



Episode 306: Dangers of Mold Exposure & How to
Protect Yourself From Mold Toxicity
With Ann Shippy MD

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to "The Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And I'm really excited to talk to today's guest because I really respect her work. I'm here with Dr. Ann Shippy, who is a powerhouse on a very powerful mission to help people across the world live their healthiest lives using cutting-edge science, really specific research, and genetic information to treat the root causes of disease. She specializes in environmental toxicity, preconception, and reproductive health, and mold exposure, and she's designed life-altering treatments and protocols for her patients using epigenetic information, which is the study of DNA expression and the body's incredible ability to express or oppress helpful or detrimental genes as well as prevent, heal, and even reverse certain illnesses.

She has a fascinating background. She was an IBM engineer for a decade, and then her challenging experience with traditional medicine motivated her to search for her own health answers. She left engineering to attend the University of Texas medical school and is now board-certified in internal medicine and a certified functional medicine physician with a practice in Austin, Texas. If you live there, I cannot recommend her highly enough. She's the author of two books and is currently working on her third, and I know that you're going to love this episode. We go really deep on mold exposure, mycotoxins, and what you need to know to make sure that you don't have any underlying problems in your home that you're not aware of. Dr. Shippy, welcome. Thanks for being here.

Ann: Oh, I'm so excited to be here.

Katie: I am so excited to chat with you because you are an expert on many, many things, but I know that you both have personal experience and expertise in an area I get a lot of questions about, and I want to jump into today, which is mold and mycotoxin exposure. And I know that you have a personal story, and I would love to start there because I think there's a growing awareness about this and people are realizing they might have a problem, but there's also probably a lot of us who don't even realize we have a problem, but we might. So, can you start with the personal story?

Ann: Yes, I was already practicing functional medicine, you know, where I'm looking for the root cause of illness, and I had gone to a conference on mycotoxins about a year before, but I didn't know what was happening to me. So, I was getting sicker and sicker. I had gotten to the point where I would drop a glass if it was full of water because my right arm was so weak. I couldn't even grasp it fully. My hair was falling out all over the bathroom. I had so much pain in my body that I didn't want my kids to hug me. It hurt so badly, and I couldn't wear my heels anymore because my right foot hurt so much, and I was really getting scared. I was starting to wonder if I was going to be able to take care of my patients, my kids, and myself. And I had sought out experts. I'd been to a neurologist, an immunologist, a hand specialist, internist. I had reached out to my friends in the functional medicine community and was really getting stumped.

And then one day, one of my patients that I was treating for environmental toxicity, she was doing great, but she just looked across the table at me, and I thought I had it all kind of covered, but she was like, "Dr. Shippy, I think you're really sick. My intuition is telling me it's something that I had gone through, which was toxic mold exposure to a specific mold called chaetomium," and she loved me so much. She was insisting on coming to my house at the end of the day to go walk through it and see if she got her mold symptoms. And so, sure enough, that day, she came to my house, walked through it, and in 5 to 10 minutes she was really not feeling well and had to leave, and she said, "Yeah, this is what happens to me when I'm in chaetomium. You should take very few of your belongings and leave and not ever spend another night here." And I was so scared. Then I did exactly what she suggested. I went and took my kids and started staying at my parents' house and really amped up my detoxification support and started to feel better. And finally, like a month later, after doing several of the wrong kinds of mold tests, did the right one in the right place in the house and found that chaetomium.

Katie: Wow, that's amazing. And especially because I know, like, you as a functional medicine doctor, you already know all the stuff to do, and I'm sure you were living a very clean lifestyle. So, the fact that you were still sick, that's really...like, points to some other kind of issue. Kind of walk us through what some of the common symptoms are when it comes to mold exposure. I know that there's probably a range, but, like, both the ones you experienced and other ones people might experience.

Ann: Yeah. So, a lot of times, people will just feel like they're more tired. They don't have the energy to do the things that they need to do, or their brain will feel a little foggy, or they'll be getting skin rashes or a little bit of digestive upset. And then on the more severe side, when we go looking for the root cause of illnesses, it can be things like what's triggering your autoimmune disorder? What caused your cancer? What triggered the

diabetes? So, it often is the root cause of illness, but the early symptoms are just maybe feeling a little bit more tired. Your hair might be falling out more readily, some digestive symptoms, headaches, or even more like the allergy symptoms. So, I had to go through mold again a few years later. And actually, it was a brand new home that I was living in. I just started developing worsening allergies and asthma.

