



1084: Fast Like a Girl, Eat Like a Girl, and Age Like a Girl With Dr. Mindy Pelz

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Hello, and welcome to the Wellness Mama podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com, and I am so excited to be here with today's guest, who is long overdue for this episode. I had her on years ago, so excited to have her back. Dr. Mindy Pelz is a two times New York Times bestselling author, one of the most trusted voices in women's health.

She has bestsellers, including Fast Like a Girl, Eat Like a Girl, and now Age Like a Girl. Her now podcast is called Live Like a Girl, and she has helped millions of women better understand their hormones, their metabolism, and their health. I love her YouTube channel as well. I'm gonna put so many links in the show notes for you guys.

Definitely a tremendous fan of her work, especially the nuance she brings to the conversation about women and fasting. How women are often told fasting is not good for women, and she calls this into question and gives very real ways to understand how to fast as a woman. I know for me, fasting was a valuable tool in my healing and recovery journey, and it has been for the thousands and thousands and thousands of people she has helped as well.

I'm a huge fan of her work, like I said, and I can't wait to jump in with her. We touch on fasting. We touch on nutrients. We to- touch on nervous system. We touch on healing,

switches that turn on when we fast, what flex fasting is, the order of foods and why to eat them in a certain order, and so much more.

Also, how to adjust this if you are a woman who still has a cycle, if you are perimenopause, if you are post-menopause, and the nuance at each life phase. It's always a joy and an honor, so let's join her now.

Dr. Mindy, welcome. I am so excited to chat with you today.

Mindy: Thank you, Katie. I'm so excited to be here. And I don't know if you know that I was on your podcast, like, years ago, and it was one of the first podcasts I ever went on, and we talked about detox. And it, like, launched a whole new level of, of just people knowing me, and you were like the, the, you were like the beginning of it.

It was really sweet, so it's kind of a full circle moment for me to be here.

Katie: I love that, and I will link to that episode for anyone listening. I remember that one. It was such a fun one, and I love to see that you have basically just catapulted into helping so many people since then. And we're gonna touch on some of the various ways that you do that today.

But I really love your topics, and I love that you bring a very female-specific voice to this space because as I've talked about before, as you've talked about before, women weren't even included in medical research until the '90s. Everything we even know about the nervous system was all studied on men.

There's, like, so much nuance missing, and so I feel like you bring a voice of reason to this topic, and it's very close to heart for me personally. I've shared how fasting was huge when I was recovering from thyroid issues and losing weight, and it wa- I feel like it was absolutely instrumental in that journey for me.

And I still hear from so many women who think women can't fast. And on the one hand, I can understand if they try to do it like a man why they would think that. And certainly it can be done, from my understanding, in a, in a way that is harmful to the female nervous system, female body. And as I feel like you are the world expert on, it can be done in a way that is very in alignment with female physiology, and not only that, like, very supportive hormonally and across the board.

So I know this is a massive topic. I adore your book, which is called Fast Like a Girl. I'll link to that as well. But maybe to just kind of broadly intro to this topic, maybe just intro us into some of the ideas of what does separate men from women when it comes to the topic of fasting and what women need to know specifically.

Mindy: Yeah, so when I wrote Fast Like a Girl, what was happening is the fasting movement was really starting to emerge, and we had all these fasting books that were generic for men and women. And I was deep in the research trying to understand all the different things fasting could do, and I was teaching it to my patients, I was teaching it to my YouTube community, and I saw that women were actually struggling with fasting.

They were doing the same fasts as men, and many of them, their hair was falling out, they were losing their menstrual cycles, some of them gained weight. And so I sat down and really looked at a woman's hormonal cycle and realized that there are parts of the hormonal cycle where a woman should not be fasting.

And this was the whole premise of Fast Like a Girl. This is the whole... This was, like, what I wanted to bring to the world, is that women need to fast differently. Now, to make it simple, there are three types of women we have to talk about. We talk about the one who's menstruating, so this is anybody who has an active cycle.

The, that is what I'd found with Fast Like a Girl, that there were two times in the menstrual cycle that a woman should not fast, and the biggest one was the week before her period. If a woman started to fast the week before her period, she started getting adverse reactions to fasting, and a large reason for that is because of the hormone progesterone.

And progesterone needs more glucose, and we all know this because what do we crave before, before we, our period? We crave carbs, we crave sugar, because that's your intelligence saying, "Give me more glucose so I can make this hormone." So if I, once I figured that out, if women stopped fasting and, and, moved more into, like, carbo-carbohydrates, which we also fear.

I, I talk a lot about nature's carbs, like how do we eat more, more healthy fruits and squashes and sweet potatoes. Those kind of things are great the week before a woman's cycle, not fasting. That was a game changer for menstruating women. The second time that I really brought forward was perimenopause, and this one's a little bit trickier because some- sometimes a woman has a two-week cycle, sometimes she has a two-month cycle.

And so she really has to start to watch her symptoms. The minute she starts spotting, the minute she starts having trouble sleeping, the minute the anxiety kicks in, she stops fasting during that time. But then once her cycle starts again, she can fast. And then the third time that I've brought forward in Age Like a Girl that I'm really passionate about right now, is post-menopausal women.

