



Episode 280: Using Adaptogens & Herbal
Supplements to Manage Stress (Even for Kids)
With Gaia Herbs

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Katie: Hello and welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And today, we are going to talk all about adaptogens, and I can't wait to dive in because I am here with Dr. Mary Bove, who I hope I'm pronouncing her name correctly. She's a naturopathic doctor and midwife with advanced training in phytotherapy and herbal medicine. She practiced naturopathic family medicine and midwifery for 25 years and taught at Bastyr University. She's the author of "The Encyclopedia of Natural Healing for Children and Infants," which is considered an authoritative reference on natural pediatric medicine and a wealth of knowledge. She also co-authored "Herbs for Women's Health," and she lectures and teaches internationally. In collaboration with Gaia Herbs, she developed an herbal remedy line specifically for children called Gaia Kids. And we're going to delve into a lot of that today. But, Dr. Mary, welcome, and thanks for being here.

Dr. Mary: Well, thank you. It's wonderful to be here.

Katie: And I can't wait to go deep on this with you because I feel like adaptogens are a super popular thing right now. And I hear a lot about them, I see other people talking about them on blogs, on social media, and I know that you have been an expert in these for a very long time. For anyone who's not familiar, can you start us really high level and just define what is an adaptogen?

Dr. Mary: Yes, I'd love to. And I think that's a great question because it's kind of unique in the sense that adaptogens and the term actually came more in the modern-day herbalism. So it's not something we would say would look back 100 years ago and we would have used that term. The term adaptogen was actually coined in the late 1960s. And really what it is, it's a plant that impacts our body through our stress maintaining systems. And so what that means is that they actually help to protect against stress and to enable and enhance our ingrained systems that we have for stress. And given the fact that the stress response has multiple stages, it's important that it's healthy and it does all of the parts of what it needs. And adaptogens impact that directly. And one of the parts of the stress response is the adrenal glands. They also impact adrenal health, and the endocrine system, and how it communicates with the brain and the higher centers of the brain, the hypothalamus, and the pituitary.

And when they looked at coining that term, they looked at several criteria that the plant had to show and then it could be added into the category adaptogen. And so, we've been learning a tremendous amount about these plants because they are very popular, as you say. First of all, adaptogens can't be toxic or have harmful side effects. Second of all, they work to bring balance. So somebody who has a hyperthyroid and a hypo, a low functioning one and a high functioning one, could use an adaptogen to balance it back to the center, which is an odd concept for a lot of people who work within medicine because it's not a concept we see in traditional, you know, mainstream medicine.

But it's the concept of the plant working within the system to bring that homeostasis, or that balance and that they are stress-protective, that they particularly work through that system. And, you know, just that alone, I think, as you said, it's very popular, this term, and the using of these plants right now. And then part of that is because we're in a stressful time in, you know, our lives, in our communities, in the world, and I think stress comes in so many forms that many times we don't realize how many ways we interface with it on a day to day basis, and that wears our healthy response down. So using adaptogens can keep us, you know, up on our toes and being able to deal with the challenges that come day to day.

Katie: Yeah. I think that's such an important point about stress because, of course, that's, like you said, something that's also very much in the news. And I think most people are pretty aware that we're operating on often higher levels of stress than previous generations. But something I've talked about as well is even if you don't feel mentally stressed, there's a good chance that your body might still feel stressed in some way because we are exposed to a lot of things we weren't exposed to even just a few generations ago. So we're getting less sleep than we should, and we're exposed to kind of artificial lighting all the time, and we're exposed to all kinds of different chemicals in our environment. And all of those things the body can perceive as stress, even if we don't feel stressed. And so I think that's why things like this really come into play to help find balance. We're not just talking about, like, if you mentally feel overwhelmed or stressed. I think there's, like, layers of the onion when it comes to talking about stress. Do you feel like that too?

