



Episode 387: Ask Katie Anything: Protein, Supplements, Sleep, Parenting, and Shoes

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

This episode is sponsored by Hiya chewable kids vitamins. It's a new company I found that my kids are extremely excited about. Do you know that most typical children's vitamins are essentially just candy in disguise? Many have as much as two teaspoons of sugar, along with some food dyes, some other unhealthy chemicals, or gummy junk that kids should probably never eat as a dentist would probably agree with. Hiya is the complete opposite. It fills the most common gaps in children's diets with full-body nourishment and a yummy taste they love without any of that junk. While most children's vitamins might contain as much as 5 grams of sugar, it can cause a variety of health issues. Hiya has created a zero sugar, zero gummy, junk-free vitamin that tastes great, and as my kids will attest, is delicious. It's perfect even for picky eaters. Also importantly, it's manufactured in the U.S. with globally sourced ingredients, each selected and screened for optimal bioavailability and absorption. What's cool is they send us to your door on the pediatrician recommended schedule. And the first month, you get a reusable glass bottle, that you can personalize with stickers. So every month thereafter, they send a no plastic refill pouch, which means it isn't just good for your kids, it's also good for the environment, and it reduces waste. My kids love the little glass jar that the vitamins are in and I love how it's low waste. You can find out all about them, and their sourcing, and the many benefits by going to [hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama](http://hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama).

This episode is brought to you by Gladskin, an incredible new product and resource for anyone who is struggling with eczema. This product is rooted in a really unique scientific understanding of the skin's microbiome. Gladskin has unearthed an innovative new way to solve eczema that helps to treat the root and not just the symptom. It's a new category of non-prescription eczema treatment rooted in endolysin science, and has received recognition from today's leading dermatologists and pediatricians. While most microbiome studies have focused on the health implications of what's found deep in the gut we're now finding that healthy skin, just like a healthy gut, requires a balance of bacteria. In fact, four out of five people with eczema have a specific type of imbalance in their skin bacteria or their skin microbiome. And this is where Gladskin comes in. When the skin balance bacteria gets out of balance, eczema is more likely to flare. So a targeted approach to that takes into account the microbiome's good and bad bacteria is critical to relieving the redness and itching of eczema. Although new and unique in its approach in the U.S., this has already been a proven solution for eczema in Europe for five years and received recognition from leading dermatologists and pediatricians. It's also been accepted by the National Eczema Association and is a different approach altogether compared to steroid creams and traditional over the counter moisturizers. The best part of Gladskin is hypoallergenic and free of steroids, fragrances, drying alcohols, and harmful preservatives. It's stored fresh in a pharmaceutical quality bottle so they don't need to use the chemical preservatives found in most over the counter creams and lotions. I hear from a lot of you whose children have eczema, and I'm so excited to get to share this resource. You can find out more and get an automatic 10% discount by going to [wellnessmama.com/go/gladskin](http://wellnessmama.com/go/gladskin). To get a 10% discount, it should be automatic, but you can also use the code WellnessMama10 if you have any trouble.

Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com) and [wellness.com](http://wellness.com), which is my new line of personal care products, like hair care, shampoo, and conditioner,

toothpaste, and hand sanitizer if you haven't tried them yet. And we have dry shampoo as well. You can check out all of that at [wellness.com](http://wellness.com). That's wellness with an E on the end.

And this episode, I'm going to tackle a bunch of commonly asked questions. In fact, these are all reader-submitted questions from a recent Instagram post. And I was answering a bunch of them on social media and realized it might be a lot more efficient if I just jumped in here and answered them in real-time as a podcast episode. I received a lot of questions related to protein intake. And a lot of these are follow-ups to a blog post I recently published about my weight loss over the last couple of years and how protein was a big part of this equation for me. I'll make sure that post is linked in the show notes. But the short version is that I found I was actually not consuming enough calories. And part of I think when my body was having trouble losing weight, aside from the trauma aspect was that I was undernourished. And so, for me, solving that was very much two-part. There was the inner mental-emotional work that I did that I talked about in detail in Episode 309, which I will also link to, but then I also had to make a conscious shift away from deprivation and dieting, and into nourishing my body and eating enough food.