I love hearing this about your parents reading the book because I think the ketone, when you fast and you get ketone, that is the solution to dementia. That is the solution to

Alzheimer's. The, the aging brain, especially in women, can't... doesn't know what to do with glucose. This is why we call Alzheimer's diabetes type 3.

So when you move into those post-menopausal years, when you shift over into a fasted state, helping your brain and your body get ketones, it completely slows down the aging of a post-menopausal woman's brain. So very different. So when people are like, "Women shouldn't fast," I'm like, "Nah, we gotta go deeper in that conversation," because there are times when women shouldn't fast.

But there are times, like to your point, where fasting can be a game changer. Many times it can be a game changer for weight loss, it can be a game changer for autoimmunity, it's a game changer for depression. I mean, there's so many benefits to it.

Katie: And I, I wanna go a little deeper on each of those three types.

I do wanna touch on one more just to give clarity to it for some of the people listening. I'm guessing I personally fall into this category of women who should not fast at all, which is pregnant and breastfeeding, 'cause I'm currently nursing.

Mindy: Yes. Oh, yeah.

Katie: And I just wanna make sure that that's explained. However, I will say, like, just like the idea that there's not one, you know, fasting doesn't work exactly the same at every time, there's also not the same thing that we should eat at every time, like you said with more carbs before your cycle. I'm learning that this time around with nursing too is, like, my body was craving more healthy carbs, and I'm having to add in more fruit and vegetable based carbs to feel good.

And it's, I feel like I'm very in tune this time in a different way. But I love your message because I say so often our body's always on our side, and if something's not working how we want, it's because we're either not giving our body something it needs or we're giving it too much of something it doesn't need, but it is never not on our side.

And I feel like you bring that explanation to the fasting side and the cyclical nature of women's hormones, which I think is so important. I'd love to delve a little bit more into ketones as well. I would guess most people have heard of ketones and maybe have some idea how they're good for the brain.

But maybe talk about how these happen, when these kick in on a fast, and then the benefits for the brain and the body. And if it's, in my understanding, we also when fasting make something called acetoacetic acid, if I'm remembering correctly.

Mindy: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Katie: Which is also, from what I've read, beneficial to the body for sort of, like, cellular cleanup and cleaning out blood vessels and so much more.

Mindy: Yep.

Katie: But I feel like a lot of people maybe have a passing understanding but not a depth of knowledge around what's different when we're fasting and we're running on ketones...

Mindy: Yeah.

Katie ... versus when we're running on glucose.

Mindy: Yeah. Oh, it's such a good question. So let me make it as, as easy for everybody's brain to understand.

Here's what we have not been taught, and if you, if this is the first time hearing this, it'll blow your mind. We literally have two metabo- metabolisms. So we have one metabolism that works off of glucose. Glucose is the molecule that you get when you eat food. You eat any kind of food, your body breaks it down, and it creates these sugar molecules.

Doesn't mean you ate sugar, but it breaks down these sugar molecules, and we call them glucose. And glucose goes into the cells via an escort called insulin, and that creates an energy state for us. But when we go about 8 to 12 hours without food, it's somewhere in that 8, that four-hour time period where we haven't eaten, we haven't seen glucose go up, the body will shift over into a different fuel source, and this fuel source is called, I call it your fat-burning fuel source.

Clinically or, or scientifically, it's called the ketogenic energy system. So your body, when it hasn't had food somewhere between 8 to 12 hours, in order to keep you powered up, it will literally go find fat in your body and it will burn fat, and the byproduct of that is a ketone. And we were meant to switch from these two metabolic systems. And what I, I, what was amazing when I first discovered this is I thought, "Oh my God, like, everybody's trying to just manipulate one energy system with the food they eat."

But if we can take every diet, whether it's paleo, keto, whatever diet, Mediterranean, and you hook it onto a fasting window, then you're actually getting both fuel sources. Now, what I brought forward in Fast Like a Girl was that when we switch over into the ketogenic energy system, we start to turn on all kinds of healing switches.

I lo- I, I love your belief on the body is always telling you the right thing, doing the right thing, 'cause I believe the same thing. And when you actually go into a fat-burning place, in this energ- ketogenic energy system, you will stimulate everything from more growth hormone, which slows down, will slow down aging and help you burn fat.

The one thing you were talking about, the cellular cleanup, the general term that we use for that is autophagy. All of a sudden, the cells start to clean themselves up. They may even switch over into something called apoptosis, where, the intelligence in the body goes, "Wait a second, this cell is a weak link.

We need to get rid of it," and it'll get it out of the system, which is great if it's a cancer cell, if it's great if it's a zombie aging cell. The body will actually clean that up. And there's, the longer we stay in this fasting window, the six different length fasts I mapped out go all the way up to 72 hours, you start seeing all kinds of healing.

Gut repair, waist circumference goes down, dopamine reset, immune reset, which is so powerful. And if you pair these different fasting lengths with different food styles, whatever your food style preference is, you will experience health at a level you may have never experienced before. But a good reason for that is because your brain will start to get ketones, and ketones are a more efficient fuel source for the brain, and they bring all kinds of neurotransmitters like dopamine and GABA.

