



1008: My Holiday Survival Duo: Stress Less,
Digest Better, Feel Energized (Solo Episode)

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast!

Katie: This podcast is brought to you by BIOptimizers and in particular, their product that holds my heart, which is their Magnesium Breakthrough. My goal this year is to continue to focus on my wellness and to create more harmony and resonance, and we all know that the foundation of health is a good night's sleep.

I talk about that so much on this podcast. And magnesium is the one nutrient that helps my sleep so much as well as so many other aspects of my health because magnesium is vital for so many things within the body, and it is nearly impossible to get enough from food anymore. And Magnesium Breakthrough from BIOptimizers is in a category of its own.

They have seven different forms of magnesium in one supplement, and since magnesium is involved in over 600 different biochemical reactions in the body, no other supplement on the market offers all seven types of magnesium in one bottle. Pretty much every function of your body is upgraded when you take magnesium regularly from the quality of your sleep to your brain function, from metabolism to stress levels, and so much more.

This is one of the few supplements that lives on my nightstand and I'm a little odd, but I take every morning because I actually get energy from it though most people notice that it's better at night. Now studies point to a lot of benefits of magnesium, including that it may help improve sleep quality, especially by supporting healthy sleep onset and have more peaceful nights.

Magnesium is also involved in stress management support and it may help maintain energy levels and positive mood while also supporting mental clearness and relaxation.

Magnesium is also important for healthy and balanced muscle tone and providing the building blocks to strong bones, and it promotes a balanced stress response, supports relaxation.

And I feel much calmer when I'm regularly taking magnesium. So let's face it, even if your 2025 resolution is not all about focusing on your health like mine is, how are you going to be able to achieve your goals in any area without enough quality sleep and stress management? Check out Magnesium Breakthrough and make it part of your daily routine this year as well.

For better sleep, better stress response, and much more. They have a 365 day money back guarantee and you can find it at Bioptimizers.com/wellnessmama and use the code Wellnessmama for a discount.

Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And this episode will be a short solo episode that goes deep on a

couple of things that I find really helpful, really all year, but especially this time of year. And you might have heard me talk before about how I don't do anything every single day. And I often cycle and rotate things and I take many fewer supplements than I used to. But I'm gonna talk today about a couple compounds in particular that I take very regularly that I find very helpful for a lot of different reasons and kind of delve into some of the reasons why. So this is gonna kind of, I'm calling this one my survival duo.

The two things that help a lot, especially this time of year, and I find really help just keep me driving and immune system bolstered and have energy in the busyness and craziness of this time of year. Before we jump in, I just want to make sure that I say that nothing I ever say on this podcast or anywhere is ever medical advice or any kind of advice. You are your own primary healthcare provider. And always do your own research, ask questions, question everything, including and especially me in this podcast and online. I only share my personal experience, my personal research, and what I've learned along the way as a starting point and for inspiration. Never for comparison, and never as prescription.

So, like I said, question everything. Even, and especially, me. Perhaps you have heard the phrase flu season or cold and flu season. And I saw something recently online that I loved. It said, we don't have cold and flu season. We have a candy holiday followed by a pie holiday, followed by a cookies and candy holiday, followed by a booze holiday. And there is some relevance to this because we're moving into a time of the year where it is darker, we get less natural light, which I've talked so much about the many benefits of and how it supports the body in so many ways. We typically... So we're spending less time outside getting less sunlight. Sleep patterns could be disrupted.

We actually need more sleep in the winter and we're typically, as population on average, eating more processed food, more sugar, a lot of things that can have an immune impact. So the holidays are supposed to of course be joyful, cause for celebration, but for moms especially, I feel like they can be a marathon of stress and sugar consumption and sleep deprivation and all that going on between travel, family, extra desserts, and it's no wonder our bodies sometimes need a little bit of extra support this time of year. The good news is I think there are some small levers we can pull that make a big difference, and I will link to some other podcasts because on some of these I've talked a lot about really trying to keep a consistent sleep schedule.

Trying to get enough natural light exposure is huge. And all the things I would normally talk about. But I wanna talk about a couple in particular today that I think are especially helpful this time of year. And some things I've learned through experimentation seem to actually make a noticeable difference. So the two overlooked keys that I'm gonna talk about in depth today are magnesium and enzymes, and specifically why they're extra helpful this

time of year. And I'll link to it in the show notes. There's a particular one that I use for both of these actually. Which is Magnesium Breakthrough, which is a broad spectrum magnesium as well as MassZymes, which are the best enzymes I've found. And I use these in various ways all year.