Katie: Gotcha. And I know that those are relatively common now as well. So, you mentioned it took several rounds of testing before you were able to actually locate it. And I have heard this experience from as well, who...even a neighbor of ours, when their son got really sick, they did multiple tests and then finally were able to find and identify the mold. And so, it was a long process to remediate. What kind of testing did you finally do that worked, and are there different kinds of tests for different things?

Ann: That's such a great question, and I think it's a little overwhelming for people to be listening and taking notes, so we do have a mold handout that we can have you put in your notes. It's just annshippymd.com/mold. So, a lot of even the inspectors that are out there are still not up on the latest technology, so a negative mold test means nothing. A lot of the inspectors are doing air testing, and a lot of these really toxic molds don't put enough mold spores into the air. They're big, and they're heavy, and they just kind of drop down close to where they're growing, so it misses them. So, if you do an air sampling test and it's positive for any of the more toxic molds, really pay attention to that. So like *Stachybotrys* and *Chaetomium*, things like *Walleimia*, *Ochratoxin*, *Penicillium*, if those show up, pay attention. But what I really like to do are samples on the dust, so getting as much dust from the building. Whether it's an office or a home or a school, get as much dust and then do the DNA testing rather than just doing the visual inspections or their culture.

So, sometimes they're called an ERMI test, but that ERMI is just really a calculation of what DNA was there of the mold. And then find somebody that's really good at being the house detective. So, I think about myself as being the good body detective, like figuring out what's going on. Find somebody who takes mold seriously, that they protect themselves with a respirator and the clothing that will protect them so they really know that mold can be a problem. And then have them, you know, pull out the refrigerator and sometimes even have to go into the wall cavities with a camera to look to see what's going on. They climb up in the attic, and they look to see if things are sealed properly, to not leave any stone unturned because you don't want to have the wrong result and have a hidden problem, which is what often happens. The inspectors come in and say, "Oh, no, everything looks good," and then you've really missed a big problem.

Katie: So, explain a little bit more on why to test the dust. Because I know from my own research that, you know, dust can be a source and a home of many things, but why test the dust versus test the home itself?

Ann: Because that gives you the best collection. So, what I like to do is to take the dust and send it for both looking for the mold DNA and then also for the toxins. So, we're still so early in the detection technology for the molds, so we want to use the most advanced ways so that we don't miss it. So, we can test for about four families of the mycotoxins in the dust and then about 36 of the different mold DNA, and there are, you know, hundreds to thousands of different types of mold and many, many more of the chemicals that the mold is making.

So, if we can at least get an idea of what's there, it's a tip of the iceberg, but when we find those things, then we can know, "Oh, well, maybe we really do need to open up walls," and that kind of thing where it's hidden rather than just saying, "Okay, everything is okay on the outside." So, for example, when I was going through my mold thing, that thing that had happened is the flashing on the chimney had failed, and so there was a little bit of moisture running down the wall between my son's room and my bedroom and then the ceiling of the living room. But it wasn't enough moisture to show through the paint, but it was enough to really grow a lot of mold.

Katie: Oh, wow. I know that's relatively common, right? That mold can be in the walls or in a place you may not see, but still causing symptoms very much in the house.

Ann: Exactly. So, a lot of times it'll be maybe a shower pan has failed, and it's enough to be growing mold in any of the drywall around the shower, but not enough that the wall is getting wet, or even behind toilets, refrigerators, dishwashers. And then sometimes it's even behind the washer and dryer.

Katie: Gotcha. And I know there's some controversy surrounding the idea of mold remediation and how it needs to be done correctly, and I've even seen a couple of sources argue that once you've found mold, it's really never possible to completely remediate it. I'm curious the approach you took and if you feel it is possible and what the best process is to remediate if someone does find mold in their home.

