



Episode 244: Debunking Probiotic Myths With Just Thrive Founder Tina Anderson

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie, from wellnessmama.com. And I'm here today with a friend and someone I love so much, Tina Anderson, who is the co-founder and CEO of Just Thrive Probiotics. And we're gonna jump into a lot of probiotic myths and understanding today, but Tina's journey is really fascinating. She got into the world of health with some unusual turns. She began her career as a trial lawyer who specialized in settling cases by bringing both sides together and uniting them, which is a personal passion of hers and something she's very good at.

But once she had her second child, like many of us, she wanted to change and she left her high-stress job so that she could focus on family. And she was still able to use her legal skills to point her career in a new direction as in-house counsel for her family business, a family pharmaceutical company. But what she saw there made her change direction again, and she eventually turned toward the field of natural health and found her life's work and passion. She's now channeled her energy into learning all that she can about disease prevention and good health maintenance. And this, of course, led her to discover the importance of gut health, and how connected and crucial it is for overall health and wellness.

To share her discovery with the world, she and her husband, created a unique supplement that contains superior probiotic strains from renowned researcher Dr. Simon Cutting. And we're gonna go into it today. I know I've heard so many questions from all of you guys. And Tina is here to answer them. Tina, welcome, and thanks for being here.

Tina: Hi, Katie. Oh, thank you so much for having me on today. I'm so excited to be here.

Katie: Likewise, it's always so much fun to chat with you. And I know our initial episode with Kiran, your microbiologist was so popular and we had so many follow up questions, and I can't wait to jump in and ask you some of them today. But I touched on your story a little bit in the bio and I'd love to hear a little bit more from you, because that seems like a really big change from trial lawyer to being very much an integral of this natural health world.

Tina: Yes, it definitely was. You know, essentially we, you know, we went into, I ended up going into the pharmaceutical industry. And after being in the pharmaceutical industry for many years, we just noticed so many abuses in the industry, including, you know, the rampant over-prescribing of medications. In fact, one example is when our company was awarded a very large contract for one of the largest hospital systems in the country for a cholesterol drug. And we were all so excited and celebrating and the pharmaceutical manufacturer's rep came into our office and said, "Oh, this is great. We won this contract." And now it's my job to go to every cardiologist in the system and get them to lower the number that they prescribe cholesterol meds. So, in essence, they were lowering that number in order to prescribe more of their medication.

And, you know, while a part of me was shocked, you know, another part of me a light bulb went off in my head and I just realized that this was happening all around us. I mean, we had a family member that started on one prescription. And then that's led her, you know, to stomach problems, which then caused her to be on another medication, which then led to joint issues which then led to another prescription. And before you know it, within six to eight months, she was on over a dozen prescription medicines. So, you know, we also saw it with our kids, antibiotic after antibiotic for ear infection. And we always try to use natural remedies but we still heard that message over and over. And, you know, believe me, unfortunately, my kids have had their share of antibiotics before I learned about the devastating impact they have on our gut health. And, you know, the ironic thing is that when we started in the pharmaceutical industry, we loved knowing that we were in the health field and we were distributing life-saving medications to people.

And there's no doubt I mean, I think you would agree too, that there's absolutely a place for pharmaceuticals, especially in emergency medical type of situations. But we just don't feel that it was a place to treat chronic conditions. And we saw this firsthand with overprescribing of medications. And we started to realize that there was, you know, virtually no emphasis on prevention and it was just focused on treatment. And we just found it very frustrating. And, you know, I'm a pretty deep thinker. I read a lot of Wayne Dyer and Norman Vincent Peale. And both my husband and I just believed that we weren't doing our life's work anymore. So we delved into research, started learning more about natural health, and particularly gut health. And we were, you know, frankly, we were blown away. I mean, this was shortly after the Human Microbiome Project was conducted by the National Institutes of Health. And wow, did we learn a lot.

And what we learned is something that much of your audience already knows now, but that gut health is related to virtually every aspect of our overall health. And then just by kind of being at the right place at the right time, saying my daily affirmations and meditating and lots of prayer, we were given the opportunity to license the exclusive rights to these bacillus spore-based probiotics from London University. You know, one of

the top, you know, leading probiotic researchers in the world. And from there, that's where Just Thrive Probiotic was born. And it's been the most gratifying and rewarding journey. And I'm even more excited for what's ahead.

Katie: I love it. And I love so much about your story. The fact that you had what so many people strive for multiple times, you had this amazing legal career, and then you chose to take a new direction for the sake of your family. But even then, you had this amazing work at home career, where you still got to be involved and do this work that was probably I'm sure financially wonderful and had many benefits. And yet you still had this search for something deeper in health. And I think like so many of us, being a mom and having these goals for your family, like really led you to a new path that's now helping so many people.

And I just love that your mission is now one that reaches so many of us. And I know that you...so you started talking about gut health. I think you're so right. I think we're only beginning to start to scratch the surface of just how important gut health is. But you're right. We know that it's tied to mental health, to skin health, to pretty much every aspect of health and life. And from our previous conversations, you guys actually have studies relating certain probiotics to gut health. Am I remembering that correctly?

Tina: Yes, exactly. So we have a published human clinical trial on leaky gut, the medical term metabolic endotoxemia, and we have nine other clinical trials going on right now. So and we just completed a roundup study that we're kind of still going through the data on and that should be published, you know, hopefully, in the not too distant future. So we are really focused on research. We think that that is a missing piece in a lot of them, in the supplement world. So yes.

Katie: That's awesome. And walk us through a little bit just on the specifics of the leaky gut trial. Because that's such a buzzword right now, and I think many people are starting to understand how problematic it can be. But kind of just give us a high-level overview of for anyone not familiar what leaky gut is, and what you guys found in that research.