Dr. Mary: Yes. I do. And I think that's really well put. And I think, you know, as you said, many people don't realize how many layers there are or how full their stress basket is. And some of those things are kind of wound up with modern-day living, which is, you know, I would certainly say one of the things that wears on us in that sense. And then there's mental stress, like, you know, in the sense of worry or, you know, the challenges that come with working with one's mind, which we do a lot more given the computer age.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. Okay. So that I think was a perfect, broad overview of what adaptogens are. And like I said, I know I see these in the news all the time. But walk us through what some of the most popular adaptogens are, just as examples of what kind of plants qualify?

Dr. Mary: Oh, absolutely. Well, I think, you know, if we look at like what's popular in the current news and out there in wellness world, we would certainly have to say ashwagandha. Ashwagandha is an Ayurvedic Indian herb that belongs to the same family as tomatoes. And it is used as an adaptogen. When the original work was done on adaptogens, the Russians did a lot of that work in the '60s and '70s, and they actually looked at combinations of things like eleutherococcus, rhodiola, and schisandra. And so as we look at the pool of adaptogens we have, we have a lot of information on the ashwagandha, and on the rhodiola, and the schisandra, and eleutherococcus.

And we also have other adaptogens that we've been able to learn about such as holy basil. And what I think people are drawn to, are drawn to the fact that adaptogens are safe, that they can, you know, work currently right, you know, in your life as is, and they can help protect you because we know that stress gets under our skin. And we know that in, you know, our knowledge of modern-day effects of stress in our physiology, we know it contributes to many health challenges and diseases. And if we can do something day to day when we know we have a stressful work week or we overuse our body as an athlete, we may well want to do something that can just help us go a little longer, have a little bit better energy and not wear and tear our body so much.

Katie: Yeah, exactly. So can you walk us through some of the specifics? Like, we'll start with ashwagandha because I think you're right, that one is everywhere right now. What is it specifically, where does it come from, and what are some of its main benefits?

Dr. Mary: Ah, very nice. Yes, well, the root is used of the plant. As I said, it is an Ayurvedic herb that we, you know, learn a lot of information and tradition about its use through the Ayurvedic. And, you know, we see that through the work coming out of India. We also know that traditionally, it's a plant that would be used as a nerve tonic as well. So it's very soothing and calming to the nerves, and it's botanical name, withania somnifera, somnifera meaning sleep. It was called the sleep maker. And it's often a plant that's helpful to wind our mind down and prepare our body for moving into the sleep cycle. So, you know, many times we'll use an adaptogen at night to support the night cycle and withania is, or ashwagandha is a perfect term for that because it really helps us to restore, and revitalize, and get kind of the day's agitation out of our nervous system as we're sleeping and helping us to sleep better.

Then there would be a couple of other things I'd say about ashwagandha. And if we look at some of the modern science of ashwagandha, we know it to be a strong neuroprotector, we also know...and we can see it's used in the pediatric population, so with kids. They have looked at using ashwagandha with children who are slow to grow, unable to get good weight gain and with different challenges for both behavior and learning.

Katie: When during the day should ashwagandha be taken? Since it's better for sleep, is it better taken in the evening, or can it be taken through the day, like, different times of day and still have that same effect?

Dr. Mary: Yes, good question. It can be taken throughout the day. One of the nice things about it is that it isn't acting like a sedative. So if you took it in the day, it's not going to make you sleepy. What it does is that it will help to support their adrenal system and act with stamina, and energy, and focus. And so it can really help with what you're doing in the day and give you that stress protecting activity. If you're using it in the evening time, it will work more in a restorative way, calming down, and improving the sleep cycle itself. And so by doing that, as I said, it's not necessarily going to act more like a herb that puts you to sleep, like let's say valerian is used as a sleep herb. It's not that same aspect. What it does is it turns down a deeper level of agitation. And it actually supports the day-night cycle that we tend to mimic in our endocrine system. And so it supports the hormones that would be quieting from an active day, and it supports the hormones that help us with sleep such as melatonin.

