

That being said, I know some of you guys are thinking, "But I am scheduled for a repeat C-section." Or, "With my first baby I just couldn't exclusively breast feed." Or, "Baby needed antibiotics. I needed antibiotics because I had Group B Strep, Vaginal Group B Strep around the time of delivery."

So, it's never too late, right? When we go in knowing that these are the factors that can disrupt the gut microbiome, then we know; okay if your baby is born by C-section. Then I want that baby to be supplemented, and mama to be supplemented with probiotics from the very beginning.

And there are infant specific probiotics that you can choose from.

Inna Topiler: What are some of your favorites for that? Because I know people always ask. Even a physician make choices with children, I think it's a little more specific.

Dr. Elisa Song: It is. It is. So, with babies, so what is really fascinating; the baby's gut microbiome after about two years of age. And for sure by three years of age. Shifts over into a more adult microbiome. And it can be very challenging to shift the gut microbiome after that.

So, we have this golden period in those first two years of life to really, really focus on that baby's gut. Because that's not only going to have a powerful impact on how their immune system functions, but how their brain functions. And how their later hormones function. So, really looking at that time.

And so, for infants under two, they tend to have more bifidobacteria species, [inaudible]. Although they still have quite a range. So, there are infant specific probiotics.

And my favorite is still the one by Klaire Labs. They have an infant probiotic. I do like the probiotics by Seroyal. Which they have an infant specific probiotic as well.

I have had actually good colonization when I actually look at stool tests with the Jarrow brand. Which is really easy to find as well. So, it's not like you have to use only practitioner provided probiotics.

But you want to make sure that with probiotics that you buy from a reputable manufacturer. So, Amazon usually doesn't cut it. Because they are not sent directly from the distributor. You don't know how the probiotics were stored. And then, also know that it's a high quality probiotic.

So, yeah, Jarrow, Klaire Labs, Seroyal, Nature's Way, which is also easy to find at whole foods. I've had good outcomes with.

Inna Topiler: Great.

Dr. Elisa Song: So, making sure if you needed antibiotics, if your baby needed antibiotics, if your baby needs Zantac for whatever reason. Some babies are put on antacid medications. And they're absolutely is a holistic, integrative way to manage for infant reflux. And really try to reduce or avoid the need for antacid medications.

But if your baby is on antacid medications, and yes, I would absolutely give probiotics at that time. If you baby's formula-fed you could just put the probiotics right into the bottle. If you're breast-fed and you're not pumping, giving a bottle. Then you could just put some of the power on your finger and have the baby suck it off your finger. Put some on your nipples before you nurse.

There's a lot of different ways that you can give the baby probiotics directly. But that is one of the best ways to help keep that baby's gut microbiome as healthy as possible and optimal as possible in those first two years of life. Because again, those first two years are so critical for how your gut talks to your immune system. And talks to your baby's brain. And really informs your baby's hormones later on in life.

Inna Topiler: Yeah. That's so helpful. It's so good to know. I think also with probiotics it's really helpful to, of course, continue those after. It's not just when they're a baby. And I found with my son. I started giving him probiotics very early on. And then, once we introduced solid foods, I would sprinkle them on his food. And he got so used to it he actually thinks now that it's part of his food. So, when he eats he says, "Mama promiotic, please."

And so, it's nice, because people always ask me well how do you give him vitamins? How does he take stuff? I think it's just because I introduced it so early on, that he just thinks it's normal. And that's what we do. So, it helps.

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. I love that. And then, of course, we can't forget the power of fermented foods. Because fermented foods really are going to pack so much more bang for the buck than any probiotic supplement that you can give your child. And if you start fermented foods early, then they will develop that taste for it and it can become a regular part of their diet.

I mean I have little kids in my practice who, sauerkraut is their favorite food, right? You can try sauerkraut or kimchi. I'm Korean, and I love kimchi. And kimchi has so many health benefits for the immune system.

And actually, can kill the H1N1 flu. So, that's a great thing to know. I load up the kimchi in the winter time. But miso soup. Kefir, kabocha, of course you want to get the low sugar, low alcohol kabocha.