I'll explain what they do. I'm actually gonna go do a whole separate episode that goes really deep on the science of enzymes because I find it so fascinating. But today I'm gonna share kind of what these both do, how they can work together, and why I find them especially supportive. Before I jump into that, just a little bit of overview of why this time of year can create so much havoc in our bodies. Like I said, we're often eating more calories than we need, often consuming fewer actual nutrients than we need, even if we're getting a lot of calories. We're eating rich foods on average, statistically more sugar, more alcohol and disrupted sleep. And the commonality is, these things all can spike our stress hormones, especially cortisol.

Which you've probably heard a lot about. It's trending on the internet right now. But this affects so many things in our body and in our health when our cortisol rises and stays elevated. Not that cortisol in and of itself is the problem. We actually wanna see a cortisol spike in the morning. We want to see a cortisol spike during times of legitimate stress, and we want it to be able to go back to baseline easily after. In the modern world, often it stays elevated. So when cortisol rises and stays elevated that's when we see things like physiological changes involving less stomach acid, which is important for digestion and absorption of food. Slower digestion, we might see more cravings because the body sees this as a state of stress and not a state of safety.

And cortisol competes and disrupts melatonin patterns and sleep quality, which if you've listened for a while, you've heard me talk about a lot. So chronic stress plus poor digestion this time of year especially can lead to fatigue, bloating, brain fog, and a lot more. It's an interesting data point up to 70% of Americans report digestive discomfort during the holidays, and over half of us say that we sleep worse during this time of year. So for any of us who have ever felt wired and tired or bloated or sluggish after a big meal, we've seen this connection firsthand. The good news is we're not at the mercy of it. There are things we can do. I also think it's important to delve into the sleep and stress link.

Like I've said over and over on here, I've never had one single expert in the over a thousand episodes of this podcast claim that sleep is not vitally important for human health. We know it's important, yet many of us are still really not dialing this in. But this in light of the winter and in holiday season is especially relevant. So you've heard me talk a lot about the benefits of natural light exposure, spending time in the sun, especially in the summer and the warm months. I talk about this a lot. What I haven't talked about as much yet is there

are also tremendous benefits to less light in the winter, to darkness, if we understand how the human body was meant to be in that time.

More darkness means if we're living in a natural, in natural harmony with light cues, we are making more melatonin. We'll naturally sleep more. In, traditionally, we would eat different kinds of foods. There'd be more autophagy that happens in the winter with potentially less access to food, less access to carbohydrates, especially historically. And so like longer sleep, less food consumption. That's the opposite of what's happening in the modern world. But cortisol and melatonin, in a sense, are kind of opposites. When one is high, the other is low, and vice versa.

So if cortisol's high, melatonin can't do its job and cortisol should spike in the morning when we actually don't want melatonin to be high.

But for many of us, this pattern, for me, it was for years reverse where my cortisol would spike at night. I would have trouble falling asleep and I was having trouble making melatonin. So I'll get back to those later. But chronic stress, even physiologic stress from things like artificial light, excess sugar consumption, things we're interacting with in our environment that aren't natural. Those things can all keep cortisol elevated so the body can't fully relax at night. So we're not sleeping as deep, so we're not making as much melatonin and the cycle perpetuates. And this is important because sleep is when our body repairs rebalances our hormones. And build neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which if you've researched those, you know how important those are.

And this is where magnesium comes into play. I have been reading about and writing about the importance of magnesium now for almost 20 years, which is mind-boggling. And I love that this is now so much more mainstream knowledge than it used to be. I feel like this was much less talked about 20 years ago. But we now are understanding more, I don't think completely, but more of how vital magnesium is, and how many of us are deficient. Some of the things that magnesium does in the body. It is a co-factor in literally hundreds of enzymatic reactions. I used to hear 300 enzymatic reactions. Now I've heard estimates upwards of 600. It's really helpful for regulating our circadian rhythm and our stress hormones.

It supports GABA and melatonin for deeper sleep. And low magnesium is often correlated with anxiety, restless sleep, and muscle tension. And I'll go into more specifics later, but for this reason, many people find that taking magnesium in the evening can be really helpful. I learned through trial and error that I inverse modulate certain things involving the GABA pathway, so I actually take it in the morning. Which makes, unusual and I'm in a very small percentage of people that that's true for. However I mentioned that just to say if you've ever

taken magnesium at night and felt wired, you might also be in that small percentage and wanna experiment with taking it at lunchtime, for instance.