Katie: That makes sense. And I'm not sure if there's any data on this, but I'm curious if it also helps with deep sleep because that's something I've been tracking through a device called the Oura Ring for quite a while. And my deep sleep has gotten really solid actually, like a couple hours a night, but my husband still struggles with getting enough deep sleep. Do you know offhand if ashwagandha can help over time with balancing the sleep cycles and getting enough deep sleep?

Dr. Mary: Yes. That's a great question. And it's so interesting as you track it like you said, and yes, ashwagandha can improve that. And one of the things that I found was that using ashwagandha in combination with magnolia bark, and magnolia bark really helps as an adaptogen as well and helps with supporting that night cycle and the cycle of sleep moving into both REM and non-REM sleep. So putting the two together and using those in the evening would be an excellent way to support that for your husband.

Katie: That makes sense. And anytime we're talking about any herb or supplement, I know that I'm going to get the questions from the audience. I'm just going to go ahead and ask you as we go. Are there any contraindications for ashwagandha? Anyone who cannot take it? You are a midwife, so what about pregnancy and nursing?

Dr. Mary: Oh, boy, that's a lot of big questions. Generally, ashwagandha is very safe, and there's not like straightforward contraindications like with some herbs in the sense that generally, it's tolerable. When we come to the population of being pregnant or lactating, I would certainly say that, overall, we try not to use a lot of herbs within the first trimester and overall in pregnancy if not needed. If someone needed to use an adaptogen, would ashwagandha be a safe adaptogen to use? I would certainly say we don't have a lot of good data on that. But within tradition, we do see that. We do also see there are other herbs that fall in the

adaptogen category that are also lactation-friendly and pregnancy-friendly, and that would be something like holy basil.

Katie: Got it. Well, while we're on that topic, what is holy basil? I believe is that the same as tulsi? Is it also called tulsi?

Dr. Mary: Yes. Yes, it is called tulsi. And there's three types of tulsi or holy basil, all of them within...their traditional use may vary, but we often find the Krishna variety out on the market that we're using in a lot of the products that we see. And it's an adaptogen plant that's a member of the mint family. So it's very aromatic, and it's known as the goddess and it is a plant that's used traditionally in Ayurveda all the way from protecting the house, and being a woman's herb, to helping with sleep, and nervousness, and calming. And one of the things that we often say about holy basil is when everything is going a miss around you, and things are just swirling, and hectic, holy basil can keep you grounded and keep you able to kind of see through all that, your way out and get, you know, a handle on what's going. So I like holy basil very much for people who feel like they've kind of lost motivation in their life, or they can't feel like a lot of joy, or they may not feel inspired, or motivated.

And there is some data on that where they looked at people who were more depressive, lacked motivation, lacked inspiration. And over their time of using the holy basil, they noticed that these types of feelings inside themselves actually changed and that they were more positive and more apt to get up and do something. And I think that really says something because when people are depressed, a lot of times, it's really hard to do nice things for yourself. And if holy basil can help give you a nudge and support that, then they've kind of get a friend and getting yourself to a more positive place.

Katie: Yeah. I think that's a great tip. And it reminded me, to circle back to something you said towards the beginning. You mentioned that there are herbs that can be used to help support the thyroid, to bring it back into balance. And I think there's a significant segment of the listening audience that has a thyroid struggle in some way. And personally, I'm in remission, but I have Hashimoto's. So I would love to hear what are some things we can do to support the thyroid using herbs especially since with your background in midwifery, as you know, women often see those things more so after pregnancy, that can often be a trigger for thyroid issues. So, knowing that, especially as women and all of our hormone fluctuations, how can we make sure that we're being kind to our thyroid?

Dr. Mary: Nice question, Katie, because of the part that we didn't talk about with ashwagandha, ashwagandha is actually an adaptogen that has a very strong influence on the thyroid gland and that influences thyroid hormone production, and the ability for it to be able to function, you know, as in supporting that gland within that function. So ashwagandha is, you know, one of the main adaptogens for somebody who has thyroid challenges that I would certainly say yeah, consider taking ashwagandha to help support that.