But there's so many different ways you can enjoy fermented foods. I would say start early if you can. Because then your kids will enjoy them. It's harder to introduce later. It's not impossible. But if you haven't introduced them early you maybe until they're into elementary school before they are accepting it more. And you just keep trying.

Inna Topiler: That's great advice. And I want to go back for a second to a few of the other risk factors for autoimmunity that you talked about. Just with the gut. And one of the things you mentioned was babies that are born through C-section. And like you said, sometimes it's something that we can't help. And there's many reasons for that. But if someone knows that they are going to have a C-section or perhaps it was an unexpected C-section that just happened. Are there things that they can do to help to bring some of their vaginal flora to the baby even though they weren't born vaginally?

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. So, that's such a great question. You know there's some small studies that have been done. Looking at something called vaginal

seeding. Where a swab is put into the mom's vaginal canal, left there for a certain amount of time. And then that swab is then placed all over the baby, right? The baby's mouth, anus, nose, just covering the baby so that hopefully that babies can get some of mom's good vaginal flora.

So, and the studies were small but positive. So, there are really depending upon your obgyn or your midwife. I would have a discussion on that. It's been a bit controversial. The obgyn licensing authority, I forget what they're called, the FACOG, right?. The academy of obgyn is not necessarily recommending it. However, I would say from a functional medicine, holistic pediatric standpoint, it certainly couldn't hurt. And I do think it could help. So, that would be great.

When you're born by C-section it can take a little longer for your milk to come in. But you know even then, you can start pumping right away to try to stimulate your breasts even more to get that breast milk in. And get that good colostrum to the baby. So, having the baby to breast as soon as possible after the C-section is really helpful too. Because sometimes you're a bit separated for a while.

So, if you can advocate for, "Can I have the baby with me as early as possible?" That's really going to help too.

Inna Topiler: I know that's great to know. And I think that what you were saying about how the vaginal seeding could be controversial. People may think that, "Okay, maybe it's not as helpful." But I think what is important to know what you're saying is that it's not going to hurt. So, even if your doctor may say, "Oh, don't worry about it, you don't need it." It's something that definitely can help. And why not try it. That's something that we tried. And I actually wish I knew more about it when my son was born. Because I just did it once.

What had happened was I had the C-section, and it was unexpected, so obviously there was a lot of stress and a lot of emotion and everything else that goes along with it. And so, my midwife had given me these like cotton pads. But then she put them in a bag and they sort of all got dry and then I rubbed them on Jake. But they were kind of dry.

And what I should have done is done it again later day, or the next day. But I just didn't even think about it. Because you have medicine in your system.

Dr. Elisa Song: Of course.

Inna Topiler: And I also didn't realize that you can do that later. I thought that it was like only the very first day. And that's it. But as I'm learning you can do it the second day or third day. You can even do it a week later. Why not, right?

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. Absolutely. And during that time too, deliveries rarely go as planned, right? Even if it goes beautifully, and you have the birth that you envisioned, whatever that vision is. It's still such a stressful time. So many of us as new mama's we don't have that village around us like we used to, right?

I delivered my kids out here in California. And you know, my mom, my sisters, they're all in different states. And so, you don't get that immediate kind of nurture the mama support, right?

Whereas my sister who was in New Jersey, where my mom lives, or she used to live at that time. And my aunt lives. She just had vats of nourishing seaweed bone broth. And got to rest. Someone else would hold the baby. And was really nurtured during that time. In the way I think mama's should be. But so many of us don't have that opportunity, and that psychological stress really, not just during that delivery, but during pregnancy is so stressful too.

It's good a lot of it. But a lot of it's also really stressful, right? And you're sleep deprived. Your adrenals are crashing, which doesn't help your thyroid any.

So, really as soon as possible, as soon as you can, focusing on your emotional health is really going to help your baby. As early as you can, focusing on your baby and as they're growing up. Talking to them about what it means to be mindful. What it means to be present. What it means to have gratitude. And having a family meditation session. You don't have to call it meditation. But it could just be family fun time with mommy at bedtime.

Is a really, really, really, really important lifestyle factor to incorporate. Because we know that stress, psychological stress can actually change your gut microbiome, right? That alone. Psychological stress in mom can change her vaginal microbiome.