They, they start to repair neurons in the brain. It is such an important fuel source that so many people are not getting.

Katie: Well, and the other thing I love about your message too is you talk about, like, the adaptability and being able to use both. I feel like it's tempting, like when I first learned about fasting, I felt so good on ketones.

It was tempting to want to just always be in that state. But as you explain, like, it's the adaptability and being able to feel phenomenal on both and switch without feeling uncomfortable. And I feel like that's where the real magic happens. I know for me anecdotally, when I learned that and I really got it dialed in for me and what worked for my body, I was leaner than I was in high school.

I felt phenomenal, and just had so much energy, and it was part of my journey of reversing autoimmunity and all kinds of things. So I've seen firsthand how powerful this is. and I do feel like some women still have- From a healthy place probably, but fear around this that isn't warranted. So I'd love to touch a little bit more on the perimenopause and postmenopause, 'cause I feel women in those ages especially are very cautious about not wanting to stress out their bodies.

And, and also to highlight what you said, we can start accessing that you said after just eight to 12 hours, which means if we time our food right, we can access that overnight while we're sleeping. This doesn't have to be all the time days long fast. But I'd love for you to talk about the postmenopausal, perimenopausal and also maybe the timing, and if there are guidelines specific to women.

For me anecdotally, I noticed I felt good, getting morning sunlight, eating earlier in the day but then stopping eating around before sunset or, like, stopping eating earlier at night. And I know there was, like, the intermittent fasting thing where people were not eating till 2:00 PM. I didn't feel good on that personally, but I would love your take on all of those variables.

Mindu: Yeah. Thank you for asking me this, because this has been a big thing I've been teaching on my YouTube channel these days. Because everybody thought that fasting meant you skip breakfast, and then all of a sudden hormone experts came in and said, "It's really important for women to eat breakfast." And so I came up with a term recently that I've been using that I call flex fasting.

You, you get to create whatever eating and fasting window you wanna create. So if you like eating earlier in the day, then eat earlier in the day. That's, that's what is congruent for you. You're just gonna need to stop eating a little bit earlier at night, which is probably better metabolically anyways for you.

So, so just the first thing I just wanna say is you control your eating and fasting windows. It's, it's your decision. So this isn't a skip breakfast and white-knuckle it till 2:00 PM moment. So that's the first thing. Perimenopause. So let's, let's unpack, like, what happens during that time. By the time you are in perimenopause, one of the biggest hormones you will lose first is progesterone.

She starts to go down around 35. Progesterone kept you chilled out. She was the, she was the hormone that let you go to sleep, let you relax, let you handle stress. And so a lot of women in their late 30s, early 40s start to see that, like, they're not sleeping as well, they're not handling stress as well. As you know, and I'm, many of the guests you've brought on, if you're not handling stress very well, you're gonna end up with big cortisol surges. Now, the second hormone to go down is estrogen. She starts to go down somewhere in the middle of your 40s or early 40s, and, and some months estrogen's really high, some months estrogen's ver- very low.

And so, when we lose estrogen, we start to lose other neurotransmitters. This was a big part of Age Like a Girl, where I really showed that estrogen has a girl gang. She stimulated dopamine and serotonin and acetylcholine and GABA. So you're going through, in your 40s, a massive neurochemical shift. Some women weather that just fine. And they, they don't tend to have these big cortisol spikes.

Maybe it's their temperament, maybe it's their lifestyle, and those women typically can do really well with fasting, and they will find that they actually are metabolically healthy going through this process when they fast. Some women are not gonna do well if all of a sudden they're, you know, working all day long, they come home to kids at night, their marriage is

falling apart, they're gaining weight, and they're really upset, and that there's this - a compounding cortisol surging or a constant cortisol surge going on in their body.

Those women are going to need to keep their fasts at a much shorter place, like 13 hours. They should not be fasting long because just like exercise, fasting will increase cortisol over time. So this is where perimenopause is very individual, and I do - and I'm always, frustrated when we make blanket statements that say, "Oh, perimenopausal women shouldn't fast."

I actually think you should assess what your stress load is and say, "Okay, I'm under a tremendous amount of stress. I'm not handling stress very well. I can, I, I can do a 12-hour fast easy. I like that length." Great. Just stay there. Just stay at that, at that point. What I see a lot of women do, especially because it's very easy to start gaining belly fat, it's very easy to gain weight in your perimenopausal years, is they, they try harder at all those habits.

They work out more. They fast more. They diet more. And all they're doing is increasing cortisol. So the perimenopausal years become very individual of... And you've gotta look at your stress load. It doesn't mean you throw fasting out, but if stress is high, a 24, 36, 48, 72-hour fast is not going to be your tool.

But a 13-hour fast, great. Okay, then the postmenopausal. This, this one, I, I, I really feel that we could end dementia and Alzheimer's if we started teaching women after their, their last cycle to start to fast longer. And what's interesting is what the research says is that when a woman starts to lose enough estrogen, this was Lisa Mosconi's work, all of a sudden there are neurons in her brain that start to prune away.