The other thing about supporting the thyroid is that you look to make sure that you've got the things that it needs. And so supporting thyroid means that you might be using things like kelp or other seaweeds that help to give iodine, which is one of the precursors that's needed for making thyroid hormone. And that would be

for, you know, a low-functioning thyroid. At the same time, you mentioned how pregnancy can sometimes kind of have that show up either pre or post. There are many women who deal with a hyperthyroid in their postpartum time. And there are herbs like lemon balm and mother wart that can be very helpful for managing the hyperthyroid. And again, with that, you can find something like ashwagandha will help to balance thyroid so truly as an adaptogen, it should be applicable to be able to use in both aspects. But, certainly, like when you mentioned Hashimoto's and remission, certainly one of my go-to's when I would work with Hashimoto's clients would have been ashwagandha.

Katie: Got it. Okay. Yeah. That's really helpful. And I wanted to go through a little more detail on a few other adaptogens out of curiosity, and then talk about a little later on how they can work together, but you mentioned several at the beginning. Another one I'd love to talk about is cordyceps. I'm a huge fan of medicinal mushrooms, and that one is a mushroom. So can you explain how that is beneficial, and if there's any differences since it does come from a mushroom?

Dr. Mary: Yeah. So cordyceps is, you know, as you said, a medicinal mushroom. And it provides particular kinds of compounds that are very useful in building the immune response, and building one's stamina and energy. And so as an adaptogen, we really think about cordyceps for people who really have lost their energy, lost their stamina, who tend to be, you know, immune-challenged because those are some of the places that cordyceps can really thrive. So it can help like, you know, in one's day to day energy, as well as it can help with improving the overall ability to build one's stamina over time. So somebody who's, like, an athlete, goes out and runs a marathon and really puts everything into it, after they finished that, there's a lot of responses that happen in their muscles. And sometimes that can, you know, be pain, and it can be work against the muscle health in the long run.

Something like cordyceps can help to mediate that and improve oxygen in the muscle while it's working, improve the way it makes energy, and it can also improve how it clears out the debris afterward in not having a lot of muscle breakdown and stress and oxidation from that. And as a medicinal fungi, you know, as I said, we know it as an antioxidant. But certainly, that immune-modulating piece is important because a lot of times with stress, the immune system responds in a hyper response that's not necessarily very good in the long run. And the effects of the mushroom to be able to modulate that really helps us to keep away from over challenging our immune system.

Katie: Very cool. Yeah. I'm a huge fan of medicinal mushrooms and cordyceps. It's such a...I feel like a beneficial form, and it's something I put often into drinks or just sip throughout the day in a tea. What about rhodiola? That's another one that's been getting some buzz lately. Walk us through what rhodiola does?

Dr. Mary: Yeah. Now, that's mine. It has to be one of my favorite adaptogens. I really find rhodiola to be a plant that is very diverse. It impacts our mood through many of the neurotransmitter aspects, GABA, dopamine, and it can improve, you know, depressed moods as well as helping to dampen down anxiety. It helps to modulate that HPA access in the brain-endocrine-adrenal system. So we know that hypothalamus, pituitary is always talking to the adrenal gland, and so it helps to keep that communication up and going. It also helps to improve oxygen uptake, particularly by the muscle tissue. So it helps with our stamina and our output to be able to make energy and move through the day. You know, right now, it's being looked at for

some of its effects as a nootropic, helping us to improve the way we focus, and our memory, and concentration. So our brain function is being impacted by that rhodiola.

And then if we look at it in a traditional form, it's a high iron root. So it's traditionally been used for anemia or low iron in someone's blood. It's also been used as a spring tonic, it grows in Siberia, and so there, there's a lot of change between cold, cold winters, and that's a very stressful thing on our body. And coming out of that, rhodiola was traditionally taken to help us transition from that cold time of the season into spring, and blooming, and more energy, and the warmth. And then lastly, it was also used as a fertility tonic. And in my work as a midwife, I used rhodiola often with my fertility work. So particularly women who are trying to get pregnant or unable to get pregnant, maybe later age of life, who showed up with having adrenal challenges, either adrenal exhaustion or stress challenges. And when that's occurring, that can really take away from the hormones that make us really fertile. So rhodiola was one of the go-to plants for me to help to get that system balance so that good ovulation could take place. And that's one plant that I would also say that I tend to use more in the morning. So rhodiola, I often give morning and noon. Though it does improve sleep, but often it does that by improving the 24-hour day-night cycle so you have more normalcy in that, not necessarily making you feel sedated or sleepy in that sense.

