

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**[®]
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 143: Reducing Inflammation: Curcumin,
Keto for Women, and Easy Weight Loss with
Thomas DeLauer

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

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This podcast is brought to you by Homebiotic. We all know about our microbiome and most of us know about our oral microbiome and even our skin microbiome. But it's easy to forget that we live in a microbial environment as well. And that our home environment influences our health too. The overuse of disinfectants and harsh cleansers has led to an overgrowth of less than optimal bacteria in many homes. Things like mold, pets, and the normal bacteria that comes with a household of kids running in and outside all day can cause odors and bacterial imbalance in our homes. Those of us with little kids have children sitting on the floor of our homes and interacting with that bacteria on a daily basis. So, my solution to this has been Homebiotic. This is a natural probiotic spray for the home that neutralizes odors, germs and even mold. You can check it out at wellnessmama.com/go/home-biotic

Katie: Hello and welcome to the "Healthy Moms Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com and today's episode is going to be fascinating. I am here with Thomas DeLauer who is a renowned nutrition and health author. He is most noted for his personal transformation from a 280-pound corporate executive to being on the covers of health and fitness magazines worldwide. He is noted as one of the world's leading experts on the ketogenic lifestyle and he reaches an average of 15 million people per week with his videos, a lot of those will be linked in the show notes. And he educates on topics like inflammation, ketosis, and intermittent fasting. He resides in California with his wife and their new beautiful baby boy. So Thomas, welcome and thanks for being here.

Thomas: Awesome, thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Katie: It's gonna be a fascinating episode and I can't wait to delve in but I also can't lead off with an intro like that and not ask you about your story. So how did you transform your own body and your life so drastically?

Thomas: You know, I was living sort of the standard American dream, so to speak. I was chasing all the wrong things. I was chasing money. I was chasing success. It's important to preface this with the fact that I've been with my wife since high school and she was with me through all the different variations of my life, but supported me all the way. But, either way, I was in a period of my life where I was just focused on money, on trying to just grow my career. Again, that, you know, "American dream." And it wasn't until the pressures of business really started to affect me physically and I realized that, "Wait a minute. I need to start having an inverse relationship with my health here and business. If I want to be able to do well in what I'm doing, I need to be able to get my health in check."

I owned a part of an ancillary lab services company, so I was very well-versed in the healthcare world. That's what I did. And I had a network of just amazing, amazing physicians that I literally worked with. It was part of my career. And it wasn't until a couple of these doctors that were just well-known naturopaths and really started saying, "Thomas, you know, something's got to change. You're not exactly a healthy person that's in the healthcare industry. You can't be doing what you're doing and eating and living a lifestyle that you're living."

So that was really my solid call to action, you know what I'm saying? Okay, something needs to change. And the frustrating thing, to be honest, Katie, was that I was an athlete before. I knew I had the discipline. I knew I had the structure to be able to stay focused, to get in shape, but it's just I had all my eggs in the wrong basket. So, for me, it was a matter of just realigning and understanding that, "Okay, I need to know why I went down this path. I need to start making some changes." And from there, the rest is history. I tapped a lot of the resources that I had in terms of amazing physician contacts and amazing doctors that were on the cutting edge and learn some phenomenal things about the ketogenic diet, about fasting, about how inflammation works in the body, and was able to turn my life around pretty darn quickly. I mean, between a little under a year-and-a-half and I dropped close to 100 pounds.

Katie: Wow. That is really amazing. And from what I've read, your wife also went through some health struggles, probably like in the same time? I don't know the timeline but she had some struggles with, I believe, Lyme disease. Is that right? And how did that line up with your story?

Thomas: Yes. So my wife had suffered for quite a long time. She suffered before I was ever immensely overweight and she suffered actually long after I started to really train. But for the most part, yes, she was diagnosed with Hashimoto's, which we're all pretty familiar with now because it's talked about a lot. But, essentially, it's an autoimmune condition that affects your thyroid, and she was starting to struggle with her weight quite a bit. And she is never someone that struggled with her weight. Very fit. Eats very healthy. And that was the first sign that we had that something was wrong. Well, us having our background, we're like, "Okay, well, usually an autoimmune condition is just one part of the problem. There's usually other underlying things."

So a lot of her symptoms were really adding up with Lyme disease, and given where we grew up, we grew up northern California, again, we met in high school, so it was practically a hobby pulling ticks off of each other because up in northern California there, we would hike and horseback ride all the time, always. So there was no surprise that we had probably been exposed to these, you know, ticks that were carrying Lyme. So, Western blot test later, and we find out that she is definitely Lyme positive and so begins the treatment. And we're all about doing it however we can in a way that we're gonna be utilizing food and utilizing natural resources rather than just going on copious amounts of antibiotics. They're gonna kill off all of her gut bacteria.

So it did coincide with my story quite a bit because while I was understanding how inflammation played a huge role in my health and my weight, she was simultaneously understanding how inflammation played a role in her actual disease state. So, for us, it was able to combine those. We were able to realize that, wow, you know, here, when we look at our food, not only is food what allows us to look our best but it truly is what allows us to live a long healthy life in a non-diseased state. So it really bridged that gap for us.

Katie: That's amazing. So take us through some of the practical aspect of things that you guys did because I

can totally relate to some of these. I have Hashimoto's as well, and so I'm really curious, the actual practical process that you went through as you guys were both trying to find your own answers.

Thomas: So, you know, there's something that's known as the Autoimmune Paleo Protocol which is pretty common these days. I mean, like we've heard of the Whole30 and things like that which kind of leverage some of those. But we took it a step further. What we want, needed to do, is we needed to start understanding which foods were affecting us. So, for us, it was elimination protocols. It was going very, very, very clean on what we would eat for a set period of time and we're talking boring clean. But we figured it was a litmus test to start determining, and then adding specific foods back into the diet to measure different inflammatory responses within the body. So measuring whether we get a rash or whether we get bloated or whether we get headaches, and even going so far as testing different antibodies and getting some blood work done.

Now we went to the extreme but when it comes down to identifying like, "Okay, well, I had it since...the almonds that I didn't know I had." And once we started understanding inflammation there and the root of it with different foods, it made it a lot easier to be able to start removing certain foods from the diet. That, in conjunction with understanding the ketogenic diet and the ketogenic diet as it pertains to inflammation, because when your body is producing ketones, they're very, very anti-inflammatory.