Tina: Yep. So leaky gut is, the funny thing is, it's pretty much what it sounds like it is, you know, there's holes in the intestines. And what happens is there is a protein called Lipopolysaccharide. And we could just for these purposes call it LPS. So LPS is a toxin that's naturally found in our gut microbiome. So it's found in our gut, and it's not really problematic when it's in our gut. It's not until it seeps into the bloodstream that it starts to create havoc on our immune system. And so the study that was done took healthy college students with no other, you know, any type of health issues and they basically found that these college students they found 55% of them had a leaky gut and didn't know it. And so this is this chronic condition that's going on all the time that we don't even realize. And so they did a treated group and then they did the placebo group. After 30 days, they found a 42% reduction in the LPS levels in the bloodstream.

So there's a huge finding. There's no other study, or, you know, pharmaceutical or supplement out there that has a finding that's showing that we're actually reducing the LPS levels in the bloodstream. And we know that heightened LPS levels in the bloodstream, there was just a study that came out that show that the number

one driver of Alzheimer's is a heightened...is LPS level. And so we know that these strains are actually reducing the LPS level in the bloodstream. And thereby, healing leaky gut.

Katie: That's amazing. And 42% in a clinical trial is really drastic for anyone who's not, I know I'm in the literature a lot of that, but drugs can get approved showing just minor improvements over placebo. So that's really amazing, 42% is a huge number.

Tina: It's a huge number. And we have, like I said, lots of other clinical trials going on right now. And we had a long term study of the leaky gut study, too. So it's gonna be over that was over 30 days. Now we've got another one going on over 60 to 90 days. So imagine what could be happening after 90 days of being on the product.

Katie: And it's so important and so amazing that we are now being able to use the best cutting edge science to find solutions. Because unfortunately, I feel like we are living in a world where we have so many negative inputs that we do have to be proactive to battle some of these, unfortunately. Like there used to be a time where you could pretty much eat a really pretty clean diet, grow a lot of your food yourself, get enough sunshine and be okay. But now we are facing so many just stressors on every level for the body. And especially when it comes to gut health.

And I know that you've done some research on this as well. And I certainly see the research when I look for it, but just all of the things that can potentially trigger gut problems and leaky gut. So I'd love to just touch on a few of these, especially for the moms listening, of things we need to be aware of that can really negatively impact our gut health. And I know that there's a spectrum of everything from things like glyphosate to even just food intolerances. So what have you found in your research on this as some of the most common triggers that we're seeing in gut problems?

Tina: Well, one of the biggest triggers is antibiotics. And, you know, we think, you know, a lot of us try to avoid antibiotics and all that. But they're in our food supply. And we know that they're in, you know, our cattle is being fed them, our chickens are being fed the antibiotics. So we are exposed to antibiotics like crazy. And so antibiotics is a huge offender to our gut health. They are killing the bad bacteria but they're also killing the good bacteria. We also, of course, leaky gut like we talked about, that elevated LPS from leaky gut is really such a huge driver in poor gut health.

Like you mentioned, I think you mentioned it Roundup, you know, glyphosates, the pesticides that are on our food, you know, we did not see any, you know, we didn't see kids with autism and allergies. I know when I was a child, I didn't see hardly any of that. And now it's so rampant and we're seeing it all over. And we really there must be a direct correlation between the use of glyphosates and Roundup and this incidence of autism and allergies and other behavioral disorders by kids.

So we also feel that stress is a huge offender to gut health. We've seen it all the time. You know, not just physical stress but emotional stress. All of these things are contributing to wreaking havoc on the gut flora.

And then sugar is another one, you know, sugar feeds the yeast and it causes overgrowth of yeast in the gut. So we really wanna try to avoid sugar at all costs too. So trying to eat clean always is very helpful.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And I think also that's very much where probiotics come in. Because you can explain this better than I can. But in previous years, and throughout history, we interacted with a lot more different variations of bacteria in our daily life and through our environment. And that's largely changed. So can you walk us through basically what probiotics if they're working correctly, which we're gonna go into some myths in a minute, but if they're working correctly, what are they doing in the gut, that's beneficial?

Tina: Well, the first part is they need to arrive alive. So when they get...when the bacteria gets into the gut, they need to arrive alive. And when they get there, they start to colonize. And so they attach the intestinal cell wall. So they need to arrive alive and then confer a benefit on to the host, which is the body. So we want them to, you know, get to that...get to the intestines and actually colonize and start to shift that balance of good and bad bacteria so that the good bacteria is outpacing the bad bacteria.

So that's a really important thing, is that what our bacteria is doing is helping balance the good and the bad bacteria. And we're trying to keep things from overgrowing. We want, there are certain bacteria like Candida, for example, is a great example. I mean, people worry, they either worry about Candida overgrowth and all that. But we have to remember that we don't wanna just get rid of all of the Candida. We just want it...because Candida is a normal part of our gut flora. So is H. pylori. These are normal parts of our gut flora. It's just when they become overgrown that they start to become problematic.

So one of the biggest things with a healthy gut is diversity. So we need a diverse microbiome. Every expert out there would agree that in order to have healthy microbiome, you have a diverse microbiome. So we really wanna make sure that we do all the things possible to have a healthy and diverse microbiome. Because when you have a diverse microbiome means you have health.

Katie: That makes sense. And I also noticed when it comes to probiotics, there is such a wide variety of different types. And so if you just go in any store, pick up a bunch of different probiotics and look at the backs of them, you'll see all of these different strains. So can you kind of give us an overview of what the types of different strains of probiotics that you might find in supplements and how they might impact the body differently or be used differently?

Tina: Oh, yes, for sure. So the majority of probiotics on the market are made up of lactobacillus and bifidobacter strains. And so that's 99% of the probiotics you find on the market are made up of lactobacillus and bifido bacter. And really, the approach that was taken with using these lactobacillus and bifidobacter strains was based on what we used to know about the microbiome. Now, with the, you know, studies, the findings that came out of the Human Microbiome Project, we know more than we ever did before. And many studies have identified a lot of the issues with the approach of using lactobacillus and bifidobacter. And one is that those strains tend to be very sensitive organisms. They have tremendous difficulty surviving the gastric system, you know, the stomach is known as the gastric barrier. And there have been many studies that have

actually shown that these lactobifido strains, like I said which are the strains that are found the most common probiotics, simply don't make it past the stomach acid. So they really never arrive alive.