Ann: Yeah. So, I think it is depending on what type of mold is there. I've rarely had people that have the type of mold that made me so sick be able to remediate, the chaetomium, because it has little hooks and just grows into things and it's so hard to remove it all, and we get so sensitive to that particular type of mold. But a lot of the other types of mold, you can remediate if you get somebody really good doing the actual remediation. It's so important to set up containment. One of the mistakes I think that some people make is that when they're doing the deconstruction, the mold spores really...and then the toxins spread all over the building. So, using plastic walls and really good filtration devices to make sure that they're containing all of the toxins that are being released is really, really helpful to making it more likely that you're gonna be able to do the adequate cleaning so that the people can get better. And some of it depends on how the building is constructed.

So, basements can be really tricky. Buildings that are built into the sides of hills, it can be hard to control the moisture enough in the future to keep it from growing back. So, kind of picking and choosing whether it's better to move forward or make the investments into the building to try to make it better. And it also depends on how sick the person is. Like, I was so sick I just had to move and not take much with me to be able to get better. If you're not to that point where you're really in survival mode, it's probably worth it to try to remediate. So, it's really, really situational and it can depend on how good of a team you have. I've seen a big disparity in the ability to remediate depending on how much the people get it that are doing the work on what they're dealing with. If they're not thinking about this as being something super toxic and they're not

protecting themselves, then that's a real warning sign that they don't understand what they need to do to help to get you better.

Katie: That makes sense. Is there a good general practice for...Like, we bought a house a couple of years ago in an area that's, like, prone to mold. In hindsight, I wished I had tested for mold ahead of time. Is there any kind of at-home test that people can buy and test if they're thinking about moving or gonna move into a new home?

Ann: Yes, and that's on the handout that we put out. So, there's a website called blackmoldscan.com. I think it is. I'm forgetting exactly what it is, but it's on the website, that you can order the kits yourself or a company called RealTime Lab. They do the testing in humans as well as doing the testing in the environment, and you can order kits from them and do both the DNA part of it as well as the mycotoxin part of it. So, yeah, if you're buying a home or even potentially leasing something for a period of time, I really, really recommend testing it before you move all your belongings in there and potentially contaminate yourself and your belongings if you're in some of these areas. Like, you're in Florida, right?

Katie: I am. Yeah. So, definitely, like, mold central where we are.

Ann: Yeah. So, some of these places that have had all these hurricanes, it really is difficult to find a safe place to live. Like, so many of my patients have come from Houston, and they thought that their home was okay because they didn't have obvious water damage, but because of the blowing, driving winds, if there's any issue with the building envelope not being sealed almost perfectly that the backside of the drywall ended up with big problems. And even the air conditioning systems can be so compromised with those high winds and driving rains.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I think there's also some misconceptions when it comes to mold of, like, you know...if there's mold in the house, it should smell musty, or you can kind of tell by smelling it. Can you talk about mold versus musty smell? Do they go together, or is that misconception?

Ann: Oh, that's the perfect question because I have so many people that say, "Oh, I can't smell it, so it must not be there." That's the MDOCs that some molds make, and so that's a little different type of chemical than the mycotoxins that are also produced. And both can be dangerous. But definitely, if you smell mustiness, something needs to be done or avoid it. But a lot of the mycotoxins, you can't smell, so you don't even know it's there, so the only way to know for sure is to either test you or test the environment.

Katie: Okay. So, mold doesn't always necessarily go along with a musty smell. What about mildew? Because I feel like those words get used interchangeably. Is mildew the same thing as mold, or is it different? And if it's different, is it dangerous?

Ann: Mold is an overall category of organisms, and then mildew is kind of a slang term. But a lot of times the things that we think are the harmless mildew kind of thing really aren't. And if somebody says to you, "Oh, that's not a problem, it just looks like mildew," run because you can't tell what type of mold something is by looking at it. It really has to be looked at under a microscope, cultured, or tested by the DNA because mold changes colors. It changes the appearance depending on what kind of surface it's growing on and what other kinds of mold are present. So, you know, like a mold growing on one substance might be white and black on another, and pink on another, so you really have to test it to know for sure.

Katie: Got you. Okay. That's good to know. And you mentioned a few of them. Are there areas of the home where mold is more likely? I know you said like laundry room, in like anywhere where it could leak in through the roof, but if someone is having kind of unexplained symptoms, where do they even start looking? I know you have a resource or two that you've mentioned. We'll make sure that's in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. If you guys are listening, definitely check that out too.