So for me it took years literally to really dial in through experimentation, getting my magnesium levels optimal. And when I was in the experience of having Hashimoto's and had a lot of inflammation going on in my body, actually had some side effects from magnesium, especially certain forms back then. And I realized in hindsight, that was my body actually trying to heal and to detox and to bring some of these enzymatic reactions back online. Because I was so deficient, I needed to do that slowly and gradually to give my body time to adjust. I used to even get itchy from magnesium, even if I took it orally, not even topical. And over time, all of that thankfully has resolved. And now magnesium is very much a part of my routine.

But it has made a drastic difference in my sleep, my recovery, my mood. Now I make an effort, you've heard me talk about before, to get a broad spectrum of minerals, especially magnesium. I also make sure to get enough salt in my food and sometimes in water and other minor minerals as well. But I feel like magnesium is absolutely the juggernaut when it comes to minerals and that the high likelihood is many of us are not getting enough. There's a lot of forms of magnesium. I won't go into all of them and what they do, I can put a chart in the show notes. However, I finally found one that has all seven main forms, and each is absorbed differently by the body and does something different within the body.

So I find this broad spectrum one doesn't just help with relaxation, but it helps me kind of across the board. I feel a difference in digestion and stress, energy, kind of all of it. And I'll link to that one in the show notes as well. It's called Magnesium Breakthrough and it has seven forms. Okay, I also wanna talk about the digestion and energy link specific to this. So digestion is an energy heavy, energy intensive process. It can take up to 10% of our total daily energy just to digest our food, and this is where the other aspect of what I take during the summer year comes into play, which is enzymes. Because, this is fascinating, when enzyme levels are low, especially from factors like stress or age, which both affect our natural enzymes, food takes longer to break down.

Which can lead to bloating, discomfort, sluggishness, tiredness after meals. Also, things aren't digested properly in the right timeframe. Undigested proteins confirm it, which leads to gas, inflammation, often even skin issues or fatigue. And we also, if we don't have correct enzymes and stomach acid, we often aren't absorbing the nutrients from our food that we could be. So enzymes are, to me, kind of the tools, the keys, our body needs to unlock nutrients and they fit into several categories. This is, like I said, a big topic and I'm gonna do a separate episode just on this, but there's proteases, which breakdown protein.

So there's several different categories of enzymes. There's proteases, which help break down proteins. There's lipases, which as the name suggests, you might guess, help break down fats. And there's amylases that help break down carbohydrates. So they all serve different functions, and I'll come back to this, but there's a timing component as well. So when we take enzymes with food, they help break down those various components of food. When we take enzymes on an empty stomach, they serve a different purpose. They work in a more proteolytic role and help with things like cellular cleanup. And I won't go deep on this in this episode, I will in the enzyme episode.

But I feel like this was a very helpful piece for me when I was in recovery from autoimmunity and had a lot of inflammation and cellular cleanup to do. So a helpful analogy here is to think of enzymes like scissors. They sort of snip your food into little absorbable pieces so that our body can use them for energy, for muscles repair and brain function. I'll link to this in the show notes as well. The enzymes I use all the time are called MassZymes, and this one actually contains enough protease to make a noticeable difference. This is something I have found experimenting with other enzymes is that many of them don't have enough protease to make a difference. Especially if you're eating enough protein, which I've also talked about and can link to blog posts and podcasts about as well.

But I find these enzymes especially helpful when I'm hitting my protein goals, and it's like giving your digestive system a little extra help. I also notice when I'm consistent with this, I have more energy after meals and even after big meals I don't get that kind of energy dip while I'm digesting. I take them, like I said, on an empty stomach and with meals, stay tuned for a whole episode about enzymes and how they work differently in those different situations. But I love these two in particular. If I had to only pick two things to take with me when I travel on holidays, these would be the ones that make the cut along with some high quality salt. Because I'm a huge fan of salt and occasionally also baking soda and water in the morning.

But those are very easy to find even at grocery stores. So I always pre-order and make sure I have these particular supplements on hand. Totally anecdotally, I don't know that there's any research on this, but it is standard protocol in my house if anybody feels like they're starting to get sick, they will take enzymes every few hours. And I don't understand the mechanism here, but it does seem to really kind of ward off most illnesses when done early. And I wonder if it has something to do with helping the like cellular cleanup aspect of the body or digestion so things are more easily usable by the body. But I have found that very helpful as well. So back to my holiday survival duo.