And these are neurons we no longer need. And the beautiful thing is many of these neurons were the people-pleasing neurons. They were the neurons that kept you addicted to fixing everybody's else's life and pleasing everybody around you. So this is why you go through menopause and all of a sudden you finally speak what you wanna say because you lost those neurons that actually kept you addicted to what everybody else thought of you.

That was *Age Like a Girl*, and it's so exciting. But what I learned since putting that book out from, actually a neurosurgeon taught me this, that when those neurons start to go away, they actually give off a byproduct, and the byproduct is a ketone. Now, let's talk about why that's so important for post-menopausal women.

Because if the intelligence in the body is making a ketone as it's remodeling the brain, that tells you that that brain needs more ketones when it moves into the post-menopausal years. When I interviewed Lisa Mosconi and she... I said, "What about ketones for post-menopausal women and Alzheimer's?" She's like, "Yeah, I hear that that really a lot of women get a great mental clarity when they get ketones as they age."

And I'm like, "Why aren't you researching this, Lisa? Th- we should be researching this." The preferred fuel source for the post-menopausal brain is a ketone. So I want that woman fasting as much as she can. She doesn't have a cycle to think about. She doesn't have to worry as much about progesterone. So I want her doing maybe one meal a day every day.

I want her doing longer fasts, as long as she's not hurting her muscle strength, and we can talk about how you preserve muscle with fasting. But the post-menopausal woman thrives in a ketogenic state. Perimenopausal woman's gotta watch her stress load, and the pre-menopausal woman needs to look at her menstrual cycle to gauge when to fast and not fast.

Katie: Ooh, so many good points you just made.

And to double click on a couple, I love that it's the people-pleasing neurons that get burned off. I did not know that. That makes me so happy. Yes. I wonder if that's already happening for me a little bit, 'cause that's been a shift the last couple years.

Mindy: Yeah, you can, you can see it, right? You can feel it. All of a sudden you're like, "Did I just say that?"

Katie: Yeah. Yeah. The, like, caring as much has just gone away, and I'm okay with it. But I love that you mentioned your YouTube channel. I'm gonna link to that as well, because I have loved binging on your YouTube, and your videos are so good and so informative.

And I also love that you talked about the stress side, because to your point, it changes at various phases of life for women, but I think this is a thing that often gets overlooked. Like, we know, quote, stress is bad, but we're not often, like, given really good resources of what to do with that information.

And so for me, what's been helpful is I've kind of tried to think of, like, safety signals versus stress signals, and to try to get more safety signals when possible, just to give myself a metric to look at. And I realized when I was healing especially, to your point, long fasts were not great in the beginning.

Hard exercise was not good in the beginning. In that phase, my body was wanting extra rest, extra sunshine, extra minerals, extra hydration and being gentle with myself. And as my capacity grew, then fasting worked totally differently. So I suspect women who have been like, "Oh, fasting doesn't work for me," maybe that's the missing piece for them.

So I love that you brought that up. And I know you have videos specific to that. I'll find those and put those in the show notes, 'cause I do feel like that's probably the variable that needs to be adjusted for most women who think they can't fast.

Mindy: Yeah, and I can, I came up with something that I just offered my YouTube community, and I'm happy to give it to your people, which is a questionnaire that lets you rate your stress levels.

And you get a score, and it tells you, "Okay, if you're in this score of stress, you should keep your fasts lower. And if you're in this score, you can fast higher." 'Cause a lot of women just don't even know you know, that we, we can, we're so capable, we can handle so many things, that we don't even realize that we're stuck in sympathetic fight or flight.

So I'm happy to give that to you because it's been really helpful for my audience to have actually have internal reflection of if they should fast or not.

Katie: I love that. Well, let's put that in the show notes as well. And I feel like this is a great bridge in between the fasting and the aging piece, because like I said, I actually was motivated to have you back on because my parents have fallen in love with you lately and have been, like reading your books. And I love that they both read it together, and that they are... This feels wise to me. They're, well, they wanna fast together, so they're doing what works best for my mom.

Because on average, women have more limits on fasting than guys do. Like, guys typically can handle-

Mindy: Yes

Katie: ... most things women can handle, but not vice versa. So I love that they're like, "We wanna do this together, so we're gonna start with what works for my mom." But I just love-

Mindy: Yeah .

.. seeing them experiment with this, and I hope they live for many more decades, so I'm very excited that they're bringing fasting on board.

Mindy: How old are they?

Katie: They're in their 70s.

Mindy: Yeah, that's perfect. And I, and you know what? I'm just sitting here, like, so proud that, that your dad's like, "Yes, we'll fast according to Mom because she, her system's a little more volatile." Like, that's it. That's it exactly. So tell them bravo. I'm cheering them on.

Katie: I love that. Well, and it, they are definitely an inspiration, but in their 70s and no medications, tons of energy. My dad is always helping me with all the crazy projects I dream up. So I'm like, "I would love to keep them around for many, many more decades," and I think fasting-

Mindy: Yeah, that's beautiful

Katie ... is part of that. And I think when it comes to the fasting piece and the aging piece, maybe one thing that's a connector here is, like, fasting, if we go too much, I feel like can be a stress signal. So part of that is balancing with nourishment. Like, we don't wanna always be fasting. We also need to tell the body at times, like, food is abundant or at least nutrients are abundant.