And many of the studies that have been done on probiotics actually have been on the dead bacteria that have come into the intestine. So another issue with the lactobacillus and bifidobacter strains in supplement form is that they're aerobic organism. So they're made in a lab utilizing oxygen, but then they try to live in your gut, in an anaerobic environment where there's no oxygen. So even if they could get there alive, they are very unstable because they're in the wrong environment. So the lactobifido strains were, you know, fine for many years, it was the best that we knew based on the understanding that we had before. But now that we've learned so much about the human microbiome and our gut health and how it worked from the Human Microbiome Project, we see that there is a much better approach to that.

So another strain that is really important, of course, are the spores. You know, the big thing we found with the lactobacillus is that where in nature did we see this? You know, you didn't find lactobacillus and bifidobacter strains in our environment. The only time we actually were inoculated with lactobacillus and bifidobacter strains was through vaginal childbirth or breastfeeding and close skin to skin contact. But after that, our ancestors didn't get lactobacillus and bifidobacter from the environment. It was really only when we inoculated, you know, during childbirth, vaginal childbirth and breastfeeding. So, you know, there is a completely different category of probiotic strains known as Bacillus spores. And Bacillus spores were abundantly found in the environment, and our ancestors would get them because they ate off the land. And unfortunately, now our soil is over farmed and contaminated and no longer has the Bacillus strains.

You know, if you go to a tribe in Tanzania and some other less populated areas of the world, you will see that those bacillus strains still exist and you see that there's virtually no incidence of, you know, Crohn's, colitis, IBD, food allergies, autism, nothing like that is rampant because they're eating off their land and they're getting these Bacillus strains. So, and, you know, as I mentioned, the Human Microbiome Project told us more about the gut than we ever knew before. So, you know, the probiotics, the spores are really were formulated based on what we now know from the Human Microbiome Project.

And one of the biggest advantages of spore-based probiotics is that they naturally survive the gastric system. So spores have this...they're called spores because they have an endospore shell around themselves. So they don't...it's not like a mushrooms spore. They have an endospore shell around themselves. And that shell allows them to survive the gastric system and get to the intestines 100% alive. So this is a natural process. We don't entero-coat them or anything like that. This is just a natural process. So they get there and they are alive. And once they get to the intestines, they go into their live vegetative cell state. And so it's interesting because the spores are actually dormant in the capsule. So they're not live organisms when they're in the capsule. It's not until they hit the intestines that they recognize it as its home. And that's when it comes out of its dormant state and it becomes alive.

So, it's a very, very different approach than the majority of probiotics on the shelves. And the best way to describe it is basically, I love to use this garden analogy because it's really the best way to describe it. If you envision a garden, and the garden has been stepped on and trampled on, and there's weeds growing all over that garden, the lactobacillus and bifidobacter approach was to re-seed the gut. So they would throw the

seeds in the garden, most of them never got there alive. But let's say they did, they just would pass through, they would maybe plant a plant here and there in the garden but then they would leave the garden.

With the spores, it's very different. You throw the seeds in the garden, they get there 100% alive. And they actually have the ability to attach to the soil, and they have the ability to get rid of the weeds. And then they have the ability to bring those plants that have been stepped on and trampled on back to life. So if you bring that back to the gut, these strains, the spores are actually going in, attaching to the intestinal cell wall. They have the capability of getting rid of the pathogens in our gut. And then they have the ability to create compounds and nutrients to grow our good bacteria. And this is how we really create diversity in the gut. So the spores are a very, very different approach to probiotics and really far more effective and really meet the definition of what a probiotic is.

Katie: That's so fascinating, I could geek out on probiotic and gut health all day. And I know that because I've actually gotten to see some of the research from you, that you guys actually have demonstrated that survival ability of, I believe it was 1000 times, up to 1000 times as much as the probiotics for instance in like yogurt or fermented foods, am I remembering that correctly?

Tina: Yep, you absolutely are. Yeah, there was a study done by Silica Labs, and they took the leading selling probiotic that sold on the store shelves. And then they took the leading selling yogurt and the leading selling Greek yogurt, and all of them died 99.99% by the time they got to the gastric system, or by the time they got to the intestines. And the strains in Just Thrive survived 100%. And that's profound. I mean, absolutely profound.

Katie: And also, even at high temperatures. That was something that I felt like also was really differentiated with you guys, is that how high I can't remember exactly how high of temperatures they can survive, but it's even like cooking temperatures, right?

Tina: Yep, exactly. We tested them up to 455 degrees and they survived. So you could, you know, throw them in your kids cookies, you could, you know, bake with them. Your kids wouldn't even know. I used to put it in my son's oatmeal, piping hot oatmeal, and you know, he didn't even know it was there. So it was perfect, because they're tasteless, colorless, and odorless too. So you wouldn't even know it's there.

Katie: And to circle back a little bit, just to put a bookend, I don't wanna throw fermented foods totally under the bus because I get that question a lot. Fermented foods would have the more like lactobacillus type strains, and those are part of traditional diets throughout history. And I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think we now understand that those probiotics and those strains in fermented foods interact with the body a little differently than we thought they did.

And I think we're also starting to understand that while we thought all the benefits of fermented foods came from the probiotics, actually, there's a lot of other widespread benefits and the fermentation process itself makes nutrients a lot more available, for instance, creates beneficial acids. So I don't wanna like throw the

baby out with the bathwater when it comes to fermented foods, but I think it's important to separate those strains. Have you seen any of that in your research as well? Or what do you do when it comes to fermented foods?