Katie: Gotcha. Okay, so rhodiola in the morning. What about schisandra, if I'm saying that correctly? That one is, like, I feel like the new one to the scene, obviously not from an herbal perspective, but from an online perspective right now that's getting a lot of buzz. And I've seen it mentioned, even for men, for things like improving testosterone. I don't know if I'm remembering that correctly, but schisandra is a berry, am I remembering that correctly?

Dr. Mary: Yes. Yes, you are. And it's a herb that we would have talked about in traditional Chinese medicine. So we gather a lot of wealth about this plant through the Chinese traditional herbal sense, and in that it is a very strong tonic. And it does help to support stamina and the aspects of energy and energy production. One of the things if you ever see the berry, it's a bright red berry. So it has a lot of phenols in it. And these phenols, they give the color, and they're very supportive to our body's immune system, and they help to manage oxidation. And one of the things about schisandra as an adaptogen, it has a very strong balancing effect within liver function. So the detoxification phases that go on within liver function, helping to support both of those processes through the liver and the enzymes that are needed there, and at the same time, helping to support the adrenal endocrine system.

It's also been looked at for its effects, particularly in depression. And there's been studies with its use with anti-depression medication at the same time to look at safety and adequate dose. And they found that they could lower amounts of the antidepressant medications when using schisandra as that enhance the effects of the medication. I think sometimes we think that a plant will only have negative effects, but there actually is quite a bit of data that shows that there are plants that actually can enhance the way a medication is working and help the medication dose to be less overall. So schisandra is one of those that I've seen looked at particularly as I said for mood disorders.

I was gonna say one other thing about schisandra. And that is that in a more traditional way, we think of it as a plant that has the five tastes. So it does actually affect us and some of the aspects of the way that taste, like

sour, or bitter, or sweet might occur for us. And I think that's an interesting thing because then we know that schisandra is impacting, you know, our digestive health and as I said our liver health and helping with, you know, overall, what we would say kind of vital energy.

Katie: Very cool. I had seen it referred to as the five taste herb, and I wondered what that meant. That's really cool.

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Katie: So you talked a little bit about mood disorders. And I hear from a lot of people who have maybe not clinically diagnosed, but somewhere on the spectrum of anxiety or depression, it seems like those are both things that are on the rise. And I know they're both things that adaptogens can potentially be really beneficial for. Is there a good starting point if someone is struggling with either of those things, or just adaptogens to begin experimenting with?

Dr. Mary: Yeah. A couple of things that I would say, is that you can take adaptogens singly and you can take adaptogens in combination. And many times, combinations will enhance and have synergistic interactions between the plants and may actually be a little more potent in some ways. But if someone's just starting off and they're wondering, you know, "What I might want to use?" Or maybe they're a little nervous or cautious, then they could start with just one, like a single capsule of ashwagandha so that they weren't having too many herbs in the picture if they were a little uncomfortable with that. Typically for stress, like anxiety and/or depression, like mood issues, irritability, adaptogens partner up very well with what we call nervines. And nervines in the herbal world are plants that affect the nervous system to bring relaxation, diminish irritation in the nerves and calm the spirit and the brain. And a good plant to think about when you have anxiety or depression would be lemon balm. It's a very uplifting plant. And it would be a very nice plant to combine with ashwagandha for somebody who had anxiety, or depression, and/or, you know, a sleep issue who had anxiety with it. And so they could use that combination per se.