So it started off with implementing the right veggies, implementing the right foods and eliminating the inflammatory foods. Then from there, we realized, "Okay, well, this isn't always the most sustainable lifestyle, to only eat these small amounts of foods." And that's how we got turned on to the ketogenic lifestyle and learned more about that.

Katie: That's fascinating. So were you able...because I've also done the Autoimmune Protocol. And I agree. It's super restrictive. And I got to a point where I was just like, "I just want spices. I want cumin and cinnamon and..."

Thomas: Exactly, totally.

Katie: But were you able to add a lot of those things back in as long as you have like a low inflammation diet after that?

Thomas: Definitely, definitely. It's...you know, the thing with an autoimmune paleo type diet is I think people get a little bit hung up on living inside this box of it where they don't let themselves escape from it. And you're kind of like held into these like clenches of what you can't eat. And I see it with a lot of people and they start to let it control their lives. And we have to remember, Katie, that one of the biggest things when it comes down to inflammation is stress. And if we're causing stress in our body because we're stressing out about what we can and can't eat, we're not doing ourselves a whole lot good. So that's where we start getting to the point where it's, "Okay, how can we reduce inflammation overall so that we don't have these massive undulations and inflammation with every single thing we eat?"

If we can at least lower the baseline, then we're not gonna feel the impact of these inflammatory foods that would ordinarily make us feel terrible. Well, I'm talking about...like I had an issue with cayenne pepper, you know, like nightshade, because I didn't realize that cayenne was technically still the nightshade. Every time I have cayenne pepper, I was so bloated and so distended and my weight would go up two pounds the next day just from water retention. And I'm like, "Okay, my body is so sensitive at this point that anytime I go off the

rails at all or I go out to eat or, you know, they season something at a restaurant differently, I'm back to square one and I feel terrible again." So it was a great way to identify but I wouldn't say it was a good way to sustain.

Katie: That makes sense. Okay, so you've mentioned the keto diet and lifestyle in passing. And I get a ton of questions about this. I've written about my experience with it but I would love to go deeper on this because I guess, like I said, so many questions especially questions related to, is it safe for women and how can women do it? And it sounds like your wife has cracked the code. So let's talk on keto and how you guys make it work.

Thomas: Totally. So the first thing I want to say about keto is that most of what you're gonna find in the Internet leads everyone to believe that it's this totally masculine diet that's just copious amounts of meat and everything like that. And the reality is that's the wrong way to do it. The true ketogenic diet should be, you know, three to one, four to one fats to protein, so higher fat, lower protein. You know, and I'm a fitness guy that's saying this. You don't need to eat a lot of protein. Most fitness guys are saying, "Eat a ton of protein." But, no, not at all. And so our experience with it has been nothing short of amazing. My wife's instance of Lyme disease has essentially gone into remission. She doesn't have...when we test now, she's not showing up with any Lyme. Her Hashimoto, she's off of levothyroxine. She's off her medication.

For me, I've never felt better. Cognitively, I feel amazing. So women tend to be a little bit concerned about ketosis simply because...well, first of all, the initial barrier is we're lead to believe that fats are very bad, you know, and we're talking about diet that's very high fat. So that's barrier number one, but that's both men and women. You know, the common barrier for women is usually the hormonal situation. Is it going to mess with the hormones? We do have to remember that most hormones, at least the important ones that are related to sexual function and related to our overall senses of wellbeing, are synthesized by cholesterol and synthesized by fats. And if we're providing our body with the right amounts of fats and adequate fats, then our body can synthesize those.

So, usually, it has a state of balancing out the hormones, balancing out the body, which was definitely the case for my wife. She was, I know, suffering with ovarian cysts a lot, too, which mellowed out a ton after stating a ketogenic diet. Interestingly enough, with her Lyme disease and her Hashimoto's, she was told that she'd have a very hard time getting pregnant. Well, we have a, you know, beautiful three-month-old baby boy at home and had no problem getting pregnant. And not that we were actively trying before, but the thing is, is that...I mean, it happened very easily. And I've heard a lot of stories talking about ketosis and how it's improved fertility in women.

So that's just kind of the general nutshell. It's just become a lifestyle for us and applying the anti-inflammatory principles as well. So when we go on a ketogenic diet, we don't have copious amounts of dairy. We don't have a ton of cheese. We do every now and then, but we try to keep it low inflammation. So we feel like if you can indoctrinate these principles that you learned from an anti-inflammatory lifestyle, still know which foods kind of affect you, and then apply ketosis on top of that, you can live a very, very nice, clean, crisp life where you feel on top of your game all the time.

Katie: I think you're so right. And then I think the hormone component is the big hang-up for a lot of women. And for a long time, because I've experimented with keto for...years ago, but fell into those traps of all the recipes online for keto or like very high dairy or very high fat but it's all saturated fat, so, for me, one of the keys that I found in genetic testing is that I have the FTO gene which means I don't handle saturated fats really well. But even on the keto diet, I can get plenty of healthy fats from like olives and olive oil and avocados and

avocado oil and so many other resources. Sardines are a great source, things like that. I just had to learn how to adapt it for me. So I think there's a huge component of that. And I think you're so right that if you aren't just like relying on the dairy and the bacon.

I'm curious, how do you guys do veggies and how much veggies do you put into your life, like on a very strict keto diet? Because I think that's one of my soapboxes personally. When I see people talking about the keto diet, I'm like, "This is not an all-protein, all-bacon diet. It should really be largely non-starchy vegetables." But I'm curious how you guys navigate that.

Thomas: You are 100% right and that's the biggest beef that I have, no pun intended, because it's...everyone thinks it's just pure meat and cheese and... No. Veggies are a huge, huge, huge component. In fact, they're a big reason why we stay so satiated on a ketogenic diet. Always going for the prebiotic fiber type veggies. So I'm talking lots of asparagus, lots of artichoke, lots of cabbage, things like that, because you want to be able to stimulate the body to allow its existing gram-positive bacteria to grow and do its thing. So in order to do that, you need to make sure that you're constantly getting these prebiotic fibers and that are continuing to grow. So veggies are a big, big part of it.