Tina: Oh, absolutely. I could not agree with you more, Katie. I am a huge fan of fermented foods. And like you said, it's the ferment that really is creating the benefit, and it's allowing us to absorb nutrients better. So I definitely eat fermented foods quite often. I'm a huge fan of them. I think I would never want to encourage anybody to not, you know, continue to take or to eat fermented foods. What I do want to explain though, is that even if fermented foods, you're not getting your probiotics necessarily from fermented foods. You're getting the benefit from the ferment but you're not getting live microorganisms that are arriving in the intestines alive. So, but I couldn't agree with you more. I'm a huge fan of fermented foods and I would encourage everybody to eat fermented foods to increase nutrient absorption and increase gut health.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And such an important distinction. So to transition a little bit, I posted on Instagram that I was gonna be interviewing you and asked my followers what they wanted me to ask you. And my Instagram blew up. So first of all, they love you, which is awesome. But also, they have so many questions about probiotics. And I know from talking to you that you can answer them so well. So I want to start going deep on some of the common myths and misconceptions related to probiotics.

And to start, specifically, I want to talk about CFUs because it seems to me like we're almost in an arms race to the highest CFU count right now. And every other week, I see another product on the market that's trying to one-up the previous product of how many CFUs it contains. So for anyone not familiar, can you explain to us what a CFU is and then what we actually need to know about how those interact with our body and how many we need?

Tina: Yep, so CFUs are basically the cell count that is in the probiotics. So we see a lot of probiotics now that are 50 billion CFUs, 250 billion CFUs. I mean, the numbers have gotten outrageous. And so the biggest takeaway with that is that, you know, the big myth is that, oh, 50 billion is better than, let's say, 4 billion CFUs. And really what we found is that more is not better, you know. Having 50 billion CFUs in a probiotic is really only helpful if you could confirm that 50 billion CFUs are actually surviving the digestive tract. And we're really finding, I mean, we have done studies or an independent third party lab actually has done studies on multiple of the, you know, lactobacillus and bifidobacter based probiotics that are showing that they are virtually dying, but, you know, 99% of the strains are dying by the time they get to the intestine.

So, it's really important to find strains that actually get to the intestines and, you know, focus on the quality of the strain rather than the number. And it really has become a marketing tool that, you know, that they've been using to increase, you know, the higher the CFU count, the higher maybe we could ask for a product, you know, price-wise. And so I would not focus on the number of CFUs. I would focus on the quality of the strain.

Katie: That makes sense. And for the average consumer, is there really any way to know if you're just looking at any probiotic off the shelf, what the survivability is going to be or how much of that percentage wise is actually gonna reach the gut?

Tina: Well, the one biggest thing to do is to find, make sure your probiotic has gastric survivability studies so that they know. And you need the gastric survivability study to show that it's a 1.3 or higher. So we have on our packaging that it's, you know, independently verified to survive. And we would just suggest that you look for a symbol of that showing that it survives. In fact, if you look closely at a label, a lot of times it'll say, 50 billion CFUs at time of manufacture. Well, that doesn't do us much good when, you know, you go to the store, you put it in your car, you bring it home and then you, you know...after a couple months it's been sitting there and you're taking it. So the 50 billion at time of manufacture really doesn't tell you much. So make sure that it doesn't say that. You don't want it to say at the time of manufacture because then they're pretty much guaranteeing it's not gonna be there when you actually take the product.

Katie: Got it. That makes sense. What about when it comes to refrigeration? Because I know many probiotics require refrigeration. And this was a question that came up with the audience quite a bit, that there's this conception that you need to have a probiotic that requires refrigeration and that's how you know it's high quality. So why do some probiotics need to be refrigerated? And is that actually a good metric of if it's good or not?

Tina: Oh, I'm so glad you brought that up because this is my favorite myth to talk about. Because it actually, when you think about it, it doesn't really make sense. You know, a probiotic needs to be refrigerated in order to be a good probiotic. But yet, that's actually a sign of a weak probiotic. Because if a probiotic needs to be refrigerated it means that it can't withstand the room temperature of the store shelf. So if it can't withstand room temperature of the store shelf, you know, how is it gonna survive your body temperature, which is 98.6, let alone, you know, getting to the harsh environment of the gastric system?

So, I think that started, that, you know, myth about probiotics need to be refrigerated started with there were some that were dead before, you know, on the store shelf. And so then the idea was to put them in the refrigerator because then they were alive and they were staying alive. But it just doesn't make sense from a scientific perspective at all that it would need to be refrigerated because if it can't withstand the room temperature of a store shelf, it can't withstand, certainly it can't withstand a much hotter temperature of 98.6 in your body. So I would say it's a sign of a weak probiotic if it needs to be refrigerated.

Katie: That's, yeah, so logical. It makes sense and also so much more convenient. I know for a while, years ago, I had all these probiotics in my fridge and they took up so much space, so it's great to know that's not required. Another thing that came up a lot, and we touched on it a little bit in the beginning but were questions related to candida and if people have candida overgrowth, can they take probiotics? I know some sources say if you have candida don't take probiotics. What have you found in your research of the relationship between candida overgrowth and probiotics and what do we need to know to be a conscious user of probiotics if we have candida?

Tina: Well the biggest thing, like I had mentioned, is that candida is the overgrowth. So it's telling us that we're out of balance of some sort. So we know that the spores could go in there and actually rebalance that gut. I mean, these spores are actually going in and they read the microbial environment. So once they get in there, they recognize, so they're gonna be doing something different in your gut than they're going to do in my gut

because they're looking to see what's going on. And so if they notice an overgrowth, they're going to actually competitively exclude that overgrowth of candida. They're not gonna get rid of it entirely because it's a normal part of our gut flora but they're gonna competitively exclude that overgrowth. So taking spores is probably one of the best things you could do for candida.

I know a lot of people take the antifungals which is great. It's just that it's not something you wanna take for a long period of time because we don't wanna get rid of the candida completely. We wanna make sure that we are keeping the candida there and just competitively excluding it and getting rid of it. I like to use the analogy of like the bacteria elbow, the spores will elbow out that overgrowth. So they're gonna compete for space and they're gonna rebalance the gut. So that's the biggest thing. If you go back to that garden analogy, they're getting rid of the pathogens, they're getting rid of things that are overgrown. And they're also bringing the good stuff back to life. So they really do an incredible job of reading the microbial environment and rebalancing the gut flora to the way it's supposed to be.