Ann: Yeah, you know, it's funny just even walking into hotel rooms now. Like, if I walk in and it's a little musty, I'm gonna go and change right away, but just looking even at air conditioning vents. So if you've got something that looks like dust or dirt on the AC, that's highly suspicious that that's mold. If you go kind of look in your bathroom and any of the caulking is broken, or there's any discoloration in the drywall, if you've got wallpaper in a bathroom, that's highly likely that there's gonna be some mold behind there. And then you can even just walk around the outside of your house. If there's any place that the landscaping comes up above where the foundation is, that's another highly likely source of entry, and then anything that you see with paint peeling or anything around entry doorways. You know, a lot of times, like, you'll see a little bit where the caulking isn't quite right. So, you might be surprised if you just walk around and look in your house where anything is disrupted. And windows too, like if you have window sills that are buckling or not just pristine, I would be very suspicious that there's an issue with the windows.

Katie: Good to know. What about the word mycotoxin because that's also used interchangeably with mold sometimes? So I'm curious if you could define what that is and if it differs from mold or what to know about mycotoxins.

Ann: Yeah, so mycotoxins are just the little chemicals that the mold is making that are toxic for us or animals. You know, every type of organism is making by-products in their physiological process of surviving. And so, it's just things that they make as part of their survival. And what's really interesting is people who study these kinds of things, it's kind of how they war against each other. So, usually, there's not just one type of mold growing when there is moisture. It's a whole community, kind of, a microbiome of that surface, and they use it to try to ward off the other molds from taking them over. And unfortunately, we get caught in the crossfire.

Katie: Gotcha. Okay. That makes sense. And I feel like now we have a pretty good understanding of what to look for and how to know if you might have any of these issues going on in your home. I'd love to switch gears

and really talk about what to do for your health if you do find it. Because like I said, I know this is a growing issue. It's a huge issue where I live, and honestly, some of the symptoms that you mentioned sounded like the response to like other autoimmune disease, or I've had several guests on to talk about breast implant illness and how the body is, like, mounting an immune response. So, I'm curious to understand on a physiological level, like, what is happening in the body when we have mold exposure?

Ann: Oh, that's such a great question. So, the mycotoxins can do so many different things in our bodies. They can directly damage DNA. They can influence how our DNA behaves. They can damage the cell membranes on the mitochondria, and then they can really injure our liver and our kidney, and then also affect our immune system. They suppress our immune system to be able to keep our own microbiome in check and to fight off infection and even affect how well our bodies keep cancer at bay since we all have abnormal cells that we're producing all the time. So, depending on the particular mycotoxin, it can do so many different negative things. My opinion now that I've seen more and more of this mycotoxin illness is that the ideal thing would be that it be part of a screening that we do on a regular basis because we can check the mycotoxins in our urine through two different companies, RealTime Lab and Great Plains.

So, if we have an uptick in the amount of mycotoxin, then we go look for the source. Is it in our car? Is it in our home? Is it our office or our school, or is it in the food that we're eating? So that we can make those adjustments before we get sick. I really do think it's one of the biggest health crises that we're facing today. So, for me, the prevention is ideal, but given that a lot of times we don't have the opportunity or the idea that we even need to be looking for these things until we're sick or having some type of symptoms, and a lot of times the mycotoxin test isn't covered by insurance, then, you know, we've got to take the action how to help to get it out of our body. And one of the things that I love is that we can help our detoxification pathways work much better just by eating a different diet, eating a lot of cruciferous vegetables, the broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, and then the onions and garlic, and spices that also support our liver in detoxification. And then there are a bunch of supplements that we can take that also augment how well our bodies detoxify. NAC, liposomal glutathione, and then there are a bunch of binders like clay and charcoal and modified citrus pectin that really help to pull the toxins out. And based on what I'm seeing in my patients, both the patients that are just super motivated to do prevention, as well as the ones that are sick, is that we really all need to be focusing on this because we're being really bombarded with toxins every day in our cleaning materials, in the food preparation or our mattresses that we need to be proactive in preventing it.

Katie: Got it. So, you mentioned that even certain foods can be a source of mycotoxins. What are some foods to watch for there, and how do we know if we're getting foods that are safe?