So, we need to really prioritize this psychological stresses as much of a factor in autoimmunity, and immune health, and gut health as we do all of these other things. Like delivery and how your fed, and any other pharmaceuticals that might be involved.

Inna Topiler: Yeah. I think what you're saying is so important and I think that stress, often times even when we are doing everything else right. We're eating well, we're taking probiotics. Sometimes, and I'm certainly guilty of it. I've been there. We can get so stressed about being so perfect, and eating so well. That that in itself can hurt. So, it's about finding that perfect balance, right?

Dr. Elisa Song: Absolutely. I love that you said that. Because it really is about having that balance and not letting this kind of allusive goal of perfection get in your way. Because nobody can do it perfectly. I mean I certainly don't. And even with all of my knowledge and good intentions, right?

So, it's really being able to be gentle on yourself and know that our bodies are designed to be healthy, right? We're supposed to be healthy if we know how to have that balance. And we've kind of strayed a little bit. Maybe having a little bit more processed foods. Okay, then in the next couple of weeks let's really clean things up.

So, it's not about being 100 percent. It's really about that balance and learning how to really optimize what you're doing most of the time. So, that when things happen like a course of necessary antibiotics or a birthday party with maybe foods that you don't necessarily feed your kid normally.

Your kid can handle that, right? And you can handle that. So, really focusing on the majority.

Inna Topiler: Yeah. No, that's good. And I think also remembering – and this is another thing had to learn. And I learned the hard way. Is that our kids really pick up on our energy. So, if we are so stressed or even stressed about just, oh no, you had a cookie. And normally you don't eat a cookie, and now I'm so afraid that something's going to happen because you ate this cookie. They're going to pick up on it. And there's likely they are going to have certain symptoms.

Dr. Elisa Song: That's right. And I'm sure you've spoken about gluten and dairy, and inflammatory foods on your summit. But one thing that we want to do as parents, our job as parents in the early stages is to make healthy decisions for our children. However, as they get older into school, middle school, high school our job is to really teach our kids how to make those healthy decisions for themselves.

And so, even early on, right? Telling them why we're gluten free as a household. Telling them why we're low sugar and what the impact is. Even when they're two you could start talking about that. Not in a lecturing way. But just this is how we eat, and this is why. And my goal for you is to be as healthy and happy as possible.

So, that that way, and when you slip up, right? When the see you eating, I don't know what it is. I will fully admit one of my little cravings, when it's in the office are doughnuts. Which, oh my gosh. Would I want my kids to have a lot of doughnuts? No. But you know, rather than sneaking it so your kids don't see it. You could say, "Look, mama ate a doughnut. I'm going to fully own it. I know my joints are going to hurt the next day, but that's a decision I made. Maybe not the best decision. But I did make that decision. And now, I'm going to clean up and move on," right?

So, that they know if they go off to college or in high school and they eat a lot of junk. First of all, they will be more willing to let you know that they did that. Because they know that mommy does that too sometimes, right? Mommy falls off the wagon sometimes. And it's okay. I don't beat myself up over it. I try to learn from it. I try to recognize what impact it has on my health and make that decision. So, that I can make a better decision the next time.

Right? So, really we want to try not to as much as possible lecture and make them feel bad about their choices. Which can be really hard sometimes as a parent. Because you know sometimes the health consequences for them. But educating them. Helping them make decisions. Learning that everyone makes mistakes sometimes. Forgiving themselves when they do. And paying attention. This is where the mindfulness really comes in. Really paying attention to how their body and their brain feels after eating certain foods that are good and healthy for their bodies. And other foods that maybe are not as healthy for their bodies.

So, then they can make that decision for themselves.

Inna Topiler: Yeah. That's so important. Now for those people that are watching who are thinking about having children in the future. What are some things that women can do, and maybe also things that they could do along with their partners? Because they also play a role here. In the time before they conceive and then during pregnancy so that they can really help to support their body and maybe prevent or just lower the risk of Hashimoto's in their children?

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. I will say these, if as a mama you're listening to this and you have the opportunity to really instill some amazing lifestyle and dietary choices in your life. It's going to help your child. Prevent them from having Hashimoto's, but also so many other health consequences in the long run.