Kind of wanna like connect all these pieces I've been talking about for a sort of full body picture. What we often see in the holidays, I would guess many of us listening have had this

experience, is more stress. There's a lot going on. There's all the kids school activities and parties and just obligations this time of year. Plus sleep can take a hit even though it is darker. So if we were living in harmony with nature, if we weren't having nature deficit disorder, we would likely be sleeping more, sleeping earlier, getting the benefit of extra melatonin for body healing and autophagy. But in the modern world, we're often not doing this. We're often staying up late, going to holiday parties or functions or watching movies.

Not that any of those things are bad, they're just variables to understand when navigating the modern world and trying to understand doing that in a way that's in harmony with nature. These factors can mean digestion slows, sleep suffers, energy crashes, and we know statistically people get sick more often. I find that magnesium and enzymes are my two big levers to pull for kind of disrupting this cycle. So magnesium, personally, I find I am much more relaxed, calm, and ironically energetic during the day and have better sleep when I am consistent about this. For most people, that means taking it at night. For me, this being an outlier, I take it in the morning, but these are two supplements I keep on my nightstand or in my bathroom.

So I actually see them as part of my routine. Because that was, for a lot of years I also forgot to take the supplements that were most helpful for me and now I've made those routine. The enzymes come into play. They actually help us absorb supplements better as well, but they help with nutrient absorption and efficient digestion. And if those things aren't compromised, it also makes us potentially more likely to get sick because the body isn't running at optimal capacity. So together, I feel like this is a resilience combo for this time of year, especially if you are doing the other foundational things that make a big difference. Like trying to, as much as possible, while still having a normal life, keep your sleep schedule consistent, support your stress levels, still getting morning sunlight.

It's even easier in the winter because the sun rises later, so we get to sleep more and still get the benefit of sunrise. I've said it before. I will say it any chance I get. I think watching the sunrise is the perhaps most underrated free health tool that we have, and I've met so many people who're doing these elaborate protocols doing all these things to support their health and who aren't watching the sunrise in the sunset. And I would encourage you if you haven't at least experiment with that, it has been absolutely transformative for me. I think it makes all these things we're talking about work so much better when we get the correct natural light cues and anything we add from that will be more effective when we are in harmony with natural light patterns.

And together, I find that magnesium and enzymes this time of year help me to have a lot more resilience. So like I said, practical tips. I tend to take magnesium in the morning, however, most people benefit from taking it at night before bed. For people who are

deficient, it seems like starting slow and working up is the way to go. I have found that I do better kind of with multi forms of all these things, and I titrated up my dose slowly after learning that the hard way and now take more than the recommended dose because I think this is a very individualized thing and we all get to dial in what specifically works for us.

But I'm glad I did not just kinda give up on magnesium years ago when I felt like I was reacting to it because it turns out I wasn't actually of course allergic to magnesium. I wasn't even having a negative reaction to the magnesium. The magnesium was actually helping things that needed to happen in my body. It's just they were happening quickly and it was overloading my body's natural detox pathways. So in case that applies to you as well, I also take the MassZymes enzymes, which I'll link to in the show notes. I take them pretty often actually, and they have great protocols for this on their website that I can link to as well. But they do different things depending on when you take them. So I take them with meals for better nutrient absorption.

I also take them on an empty stomach in the morning and at night. And this is purely anecdotal, but I really do think this helps with resilience and I notice, I pretty much never get sick anymore. And I think this plus a few other factors are probably the reason why. But when taken on an empty stomach, they serve that more proteolytic role, which means that they're helping kind of the body do it's natural job of cleaning itself. So my personal hack for this is I keep these actually in my go bag that's always with me instead of a purse. It's like my work stuff. Basic supplements, hydration and protein snacks. I take magnesium in the morning. Most people, again, take it at night.

And then MassZymes before with meals and in the morning and the evening. I wanna also briefly touch on some other holiday survival habits that I think are really important, and I've briefly touched on them, but I'm gonna summarize them here. The first one being, even if you're traveling, even if it gets light later in the morning, try to get morning sunlight for circadian reset. Even five minutes makes a difference. An hour is phenomenal. If you can pull it off. I try to get 15 to 20 minutes every single day. Try to keep a regular sleep and wake cycle and get natural light throughout the day. I know this is hard on the holidays, especially if we wanna sleep in or stay up late, but keeping a consistent sleep schedule is really helpful.