Like, we have access to the nutrients we need. We are being nourished. We have minerals we need. And I feel like that part gets overlooked as well. So we have people living in this just cortisol cocktail of not getting enough of any of the things that we need. So maybe let's talk about that side, and especially as we get older, like, what are some of those missing pieces for aging that are well within our ability to adjust and change?

Mindy: Yeah. This is also something new that I've been teaching on my channel, is that because people got such good results with fasting, they just started fasting all the time. And I was like, "Whoa, whoa, that's not, that's not what I'm teaching." Food is great, too. So let's make it simple for your audience. What, when you start tacking these fasting windows on every single day, let's say it's 13 hours, the most important meal you eat is the first one. I call it the re-feed meal. And in that meal, you want to nail some very specific things. So first, yes, you wanna nail protein. And the research shows 30 grams of protein is, will start to open up sensors within the muscle, like we think of, think of your muscles as a, as a storage for glucose.

And so you, you come in after going 13 hours and you eat protein, and all of a sudden the muscles are like, "Okay, I can use that. I can use that." And it starts to take that glucose and put it into the muscles so you, your muscles can grow stronger. So I strongly believe in the 30 grams of protein at the first meal.

Now, the, the messaging out there right now is that we should be doing one gram of protein for every pound of body weight. I have watched women not do well with that. Not every woman can do that. So I've labeled this now let's get it in that first meal. And one of the things that is really becoming clear to people is leucine rich foods.

You want two and a half grams of leucine rich proteins. In my book, *Eat Like a Girl*, I have a list of what all of those proteins are. They're not, they're not complicated. So, so let's just make sure we're getting a lot of protein there. Okay. Second thing, especially for women, is fiber. Fiber is, will feed the microbes in your gut that will help break down estrogen.

So let's use your 70-year-old mom as an example. So when she goes to eat fiber, she's feeding bacteria in her gut that will be able to break down the natural estrogen she's already making. If you can't break estrogen down, you can't use it. So you need those microbes in

the gut to break estrogen down. So I would want your mom, along with protein, to be doing a lot of fiber.

They're, they're saying thir- 25 to 30 grams of fiber women should have every single day. Okay, third thing is we really need to look at maximizing nutrients. So, and I think one of the best ways to do this is the, the good, the old adage of eat the rainbow. When we look at, at our fruits and vegetables, you know, I love blueberries, and after I eat blueberries for a couple of weeks, I remind myself I should eat raspberries.

Even though I don't love them as much, I like to eat raspberries because I know they're gonna give us a different nutrient profile. So when we're eating fruits and vegetables in that first meal, stop eating the same thing over and over and over again. We wanna have, eat that rainbow. Okay, next thing is good fat.

So this is a new one that I've been also really talking about on YouTube, which is we have a massive imbalance in, especially here in America, between our omega-3 fatty acids and our omega-6 fatty acids. The Western standard diet is hot canola oils, cottonseed oils, soybean oils. All of those oils are high in omega-6s.

You wanna have a ratio of one, one omega-3 to one omega-6. The average here in America is 18 omega-6s to one omega-3. If I was coaching a 70-year-old, I'd be like, "We, A, let's keep you off of the harmful oils, but more importantly, let's add in some high quality olive oil." 'Cause, and even like, I don't know if you've seen sardine fasting has become incredibly popular around the world, but especially on YouTube, and I think it's working because those little suckers are just packed with omega-3s.

So the... it's not complicated. That first meal could be a chicken breast with a salad that has got different types of lettuces you've used, and then maybe a side of avocado to get more of those healthy omega-3 fats, and then drizzle the whole thing with olive oil. And now you have refed your body in a way that is supporting a healthy brain, which is what I think as, what I've noticed, is that as women age, that's the, that's the, the organ they're the most worried about is the brain.

Katie: That makes sense. And yeah, I love the sardine fast thing is cracking me up right now 'cause I have been saying for almost 20 years now, sardines are so inexpensive. They give you so many nutrients. Like dollar for dollar, they're one of the best things we can eat, I think. And I love that they're popular, except for it's hard to find them now, so I don't love that.

But I love this because you said that-

Mindy: Well, you know what? You know why it's, you know why it's hard to find? 'Cause everybody's sardine fasting. So I've seen so many funny reels about that where people are like, "Hey, I was eating sardines before they were popular and now they're all popular." So it's just a funny little part of the culture.

Katie: Well, and another tip there is, like, if the sardines are sold out is wild caught salmon in a can is very inexpensive. Like four or five dollars for 100 grams of protein, and you're getting calcium and omegas and so much. So I, like, have been doing that one a lot as the sardines are all sold out.

There's always options. But I love this, and I think one thing to really highlight, one shift I made that felt so profound was I stopped thinking about calories and macros, and I started optimizing for how many, like, how can I load as many nutrients as possible into whatever I'm gonna eat?