Let's just really, really help lay the foundations for ultimately helping your child thrive no matter what happens. And so, as a mama, even before you're pregnant you really, really want to focus on your gut, as I mentioned before. If that means doing some functional medicine testing. Making sure that your gut is clean.

But otherwise take a probiotic prenatally. Pre-conception and while you're pregnant for sure. Eczema is no considered an autoimmune phenomena. And we know for sure that probiotic supplementation of certain strains while moms are pregnant and nursing can significantly reduce the risk of eczema in that child.

And for a lot of kids with Hashimoto's that I see their autoimmune reactions, they first started off with eczema when they were babies.

Inna Topiler: Yeah. What are some of those strains that are studied?

Dr. Elisa Song: The most studied one is one is Lactobacillus Rhamnosus. Which is so easy to find. The studies actually use Culturelle. You can find it over the counter easily. Now, I would never recommend just supplementing with one probiotic strain, right? We want as many different species as possible. But if you have that family history of eczema, or asthma, or allergies then certainly make sure you are also getting in some extra Culturelle. Or make sure your prenatal probiotic has Lactobacillus Rhamnosus in it. I mean they are finding so many different benefits for each strain.

So, there are strain specific benefits. There are also strains that specifically have been to find to support healthy dopamine and serotonin levels. So, if you are really stressed, or you have had a history of postpartum blues, and you're really anxious it's going to happen again. Then I would encourage you also to look for strains of probiotics that are specifically meant for mood support. The one that I've been using is by Klaire. It's called Target GBX, the Gut Brain Axis.

But there are others out there. So, prenatal probiotic supplementation while your pregnant is really, really important. But also, like I mentioned, getting in

those fermented foods. Really making sure your diet is full of mostly vegetables. But fruits and vegetables. When we think of those five to nine, I would say servings of fruits and vegetables. Lean more heavily on the vegetables. Because fruit should be considered more of a dessert or a treat.

But getting in all of those greens. Because as I mentioned, all of those minerals are incredibly important for proper thyroid and cellular functioning.

Now if you are needing antibiotics while you're pregnant. Sometimes moms will get urinary tract infections or sinus infections. Especially if it's during the winter time. Where they might need to take antibiotics while they're pregnant. So, I talk to moms and kids about how do we protect our gut after we've had antibiotics. Really important.

So, this is where you want increase your probiotic supplementation while you're on antibiotics. Take them at least an hour or two away from each antibiotic dose. Continue for at least a month after. But you're going to be already continuing, because you're going to continue for the duration of your pregnancy.

Really getting those gut healing nutrients like Zinc, Glutamine which is an amino acid. Bone broth. Which is so great for it's gut healing and gut supportive properties. So, just knowing that. Don't be afraid of antibiotics because sometimes we need them. Just know, knowledge is power, that antibiotics can disrupt the gut microbiome. So, we can do mop up afterwards. But you want to make sure that you do that mop up.

And of course, making sure that you're really focusing on a stress reduction. I know you just mentioned that you have Emily Fletcher on the summit. Which is awesome. Right? Emily Fletcher, meditation guru of Ziva. Meditation. And she has some powerful tools and techniques for mamas to use.

But really whatever works for you. I have some apps on my phone that I use. That I talk to kids and parents about. Because sometimes, especially, let's say you're working throughout your pregnancy. And you're trying to get the house ready for the baby, and maybe you have another toddler at home. And you're just like, "I don't have time to meditate."

I use a meditation app, it's a free app called Insight Timer. It's a free meditation app with mediation experts from around the world who upload their meditations. And there's one that I have that I've bookmarked. Because it's literally a five minute mediation.

I don't care how busy you are. Everyone has five minutes. And trust me, when you take those five minutes to meditate. You literally have more time to do all of the things that you have to get done. You literally create more time and openness for yourself. So, really prioritize that.

I also would love to mention, because a lot parents are thinking, "Well, how on earth do I do this with my kids?" Right? Can kids meditate? And yes, they can. Kids can be mindful, meditate. They do it all the time. Just by telling a story. If you just tell a story with their eyes wide open, you just talk to them about what's their favorite place. And imagine how beautiful it is. What do you see around you? What do you smell? What do you feel in your hair? What do you hear? Do you taste anything in your mouth?