Katie: I'm so glad that where the research is now showing this much more balanced approach. Because I think for a while, it seemed like our approach to gut health kind of mirrored our approach to germs in our environment and we were just like, "Kill everything, sanitize everything." And there were, I know for a long time, there are all these cleanses that were supposed to get rid of candida and parasites, all of these things. And I was always leery about that because I wondered, "First of all, throughout history, people haven't been able to do cleanses or to sterilize their guts at all. And people were interacting with nature much more than we do now and probably had parasites in different ways than we do now and were fine. And in fact, largely we're healthier than the outcomes we're seeing today."

So I always wondered if there was like a synergistic ability of these things that we needed them in some amounts but it was all about the balance. And it makes so much sense now hearing you talk about this and seeing the studies that our body is made to be able to handle these things but in the proper amount. And it's only when that balance shifts or one strain takes over that it's really problematic. So we're not trying to just nuke our gut and kill everything. It's about letting the gut find its own balance and then recover which I think is such an important distinction.

Tina: Yes, for sure. I couldn't agree with you more.

Katie: So for moms, especially, I know that there's so many questions related to allergies and eczema, things that are very common among children and so many differing opinions about if probiotics are okay in those situations and what kind. And especially because a lot of probiotics contain dairy, for instance, they would be not indicated in children who have certainly food allergies to those specific compounds but also even eczema. So what have you guys found about spore-based probiotics and if they're okay to use with conditions like eczema and allergies and autoimmune disease and any impact they may have in the body that could impact those conditions?

Tina: Yeah, that's an awesome question. Thanks, Katie. Because not only is it safe, I mean it's probably one of the best thing they could do is using spore-based probiotics to, like we said, rebalance the gut. We know that

spores are actually, they have the ability to actually tutor your immune system. So they actually help the immune system detect and attack pathogens and toxins in the body. So the spores will up-regulate the T-reg system and, you know, which of course will suppress some unfavorable immune responses such as allergies and food sensitivity.

So the other great thing is there's no dairy in our product. There's no, you know...we have no other...it's just the strains, no nuts, no corn, nothing like that. It's a very, very clean product. And we know with eczema, same thing. It's an autoimmune issue. We always say with skin issues, I mean, skin issues are starting in the gut, whether it's acne, whether it's eczema, it's starting in the gut. And we know that these strains are helping to clean up the gut flora and make a more favorable diverse healthy gut microbiome which will, in turn, you know, help your gut react differently to some of these, you know, allergens that we're exposed to and stuff. So definitely, probably one of the best things they could do for any of those conditions is taking spores.

Katie: And I heard from so many people on Instagram who had started taking your probiotic and your strains and noticed actual improvements in their autoimmune disease. So certainly, it's not that we can say it's going to, you know, fix an autoimmune disease across the board but I heard anecdotally from so many people who did have that experience. Another question that kept coming up on Instagram was what about histamine? Because I know that can be an issue with many probiotics and it's something that there's increasing awareness about right now. So can you take us through a little bit of just kind of what the histamine equation looks like in the body? And how, if anything, these probiotics influence that.

Tina: Yes, I definitely can. I just wanted to touch on the autoimmune people that had, you know, said that they've had some success with the product. So thanks for sharing that. But the biggest thing is, if you have an autoimmune issue, you know you have leaky gut. So now we have...the reason they're probably having such great success is because we know that these strains are stopping those LPS toxins from going into the bloodstream. And now you're not having that constant inflammatory response from the LPS levels going into the bloodstream. So it's really exciting. You know, if somebody does have an autoimmune issue, we know you have a leaky gut. And so now we've got something that's actually healing that leaky gut, and, you know, sealing up the tight junctions. So it's very exciting with the spores.

And then for histamine intolerance it's, what's great is we know that, well it's not great, but lactobacillus and bifido bacter strains we know can sometimes actually cause, produce histamine. So we know that the strains in Just Thrive do not, the spores are not producing histamine. So this is really exciting for people who, there's so many people who would say, "Oh my gosh, I can't tolerate probiotics. I've tried them. I know they're good for me but I can't tolerate them." And then I say, "Well just try the spores. The spores are a different approach. Try that." And then, sure enough, they take it and they're fine with it. So it's great to take if you have a histamine intolerance.

Katie: Yeah, I'm glad to know there's an option for that because for so long, people would ask and I didn't have any resource to send them. And I've heard the same thing now from readers, especially who have kids with histamine intolerance and they're able to tolerate it just fine. Which actually leads to another very much recurring question which is are these safe to take while pregnant or nursing? And if so, are there any special considerations around those times?

Tina: We always suggest that you ask your, you know, doctor, if it's okay to take probiotics, which I would imagine they would say yes. And not only are the spores safe, they are probably one of the best things that we could do. We know that a mother's microbiome is passed on to the child. So that is when, that is the only time your child is inoculated with lactobacillus and bifido bacter, which are very important strains to get during childbirth. So it is so important for a mom to take care of their gut microbiome by doing lots of things including taking spores. So yes, very, very safe to take while pregnant but of course, we always recommend, you know, asking the doctor first.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. That was something that throughout the years and throughout my research, I became increasingly aware of as I was pregnant with my kids is just the more we learned...there was a great movie called "Microbirth" that really delved into this process that you just talked about. But just how much of our immune system in our gut is passed on during the birthing process. So as a doula for years, I've actually helped facilitate some parents who wanted to receive their child's gut correctly, even though they needed to have a C section for any, for whatever reason, and just trying to create that process naturally. But it's just fascinating the research that we're seeing on that.