And that led me into making my own soups that had all the minerals from broth, and then adding in all these different vegetables, and then adding in fermented things, and just, like, really how can I maximize nutrients and eat brightly colored fruits for dessert and eat healthy fats? And it makes a massive difference.

If you haven't tried it, I know that sounds so simple, but that alone I feel like is, like, the best drug you can take. It's amazing if you make that shift.

Mindy: We, so when we moved here to Santa Cruz, we we made a real effort to only eat local. So we go to farm- farmer's market and we got all the wild caught salmon that's caught right out here in the waters.

I started getting sprouts, mic- those m- microgreens, which are just packed with nutrients. And to your point, wow, it makes a big difference. You know, we keep throwing all these supplements and bio hacks and things at a, at a body that hasn't even been given the basics. So I absolutely agree.

I realize when you're talking another great food that I think a lot of people who got interested in the ketogenic diet have forgotten, are, are legumes. So beans are incredible. They have a lot of nutrients for hormonal production, and they're packed with fiber. So, when we're looking at cost, beans are great.

Yeah, and if you run out of sardines, I love your idea of get, get salmon in a can. But it's really intentional eating.

Katie: Agreed. And this I know could be its own whole subtopic, but I wanna just briefly touch on, 'cause my thought has always been start with diet, yes, and we sometimes do need supplements in today's world.

But you can't out-supplement or out-exercise or out any of those things your basic circadian rhythm and your diet first, and hydration. That said, I know especially as we get older, there are some supplements that do have a lot of data behind them. So if you're willing, I would love kind of your short list what you often find is helpful for people, and I know there's bio-individuality here as well.

Mindy: Yeah. Yeah, no, this is a great question, too. Okay, so number one is for women specifically is magnesium. And there's lots of ways, if you don't like taking supplements, even doing magnesium soaks. Like get a big thing of Epsom salts and put it in your bath, your bath, take baths and get it in through your skin.

But magnesium most, you know, stress will deplete our magnesium stores, and you need magnesium to make hormones. Number two, and it's also getting a lot of press, is creatine. Creatine is, you lose that as you go through, after 40 if you're a woman, after 40 you're losing creatine, and you really have to be intentional about eating a lot of different types of meat, especially cartilage.

You're getting all the, you know, the, the darker skin and the darker meats. But creatine's phenomenal, and, there's been great research on it for muscles, for cognition, and for jet lag. My, the third one and my new absolute favorite is cod liver oil because it's so packed with omega-3s. So some form of DHEA, but, if you can find cod liver oil, if you like it and you wanna drink it, great.

Otherwise, get it in, in, in a capsule because you gotta start to work on bringing those omega-3s up to bring inflammation- inflammation down and to help your brain. Those are kind of the three right now that I'm like I, I know I take 'em on a regular basis. And I'm really, adamant that women should, that the research and, and what you will notice with your mental health, your sleep, your hormone production is profound.

Katie: I love it, and it's simple. And the one I would add that I've been experimenting with is glycine at night, which we just typically don't get a lot of in the modern food supply. But for anyone who's in that, I'm not there yet, but like I'm in the lack of sleep after baby, but I know a lot of women in menopause have trouble with the sleep component.

And I've heard from a lot of people that glycine at night can help with the body temperature drop and with deep sleep, and I feel like that's a relatively safe one. So that would be the only one I would anecdotally add as a tip as well. But another topic I wanna get into a little bit, I know this also could be its own whole podcast.

Obviously, GLPs are having their moment. They've been having their moment for a long time. I know there are many voices and kind of disagreeing viewpoints about them. And I would love to hear yours, but more specifically to hear like what might alternatives be. Like,

can we help make more of this in our body and/or if someone is taking them already and doesn't wanna take them for the rest of their life and maybe is worried about losing muscle, et cetera, are there ways to get off of it without gaining all the weight back?

Mindy: Yeah, it's such a good question. for starters, you make your own GLP-1 hormone. That's the... This isn't like some medication came up with something miraculous that we all didn't have in our body. We make GLP-1 hormone, and the sad part of the GLP-1 story is that the, the one food group that kills GLP-1, the microbes that make GLP-1 hormone is, are bad fats.

So the canola oil, cottonseed oil. So if, if all of those harmful inflammatory oils, if you've been on an ultra-processed food diet, you've been killing the microbes that make this hormone, which is one of the major reasons that people are gaining weight. So that's the first thing I wanna say. The second thing is what we're experimenting with in our, membership group is looking at the order in which people eat their food, and let me explain, and it, and we're getting incredible results with it.

So the research says when you put a meal together, if you wanna feed these microbes so they make GLP-1, the very first nutrient that you wanna put in your mouth is fiber. So have a salad. Have a salad while you're making dinner. Cut up a, a red pepper. Have, carrots. Like, snack on vegetables that are rich and high in fiber while you're making your meal, or put it in a side bowl and have it before you eat the rest of the meal.

Why does fiber first matter? Because fiber will feed those microbes, and those microbes will make the GLP-1 hormone. It will take about 20 minutes for that GLP hormone to go up into the brain and start to register that the b- the body is full. So I want that, your salad in first. Second nutrient is protein.