That right there is being mindful and meditative, right? That creativity is so innate in our children. But there are some great, great tools for kids. So, kids, there's an app called Calm. Which has a section for kids. The Calm app has a section for kids. There's another app called Breathe for kids. That's also really great too. It's an animated little video segment that your kids can watch. You know gorillas taking deep breaths and doing mediation that way.

Yeah, there is one that we use, GoZen is a great online mediation program designed for children. I love the story called the *Goodnight Caterpillar*. That teaches kids a progressive relaxation from their feet up to their heads. And that's a great quick story to read to them. My kids love it. They want me to read it almost every night. So, that they can just drift off to bed in this relaxed state.

And then any of the books by Dawn Huebner. She is my favorite, favorite, favorite child psychologist. To teach children cognitive behavioral techniques to manage their worries. And I use those techniques.

So, this is really great for adults too. Because they are such simple exercises to do. And two of my favorite books from her they are called *What To Do When You Worry Too Much* and *Outsmarting Worry*.

So, those are my to-list for every single parent to read.

Inna Topiler: Oh, that's great. How early can start? When did you start reading those to your kids?

Dr. Elisa Song: So, the *Goodnight Caterpillar* you can read at any age. But I would say, starting from about 18 months or two is when they can start to do

it. And again, we want to make sure we don't have this expectation in our minds that our kids are going to be sitting there legs in lotus position, eyes closed, and meditating the whole time. They're going to be giggling a little bit, they're going to be moving a little bit. They're going to be interrupting a little bit. Which is totally fine.

But the *Goodnight Caterpillar* you can read really at 18 months to two years. My daughter is nine and my son is seven. And they still love it. It's a story of a caterpillar who's really stressed out because he needs to find a leaf, and he needs to eat the leaf. Find a perfect branch to make a cocoon, so that he can become a butterfly by the morning.

So, he comes across this girl who's laying in the field, and she asks the caterpillar if he would like her help to relax. And so, she progressively helps him to relax his legs that are wound up tight around himself. Then his arms and his body. Then his face and his mind. And when he wakes up he looks up and he finds the perfect leaf to eat on the perfect branch to make his cocoon.

So, it's a beautiful story. But I've had 2nd graders that I've read the story to, and they are just laying on the carpet totally relaxed. And the teachers come in and they are like, "What did you do to the kids?" I'm like, "I just read a story," right?

So, it's great. And Dawn Huebner's books. So, *What To Do When You Worry Too Much*, she has a whole series of self-help books for kids. She has *What To Do When You Dread Your Bed*, *What To Do When Your Temper Flares*, *What To Do When Your Brain Gets Stuck*.

One of the books I'm reading right now with my son is *What To Do When You Grumble Too Much*, right.

So, but her *What To Do When You Worry Too Much*. So, these books are meant for kids to read and practice the exercises. From probably about eight years old and up.

But when my children were younger and not reading on their own, I would read it to them. So, you can read it to them and practice the exercise together, right? Create your worry box together in your mind.

And then, the *Outsmarting Worry* book is really meant for older kids, like pre-teen and up. For kids who really want to understand more about what their brain is actually doing when you're worried. Kind of want to understand the

process so that they really can embrace why CBT techniques, relaxation, and mindfulness techniques are so important.

Inna Topiler: This is such great advice. Thank you for that. Because I think we need our kids to not have as much stress just like we ourselves do much better with less stress. And I think that a lot of us think about meditation, we just don't often think about it for kids.

So, it's so good to know that these books are there and that there's videos and apps for that. That's wonderful.

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. For in terms of your original question, as I kind of got a little sidetracked with talking about this. In terms of preventing Hashimoto's in your kids and preventing autoimmunity in your kids. I think stress reduction and mindfulness is one the most powerful things we can do to help prevent all of this from happening to our kids.

And yes, absolutely, we need to make sure their diet is clean. We want to eat as organically as possible. Because the pesticides, glyphosate, actually was patented as an antibiotic originally. And so, glyphosate directly disrupts the gut microbiome. And directly causes that leaky gut from happening.