Ann: That's a very good question because it's really not regulated very well in our country. Other countries are actually better at this than we are, but often grains have high levels of mycotoxins in them, so wheat, barley, rice, spelt, and especially corn. Like, I won't even touch corn now because it's pretty much all moldy. And then things like coffee. The nice thing about that is that there are companies like Bulletproof that screen for it and make sure that we're not getting it in our coffee. And then also nuts, so, things like peanuts. I love peanuts, but I will rarely, rarely eat them because it's very difficult to grow them without having some aflatoxin growing on them. And then pistachios, you can see it so obviously. And then the other nuts that I eat, I make sure that I

keep it in the refrigerator or freezer to reduce the amount of growth that's gonna happen. And then if there's an obvious problem, avoid it, like, you know, sometimes cashews will have that dark area in them. So, those are the big ones to either watch out for or avoid, but obviously, the fermented things like wine and kombucha and KeVita, those are things that... It's a little bit unpredictable but can definitely have some mycotoxins in them.

Katie: Good to know. And I think like the detox stuff you mentioned, I'd love to go a little deeper on that because I know you work with people on this and that it's also helpful for other things besides just mold. Is that correct? Like, people can have other issues as well that this is helpful for.

Ann: It is. And a lot of times, mold is just the tipping point. People have had, you know, some pesticides like glyphosates and that kind of thing from their food and some heavy metals from eating fish or tuna or having amalgam fillings, all of the plastics and that kind of thing from our food packaging. So, those things are just gradually accumulating it in their body, and then they get an exposure of mold, and that tips them over. So, a lot of these supplements and the foods really help us to eliminate a lot of those things from our bodies. Especially my favorite thing, and I don't leave home without it, is liposomal glutathione. So, that's a form of glutathione that gets absorbed in the right form rather than digested and actually gets into the cells where we need them to process the toxins and then get them out of our body. And then things like mitochondrial support. So, the mitochondria are the little organelles inside the cell that help to produce the energy to do all the work in our body. So, a lot of times, just assisting those mitochondria with the B vitamins and magnesium and CoQ10 and lipoic acid and then things that help to repair cell membranes like phosphatidylcholine, all work together to help the body to do a better job of eliminating the toxins.

Katie: Okay. Gotcha That all makes sense.

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I am so excited to finally be able to share a top secret project I've been working on for years...this episode is sponsored by Wellnesse... a new company I co-founded to create safe, natural and obsessively tested products for families. You've heard that much of what you put on your body gets absorbed through your skin and goes into your body. We turned this idea on its head, creating products that aren't just safe to put on your hair, skin and in your mouth, but that are beneficial. We started with the toughest first, creating the first of its kind natural toothpaste that is free of fluoride and glycerin and that contains ingredients like green tea, neem and hydroxyapatite to support the mouth. Our haircare (shampoo and conditioner) is free of harmful ingredients

and contains ingredients like lavender and nettle to support healthy hair! Be the first to try it at Wellness.com

Katie: So, are there any other ways that people can know to keep the body's detox mechanisms in really good shape? And also, along the same line as that, what do we need to know about detoxification? Because I feel like there are so many, like, cleanses and detoxes and all these things out there that make all these promises, and my thought has always been the body has built-in mechanisms. We just need to support what the body naturally does, but what do people need to know in general about kind of the natural detoxification mechanisms of the body?

Ann: Yeah. So, some of us have genetic predispositions where we just don't detoxify great. You know, we're the ones that are the canaries that are gonna let...the illness is gonna show up in us first. But the thing that's so exciting is that there are things now available to really help us to, you know, level the playing field and help our bodies to keep up very, very naturally. So, one of the things that concerns me about a lot of the information that's out there on detoxing is that they make it sound like it's normal to have detox symptoms. Like if you're detoxing, you're gonna feel bad. Well, that's not good. That's a sign that you're not detoxifying in the right order.