So when we look at the ketogenic diet, what happens with the gut flora, some people end up having some issues with their gut flora because certain bacteria respond to fats, certain bacteria respond to starches. And when there aren't starches in the diet, then those bacteria, even ones that are good, can die. So we have to make sure that we're continuing to feed them so that they don't die with a little bit of starch coming from very low starch vegetables that have high prebiotic fiber content. So we eat a ton of asparagus. We eat a ton of artichokes. We even eat...we eat a ton of cabbage which is cruciferous, which isn't always best for someone that has a heavy thyroid issue, but those are really go-tos for us. We also eat a lot of mushrooms. Mushrooms are really, really good. Even though...if they add up, they do have some carbs in them, but terrific prebiotic fiber content in mushroom. So big old portobello mushrooms make a nice...chicken sandwich or something with some portobello mushrooms.

As a male, I consume a lot of broccoli. My wife doesn't consume as much in the way of cruciferous because, again, the link between cruciferous vegetables and the thyroid is still a little bit of a grey area. So she doesn't push the envelope there. But as a male, I consume tons of cruciferous because of the diindolylmethane, the Indole-3-carbinol, which is very powerful at modulating estrogen within the body. The short answer is probably half of our food intake comes from veggies.

Katie: That's awesome. And I think no matter what lifestyle or diet anyone is following, like we could all do better on the veggies and learn from that alone. I think that's awesome. Do you guys cycle at all? Because I know that's another thing that I've read some. And, like, for me, I tend to do well in like a couple of days a month I'll eat more sweet potatoes or something like that. I'm curious, do you guys ever cycle or do you stay in ketosis all the time?

Thomas: Absolutely cycle. And some people are gonna hate on me for this because the devout ketogenic crowd will tell you that you should never cycle on and off. The simple fact is it comes back to that check-in-the-box kind of thing again. You don't have to...just because everyone says this is how you need to do keto doesn't mean that this is how you have to do keto. You have to listen to your body. And my wife and I are both very active and we get to a point or sometimes we feel like we just need to re-store carbohydrate. We need to re-store the glycogen. When you're on a ketogenic diet, people tend to think that you burn through all your

glycogen, all your carbs that are stored in your muscles, and then start using fats.

The reality is your body stores those carbohydrates in your muscles and it preserves them pretty darn well while you're in ketosis. So you don't drain your muscle's stores of energy for like a month. So the point is is at the end of the month or so, it's okay to have some carbs, re-store the glycogen, and let yourself feel good again just like you did when you first started keto. Because so many people, first couple of weeks of keto, they're like, "I feel amazing," and then they just get into this point where they feel stale, they feel achy. And it's because, first of all, their fats might not be high enough. And, second of all, they may need to just take a couple of days and have some carbs.

But how we cycle is we actually cycle in longer phases. So I'll go like 8 weeks, 10 weeks of very devout ketogenic principles, very strict protocol, and then I'll actually go for a month out of keto. So I cycle longer. So I'll go two months to three months in keto and then three to four weeks out of keto and give my body a full break because that's just how I like the keto cycle. And, again, some people will tell me that that's not living a ketogenic lifestyle but since, for me, most of the period of the year I am in ketosis, I consider that my lifestyle. When I do re-store carbs, very low glycemic, so I'm talking lentils, green lentils, red lentils, lentil pasta, chickpea pasta, sweet potatoes. I'll kind of keep the glycemic index under 50 as much as I can.

Katie: And I think if everybody can like remember one thing from what we're saying today, I think what you just said a minute ago is key, it is so personalized. And you can't...like, you can take so much great knowledge from people but, really, at the end of the day, you're gonna have to figure out how that works in your own life. And I think that's maybe where I think all of the dietary dogmas, as they're often called, like, that's where they all fall into a problem, is when you try to make them your religion. And I've seen that happen to a lot of people. And, like you said, they feel great for a while but...by following a specific protocol, and then they don't as well and they're not willing to adapt it because they really want to cling on to that.

So I think...I really do think and hope that the future of a lot of the natural health movement is gonna be in personalization and figuring out the variation that works for individuals that I love that you said that. So thanks for bringing that up. I'm also curious if you guys worked in...I know we talked a little before we started talking on the air about fasting. So I'm curious if fasting played into that at all. Because that's something I've been experimenting with the last few months and loving, but I'm curious with your experience.

Thomas: I'm personally very seasoned with fasting. I'm a huge proponent of it, of dry fasting, water fasting, intermittent fasting. I love playing around with it because I just love how I feel. Amber is not real big on fasting and this is perfect, right to your point. Some people respond very, very well to fasting and some people just don't. It just doesn't jive with them. I know plenty of women that have just crazy success with intermittent fasting and Amber just...she likes to live more of the ketogenic lifestyle. So fasting just isn't for her. But she understands the benefits of it. So, for me, I've become very well versed in it because it's how I tend to live. I like to intermittent fast at least three days per week. I use fasting as a catalyst and sort of an auxiliary component to an already successful diet. If your body is already thriving on what you're eating, then by periodically throwing fasting into the mix, it's just catapulting you into an entirely different level.

I'm not a fan of fasting every day. You know, I'm doing these intermittent fast like 16/8 strategy every single day. I think that's setting yourself up to really get bored of it and also potentially lower your baseline metabolic rate. But I love the idea of implementing it a couple of days per week and getting maybe one 24-hour fasting per week at least and really just allowing your body to benefit from that cell recycling, that

autophagy that occurs. So huge, huge advocate of fasting here.

Katie: Well, I'd love to address a little bit, if you don't mind, because I know I'm gonna get the objections from listeners of like, "Your body is not made to go without food," and especially you mention dry fasting. I hear a lot...you know, like, "Your body is not made to ever go without water." And there are people who truly think you should eat like six meals a day and you'd be drinking all the time. So I'm curious, can you like expound on your research a little bit in why you feel comfortable both with fasting and dry fasting?