And I think as we continue to research this more, we're gonna understand just increasingly how important pregnant moms need to really focus on that gut bacteria because we had such a short window that has lifelong effects. And thankfully, like if we didn't know that, I know I didn't know that with my first few kids, there are so many things we can do that still help benefit their gut. And it's not all is lost by any means but I feel like it's such a great window of time that if you know that, that you can really optimize so much through your own lifestyle, your own diet and through making sure your gut bacteria is optimized like that.

And I know that the next logical question is then what about kids? I have gotten every variation of that question from listeners of, "Can I give it to babies? Can I give it to toddlers? Can I give it to my kids? What dose? Can they overdose on it?" So how do we know with our kids how we can implement this?

Tina: Great question. Yes. You know, it's interesting because I think it's more important than ever to be giving spores to our kids. We know our kids are being exposed to Roundup in record amounts that none of us were exposed to. Not to that level at least we weren't exposed to years ago. And so our kids guts are being attacked so rapidly on a daily basis. So the spores are very safe to take for kids. On our bottle, it says three and above. And that's really mostly for choking purposes. You could open the capsules, like I mentioned, and mix it with food or drink. They're tasteless, colorless, odorless, they wouldn't know. So it's very, very safe to take for kids. You could, and you could do a full capsule if they're three and above.

It's interesting. A child's adult-like microbiome is actually fully developed by about the age of two and a half. So you could go with a full capsule after the age of about two and a half as long as you open it and mix it so they don't, you know, have any choking issues. But for babies even, you could start out, you know, just take a little, maybe a quarter of a capsule. If you're nursing you could sprinkle it on the breast and have the baby suck on it. You could just put a little on your baby finger, let the baby, maybe a quarter of a capsule and let the baby suck on it and then just slowly titrate up as they could, you know handle it.

So we would definitely say that we could do at least a, you know, half a capsule for kids. You could do a half a capsule a day. You know, split it amongst your kids but about the age of two and a half, they're fine to take about a capsule, about a full capsule. And then what we also found is we've had customers who've just said, "My, you know, my son is doing so incredible on this. Can I increase the dosage?" And it's fine to take, you know, two capsules a day if you're really seeing some great results and you want to see some things happening. I mean, I've taken up to, you know, five or six a day if I've had, you know, something going on. But I take two a day if I'm traveling or if I feel like I'm run down, just to kind of boost the immune system a little bit. But, you know, most of the time they just one a day is fine or half a capsule a day is fine.

And it's always best to take it with food. That's really, really important. A lot of people and for many years, people have been told to take a probiotic on an empty stomach. But really, that was because you wanted, when your stomach was empty the pH of your stomach was higher, which would allow for greater survivability. We know from the gastric survivability study that was done on these strains that they survive at a pH of 1.3 which is the normal, you know, gastric pH of your stomach. So I would just say take it with food. We have a study that show that these strains actually use the food to germinate throughout the intestines. So just way better to take it with food. It's not dangerous or anything to take it on an empty stomach, it just works that much better to take it with food.

Katie: That's such a great point. And a funny story along those lines. My parents take these strains as well and my dad was having trouble remembering to take them whenever he ate. And so we actually taped the bottle to the pepper shaker because he always uses pepper. So now he never forgets when he's eating.

Tina: Oh, I love that.

This podcast is sponsored by Joovv. You've probably heard me talk about red light therapy before and the one I personally have in my home and use is the Joovv light. You may have seen red light therapy used on your face if you've ever gotten certain high end facial treatments at a spa or clinic.... This is because red light in certain wavelengths has big benefits for the skin including the potential for smoother more elastic skin tone because it helps the body's collagen process. Red light therapy is also known as photobiomodulation (PBM), or low level light therapy (LLLT), also called biostimulation, photonic stimulation or light box therapy. These specific wavelengths of red light create a biochemical affect in our cells that serves to increase mitochondrial function and thereby improves ATP (adenosine triphosphate) production in the body. ATP = energy in the body so increasing it is a big deal. There is also some evidence that red light can reduce inflammation which is why many people are turning to red light therapy for relief of joint pain as well. Joovv now has a smaller, more convenient and affordable option called the Joovv go that is perfect for use on the face or joints and is easy to travel with. Their bigger options are modular so you can buy just one or connect up to six for an entire red light wall. Check out the benefits of Red light therapy and learn more at joovv.com/wellnessmama

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of bacon. Their Bacon is uncured, free of sugar and nitrates, non-GMO verified, hormone free, made from pasture raised heritage breed pigs and its whole30 approved! The breakfast sausage is made from pasture-raised heritage breed pigs. It's simply seasoned with salt, pepper, and sage. No added sugar or fillers. A delightful, protein-rich way to start the day! I personally love getting their box each month and our family meal plans around it. My husband's favorite is their steak and I love roasting their chicken for salads or including it in soups. Go to butcherbox.com/wellnessmama to get \$20 off + 2lbs of Breakfast Pork Sausage and 2 packs of Bacon for FREE in your first box!

Katie: Another thing that kept coming up were questions related to prebiotics and there seem to be a wide array of experiences. Some people took prebiotics or ate foods that had prebiotics and felt better, some people took them and felt much worse. Based on the data that you've seen, where do prebiotics fit into this equation? And how do we, if we're going to use them, use them to optimize the probiotics?

Tina: Yes, great question. Again, the thing with prebiotics, it's exactly the way you described it. You know, if we have a healthy gut flora and you're taking prebiotics then it's going to help grow the good bacteria. But if you have an unhealthy gut flora and you have overgrowth of pathogenic bacteria, then the prebiotics will feed the bad bacteria even more. So that's why we were seeing people who have such different results with prebiotics.

And so we, you know, we're very focused on bringing products to the market that are missing and needed in the industry. And so we, of course, knew that prebiotic would make sense to launch with our probiotic. But the problem is we couldn't find a prebiotic that was really feeding only the good bacteria. But we have, so that's exciting. So we're about to launch a prebiotic that actually is only feeding the good bacteria. So it's made up of all of these non-digestible oligosaccharides that actually increase microbial diversity and selectively feed the good bacteria in our guts.