And for me, a key here especially was eating enough protein. And now most days, I aim for about 120 grams of protein per day. Typically, I don't do the same thing every day. But most days, I eat three meals within a seven to eight-hour window. So I eat every three-and-a-half to four hours during that window. And I aim to get at least 40 grams of protein per meal. And this is something I did and started doing instinctively after listening to my body during the weight loss and also something that past podcast guest, Dr. Gabrielle Lyon, talks about as an important hormonal signaling mechanism for women. I'll make sure that we link to her podcast as well. She really explains in depth why we need protein and why not getting enough can have hormonal consequences. And we know also as we age, things like lean muscle mass and grip strength, which is also tied to muscle, our predictors of longevity and have reduced risk of all kinds of health problems. So protein, at least for me, has been a very important component. I received a lot of questions related to how do I consume enough protein? I've experimented a lot with this. And I have a few things that seemed to really help. I take aminos from Kion pretty often. It's like a liquid or powder that you add to water. And that's a complete amino supplement. And that seems to really benefit my skin and I noticed a difference in my workouts. But I also just try to get enough real food-based protein at every meal. You've probably heard me before talk about things like sardines, which are one of my go-to's for sure. Several days a week, my lunch, including today, was sardines, with salad in front of you guys. I can actually show you that's what my lunch looks like a lot of days because it's inexpensive and high protein.

And I'll aim for about 40 grams of protein that way. Other meals for the family, I'll often make a lot of stir-fries or slow cooker meals that are centered on protein and then add in a lot of vegetables. So I'm not eating by any means keto or carnivore or low carb. I eat carbs a lot of days too, especially workout days with a focus of metabolic flexibility. But getting enough protein most days does seem to really be a key for me for both weight loss, and gaining muscle, and for hormones, and sleep quality.

Somewhat related to this, I received a lot of follow up questions, including one, can you discuss more about getting yourself in the parasympathetic state? So, this was another key for me, and I think really tied into the trauma aspect and why I had to deal with the mental and emotional aspects before I could lose weight. Even

though I was, according by the book, doing a lot of the right diet, and supplements, and lifestyle things, I think my body was constantly in a state of stress until I dealt with those underlying trauma factors. And I think, from a scientific standpoint, my body was largely in sympathetic nervous system. So for anyone not familiar with those terms, sympathetic would be like fight or flight, when your body is in a situation where it thinks it needs to respond and be able to fight, or flee, or freeze. And during those types of situations, the body doesn't need to digest or be fertile or make hormones because it's focused on getting through an immediate crisis. But when we get in a pattern of that and exist in that sympathetic state all the time, it can cause problems over the long-term. So, alternately, parasympathetic is the opposite when your body is in a state of rest, and digest, and calm. And a lot of us just don't encounter that state enough in modern life. And there's a lot of reasons for that. Certainly, it can be acute stress, or trauma, or mental, or emotional stress.

But often, things that we may not perceive as stress, per se, are creating a stress response in the body. So it might be the wrong type of light at the wrong time of day. It might be too much or too little food or harmful substances in our food or in our environment. It might be a food that we're intolerant to. The body can perceive stress in a lot of different ways. And so getting into parasympathetic requires, often pinpointing those factors and figuring them out. And just like other aspects of health, I think they're very, very much is a personalized aspect here. I wish I could just give a checklist. But unfortunately, I don't think there is one that applies to everyone. I think there's a great deal of experimentation that comes into play here. And I think it requires addressing things like stress levels, like our breathing, our sleep, our light patterns, our diet, all of those things, and figuring out what's gonna work. For me, some of the factors that are most helpful are addressing light. So getting outside as soon as possible after waking up and spending even just 30 minutes in the light outside. So interacting with light, not through a window. It can be under a porch or pergola, but just outdoors without anything between your eyeballs and the light. And that helps get cortisol and melatonin rhythms in the correct levels at the right time of day, which is an important signaling mechanism for hormones throughout the rest of the day. There's also a lot of evidence about midday light and how that impacts hormones. And Ari Whitten explained this really, really well in a recent podcast we did. I will link to that one as well. But basically, he makes a really strong case, that while you can become malnourished if you don't get enough food, you can become what he calls mal-illuminated from not getting enough light. And a lot of people are existing in that state today.