So I think about detoxification as being a series of dams. And if you open up one dam too much, you're gonna flood the dams below. So, you really have to be opening up the dams all together in the right order so that you don't have the detox symptoms. So, it's really not more is better, or having symptoms is a sign that you're doing something good. It's actually a sign that you might be hurting yourself. You know, you want to be kind of careful in how you detoxify because you don't want to be taking a toxin that the body has worked to sequester, you know, like in fat cells and free it up and then have it move around to the brain cells, right? So, I really believe in doing things very gently and kind of methodically so that you're collaborating with these different systems in the body to all, you know, essentially get it out safely.

Katie: That's really good to know. And to clarify on that, because I've heard people say, you know, like, "Oh, it's just a Herxheimer reaction," or like, "It's because the body is detoxing." And so you're saying that's not something that needs to happen, and, in fact, it might not actually be good for that to happen.

Ann: Right. So, for example, with patients, if they start to have symptoms, I want to know right away because that means that we might need to work more on, you know, the gut microbiome because the microbiome in the gut really is important to be healthy for getting the toxins out. Or we might need to do things like add in a detox bath so that their skin can help them more. Or we might need to go back and work more on a process called methylation a little bit more. So, if they do start having any symptoms, then we know, okay, there are other things that we need to go look at. Maybe we need to really work on their gallbladders some more so that they're making enough bile then to carry the toxins out through their gut. So, it's such an intricate system and so many things to look at with that. If you're deciding to do some type of detox and you don't feel right on it, then you really need to step back and think about how else to help support your body some more in that process.

Katie: Are there common starting places or like universal things that are typically good for everyone? Because I know, like I said, I default to the body's natural mechanisms, so I always start with things like just making sure I'm well-hydrated, and then I'm eating enough greens and fiber and things, like, I love using the sauna. I'm curious if those are beneficial for detox and, like, are there good general starting points?

Ann: I love that because we're so aligned. Yes, you've got to get the diet nailed in first. Your body's got to have the phytonutrients to run the biochemistry and physiology of detoxification. So, that's foundational number one thing. And then I do love the saunas, but I really want people to go slow with that as well, like thinking, "Okay, I signed up for this infrared sauna, and I've got 30 minutes. I'm going to get every second of it out." Mm-mm. You've really got to listen to your body. And if you get in the sauna and you have this kind of impulse to get out in five minutes, you're done. And so, then just gradually build up to where your body is sweating and feeling good for the entire time that you're in there. And every once in a while, you might have a setback too where you've been doing a 30-minute sauna and feeling good, and then all of a sudden you have one where in 10 minutes you're like, "Wow, my body is really telling me to get out." Go ahead and get out because that means that's all your body can do for the day.

And then exactly, the hydration is so important. You need your kidneys being adequately flushed every day so that they can do their job optimally, especially if you add in something like saunas, making sure that you have plenty of minerals to sustain your intravascular volume, but then these minerals are so important for the detoxification enzymes to work optimally. So, making sure that you're getting plenty of minerals either through a good mineral supplement or if you've got food that's, you know, probably grown in the farmer's market where there's still minerals in the soil that get into the food is super helpful. Oh, and then one of the most important things is you've got to be going to the bathroom. You have to be having bowel movements at least once a day, two or three times a day if you can because so many of the toxins also go out through the gut.

Katie: That makes perfect sense. Like, just supporting, like we talked about, all those natural detoxification mechanisms that we're born with, like urinating and going to the bathroom like you said, and I love sweating as well. I just try to make sure I'm sweating in some way every day just to keep that, whether it's to exercise or sauna or both. That's really important, and it definitely helps my skin feel better when I do that too.

Ann: And it really does make a huge difference when I see patients, especially when their bodies are super broken down, they'll be like, "Well, I don't even have the energy to exercise, but when we can get them to the point where they can do the saunas and do an exercise where they're sweating, it's amazing at keeping some buffer in their barrel so that they're not filling up. So, I love it that you're really helping people to know these foundational things and hopefully prevent them from even getting sick.

Katie: I'm just curious of your take on different forms of fasting and how they can support detoxification and if they should be used or should not be used in a detox situation because personally, I love, some days, just not

eating until later in the day. I feel better, too, as you're doing that. And then occasionally I'll do like longer water fast, and I feel like it just really helps my mental clarity. But I'm curious, does that have a place in when someone's dealing with an acute issue like this or should it be avoided until they kind of address the problem?