Protein can also start to make GLP-1 hormone. It's also, of all the macronutrients, it's the most fulfilling and satisfying, and it kills hunger in a way that some of the other mac- macronutrients don't do. I... And by the way, I love that you are not counting calories or macros anymore. In, in Age Like a Girl, I didn't put any macros in there 'cause I think that counting keeps us tethered to some outside reasoning, and I want people to understand their own internal sense.

So, so protein next. Then, of course, you're gonna have your fat, and then the last thing is carbohydrate. So the order in which you eat food really, really matters. It's crazy how much it matters. So let's get your order right first. Now, what we're seeing is we recently ran a combination of fasting with this style of eating, all for GLP hormone reset, is what we called it.

And in two weeks, we saw, for 600 women we took through this, experiment, we saw that they lost 5.8 pounds in two weeks. That's, that's responsible weight loss. Just by tacking on fasting to an order of eating food, we got them off the ultra-processed foods for two weeks, and they're getting better. You know, to me, that's a better result than these drugs.

And they didn't lose muscle. So you have the control to make your own GLP-1 hormone. I just wanna continue to say that. People who go on the drugs, we already, hopefully pe- your audience knows this, but it's worth saying again, that the weight you lose, a large part of that is muscle. And when you get off of the medication, that muscle isn't coming back.

So it's gonna be a lot harder, let's just say, to get it back. So I would love to see the world work on diet changes first, and then if it doesn't work, go to the GLP-1 hormone. That would be what I would say is, let's, let's use your lifestyle, and if you still are getting stuck, then you continue to use your lifestyle with the assistant- assistance of these drugs.

But there is no off-ramp. That, y- once you're on them, you're on them. There's no off-ramp unless you are consciously making lifestyle choices. And that's where I think we have gotten in a cultural mess, because everybody wants the pill. Everybody wants the shot. Everybody wants the quick fix. It might let you drop a lot of weight, it might bring the food noise down in a matter of a couple of months, but what's your next move?

Where are you going with this? And so I'm really hoping that people will think through where- what do I wanna be doing a year from now, two years now, from now, three years from now. So, so, and, and the, and the last thing I'll say is I just wanna, acknowledge that some people really can't make positive food changes.

And some of the best, advice I've seen given from doctors is, "I will put you on this hormone, this drug, for 90 days. But after 90 days, and we're gonna work on your lifestyle, after 90 days, I'm taking you off the drug." Dr., Kinealy, I'm sure you've, run into her before, Lee Erin Kinealy, she's a longevity and cancer specialist.

When people come in that are, have an extra 100 pounds, 150 pounds, and their hemoglobin A1C is up at 6, she's like, "I'm gonna help you get a head start while you work on your lifestyle changes. And then after 90 days, I'm getting you off." That seems like a strategic way. But right now what's happening is everybody's going in on it without a strategy, and that is scary.

Katie: I agree with you, and I don't- I'll admit, I have no first hand experience with this.

I have not tried them, so I don't have any- anything to share from that side. But just from reading the data and what I've seen and, like, what you just explained so well, it makes me

very nervous because we know as women something that's very important, well, two things that are very important as we get older are our bone density and our muscle mass.

Mindy: Yes.

Katei: In fact, if you wanna look at things that correlate with longevity, those are really high up on the list. And so if we're doing something that is affecting both of those negatively to me, that's like for a lot of people trading vanity for longevity, which I don't think is a good trade to begin with.

And I, to your point, I would guess there's a massive difference between someone who's doing this, working with someone who's knowledgeable like you, who's doing this in maybe a microdose amount while eating enough protein, while lifting weights, while optimizing all these other factors, and someone who's just like, "I wanna get skinny."

And I get it 'cause I have at times in the past been 100 pounds overweight. I know what it feels like to want to be thin. It just to me feels like a dangerous game to trade our longevity factors for that when, to your point, there are other ways that perhaps people have not tried. 'cause I know when I used to say, like, "I've tried everything," I hadn't. I hadn't tried eating food in that order. I hadn't tried getting more sunshine. I hadn't tried fasting. I hadn't tried dealing with my trauma. There was a lot I had not tried when I thought I had tried everything.

Mindy: Yeah. Yeah, and I think, and I get it's hard. I mean, y- you're a great example. The journey back to health for s- is, is a lot of work for some people, so I understand that. I, and I, I think the microdosing these weight loss drugs is an interesting approach. I just, especially for aging women, y- y- I can tell you, I was a competitive athlete in my younger years, and I'm 56 now.

I have to fight for muscle more than I've ever fought before. I could look at a weight and I would gain muscle. Now I lift, you know, every single day I actually do some form of weightlifting and it takes weeks and weeks and weeks to see muscle. I, that, that alone scares me right there. The, the other thing I've heard, you know, there, pe- go look at the lawsuits on this.

Thyroid cancer is one of them. Several people have had thyroid cancer. The second thing I recent- osteoporosis is a big one that everybody seems to be turning their, their head away from. But another one that I saw recently that was really interesting, and if you're on these drugs please go talk to your doctor about it, is what these drugs do is they slow down gastric emp- emptying, which, and they do it 24/7.