And so he makes a case for why we need midday sun for some of those same reasons of important hormone signaling and all of the things our body needs to maintain optimal health. So light is a big one that comes into play there and that was really helpful for me. I also found when I was in the healing phase, that exercise was actually counterproductive or at least certain types of exercise because until I was able to calm down that stress response, my body perceived exercise as another type of stress. So I focused on gentle movement versus exercise during that time and focused much more on rest, and recovery, and rebuilding my body versus trying to exercise to lose weight. And during my intensive weight loss phase, I really didn't do what would be considered formal exercise at all. I did walk with friends quite a bit or gentle swimming. But I really spent a lot of time just in the sauna, which is a lot of the same benefits as exercise, but also helps the body get into that parasympathetic state and just resting, recovering, sleeping, nourishing my body, making a conscious effort to undo some of that stress and damage.

Let's see, we might touch on that a little bit more in a little while. There are also a lot of questions I mentioned in passing, that I don't do anything every day and that I skip taking supplements on the weekend. And the reason for that, I first was given this advice by a doctor named Dr. Petra in Switzerland at a clinic I studied at there. And her reasoning was that you don't ever want the body to get completely used to any singular input, including a supplement because you don't want it to always assume that it's gonna get something exogenously, especially if it's something your body can create on its own. So her advice was just skip supplements on the weekend, which I do. But I also vary my supplements every day. So, when I get asked, "What do you take these days?" It really depends on the day.

I will try to relatively soon highlight on social media, just for a week, what some of those different days of supplements look like. I'm hesitant to give a checklist because I have figured this out through looking at my genes and through a lot of experimentation. And I think it's incredibly individualized. So, in no way do I think what has worked for me is gonna be the right thing for you. And I don't want anyone to just try to apply a checklist. I think, at the end of the day, we are all our own primary healthcare provider. And optimal health is found in experimentation and figuring out what's gonna work best.

And that said, I started by looking really in-depth at my genes a couple of years ago when I realized that none of these systems I was trying from other people seemed to be completely working. And I think I'm a very big believer actually, that we can learn something from every person we encounter, from every situation we encounter. And from all of these experts who have done so much research and study, I think there's something to be learned from all of them. But at the end of the day, I think we are responsible individually for figuring out how to apply that and which parts are gonna be most helpful for each of us. So, I did a deep dive into my genes. I used nutrition genome, which I will link in the show notes as well. And they give you an almost 100-page report about the nutritional aspects of your genes, some helpful supplements, some lifestyle factors. And that was a really helpful starting point. That was how I learned things, for instance, like, that, I'm largely fast-twitch muscle dominant, and that I do much better with strength training and sprinting versus any type of endurance cardio. That's also where I learned, for instance, I have many genes that make me naturally need more choline and I also I'm intolerant to eggs. So, optimizing for that was absolutely life-changing for me, but might not be helpful for everyone across the board at all.

I do take phosphatidylcholine, which was night and day difference. I take actually several forms of choline. And those made a big difference for me. That won't be the case for everyone. I needed certain B vitamins. And I think there's gonna be variation with those. I also watched my vitamin D levels very carefully after getting that test, and then realized I had a much higher than average protein demand and that I don't do well with saturated fat,

which is interesting, because I have had a post for years about the benefits of saturated fat. And I do still believe that saturated fat was unfairly vilified, and that, in general, it's absolutely not harmful. But I also now think there are a lot of genetic variants there and that some people need more or less saturated fat. And I personally do better with keeping my fat intake low to begin with and my saturated fat intake extremely low. And that's not gonna be the case for everybody. So I think there's a lot of variation there. Again, the protein component ended up being a really big thing for me. I think we all do need adequate protein, but I think the actual amount varies very much from person to person. So starting with Genex was really helpful to me, and

then keeping track of all the things I did daily to be able to pinpoint what was helping and what wasn't, was also a big part. So I've experimented with a lot of different ways to do that. I tend to go back to the Oura ring, which mine is charging right now. But I would normally be wearing the aura ring, and it tracks sleep and things like heart rate variability, recovery, activity, and I can put notes in there about things like sauna use and which supplements I take so that I can pinpoint patterns over time. I've also been working on an algorithm that does that in a little bit more detail specific, especially to nutrient timing and supplements. And if I can ever get that fully figured out, I will share that as well.