Also, one of the things that I would think about here would be the use of holy basil, the tulsi, because holy basil kind of does both of those things in some ways because as I said, it's a part of the mint family and that family often can have calming effects in the brain and in the spirit, as we would say. And holy basil has, you know, multiple different ways that it impacts with our mood. And so I would certainly say that a plant stands out, and I use it often when there's either anxiety and/or depression. And with holy basil and lemon balm actually put together, lemon balm is very uplifting. It's kind of nicknamed the happy herb. And so it really helps to, you know, kind of lift the mood. And it's something that will do that in a relatively short period of time. So if you take a tea of it or tea of holy basil and lemon balm put together, or an extract, you typically will feel that effect within an hour so that you'll feel a little uplifted, or relaxed, or a little bit, you know, more positive in your outlook. So that's kind of nice because some of the other adaptogens like rhodiola, which affects the mood, takes a little bit longer to work. And so it'll take a couple of weeks for someone to feel the effects of the rhodiola, where you may actually feel the effects of the lemon balm, holy basil at, you know, a more kind of rapid time, you know, not having to wait a couple of weeks.

Katie: Very cool. Yeah. I love that idea of them in combination and stacking them for that reason. Another thing I get a ton of questions about, and I'm guessing you probably also did in family practice for naturopathic medicine is relating to kids and sleep. And in kids and supplements in general, like what can we give, what can we not give? And I know you are uniquely qualified because you actually developed a line that was safe for kids. But can you give us any tips for when your kids won't fall asleep, when your kids don't stay asleep, when they wake up with growing pains, are there ways we can support them through those things naturally?

Dr. Mary: Yes, there are. I'll start with the growing pains because that's, you know, pretty straightforward. A lot of times I find the kids have growing pains, you can use something like catnip or California poppy extract, typically about 10 to 30 drops per dose, 10 for like a 5-year-old and 30 for 12-year-olds, who might have something like that at the time they're having discomfort. But what I also find is that they start taking magnesium, higher amounts of magnesium, so two parts magnesium to one part calcium, rather than having higher amounts of calcium. They often can get the growing pains to actually cease. So that's just, you know, an easy one.

When we look at sleep, like either falling asleep or staying asleep, some of the things that we have to think about is what creates the disruption. So falling asleep has to do with kind of winding down. And traditionally in

herbal medicine, they would use chamomile, and lemon balm, catnip, and oats, avena sativa as a tea or an extract and given typically, you know, after dinner and before bed. A lot of times, they would combine that with things like lavender bath or hops bath. And we know that herbs like hops, and lavender, and chamomilla will all help to relax the mind, relax the body. So that, you know, are some practices that one could do a herbal bath. they could make some tea and have tea. If they're worried about taking too much fluid before bed, then I would suggest using it in extract form. And, that way, you can either just put it in a little bit of fluid, or you can actually put the extract and mix it in with a little applesauce, and they can take it that way, which makes it a little bit easier.

For staying asleep, the first thing that comes to mind is that many of the herbs that we just talked about could be given, and over a period of time that will help with staying asleep. But some children wake in the night because they actually need calories. And so, if it's a child that's doing that, they actually need to have a snack, or giving a bedtime snack can actually help those children not have the need to wake up to get calories in the middle of the night. So I always ask whether, you know, how long it's been since they've eaten, before that they've gone to sleep, and try to figure out whether or not food is part of that wake-up issue.

Katie: That's another great point. Is there any reason not to let kids eat during the middle of the night? Is that normal because I know with, you know, for instance, breastfeeding, I always heard that after a certain point, kids were able to sleep through the night without needing to nurse and wake up. As kids go through growth spurts, is that actually more common that they do need to wake up and consume calories?

Dr. Mary: Yeah. And a lot of times, as you said, in growth spurts, many times what I would tell moms is to just like have...you can use fluid as that calories. So whether that's, you know, milk, or milk alternative, you can, you know, get up and they can have four ounces of, you know, an almond milk and find that that's plenty for them to, you know, go back to sleep with. So it doesn't necessarily mean you have to get up and cook a meal or give them a lot of food.