Thomas: Yeah, totally. So when it comes down to this traditional fasting in the first place, the first thing I want to say is we have to look at kind of the Pavlovian response that we've been conditioned to fall into. You know, from the time that we are small children, we're led to believe that when the...get up in the morning, we eat. And then the school bell rings and it's lunch time or its recess and it's time for a snack. And the school bell rings and it's time to eat again. All the way down to the "dinner bell," we literally have just conditioned ourselves, from a mental aspect, to just think that we need to be eating multiple times per day when, in reality, we can be making ourselves more metabolically inefficient. So I encourage people to look at it slightly different where if you are training your body to eat all the time or every few hours, then your cells are not becoming adapted to being able to survive on their own.

We have a very adaptive body. Our body is very capable of adapting to many different things. That's what makes it so unique and so powerful. So if we go periods of time where we're fasting, we're putting ourselves in this tremendous situation where our cells become adapted to being more efficient at energy utilization. They get better at it. The other thing is our body has a lot of natural storage of fat that it can pull from. And that fat is very, very calorically dense. And the whole idea is your body takes these fats and turns them into ketone bodies so that you have energy, so that you do feel well. Now, initially, when someone first starts to fast, they can find that they have to modulate a little bit because their blood sugar is kind of up and down a little bit because it's just not used to it. But that literally is something that goes away after one or two days of practicing fasting.

So when it comes down to the constant stress on the body, every time that we eat, our pancreas has to secrete insulin. And that insulin is really hard on our body. Our bodies aren't designed to be actually taking in this constant insulin surge and it's taxing on the pancreas. And there are even been...you know, thought leaders in the industry that have shown that if we could fast or if we could limit our food intake, that our cells would live a lot longer and consequently we would live a lot longer. Some of the cultures, Hindu cultures, and some of these Asian cultures that have periods of fasting incorporated into their lifestyles, they have the longest life expectancies. And you can't negate that. And some of these...you know, Indian cultures go weeks of fasting. That's a little bit extreme but, still, they have some of the highest life expectancies. So it definitely isn't a matter of is it healthy or unhealthy? It's more just a matter of how you've mentally framed yourself to be able to handle that.

And being that I talked about fasting on the Internet a lot, you know, I've heard it all. I've had a lot of people telling me that we're not designed to do that. You just have to test it for yourself because one thing is for certain: you're not gonna waste away. Your muscles aren't just gonna surrender and you're not just gonna lose all your muscle. The very worst case scenario is you're gonna lose some fat and you might feel a little bit weak on your first time fasting. And I get behind fasting 100%.

Katie: Definitely. Me too. As I said, it's something I've been experimenting with. I'm actually on day two of a

fast right now. That will be a five to seven-day water fast. And I had that same thing, all those things that you read and hear. And, you know, people throw their cautions about you're gonna down-regulate your metabolism and you're gonna ruin all your blood levels. And like...it sounds like you are, too. I'm very much a researcher so I...the first few times I fasted, I tested my blood levels before and after and I tested my morning blood glucose and...like various times throughout the day. And I tested ketones, and I tested breath acetone. And certainly, for me at least, it definitely was a very positive thing. And it...like my morning...my fasting blood glucose went down 10 points and stayed that way after fasting.

And, I mean, it's been really drastic. But I think you're absolutely right that it doesn't work for everyone but it's worth experimenting with for everyone for sure. And there's so much cool research on how you're body goes into autophagy which means it's gonna kill off bad cells and how you get...I think it's even stem cells, on like day three to five of fasting, you get an infusion of stem cells. Have you seen any of the information on that? You probably talked about it already.

Thomas: Yeah. It's really interesting, particularly in the brain which is really crazy, is, you know, at the brain, you know, brain stem cells actually showing up. That's powerful. So then we're talking about very powerful states of, you know, neurogenesis. And I want to...you touched on something that I want to mention, about down regulating the metabolism, because...so I'm gonna touch on that for a second because I know that's a huge obstacle for a lot of women as they think that their T3 function, their thyroid function, is gonna go down. So there are studies...I can send them to you so you can put them on the show notes because I forget the publication right off hand, but, essentially, what they found was that your T3 levels while you're fasting, which is your bioactive...your form of thyroid, that thyroid hormone that is present at that point in time, yes, it does go down while you're fasting.

And that scares people. It freaks people out. But what they found doesn't change is that your thyroid stimulating hormone and your T4, it does not change. And those are the precursors to your thyroid. So with those not changing, it goes to show us that any down-regulation of the thyroid is only temporarily literally during your fasting state. Other than that, you're golden.

Katie: And that makes perfect sense. And that probably also is why I've noticed, and a lot of people seem to notice, this being cold on the first few days of a fast. But if your T3 is down, that would make sense, that you'd feel more cold. So that's a really a good point. I would love if you could send those. I'll make sure they're on the show notes as well.

Thomas: Totally.

Katie: Awesome. So let's talk inflammation more in-depth because I feel like that seems like it was a huge part of your story and something that's a huge focus for your research now. And I know I've seen a lot of studies about how inflammation plays a part and pretty much every disease in some way. But to start, let's talk about what exactly is inflammation and why are we seeing more of it right now?

Thomas: I think the reason we're seeing more of it now is mainly just because there's just more awareness online, period. I think, you know, with the advent of like the Whole30 and some of these other publications that talk about it, we're just...it's more top of mind. The simplest way that I can explain inflammation is if you ever bump your elbow or you bump your knee or you've gotten a sprain or a bee sting, you know, it gets all swollen, that swelling is acute inflammation which means that it is inflammation that is responding to a given

stimuli.

Now, we have inflammation that's called chronic inflammation. This chronic inflammation is inflammation that is not necessarily responding to any stimuli. It's just constantly there. So if you can visualize the swelling and the redness of a bee sting happening on each microscopic cell within a given area of your body, that's exactly what inflammation is. And if you think about it, just quite logically, when a cell is inflamed like that, it makes it so nutrients can't get into the cell as well because there's all this swelling. The cells can't communicate as well because they have a layer that makes it so they can't...the neurons can't connect and they can't actually have the cell fluid they need that we need to be able to communicate. And it can cause a lot of problems.

It basically makes us so that your immune system is constantly on high alert. It's like inside your body, you have a low state of the flu going on all the time whenever you have instances of inflammation. So that's why people tend to get that brain fog or just that chronic fatigue. A lot of times, it's just inflammation doing its thing on such a low scale that you're not actively thinking about it. But when you stop and you reflect, you're like, "Wow, I have been really foggy. I haven't been myself." And that's usually just chronic inflammation, just running amok in your body like as if your body was fighting off the flu.