But all that to say, at the end of the day, I think it's extremely individualized and we each have to figure out on our own what those factors are gonna be. But I do think it's important not to get adapted to anything and to give our body a wide range of inputs and not to give it the same thing every day. There seems to be an increasing tendency to get more and more dogmatic on things like diet and supplements, whether that be people becoming increasingly dogmatic with keto, or carnivore, or plant-based. And like I said, I think there's something to be learned from every one of those approaches, but I think our bodies were designed to have metabolic flexibility and to be able to handle a wide range of inputs. And at least, personally, I want my body to be able to handle days when I eat high carb, days when I eat no-carb, days when I work out a lot, days when I don't work out at all. I want my body to be able to handle all of that. So my goal is metabolic flexibility and that's why I don't do anything every single day.

From a dietary perspective, protein is probably my most consistent, common dietary thing that I do. But I also don't even do the same nutrient timing or calorie consumption every day. So probably one day a week, I will fast and not eat at all. Other days, I will eat in a seven to eight-hour window. And then at least one or two days a week, I will do almost like a feast day. I'd eat more calories, especially on workout days, more calories, more protein, more fat, more carbs, and in a longer window to signal the body that there is still an abundance of food. It doesn't need to downshift by metabolism. But I like to just keep my body guessing. And then to track and see what's working overtime. The result there is that I am now definitively consuming a lot more calories, a lot more calories than I was when I was trying to lose weight years ago. And I have lost weight much more easily. And I'm now understanding fueling my body versus depriving it.

I've also found as I've increased my workouts recently that I have to consume enough calories. I'm not fasting nearly as much and I'm listening to my body on how much protein it needs and especially how much carbs it needs. And so there will be nights where I eat two big sweet potatoes to replenish after a really hard workout. And I think at the end of the day, listening to our bodies is really, really important. And that's the individualized component.

On that note, I have received a lot of questions as well about my current workout routine. To preface this, I wanna make sure I say, again, during my intensive healing phase of Hashimoto's and my intensive weight loss phase, I did not exercise at all. I rested and I moved very gently but I did not exercise. And I think this was actually a really important part of that healing for me because it gave my body time to recover. So I don't advise the intensive workouts for anybody in that healing phase. And I don't think it would have been helpful to me then. That said, now that my body has reached, like, I've lowered my inflammation, I've recovered from Hashimoto's and I've reached my weight loss goals, I wanted to add workouts back in with the intention of

increasing muscle and really for fun to be able to keep up with my kids as they get increasingly active and I have teenagers, and they're wanting to pole vault, and we're doing much more active family activities. So, this has been a newer aspect that I'm very much just learning. My background is not in fitness, and I don't claim to be an expert in this at all, which is why I'm actually tagging along with some local athletes. So through the pole vaulting my kids are doing, we have met some local athletes who are training for the Olympics. And it's been really fun to watch and learn from them. The idea of training versus exercise because they're not just trying to create a certain energy output per day to maintain a certain weight or something like that.