So the biggest thing with prebiotics is they can be really beneficial by feeding the good bacteria. But the problem is most prebiotic fibers out there can't distinguish between good bacteria and bad bacteria. So it's just important to find a prebiotic that is only, you know, is targeted to feed only the good bacteria. So lots of great foods, of course, with prebiotics. You know, we've got, you know, onions and garlic and different asparagus, apples, bananas, all are great sources of prebiotics. But some people, you know, chicory root, I know some people have difficulty drinking that chicory root tea because it does end up feeding the good bacteria and the bad bacteria. But it's a great source of prebiotics. But we just wanna make sure that you're finding prebiotics that actually are feeding only the good bacteria and not the bad bacteria.

Katie: That makes sense. And I know something that you would probably echo me on is that like the...I feel like probiotics are something that anyone should take. But when it comes to prebiotics, I feel like that's not something you should just take a supplement for. Like we know based on the data that you need a varied diet that includes lots of fiber from different types of vegetables and micronutrients from different types of vegetables because like you said in the beginning, that biodiversity of your gut is so important. And so I feel like this is one of those areas where it's a both and. You like, can't just out-supplement a terrible diet. You need to make sure you're including variety in your foods and then you're gonna see better results from your probiotics as well. Is that kind of what you get as well?

Tina: Absolutely. And in fact, that is one of the things I always encourage people to do is to eat a diverse group of foods. I mean, we know in order to have diversity, and the spores are very helpful in creating diversity, but one of the most important things we can do is to eat a diverse group of foods. Even going to different ethnic grocery stores and eating a different type of, you know, cucumbers from one ethnic store and cucumbers from, you know, your regular grocery store, or just trying to find foods that are really, really different is really gonna help create more diversity. So it's one of the biggest suggestions I make to people all the time is trying to eat a diverse group of foods. You help create that diversity because we know diversity is key to a healthy gut.

Katie: Absolutely. To shift gears a little bit. So you guys...well you mentioned you're gonna be launching a prebiotic and you already have this amazing probiotic. But you also have another supplement that I also take every day and that my parents take every day, which is a K2-7. So I wanna make sure we touch on that a little bit. Can you just start, just explain to us what that is?

Tina: Oh, yes. So vitamin K2 is an essential nutrient that unfortunately most of us are deficient in. you know, they asked me 90% of the population is deficient in vitamin K2. And yet it's something that's so essential for heart health and bone health. But basically, the job of vitamin K2 is to take calcium away from arteries where we don't want it, you know, like the heart and to put it into the bones where we do want it. So it's so essential for bone health and heart health. And it's literally moving the calcium away from where we don't want it to where we do want it.

And it's actually interesting because K2...so everybody knows that taking vitamin D3 is great for bone health. But there's one big missing piece to that strategy. And I don't want to get too scientific here but it's just important to understand that vitamin D3 stimulates osteoblast cells in the bones. And then the osteoblast cells release osteocalcin. So osteocalcin is the bone-building protein. The problem is that osteocalcin is released in an inactive form. So it's kind of floating in the body not doing much.

And so the only way to activate that osteocalcin is by having adequate amounts of vitamin K2. And so once that active, that K2 is activated by the osteocalcin it literally takes calcium and plaque and sticks it on to the bone. So it's really having the K2 is the critical last step. You know, and the problem is that there are people who are taking high doses of vitamin D without the K2. And then the body, it's using up all the body's K2 which leads to a K2 deficiency. And of course, if we have a K2 deficiency that leads to heart health or heart disease, I'm sorry and bone reabsorption.

And the other problem is really the only natural sources of K2 are from organ meats, Japanese soy, a product called maddow and then some fermented cheeses in Northern Europe. So we're really, we don't have a lot of sources of vitamin K2 in the Western diet at all. And we also know and there are some crazy studies out there about heart health and vitamin K2. There was a study done, they called it the Rotterdam study. They studied 4,800 men and women over a 10 year period. So it's a pretty profound study and they found that taking as little as 45 micrograms a day of K2 reduced arterial calcification by 50%. I mean, there is nothing on the market that can do this. I mean, an arterial calcification is the number one risk for heart disease. And, you know, going hand in hand, they found that, in the study, they found that there was a 50% reduction in

cardiovascular death. So, obviously, because if you have reduced cardiac arterial calcification, you're gonna have a reduced cardiac death.

But the other interesting finding in this study is that there was a 25% reduction in all cause mortality as compared to a low intake of dietary K2. So it's literally showing that vitamin K2 is increasing longevity by seven years. And the study was very, very profound. So, you know, there's a lot of other studies on vitamin K2 shown to reduce diabetes by 20%. In another study, it was shown to decrease cancer risk. So, there was a study done on 23,000 German adults that showed a higher K2 intake was associated with a lower likelihood of developing or dying of cancer. So really, really...it's crazy the impact it's had.

And the scary thing, you know, back to the pharmaceuticals is statins are actually the number one prescribed drug for heart disease. So you would think that as the amount of statins prescribed go up, the amount of cardiovascular disease would go down. But that's actually not the case at all. In fact, the opposite is true. And there was a study that was published in 2015 that showed that statins actually interfered with vitamin K2 function. And by doing that, it actually would, you know, help increase the risk of heart disease.

So there's so many studies and they're even more studies coming out just showing the importance of vitamin K2. And they're even showing that vitamin K2 is improving the mitochondria of the cell, so the powerhouse of the cell. So this is really important. There was a study that showed that it actually is helping revive and rescue dead and dying mitochondria. So really, really important information and studies out there about vitamin K2 and it's important.

And it's something that we just don't get from our diet. And we don't, unless you're eating organ meats, or the Japanese food natto, which is super, super healthy for you, we're just not getting a lot of vitamin K2. So we, again, we found that there was a need for it. The big thing is all the studies are showing that we need a high dosage of vitamin K2. There's actually no known lethal dosage. So there's really not a chance of ever, you know, overdosing on vitamin K2. There's 320 micrograms in our formulation of vitamin K2 and it's one of the, you know, best things we can do for heart health and bone health to support our bone health and heart health.