Katie: That makes perfect sense. So then I'm assuming that things like the ketogenic lifestyle and fasting both help reduce inflammation. But what are some of the other ways that you guys have dealt with inflammation and reducing...because, obviously, with Lyme disease, that's also a huge a problem, having the excess inflammation. So how else did you guys address that?

Thomas: So one of the big things that we've implemented is...you know, studies have shown that literally just small amounts of fasted cardio like first thing in the morning, even if you can't fast like for an extended period of time, but if you get up and you do 10 minutes of easy fasted cardio...I mean, going for a walk in a fasted state, it has been shown to reduce interleukin-6, which is an inflammatory marker or a precursor, quite dramatically. So, I mean, that's one thing that we've noticed that made a huge difference, just trying to get some tangible aspects for the listeners who think that they can try. So very, very powerful there. Reducing sugar intake. Sugar is so inflammatory. And even fructose is very inflammatory in large amounts, and that's the sugar that comes from fruit. We're not designed to be eating a lot of fruit. We're designed to be eating amounts that would naturally be growing at that point in time in our respective regions.

So cutting down those sugars really brings things down a lot, particularly with brain inflammation. Digestive inflammation is a very, very big one. So reducing meat consumption quite a bit. I'm not a vegan. I don't play one on TV and I don't ever claim to be one, but I do advocate for a much lower protein diet. And I feel like if you eat just enough protein to really sustain the right function and just enough protein to build muscle, if that's what you want to do, then that is perfect. So reducing sort of the carbon footprint on our body because too much meat is very, very hard as far as inflammation goes. Believe it or not, some of the foods that we think are healthy that are even inflammatory, an example is large amounts of nuts.

Sure, the fats are great, but, mechanically, they're very hard to digest. First, you've got to chew them really, really well and the body has to break them down. But they also contain things called phytase, phytic acid, which is really hard for the body to breakdown. And it's kind of funny, but if you ever think about...you know, you're walking in the woods and you were to look down and you were to see some animal scat on the ground, you might see that there's some nuts and seeds already in animal scat. Well, that's simply because the phytic acid that is in seeds is designed to make sure that like nuts don't fully breakdown. And it's so that they can

germinate, so that the nuts can pass through and get planted and the seeds can get planted when an animal passes them and they can grow into a tree.

So it's actually a biological component of nuts and seeds to have this phytic acid where it restricts our body from fully breaking them down, especially if the skin is present. So things like that, like reducing the nut intakes that we're not eating so much. And on the ketogenic diet, you know, we have a tendency to eat a lot of cashews. We eat a lot of almonds. But, actually, modulating that a little bit more and going with more of the oils and stuff like that. So really understanding that was very, very important, but sugar was the biggest one. But also Omega-3 is huge, especially getting it from like a Docosahexaenoic source, DHA versus this traditional EPA, which is the kind of stuff you'll see this on the shelves. Omega-3s are very, very powerful and we're supposed to have a one-to-one ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3s in the body.

The standard American diet is 18 to 1, Omega-6 to Omega-3. So we're way, way, way off. So the first order of business is getting out sugar. Second order of business is increasing our fat intake by way of these Omegas so we can get that baseline back to one-to-one, because Omega-6s are exceptionally inflammatory and if our body is constantly coming to fight with inflammation from those Omega-6s, excuse me, we're never gonna get ourselves to the place we need to be to start finding homeostasis.

Katie: That makes sense. So you mentioned a couple of times like eat protein but not too much protein. So what does that actually practically look like, both for you and your wife, on a day to day basis? Like how much protein do you actually consume?

Thomas: So I'm about 180 pounds so I consume less than 100 grams of protein. So I'm about half a gram per pound of body weight. And, again, mind you, I'm a relatively heavily muscled guy so my protein requirements are a little bit higher. My wife probably only consumes 50 at most. She doesn't consumed much, 50 to 70, you know. So it's...she just doesn't need to be having that much especially on a ketogenic diet because proteins can get converted into sugar relatively easy in the body. So you want to be a little bit lower on protein and higher in fats. The general rule they say is about 0.6 per kilogram of body weight. So you take your weight and you divide it by 2.2, get yourself in kilograms, then you are looking at between 0.6 to 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. That's what's been tried and tested the most.

Katie: Got it. That's really helpful. So also believe, from what I've read, you used some turmeric-based compounds as part of reducing inflammation. Am I remembering that right? And if so, can you talk about it?

Thomas: Yeah, totally. So it's actually, as far as compounds go, the combination of turmeric curcumin and Docosahexaenoic acid, so fish oil or an Algal oil in this case, that combination is exceptionally lethal in terms of just modulating inflammation. I gotta be careful how I say that. Lethal in a good way, meaning it's gonna kill off inflammation. So curcumin, there are literally over 12,000 studies, peer-reviewed scholarly articles, directly linking curcumin to reduction of inflammation, and we're talking about major things like nuclear factor-kappa B, which is a huge inflammatory marker in the body. Huge reductions in C-reactive protein, another major biomarker. I mean, just countless. Literally, over 12,000, and it's just growing immensely by...and then all of the studies of curcumin in cancer research too and being able to shrink certain cancer cells.

But as far as inflammation goes, there is no better natural compound. There's even a study that found that curcumin was more powerful at reducing inflammation as a Cox-1 inhibitor than...we have these Cox-1 inhibitor, basically, it's doing the same thing that Aspirin or anti-inflammatory drug does. But studies have

shown that curcumin is even more powerful than an anti-inflammatory or an Aspirin at reducing localized inflammation. That right there is so powerful. And, for me, having weighed 280 pounds before, my joints were already suffering at a very young age. So curcumin was such a huge thing for me to be able to control systemic inflammation but also the joint inflammations that I could feel good again.

Katie: Wow. That is really drastic. I'm curious, because a lot of the stuff I've seen, at least articles online, seem to say you should take turmeric or curcumin with black pepper. And the one...we'll link to the one that you used. It will be in the show notes and I think there's even a discount for listeners, but I noticed it doesn't have black pepper, and I'm curious why.