They are training toward a goal. So they're trying to increase speed and muscle. And so I decided to join them on this year's athletic basically track and field training program, and learn from them as we go. So there are different phases of this and every two to three weeks, we go into a different phase of training. So we went through one called, there was like an aerobic phase. We did a contralateral training with our mouths taped shut. So we had to focus on nose breathing. And that was designed to increase endurance and aerobic capacity without a lot of distance running or anything like that. And from what I understand, that program was created for track athletes who weren't runners, so maybe throwers or I guess like shotput, people like that, to increase their aerobic base without having to do a lot of things like running that would be hard on the joints. And I noticed a drastic increase in my aerobic capacity and ability, my lung capacity from that phase. We also with that did things called contralateral movements, which if you think about the word, it means, like, moving alternating sides of the body. And I found that really helped my balance and coordination quite a bit. And so there were parts of that that were on Monday, Wednesday, Fridays, and then there were alternating things on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays during that phase. We just completed the glycolytic phase, which was designed to, for my understanding, increase or improve that glycogen cycle with muscles. So this one was fun because we alternated things like isometric hold, holding lightweight movements for 30 seconds for one round. And then the next round doing the same movements, but oscillating the weights as rapidly as we could. And that was supposed to help with, again, that glycogen cycle and also with explosive power from what I understand. Like I said, I'm still learning as I go and by no means an expert in this, and I'll share more and more on social media as I go through it.

The part that's been really striking to me so far is how rapidly the body adapts. It's absolutely incredible. These workouts that seem really difficult the first time we do them, by the end of a two week cycle, don't really seem that hard at all. And I've never gotten to watch my body athletically adapt so quickly or actually see muscle tone happen. So it's been really fun to, again, have that focus of training versus working out and see the changes in my body. And we'll be doing this through... I think February or March is the training cycle. So I'm excited to continue and see what that looks like over time. I will say I'm also for the first time in my adult life, very close to being able to do pull-ups and chin-ups, which is super exciting. And I will definitely be posting that on social media when I'm able to do it. And soon will also be hopefully tackling my fear of being upside down because that tends to be an important part of pole vaulting as well.

So several questions about concierge medicine and the doctor I use. I will put this link in the show notes as well at [wellnessmama.fm](http://wellnessmama.fm) for any of you listening. But I use a service called SteadyMD, which is a concierge medical practice available in all 50 states. And you have 24/7 access to your doctor that knows your medical history through an app and also in emergency situations through phone or video chat. And they have a pediatric option as well. So I have this and I use this for my whole family. Actually, I was gonna show you, but

it's got all my kids names in it. But I use this for my whole family and have channel in this app for each of my kids. And so you could upload pictures. They can do your exams with digital otoscopes. It's been absolutely incredible for our family.

And since they're always on call, I've been able to get labs to these doctors, to get feedback on labs through my doctor, to get advice when I was tapering off of thyroid meds, and just to always have a doctor who knows my history, who's able to respond within 24 hours has been incredible.

Multiple questions about egg-free breakfast ideas. Okay. So a little bit of a soapbox about this one. I am still intolerant to eggs. I'm working on this, but I have had this intolerance for a long time. So I'm not super hopeful I'm gonna overcome it. But I right now don't consume eggs. Like I mentioned, I do have a higher than average genetic need for choline. So it's something I supplement with since egg yolks would be the most easy source of natural choline.

But eggs are also very common breakfast idea. And so without eggs, I had to get creative about breakfast. And I get a lot of questions about this. Unfortunately, in the U.S., breakfast often tends to be either just eggs or high carb. And metabolically neither of those things are actually very helpful. The eggs can be because getting protein in the morning is an important signaling mechanism for hormones. But if you are avoiding the eggs, that gets more difficult. So my advice here, my soapbox is, we need to stop thinking of meals as separate and different types of foods for different types of meals. The foods that we eat for lunch and dinner can be perfectly great breakfast foods as well. So, I recommend leftovers as a very easy low-stress breakfast or just creating stir-fries and soups like you would for any other meal. Of course, if you could tolerate eggs, those are a great protein source as well. But I find that protein and veggies are great for any meal, including breakfast.