Katie: Yeah, it's amazing. I've seen that research as well. There's entire books written about the calcium paradox and the K2 connection. And it's just, yeah, it's so staggering. And I've personally eaten natto and I will say I don't think it's a mainstay in the American diet. It has a very, very unique taste. There's very few things I don't like and won't eat, bananas being the top of the list and natto being second as tough things for me to eat. So I love that there's an alternative. It's not one of my favorite foods at all. If I remember correctly, but there's also a study related to the K2 and something to do with athletes and oxygen. I'm not remembering the full study. But what is the connection there?

Tina: Yes, that is incredible. That study actually showed that the K2, this was done on our formulation, and it actually showed an increase of cardiac output by 12%. So this is huge. I mean, this is increasing the amount of blood flowing and it was incredible. So I mean great for athletes. We say it's the only legal sports enhancing, you know, supplement out there so because it's actually increasing cardiac output by 12%.

Katie: Which again is a huge number when you're talking about statistical changes for placebo in study. That's amazing. I know for all the moms listening, we're looking at the same questions we got about probiotics which are is it safe while pregnant and nursing? What about babies and kids, who can take it and who can't? And I know that it's also, it's a nutrient that is talked about during pregnancy and it's something that's given to babies. So there is a connection there. But what advice do you give for those stages of life, pregnancy, nursing, and children?

Tina: Great to take while pregnant. Of course, the same caveat is to ask your doctor. But I know that the author of the book, "Vitamin K2 and the Calcium Paradox", you know, dramatically increased her dose while she was pregnant because she knows how important it is. So great for bone health as our babies are developing their jaw structure as Dr. Weston E. Price taught us. And so great to take while pregnant, nursing. Again, I always say to ask your doctor but really, really great to take in those situations. I give it to my kids and my kids are older now but I give it to kids. Great for bone health as your kids are growing. They're growing bones, super important to take.

And, you know, you could take one a day. The way our K2 is formulated, it's two capsules a day. One in the morning, one at night. If your kids are under about the age of, you know, maybe seven or eight you could just do one capsule a day. That should be fine. But usually, it's two capsules a day because you get 320 micrograms. And also take this with food. So fat, lots of fat. So it's a fat soluble vitamin so you wanna take it with food.

Katie: Got it. Yeah, when your supplements are both ones that our whole family takes and even the kids. And I love that it's one of the few things I can recommend that truly does fit pretty much everybody because, like you said, it's histamine free, it's dairy free, it's allergen-free, there's no gluten. So whether it's people with autoimmune disease like I have or just kids who you wanna make sure that that you're only putting good things in their body, there's really no contraindications like you would find in a lot of supplements. I love that and I can recommend it completely, wholeheartedly for sure.

I know for anyone listening who's interested whereas I wanna make sure we mentioned that there is a discount. And so the website, make sure I get this right, is thriveprobiotic.com/wellnessmama. We'll give you a discount page. I know you guys offer discounts for buying in bulk or for auto-ship. And then also there's the discount code `Wellnessmama15` so they can save 15%. Am I getting that right?

Tina: Yes. Thank you.

Katie: Awesome. And I could not believe we've already flown through almost an hour. A couple quick questions I love to ask at the end and I can't wait to hear your answers. The first being, is there a book or books that have really influenced your life and that you would recommend?

Tina: Oh yes, there definitely are. I could probably go on and on but I won't. So one of my favorite books that has really been very influential in my life has been, "I Can See Clearly Now", by Wayne Dyer. I've read a lot of Wayne Dyer, as I mentioned in beginning of the interview. But I just love his book. It just, you know, goes into how you don't really know why things are put into your life when they're happening. But you know as you get older and as time goes by, you can look back and everything is so much more clear. And you realize that it was put there for a reason and to teach you something. And it's been...it's just a great book. I definitely recommend, you know, people reading it.

I also, I know you've...I've heard you talk about this book a lot but it is definitely a book that changed my life and that's "The Four Agreements". It's one of my favorite books by far. Definitely, I recommend everybody, you know, any child even graduating from college. I think it's a great college gift to give to somebody and just any adult. It's just a great book to look at your life differently and with a different lens. And loved it, definitely changed my life.

Katie: I love both of those. And lastly, if there was a piece of advice that you could spread far and wide, what would it be and why?

Tina: Well, you know what? I think I would say to do your life's work. I think that that is one of the biggest things that I've taken away from this whole journey. It has been the most gratifying, rewarding thing I've ever done. I get, I still save all the voicemails that I get from customers that have had life-changing results and handwritten letters from people. And I just am so glad that I did my life's work. I finally, you know, through my whole career journey, I found what I was really truly meant to do.

And I would encourage everybody to really do their life's work and encourage your kids to do that too. I mean, I have two kids that are graduating. One's graduating from college this year. And I've just really tried to encourage my kids to find what they love and what they love to do because then it just, it all works and everything falls into place when you're doing your life's work.

Katie: For sure. And I should also note while I have you on here that I've quoted you so many times in podcast interviews and other interviews. But your saying about everything will work out perfectly, I have totally stolen in love from you because I feel like you're one of the most positive, joyful people I know. And like I just, I love that line that I think we talked about when we first met. So that's...you got, you're the source for that. I wanna make sure everybody hears that while you're on here.

Tina: Oh, thank you. We say that every time, every day. Everything works out perfectly for me. I'd encourage everybody to say that too, everything works out perfectly for me.

Katie: One more time for anybody listening, thriveprobiotic.com/wellnessmama to find out more and discount code Wellnessmama15. And of course, both of those will be in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. Tina, thank you so much. This has been so much fun. Like I said, I could geek out on gut health forever and that you're such a wonderful expert and a light in this industry. And I really appreciate your time today.

Tina: Oh, thank you, Katie. It was an honor to be here with you.

Katie: And thank you for all of you for listening and sharing your most valuable asset of your time with us today. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama Podcast".

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