Thomas: Yes. So the thing with black peppers or, you know, Bioperine is its trademark name, a lot of times a company will use that, black pepper, it's not a bad thing. But we have to realize what black pepper is doing. So curcumin is the bioactive component of turmeric. So we actually have a couple of stages. So we start with turmeric. We've got the root, right? And then we break it down into the standardized bioavailable extract which is curcumin, which is what's actually doing most of the work. Well, curcumin is a powerful compound that has to be broken down by the liver. It has to be somewhat methylated. It has to go through this process in the liver where it breaks it down. Well, it's very hard to break down. So a lot of times the liver just says, "Forget it." And it passes on through the urine and excreted out.

But when you have black pepper in the mix, black pepper disarms the liver. So it disarms certain compounds within the liver so that medications can be absorbed. When we look at it with curcumin, it does the same thing. It shuts off the liver temporarily so that the curcumin can be absorbed. But when you really think about it in how it's setup like that, why on earth do we want to ever turn off our liver? It's...you know, we become very susceptible to all kinds of other things at that point in time. So if you take any other medications or anything like that and you're taking black pepper extract or Bioperine along with your turmeric curcumin, well, you just open yourself up to being dramatically more sensitive to whatever medication you're taking, dramatically more sensitive to the negative effects of alcohol and any other compound, or even, you know, recreational drug or whatever it could be in your body.

So very, very dangerous, but it's also just disarming the liver to be able to synthesize and process different oxidative stressors in the body. So it turns off your liver. Now, it doesn't literally turn the whole liver off but it deactivates certain components so that different things can be absorbed. So I'm a huge fan of finding turmeric curcumin that has been utilized or processed in a way where it can be metabolized without having to go through that particular area of the liver. Or, if it can, it's already nanoparticulated that it's brought down and small enough, that it can utilize. So that's where the specific kind that I use and I actually...I'm on the Scientific Advisory Board so I've personally worked with some of the research that's been done on this micellization. And we can get into the details of how that actually works but, essentially, you want to be very, very careful with the black pepper because it can make it so that you're much more sensitive to other things in your life.

Katie: That's fascinating and really good to know. Can you explain in-depth what you mean by that? I think you just said micellization, is that right? What is that and what does that mean?

Thomas: Yeah. So when we eat fats...you know, first of all, our bodies are predominantly water. So when we eat fats, I want you to think of what happens if you were to put a bunch of olive oil on a cup of water. It's gonna bubble up, it's gonna bead up, and it's not gonna break down. Fats need to be emulsified. I mean, they need to combine with different enzymes to actually turn them into something that can be soluble in water. So

whenever we consume fats, they are broken down and our body puts them through a system and a process, part of which is releasing bile from the gallbladder and parts of the liver. And that gallbladder turns this fat into a micelle or, basically, it micellizes the fats. Micelles are very, very small nanoparticles that are small enough to cross through the intestinal tract to get things from the intestines into the bloodstream.

Well, they're little tiny carriers for fat. So what they do is take the fat, emulsify it, make it digestible, put it inside this microscopic school bus. The school bus drives through the intestinal tract into the bloodstream and, voila, you have fat in the bloodstream. They're gonna be utilized for fuel. So really a cool thing. Now, if you take turmeric or you take curcumin, and you can scientifically find a way to nanoparticulate it and make it small enough that you can encapsulate it in a micelle, we're talking about very, very finite process here, like very, very, very small little tiny particles that you're putting curcumin inside of, well, you just got yourself a delivery system for that curcumin where it's broken down small enough, encapsulated in a microscopic piece of fat basically, that goes right through your body, right through...or not right through your body, excuse me, right through your intestinal tract and your bloodstream ready to be utilized by a cell. And then a micelle connects with a regular cell in your body and opens up the gateway so that the nutrient can get directly into the cell.

So you basically bypassed the extra process of the liver. And this is a very unique function, a patented function that we use with this particular strain of kind of curcumin. So really, really powerful how it works especially...and just for those that are wondering, the fat that is added to it is that Omega-3, that DHA coming from an Algal source. So it's not derived from fish. It's derived from algae. The reason fish have a high Omega-3 content isn't because they're naturally born with high amounts of Omega-3. It's because they eat the algae that has high amounts of Omega-3. So rather than go to the fish, let's go straight to the source and use the Algal oil and get the true high-quality Omega-3 so that we can combine this with the curcumin in a micellized form and we've got this ultimate inflammation reducing compound.

Katie: That's really cool. And it would seem like...because I know a lot of different cultures have maybe like culture recipes that include turmeric and a healthy form of fat, I'm thinking off the top of my head the turmeric tea or golden milk. It's popular in several cultures. But...so this would be much more effective than that because that process has already happened and is now at a nano level versus just mixing like a fat with turmeric. Am I understanding it correctly?

Thomas: You are so dead on. Yup. And the cool thing is I've actually done videos on...because this particular...you know, we'll just call it a nano fat has to be in a liquid form. It's suspended in a liquid form because it can't be just put in a capsule because it's that unique. But it also...it tastes really good. So like I make golden milk with it. I make all kinds of recipes with it. So, you know, I will take my coconut milk and I will add this PuraTHRIVE to it. That's the product name. So I'll add this curcumin to it and make my own golden milk because that way I've already got the fats. I've already got the fats also from the coconut milk. And then I've got it from the product itself, too. So it's really cool because golden milk is amazing. The downside is you're just not always absorbing what you're getting out of it.

You're gonna absorb a little bit. It's still...there's still some amazing benefits to drinking the straight turmeric to begin with because there's turmeric and there's curcumin. Curcumin is contained within turmeric. But standardized turmeric extract, the actual benefit of the root itself, is still very powerful and you're gonna get that benefit from just making some good old fashioned golden milk. But one of my favorite things is to combine with all kinds of things: coconut ice cream, coconut milk, coconut yogurt, you know, do all kinds of

things and get creative with your turmeric.

Katie: Interesting. And since the Omega...the DHA comes from an algae form, I would guess...does that make it more stable? Because there's been some stuff coming out lately about like fish-based Omega-3s and how they can go easily rancid if they're not actually in the fish itself. And so I tend to stick to sardines and like the actual fish form to get that. But with the algae form, you would kind of bypass that problem as well, right?