So it's not like just when you do the shot it slows down gastric emptying. That's part of their success is your bo- your stomach thinks it's full. But they're very concerned right now about other medications that you might be taking because if you are taking a medication orally, it may not be broken down in the same way as it was when you had normal speed of gastric emptying.

The same thing could go for supplements. There's just too much we do not know right now and I too understand, like, God, if you've been fighting your weight your whole life and you know I can take this pill and in two months everything will be different. Like my heart goes out to you and let's roll up our sleeves and do all the lifestyle things, and let's take a lower dose so that you can have a long-term positive experience.

Katie: I love it. I think that's important nuance, and I know we've touched on you have multiple books. I'll link to all of those. You have a phenomenal YouTube channel. I'll make sure all those resources are linked, and I'm guessing many people listening are resonating with parts or all of what we've already talked about.

But if you could maybe wave a magic wand and give women a starting point or give them tools to really, like, take into account and start using right now, what would you give the women listening as a place to jump in and actually start feeling changes? 'Cause like I said, I've f- felt this firsthand in my life.

I know how powerful it can be. And I know it also feels daunting if you've never done it or you've heard fasting is bad for women or whatever it may be.

Mindy: Yeah. Yeah, and here's the... People are always surprised when I say this. If you wanna start to learn how to fast, the first step is to eat different.

So start with food. Let's get your blood sugar stable by just eating real food. Okay, what's real food? Try for a week eating, foods that don't have labels on them because when we start to eat foods with labels, you better make sure you know everything, every ingredient in that label. Make sure that you know what those chemicals are.

But if you can go to a whole foods diet where you're eating fruits, vegetables, potatoes, sweet potatoes, legumes, animal meat, just stick with that o- and, and do the order I talked about. That's easy. Do fiber, protein, fat, carbohydrate last, and then go and start pushing your breakfast back or, or eating dinner a little bit earlier and compressing your eating window.

That alone will change everything in your life, is that I've seen more women lose weight, bring their health back on track, help their perimenopausal symptoms just by learning to fast for 15 hours and eating real food and getting off the ultra-processed foods. The thing

you have to remember about the ultra-processed foods, the cakes, the cookies, the s- the pos- you know, all the stuff in the middle aisle of your supermarket, is that those companies have worked to put chemicals into them that make you addicted to them.

So when you first move to a whole foods diet, you might say, "Ah, this is bland," but it only takes a couple of days to a week to start to change your taste buds. So we have way overcomplicated everything. Whole foods, fasting, 15, 13, 15 hours, and you will see incredible results.

Katie: I love that and I would love to see just a, a massive wave of women who instead of, like, shutting down the food noise, we keep hearing that word, we learn to, like deeply tune into our bodies and really focus on, like, deeply nourishing ourselves and coming from that place. I think that would be a massive worldwide paradigm shift if women really could do that. Like, like you said, nourish ourselves at a deep cellular level and at a nervous system level and at a rest level, and all these things we so easily ignore as women.

And so I love that, and I love your encouragement to still make sure we're maintaining and gaining muscle as we get older. I am with you on that. I used to as a kid be afraid of getting too bulky, and now I laugh so hard at that because it is so much work to gain any muscle at all, even lifting every single day. But I just adore so much about you and about your message. I feel like your tools are so valuable and literal lifelines for so many people, and I'm gonna put all of them in the show notes. Is there anything I have not asked you that's top of mind or that's really exciting to you that you wanna leave the listeners with today?

Mindy: Yeah, I mean, the last thing I would say, I just rebranded my podcast. I'm really excited. I'm calling it Live Like a Girl. And the reason I rebranded it is that I felt what I saw with fasting and even with aging, that women need a different set of tools. So I'm bringing experts on that can really drop deep into tools that will help women.

Like I brought Suze Orman on, who went through money for midlife. What do women need to know about money in midlife? I brought Frank Anderson on, who studied under the man who wrote *The Body Keeps the Score*, and I asked him, "Talk to us about trauma, stored trauma in the body and how it affects our metabolism and our menopausal symptoms."

So I'm really trying to take what really resonated with women with Fast Like a Girl, and let's go now, let's get topic deep specifically for women. So that's kind of my, my new exciting thing along with what I shared with you on my YouTube channel. I've got a lot of new information coming out there.

Katie: Amazing. Well, all of those links will be in the show notes at wellnessmama.com for any of you guys listening on the go. I hope we get to do many more rounds in the future. It's been way too long. This was so much fun.

Mindy: Yeah, thank you.

Katie: But for today, I am so, so grateful for your time, for your work, for your message, for all that you share. Thank you.

Mindy: Yeah, and I, again, I'm super grateful to you, Katie. Like, you gave me a chance before anybody else, and it really meant a lot to me back in those days, and I'll never forget it. So thank you for what you're doing and for giving me an opportunity, whatever it was, six, seven years ago, to come on here and, yeah, just please let me know how I can help in any way.

Katie: Well, thank you so much, and thanks as always to all of you for listening, for sharing your most valuable resources, your time, your energy, and your attention with us today. We're both so grateful that you did, and I hope you will join me again on the next episode of the Wellness Mama podcast.