And so, as organic as possible. But in those early stages when you feeding baby those first foods, I really want those foods to be organic.

You can go off of the Environmental Working Group's Dirty Dozen list and make absolutely sure those are organic. But to the extent possible. In those early stages you want to think about those early, zero to three years of age as this beautiful time to really lay that foundation for thriving for the rest of their life. And so, that's the time to focus on the best quality foods, and the biggest variety of foods. Really teaching them and showing them how to be mindful and manage your stress appropriately.

And so, I would say focus on really healthy foods. Of course, always. But really importantly when you're starting solids on those babies in those first few years.

And then, with glyphosate, just also know if you're babies are formula feeding they have found glyphosate in formulas too. So, you just want to make sure that if your feeding your baby formula, that you choose a formula that is organic as well.

Inna Topiler: Do you have any favorite formulas, or are there any formulas that people can maybe mix together or even make at home?

Dr. Elisa Song: Yep. Yep. That's always the million dollar question, right? What's the best formula?

And I typically will have parents order the Hipp European formula. It is cow's milk based if your baby can tolerate that. Some babies can, some babies can't. But it's an organic formula. And that also actually has prebiotics in it. Prebiotics help feed the good bacteria in our gut.

Breast milk is chalked full of awesome prebiotics called Human Milk Oligosaccharides. And so, some of the better formulas will try to mimic the Human Milk Oligosaccharides, and put those good prebiotics into formulas. So, I usually use the Hipp.

There are Holly is a goat milk formula. Also, from Europe, sadly. The standards in America are just not the same as in the European countries with what stuff, with junk, really, we allow in our foods and in our cosmetics. And our cleaning products. And so, the products tend to be cleaner in Europe.

But there are some homemade recipes as well that you can use for making your own homemade formula. And I've had several parents do this successfully. I would though, recommend really working with a great dietician, nutrition consultant, and running it by your pediatrician. Just to make sure that your baby is getting all of the nutrients that he or she needs through the formula.

But I think the homemade formulas can be a great option. And once you get it down, and I have not made homemade formulas for my babies. But I've had parents do this. And mamas say, once you get over that initial hurdle and you start making them in batches it just gets really easy.

So, it's just another habit to start instilling when you need to use formula. But that could be an option for many.

Inna Topiler: That's really good to know. Just because while of course nursing is wonderful, not everyone can do it for various reasons. And we just don't want to make anyone feel bad, because your body can do what your body can do. And so, there's still these other options that are going to be really healthy and really good for your baby.

Dr. Elisa Song: Yeah. Absolutely.

Inna Topiler: Well, Dr. Elisa, thank you so much for all of this wonderful information. It's been so insightful. For those that want to connect with you, how can they contact you?

Dr. Elisa Song: So, the best way to reach me and get more information from me. I love, love writing articles, and supporting mamas, and papas, and grandmothers, and practitioners in really understanding how to incorporate a holistic, pediatric lifestyle. And also, helping parents understand how to manage some of their children's conditions. From a holistic and functional medicine pediatric standpoint.

So, that would be on my *Healthy Kids Happy Kids* blog. That's www.healthykidshappykids.com.

And another great place to connect, not just with me, but with a community, literally a world wide community of parents and practitioners who really want to support one another in integrating a natural kind of holistic lifestyle for their kids. Is my private thriving child community Facebook group. It's an amazing community. I learn so much from the mamas and the practitioners there. And it's so supportive.

And things that are discussed are anything from the formula question, where parents will give some of their recipes and suggestions. Or what are some natural ways to get over the flu season. Or manage my child's ear ache. So, lots of great resources there as well.

Inna Topiler: That's great. Because there's really not a lot out there for natural ways to support our children's. So, it's such a great resource.

Dr. Elisa, thank you so much for being here. I so appreciate all of this information.

Dr. Elisa Song: Well, thanks so much for having, your summit is so important. I love that you're also talking about what mamas can do to try to prevent all of this from happening to their kids. And helping them thrive for their lifetime.

Inna Topiler: Thank you. Thank you so much. We'll talk soon.