Thomas: Yup. Yeah, I've seen some of that stuff recently too and it's really scary because like I used to be a huge consumer of fish oil. And, you know, in a little bit of an uneducated sense, I was just...knew it was good. I was consuming a lot of it. And when it comes back to...like fats that are unstable, and let's first off say that Omega-3s are amazing but they are an unstable fat. Okay, what that means is that they go bad very easily. They're very delicate. You know, they're a delicate little flower and that is beautiful and does amazing things but if you look at it wrong, it's gonna wilt. And that's the price you pay to get good quality food sometimes. But with Omega-3s, if they go rancid, if they go bad, they become toxic in the body. And not like this make-you-sick...well, they can definitely make you sick, but you don't even realize they're rancid. They just become a bad fat. It goes to a process called lipid peroxidation where it turns into an oxidized fat, when fat combines with oxygen. It turns bad and the body can't utilize it. And, in fact, it actually causes more harm than good.

So a lot of the fish oil, I'll probably say 80% of the fish oils out there, are very, very dangerous to take if you're taking a lot of them. And Algal oil is much more stable, much more sustainable, and doesn't have that issue. We're not gonna have...it's still an unsaturated fat, a polyunsaturated fat, so it's still unstable compared to, say, coconut oil, you know. But coconut oil doesn't have the Omega-3s that it does. So I would always recommend, no matter what, any Omega that you get, whether it's fish oil or Algal oil, you should probably refrigerate it whenever you can, just because it's gonna help keep it stable.

Katie: Good advice. And I think...I'm glad that you've also seen the research on the Omega-3s from fish sources. I'm glad that it's coming out and I'm glad that we were understanding it. And I think you would probably say as well, it's always good to go to food sources for fish anyway and I'm assuming...do you guys eat quite a bit of seafood as part of your keto diet?

Thomas: I do. Amber is not a big seafood person. She's just never has been. But I do. So I go small, small fish whenever I can. So sardines, I go mackerel, I go...the smaller the fish, the better. It's lower down the food chain, less build up. You want ones that have a short lifecycle so they don't have a lot of time in the ocean and blurbing heavy metals and everything like that, whenever you can. But I don't expect people to just go around eating algae. So, you know, you want to get the closest thing next to that, you know, the small fish that are feeding on the algae. Just the kind of a line of diminishing return, with each time you go up for predatory fish, you're going up further down the line. So you start with the algae. What eats the algae? Okay. Some microscopic organisms but then a lot of fish munch on the algae.

And then what munches on the fish? Well, the next size up fish and then the next size up fish, and then the next size up fish, and then you get this big predatory fish, swordfish, things like that. Well, what do you know? They're usually the lowest Omega-3 content. They're also usually the highest in heavy metals. So you want to keep it as low down the food chain as you possibly can. And it really helps out a lot. In fact, I'm actually...I'm speaking at South by Southwest in Austin about this, literally about Algal oil, because it's becoming so big and it's literally to your point about how fish oil is becoming a little bit more known to be a little bit more dangerous now. So it's definitely a big trending topic. I mean, to the point where I'm speaking about it, so.

Katie: That's awesome.

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Katie: Well, and I think for a lot of people listening, they're definitely probably intrigued by a lot of the things that you do and by your amazing transformation and your wife's healing story as well. So I'm gonna ask you to kind of take us through a typical day, but in a self-serving way, because I know a lot of people are gonna want to know like specifically what exactly do you do? How do you implement it and how does it look on a practical daily level?

Thomas: You're getting the good stuff here because I've had so many people on my YouTube channel, my Facebook page, that always ask me to go through a day in the life. But I always kind of reserve it for special circumstances. So this is definitely one of those special circumstances being on your podcast. So, a little bit of, you know, I'll walk through my day because I can speak for myself and then I can talk a little bit more about sort of, you know, Amber's day too. So, you know, I wake up. I'm always an early to bed, early to rise kind of person anyway. It's just how I'm wired. So I get up. I start my day with apple cider vinegar which a lot of people know, I'm a very big fan of. So I have some apple cider vinegar, a little bit of lemon and I'm just gonna go ahead and talk about a regular keto day because a fasting day is kind of boring, because you wouldn't want to hear about what I don't eat.

Then I go to the gym and I usually do some kind of short, easy, high-intensity workout or I do some fasted cardio first and then go ahead and do some kind of 20 to 30-minute hit style workout. I'm not a big fan of spending a lot of time in the gym. I just go in, get it done, and then I come home and I wait about an hour before I ever eat breakfast. So I let the benefits of the workout sort of set in. And it usually works out great because I get up, I'd go to the gym nice and early, and then I come home. I watch the kiddo while Amber goes to the gym. And so it works out great. So then when she comes home, a lot of times we'll have breakfast together. So what I will usually do is that's exactly when I'll have some of my turmeric right then and there, is

when I've recovered from, you know, 45 minutes to an hour after the workout. Perfect time to start quelling some inflammation in the body.

Then I usually use some collagen protein. So I like using collagen protein with a little bit of coconut milk or almond milk, if it doesn't have carrageenan in it. So huge fan of that. Keeping it relatively low calorie with breakfast and then adding a couple of tablespoons of coconut oil to the shake and shaking it up or just eating the coconut oil separate. I have no problem just straight up consuming coconut oil because I actually like the taste of it. Collagen is very important on the ketogenic diet because if your body is gonna start breaking down proteins in your body, it usually tends to break them down from your soft tissue, like your connective tissue first. So I always try to restore collagen whenever I can.

And then...so pretty small breakfast, especially considering that I'm 180 pounds. And then I move on into lunch. I go to the office and I sip on Matcha green tea all morning. I have Matcha green tea and I usually add MCT powder to it. MCT Oil, if you try to add it to tea, it doesn't mix very well. So I'm a huge fan of using MCT powder. Just MCTs, or medium chain triglycerides, that basically...the powerful fat that is in coconut oil that's been extracted into a powder form, so I put that with my Matcha, sip on that throughout the morning. Revs my brain up really good. Then I go home and I will usually have, for lunch, usually like three to four ounces of some grass-fed bison, so a higher Omega-3 content because it's been grass-fed. And bison has such a naturally higher Omega-3 content.