Ann: I do think that there's a place for it with some people if they feel up to it, definitely the intermittent fasting. It doesn't have to be the long, long hours, but like 14 hours where they're, you know, not having any nutrients. So, like, if they start eating at 7:00 in the morning and then finish around 5:00 or... Some people do feel better if they skip the morning, but for most people, it's better if they do something for breakfast and then finish eating around 5:00 and then don't eat or drink anything other than maybe some water or some herbal tea until the next morning, can be very, very helpful. It's stimulating the body to start to dump some of the cells that are working marginally as well as just kind of giving the digestion a break.

And then I'm not a fan of the water fasting, but I do think that the fasting mimicking, so there's a product called ProLon, and there's a lot of data around not reducing your calories completely, but minimizing them so that you get the benefits of what a water fast would do without the detrimental parts of it. It is trustful to not have any calories at all, and then you can lose bone and muscle and find it, you know, hard to replace that. So, having a very small number of calories where you're still getting some of those nutrients to kind of stabilize blood sugar and run the basic mechanisms, at the end of the day, it ends up being like 500 to 800 calories, but just for five days at a time is amazing for resetting the immune system, helping to detoxify and really dump those cells that are kind of dragging down the rest of your body so that then you get increased production of stem cells going to making new tissues can be dramatically helpful if you do that once a month.

Katie: I love that. And I've done water fasting, and I definitely agree with your point on that that it can be really stressful on the body. And I have also done both ProLon and kind of, like, a homemade version of ProLon that was just a lot of vegetables and it's about those ratios. I'm sure you've also read the work of Dr. Valter Longo and his book. It's amazing. I'll actually put it in the show notes. It's a great book to read. But that's a great point that people can do the fasting mimicking diet now and there's so much research to support that without the stress of a full water fast. So, that's great advice.

Ann: It's so exciting because some of the data coming out is showing that it's as good as some types of chemotherapy for some cancer. I'm not advocating for that as people's position, but a lot of the drug companies doing chemotherapy are asking them to do collaborative studies where they're combining the fasting mimicking with the chemotherapy, and they're even seeing more dramatic effects with helping to treat cancer, so it just makes sense too. It's probably one of the best things that we can do to prevent cancer is to have those five days once a month. And I like you, I'm like, "What can I do to figure out how to do this?" Because I don't love the food quality that they're using in the ProLon, although they've just got a new kit that's come out, that's an improvement in flavor. But yeah, so just getting lots of vegetables and a little bit of protein for those five days, I think, is a good alternative.

Katie: For sure. And yeah, to echo what you said, I've seen some of that initial data coming out about cancer rates and also in conjunction with conventional cancer treatment and just how much less people are getting

sick and how much quicker they're recovering. And I think things like this, I'm so excited when there's that kind of research that, you know, can work with conventional medicine if that's what someone wants to do and also can show data that it's gonna help avoid certain types of cancers. I think we're in a really exciting time for that kind of research.

And to circle back to the mold and the detox stuff real quick, I know that a lot of people listening, I'm going to get some questions related to, you know, kids, the elderly, what about if I'm pregnant or nursing? So, I'd love to talk a little bit in detail about what if someone finds mold in their home and they also have children? Because it's hard to give kids a lot of supplements or to have kids in a sauna for a lot of time. So, how can someone address that if they've got kids who've also been exposed?

Ann: Yeah. So, I'm an internist, and I take care of adults, but then, of course, then I have my patients that want me to see their kids. So, I do have some experience with kids especially that have been in moldy environments and affected. So, kids are so much more susceptible. You know, they have higher respiratory rates, so they're gonna...you know, the dose that they get into through their lungs, and then they have a smaller body mass. So, a lot of times, kids are the canaries, right? And yet their systems are in some ways are so much more robust, but then they're also more fragile in the same way. So I do end up having them do...we have a detox bath that kids kinda like because it's like doing a dirt bath where they get to get in the dirt and kind of play. So, I think using their skin is also really helpful. And then sometimes I will use the liposomal glutathione in very small doses, but we also have topical glutathione that seems to work pretty well for them and then getting them to eat the good healthy foods. You know, a lot of times, you can change their taste buds very quickly and find lots of vegetables that they'll love to eat or even chop it up and hide it in soups and spaghetti sauces and all that kind of thing can make a really, really big difference.