Katie: Gotcha. Okay. So we're not talking it has to be a meal, it's, just something sometimes to get them to calm back down and go back to sleep and let their body have the fuel for the sleep process because I know I've read quite a bit about how there's so much that goes on during sleep. And for kids, I would guess obviously, like, that's, even more, the case when they're growing. So it makes sense that they might just have a higher need at certain points.

Dr. Mary: Yeah. And that point about kids growing, you know, during those growth spurts, and a lot of that does happen at night during sleep. So that's a great point you make.

Katie: And you've mentioned several different herbs and combinations. I want to make sure, before we go any further, that we mention that I was also able to get a discount from you guys at Gaia Herbs, and you have a lot of these formulas there. So can you tell us about the discount, but also tell us some of the children's formula that you guys carry?

Dr. Mary: Oh, yeah. And also, I should just, you know, that not only the children's formulas, but the adaptogen formulas, you know, things that we've been talking about, like, you know, adrenal health is one of the adaptogen formulas, and that's a day-to-day, you know, really helps to maintain and give stress-protective. And that's a combination of four adaptogens along with a nervine because it makes sense to put that nerve tonic and nerve support in with the adaptogens. So oats is the nervine, and there's rhodiola, schisandra, holy basil, ashwagandha in that product. So really nice, general, broad-spectrum support. And then in that same line, there's adrenal nighttime, which takes the adaptogens that help to focus on the night cycle and sleep and sleep architects. So when you talked about the different levels of sleep, being able to fall asleep, relax your body, those adaptogens help with restoring, and that can be taken at night. So if someone really notices that their stress is interrupting their night cycles, they can use a product like that.

For those people who feel like they're really burned out, that they don't get going in the day, they can't get up and going, they might use a product called Jumpstart, which is designed to kind of really pick up an exhausted kind of system and get it perked up and going again, so that it can start to revitalize itself. And that's a daytime formula because in the day, our physiology is different. And so we want a different product for that. And so those two products one can be taken in the day and one can be taken at night, they can be taken together, or alone based on that, which is really nice, because that's, you know, one of the ways that you restore someone who's really been kind of exhausted and depleted from stress is to try to mimic the day-night cycle, which mimics our circadian cycle, which is reflected through all our tissues in our body. So it helps us to all kind of get on the same page of getting well.

Then you asked about the children's products, which are liquid products and they're products that are designed specifically for children. So that would mean that we have herbs that are safe within that population, that the herbs also typically are specific for the kinds of challenges and health that kids would have. And we try to make sure that the herbs are what we would say, flavorful or you know, pleasant in taste like fennel seed, or chamomile, or lemon balm, all pleasant tasting plants.

And those products are designed, there's a Kid's Defense, which looks at the using herbs to support the immune system during immune challenges such as cold and flu, or stomach flu, that type of thing. There's also an Echinacea Supreme where we use the echinacea species that is specific for helping with the acute response and getting over of colds and flus that's designed for kids.

And one of the nice things about this line and the ability of Gaia was that Gaia has very sophisticated manufacturing techniques. We were able to extract the plants in very specific ways so that we could really hone in on high amounts of phytonutrients, and then they're able to extract the alcohol off of that extract and put glycerin in there, which is sweet, which is much more palatable for children. And then we deliver a product that's alcohol-free and more designed for a child's taste. And there is a sleep formula there, Calm Restore, which is a combination of sleep herbs that are traditionally used for supporting sleep in children. And some of those herbs like lemon balm and passionflower have been looked at in science for safety and dose-related use with children in that population. So that's wonderful.

And there's another product called Attention Daily, and that's a product that was focused in on focus and concentration, that's kind of...but it's a product that we put together for brain focus for children. And that, in

my practice, I have so many stories about teachers, and moms, and principals of schools who call the practice to talk to me about how well children did when they were put on these products and how noticeable it was in the classroom for many of these kids, which really make my heart very joyful that I was helping and that we could help children, you know, improve their learning environment and skills.