And if it's a keto day, which, again, it is, I will usually have some big old flab of asparagus. So I'll use...like Trader Joe's has these awesome bags that are just like steamed...serving sizes that you can either microwave or you can steam, take out and steam. I usually take them out and steam them. So right then and there, I'm usually having, it sounds crazy, but like 20 to 25 stalks of asparagus because I just love asparagus. So majority of my carbs of the day do come from asparagus. And I melt a couple of tablespoons of coconut oil on that and feeling really, really good. And maybe I'll have a tablespoon of macadamia nut butter just to get my fats up a little bit higher. Then come back to the office. Usually, I don't have any appetite until dinner, if even that, because the high-fat content satiates me so much.

And that's when we usually...Amber is really awesome about just creating and coming up with these awesome ketogenic recipes. And so we usually have something creative. Cauliflower crust pizza, where we're making it with cauliflower crust and a tiny bit of coconut flour and almond flour and putting almond cheese on it. Again, we try to keep dairy low so almond, cheese and marinara, you know, get creative with it. Get some really good quality chorizo or anything like that just to make the pizza taste good and still low meat content with lower protein, higher fat. Then, this is my staple, every night it's like I cannot sleep unless I have something that I call my "mumu's." Amber makes fun of me because it's like my Mumu's Sippy Cup. It's like I have to have it before I go to bed.

And what it is it's either almond milk or coconut milk that I warm up and then I add about two to three tablespoons of good, high fat coconut cream. And then I add a couple of Stevia, a couple of drops of Stevia, and then some raw cacao powder, and mix that up with like a little magic bullet. And it froths up and it is a ketogenic, low-carb, hot chocolate that I practically can't live without. I'm like a five-year-old. And that just puts me right to sleep. And then I have a little bit more of my curcumin gold before I go to bed because I try to keep inflammation down low while I'm sleeping so my body can fight. And that is my day in a nutshell in terms of how I eat and my ketogenic lifestyle, at least abbreviated.

Katie: Nice. Has that changed at all since having a baby? Because I know that can like throw a monkey wrench into a lot of scheduling things for a lot of people. Are you guys still maintaining a pretty good schedule even with a newborn?

Thomas: It's definitely more of a challenge but, again, I think we have a little bit of an upper hand because it's our lifestyle and we're in the public eye a lot with what we do. So we have extrinsic motivation to make sure that we don't go off the rails. And we know that we motivate a lot of people. So, I mean, it's a huge shout-out and testament to how awesome my fan base is and our fan base is just because it's really holding us to the grindstone with it. So I will be the first to say that, yeah, there are a lot of times now I'm sleep deprived, just tired, you know. Holding a baby in one hand, it's not always easy to just go make a super healthy meal. It's a lot easier to just want to grab a handful of macadamia nuts or a handful of cashews and eat the things that might just be a snack. It's a lot easier to snack, I guess I should just say that.

It's a lot easier to just graze. And although grazing can be okay, it's very easy for your calories to add up when you graze and I feel like that's why...I could speak...let me to speak for men. I feel like that's why so many men end up getting the "dad bods." They just graze and they don't keep track of their calories anymore. It's not like they're just binging on bad food. I think they're just losing track. So, fortunately, little Tommy is finally getting to the age now where he...we're in kind of the sweet spot. You know, he's three months, three-and-a-half months. He's like been to the point where he's not as needy of a newborn but he's not to the point where he is rambunctious and running around yet. So we're kind of in the sweet spot right now where when we set him down, he stays there.

So we can actually cook again and we can get our schedules going. But sardines had become a good friend of mine because they're easy. I can open them up with one hand pretty easily. Macadamia nuts, as always. Macadamia nut butter has become a good friend. And, again, collagen protein has just been something which is really easy for me to just whip together if I'm just in a hurry. So, it's definitely changed. Not as much structure to the meals but it's getting better.

Katie: I feel your pain. For sure, we have six. And sardines are a go-to for me and anchovies as well. I love anchovies. But it does get harder. You're so right. And so I want to make sure we mention...I think we forgot to mention earlier that you guys are giving a 10% discount on PuraTHRIVE to anyone listening. And that's at purathrive.com/wellnessmama for anybody who wants to check it out. And, of course, that will be in the show notes as well. And I have a feeling you might include it in your answer but I'm curious to ask, and I always ask at the end, for anyone listening who maybe seems a little overwhelmed by all the information but they wanna jump in, where would you have them start? Where's the one to two baby steps you give them to begin?

Thomas: Let me answer your question just with a question just so I make sure I'm giving the right answer. You're talking about in general or a ketogenic lifestyle or is there something particular? Because I have a couple of different directions. I could go with either one.

Katie: You can interpret however you want, however...like anything we've talked about.

Thomas: Okay. So first...the first thing that I would say is everything you hear about a given diet, if they tell you that it's the only way to go, run the opposite direction because you need to do what works for you. So my first bit of advice would be to do your research from unbiased sources. Whenever you find out anything about a diet, so whether it's autoimmune paleo, whether it's keto, whether it's fasting, there's a wonderful place

called PubMed, P-U-B-M-E-D, and it's where you can access all the published studies. They do a great job of just summarizing them in very abstract, simple form. Be your own advocate for your health. You can't just trust what every guru says. And that's what I love so much about Wellness Mama as everything you do is so backed up, too. It's great.

The next thing is... And looped in with that, by the way, I mean, I've got a huge YouTube following with over 600 videos all about every health topics so if there's ever an encyclopedia of videos that you need to learn about something, you can always go there. So that's the best place to really start. Then the other thing that I really want to be able to do is don't be afraid to experiment with yourself. Don't be afraid to experiment with things that might be a little bit different from what the conventional way of thinking that we've been taught is, you know. So if you're curious about fasting but you're afraid of it, you never know until you try. And the data will speak for itself. If you feel better, if your weight changes, then that's what's really gonna be what's the most important.

Katie: I love it. And I'll make sure that all those links that you mentioned are in the show notes including PubMed and your YouTube videos. And I know you've got some great ones on topics that we covered so I'll try to link specifically to those as well. But thank you so much for your time and being here. This was fascinating. I really enjoyed it and I know everybody listening did, too. So thank you so much.

Thomas: Awesome. Thanks for having me.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening and I will see you next time on the Healthy Moms Podcast.

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