And then, especially if a child is very sick, I'd like the data. Like, I want to know what their nutrient status is. I want to know what their gene pathways are that might have caused them to be most compromised and that we can do the workarounds by really looking at their methylation and that kind of thing, but just starting out with the baths, a little bit of the topical glutathione and then some really good base nutrients to support their body: a really good probiotic, a really good multivitamin, making sure they have adequate amounts of magnesium, that they're going to the bathroom every day, that they're drinking clean water, and then get them out of the mold. Figure out a way, you know, while the problem is being fixed and not be in that environment anymore if it's going and staying with friends or family. We've had a lot of problems with the school systems here in central Texas getting moldy, whether it's the air conditioning systems being turned down over the summer and getting moldy or issues with leaks or flooding. And sometimes I've had to have kids change schools.

Katie: Wow. Yeah, that's good to know. And I hate to hear that that's a problem because that means it's affecting all of those kids. What about pregnancy and nursing? Because I know that's probably one of the most common questions I get across the board in relation to every topic I've written about is what about if you're pregnant or nursing? And I know, obviously, those are times you do have to be really careful about detoxification. So, what if someone finds mold in that phase?

Ann: That's really, really challenging. I mean, I like to help people get their bodies ready to be robust during pregnancy and to get the toxins out, so they're not passing them through the placenta or through the breast milk. You cannot detoxify when you're...do additional detox while you're pregnant or nursing because the more you free up in your body, the more you're going to pass it on to the child. So, the best thing that you can do then is just not be exposed.

It's hard to have these conversations when it's not a one-on-one, like look the person in the eye and see...because I don't want to create a lot of fear, but these mycotoxins, they're teratogens. They can cause birth defects. They can cause cancer, and, you know, you want to be protecting your children, so the best thing you can do is if you're already pregnant or nursing, minimize your exposure. I don't think that nursing women should eat corn or peanuts because we know that most of those have some level of mycotoxins in them. So, do your best with what you're eating. The coffee, if you are drinking coffee while you're nursing, then, you know, make sure that it doesn't have the mycotoxins in it. You're probably not if you're pregnant. And then just, for yourself, keep eating the most healthy foods that you can so that your body is eliminating them but don't do any active form of detoxification with the detox supplements.

Katie: Got it. And I know that you have a lot more resources for this, both on your website and in the PDF that you mentioned, so I'll make sure that we have links to both of those in the show notes. A couple of questions I'd love to ask, a little bit unrelated, but toward the end of the interviews, if there is a book or number of books that have really impacted your life. If so, what are they and why?

Ann: I love that question. So, as a child, I think one of the most impactful books was actually the series by Madeleine L'Engle. But my most favorite book of hers was "A Wrinkle in Time." I remember reading that around fourth grade or fifth grade, and it made me realize how much I loved science. Like, it just piqued my interest in really figuring out how things worked and made me very curious.

And then as an adult, one of the most inspiring books was actually an autobiography called "Tales of Wonder" by Huston Smith. He was one of the first people who really started exploring different world religions. And this book so inspired me because he was so curious about what connects us all, but also what makes us different and really celebrating our differences. And, you know, I think that's one of the biggest things facing us today is that we're all on this planet together and we need to be solving some of these problems together rather than being divided. And I think he was one of the first people to really start doing that in such a positive way and lived his life with such grace and care. I think anybody who reads it would just really be inspired about what we can do together.

Katie: I love that. That's a new recommendation as well. I'll make sure it's linked in the show notes. I am such a huge fan of your work and all the people that you help. If someone wants to work with you or find out more about your work, where can they find you?

Ann: We are doing a lot on Facebook and Instagram to get useful information out every day. So, it's just Ann Shippy MD. And then the website, we're putting out blogs and useful information, and I'm trying to get myself to get more in the mode of making some videos too, not just the written word, but we'll have a lot more videos coming as well for people on the website, annshippymd.com.

Katie: Awesome. Thank you so much for your time for sharing your work around this. And like I said, I'm a huge fan of your work, and I'm so excited to get to chat with you today.

Ann: Yes, it's great to get to catch up with you. Thanks for having me.

Katie: And thanks as always to all of you for listening and sharing one of your most valuable resources, 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.