Katie: For sure. Yeah. I think as a homeschooling mom and just a mom in general, that's something we all obviously want. And it's always great when you can find those things that really work for your kids. Also, for anybody listening, of course, as always, all of these links will be in the show notes, everything that you have mentioned. But that link, if you want to go to right now is gaiaherbs.com/wellnessmama. And Dr. Mary has offered 20% off featured adaptogens. So make sure to use the code `wellnessmama`, all one word. If you do go check it out. And as we get toward the end, there's a few questions I love to ask, and I can't wait to hear your answers for.

The first being, if there are a few things about your area of expertise that are often misunderstood or that people really just don't know, and if so what they are?

Dr. Mary: Yes. There are a few things. I'd say the first thing is that I don't think that people realize how much science and data has been collected on medicinal plants, safety, use, and validating many of the traditions, and that all over the world, there are many countries that have been collecting data on this. And that it is well-documented and there's much evidence that gives us basis for the traditional use and new uses. And I think secondly, as people get used to thinking about using plants is that it's not the same as using a pharmaceutical drug. And so you have to approach it with an open mind, and it needs to be approached in the sense that it might take time, which is different from many pharmaceutical drugs.

Katie: Yeah. Such an important distinction. Although I will say on that note, like, I feel like it's easy a little bit to fall into the trap sometimes even in the natural health world of trying to just treat a symptom with an herb instead of treating a symptom with a medicine. And I love that about the naturopathic approach. And in midwifery, when it comes to pregnancy, in general, is that it's more of a whole-body supportive approach versus let's tackle the symptoms approach. And I think, at least in my own life, that's where herbs really seem to shine is when you are able to try to support and address the body as a whole rather than just like, "Oh, let's go tackle this particular one symptom," because there's usually something else going on. You know, things very rarely happen in isolation in the body. And so I think these plants, like you've mentioned, they give us the ability to support the body very holistically.

Dr. Mary: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I kind of think of symptoms as like the voice of the body shouting out to get our attention. And then that draws us into why is that shout happening? And I think herbs do. They really do help to support that basic, you know, foundation of physiological health.

Katie: Gotcha. Another question I'd love to ask is if there's a book or a number of books that have changed your life, and if so what they are and why?

Dr. Mary: Yes. There is a book that changed...it makes me emotional even. It changed my life hugely. So, when I went to college, I was 18, and I was studying psychology. And, in my first three months of college, I went from psychology, to sociology, to behavioral modification. I kept changing my major. And so that was pretty much a sign that things weren't right for me in college. And I found this book called "Common Herbs for Natural Health," and it's by Juliette de Bairacli Levy, and she's a little gypsy from Europe. And she wrote this book, and it opened up a world that I didn't know existed. And it opened up the possibility that I could be an herbalist. And it put me on a path that took me to go and study with indigenous people. It made me open a store, which then gave me the opportunity to meet medicinal herbalists from England, and I went to England and studied for four years and became a member of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists, and that led me to naturopathic school and midwifery. I don't know, I thought I was going to be an archaeologist. So things changed greatly from this book, and it's still working one of my very favorite books to immerse myself in or to reference when I'm looking for a plant or studying a plant.

Katie: That's a new recommendation on here. Make sure that's in the show notes, as well, if any of you guys want to check it out, as well. Dr. Mary, any parting advice for the listeners today?

Dr. Mary: Yes. I would say get out into nature and look at, you know, the greenery. Spend five minutes every day really focusing in with a life of the plants around you, and you will benefit from just that exposure.

Katie: I love that. And I completely agree. And Dr. Mary, I know that you are very busy and you have so many things that you do, so thank you for taking the time to share your wisdom with us today.

Dr. Mary: Well, thank you, Katie, for having me. This was wonderful. And I love Wellness Mama as your title. And I just think that just emanates the possibility of wellness for every mama.

Katie: Oh, thank you. And thanks to all of you for listening and sharing one of your most valuable assets, your time with both of us. We're so grateful that you did. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama Podcast."

If you're enjoying these interviews, would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means even more moms and families could benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time, and thanks as always for listening.