I've had many sleep experts talk about this and I get that it's hard to do during the holidays. Another easy hack is to prioritize a protein rich breakfast for blood sugar stability. So even if we are attending more holiday parties, eating things we might not normally eat. If we can try to keep breakfast very nutrient dense and high in protein, I aim for, personally, I aim for 40 grams of protein with breakfast whenever possible. That seems to be a safety signal for the body and kinda give the body energy and blood sugar stability throughout the day. Another

easy one, especially if we are just going to eat more treats and indulge this time of year, which again, no judgment. I do also, but go for a walk after meals, which I've also done a podcast about.

I can link to that as well. This has so many benefits. Humans were designed to walk and this aids lymph flow and digestion. The movement, if, I guess a motion is lotion. That movement helps with so many things in the body, and it makes a noticeable blood sugar difference as well. Stay hydrated and mineralized, especially with travel. Even minor dehydration could have a big impact on the body. And this is an easy and overlooked one to make sure we really get dialed in. So I now travel with a gallon water bottle that I add various minerals to, and that I make sure to take minerals like magnesium and salt to keep hydrated and cellularly hydrated, not just with water, but with minerals as well.

And then simple breath work or even cold exposure could calm the nervous system when they are circadian appropriate and seasonally aligned. So just like the summer and the heat and the light have benefits, so do the winter and the darkness and the cold. I know that cold plunging, especially for women, is a controversial topic. I'm not advocating necessarily for that. I'm saying when it's cold outside our body is meant to interact with that as well. So I try to still go for walks in the winter outside. Not to let myself get super cold, but just to get exposure to different temperatures than our perfectly controlled 68 to 72 degree indoor temperatures that we often interact with.

And that little bit of cold can be hormetic and actually really good for the body. So we can lean into the natural benefits of fall and winter by leaning into more darkness, trying to avoid artificial light at night, getting exposure to the natural temperature and natural light outside. Still watching the sunrise and the sunset, and sleeping more at the time of year when we can make more melatonin and when the body tends to be primed for deep healing cycles and autophagy. These things are all benefits of winter, which I also don't think get talked about enough. Also very individualized and personalized and do your own research and work with your own practitioners. But I have found, when I was healing, especially for me and only me, personal opinion, but fasting in the winter was easier and more effective.

I think because of some of these things sort of priming us for that deep healing and autophagy that can happen in the winter. So in closing, some quick key takeaways as we head into the holidays. Remember, our bodies are always on our side. They're incredibly intelligent. They just need the right tools to do their jobs. Anytime something is off, it's a perfect invitation and opportunity to ask what the body needs that it's not getting, or what

it's getting too much of that it doesn't need, and to use that data to develop a better relationship with our body and support it better.

Things that I find helpful, especially magnesium and enzymes this time of year for supporting our digestion, our sleep and stress. And I find that this gives me more resilience and I can actually enjoy the season. And we tend to not have as much holiday illness going around with this as well. I think another component to this that might be its own episode is the simplification of life. And saying no to more things this time of year, simplifying the kind of consumption aspects of the holidays. That's its own topic, but from my physiological perspective, supporting the body in some of these areas I'm talking about today to me are, like I said, very powerful levers that have made a big difference for me personally.

And I also wanted to not talk about products without making them even more accessible to you guys because I know that in budgeting there's always you have to prioritize and I wanted to make these as easy as possible. So if you want to try the combination I use, which is Magnesium Breakthrough and MassZymes, which are both from Bioptimizers, I have gotten a 25% off site wide discount plus a free gift with purchase from November 23rd to December 3rd. So depending on when you're listening to this. You can find that at bioptimizers.com/wellnessmama and use the Code WELLNESSMAMA to save. I will also of course link to that in the show notes.

But again, that's [B-I-O-P-T-I-M-I-Z-E-R-S.com/wellnessmama](https://bioptimizers.com/wellnessmama), bioptimizers.com/wellnessmama, and the code WELLNESSMAMA. And as always, it is an absolute pleasure to share time with you in the form of a podcast. I'm so grateful and honored that you choose to listen. Thank you for being here. I would love to hear your best tips and hacks for the holidays and how you navigate it with your family. As well as I would love to hear any future topics you would like me to talk about or guests you would love for me to interview. I do read every rating and review that comes through on the podcast and every comment on the site. So I would love for you to reach out there.

And for today, thank you so much for your time, for your attention, for your energy, and for being here, and I hope you will join me again on the next episode of the Wellness Mama Podcast.