Lots of Hashimoto's related questions, especially related to fasting with Hashimoto's and to how I got my Hashimoto's in remission. I will link to some posts that I've written about this. Again, the caveat, you're gonna get tired of me saying this, but I think it's very individualized. I do think there's an inflammation component. So I think for anyone with any autoimmune disease, it's gonna be figuring out your factors of reducing that inflammation to let your body recover. But the body's natural state is to be healthy. So it's kind of about I found getting out of our own way to recover. I did use the AIP diet for a while in the beginning. And I think that was helpful in reducing inflammation. I also think that addressing trauma and dealing with the inner stuff was really huge key for me with inflammation that hopefully will not be a factor for everybody. I hope that most people don't have to work through that like I did. But if that is a factor, I think it's an important one, to dealing with any kind of chronic disease. And I also do think there's a huge individualized component here as well. A lot of sources will tell you that premenopausal women should not fast or intermittent fast. A lot of sources will tell you that people with thyroid problems should not fast or intermittent fast. And I think for some people, that advice is very important and very true. I actually followed that advice for a lot of years. But through experimentation, I have found and looking at my genes, I do great with fasting and with intermittent fasting in various forms. But I don't think that's true for everyone. So, again, it goes back to we are each our own primary healthcare provider and we are each responsible for figuring out those factors that are going to be most helpful for us.



I do practice some form of time-restricted eating almost every day. But also all of us do, unless you're eating while you're sleeping. We are all eating within a certain feeding window and we're not eating while we're sleeping. So, everybody practices some form of intermittent fasting. It's just the length that we do that and the variation. There's some amazing researchers like Dr. Sasha Panda, who focus on research on time-restricted eating. And they have found, for instance, pretty drastic reductions in cancer risk in patients who practiced time-restricted eating regularly, which means eating in a shortened window, which could be a 12-hour window, not that much-shortened window. It could be 8 to 10-hour window. And there's gonna be differences there for everybody. I don't think it's as clear cut. Somebody asked, "I have Hashimoto's and I intermittent fast 16, 8," which means fasting for 16 hours and eating within an 8-hour window, which is often what I do. They asked, "Is this not good?" And I don't think it's as simple. I think very few things in life and in health are simple as good versus bad. I think it's experimentation and personalization. It's been very helpful for me. I don't think that's gonna be true across the board.

Lots of questions about carnivore diet. This is an area I'm definitely not an expert and I don't even have very much first-hand experience. I did just interview Paul Saladino. And I'll link to that in the show notes if it has aired. If not, keep an eye out for that soon. Certainly, this is gaining popularity right now. I know that there is a clinical study in the works that they're working on funding for right now. And it seems to be very helpful for a lot of people, at least in the short-term, which makes sense because it can potentially really drastically help reduce inflammation and give the body a break and also increase protein, which I mentioned already, I think is an important signaling mechanism for hormones. That said, even Dr. Saladino, when I interviewed him, said he doesn't know that very strict carnivore diet is gonna be beneficial for women for the long-term. So, again, I think we can learn something from every approach. I think it's an amazing tool that to have in the toolkit, especially for short-term that it can help some people. But at the end of the day, I think we each have to figure out what's going to work for us.

Lots of other very specific thyroid-related questions about testing and levels. I will put my posts that go more into depth in the show notes as well. But some resources I recommend for that, Dr. Alan Christianson, and Dr. Isabella Wentz, both have websites and books with a lot more in-depth information than I could share in one podcast. Isabella Wentz has a book about root cause of Hashimoto's. And she was a big part of me figuring out those puzzle pieces for myself. I'm very, very big fan of her work. And I think she has a lot of that same mindset of helping people each identify their own root causes versus giving a prescriptive system. And so I think that's a really helpful starting point.

Lots of supplement related questions as well. Like I said, I will share some generalities in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm of things I take regularly or relatively often. But I don't take anything every day. And I will just put some general notes in there as well, making notes to myself while I do this. Another thing I've been experimenting on the note of supplements with is nootropic stacks, just to, like, for focus of energy and a lot of new projects on my plate right now. And some things I can share with you guys pretty soon. Again, I don't think these are helpful for everyone. Definitely check with your doctor. I don't think you can take these if you're pregnant or breastfeeding, but I've been really enjoying a combination of ALA and Alpha-GPC, and a couple of others that I alternate daily for the nootropic and brain benefits. Those I found really helped with

energy and focus, and don't interfere with my sleep. So I'll put some notes about that in the show notes. But those also, my genes are especially receptive to. I don't think they're gonna be great for everybody.

Somebody asked, "What stress-relieving techniques have you found the most impactful?" I will say, "I think, it all starts with sleep." I think sleep makes everything else we do in the name of health more effective. So, you guys know this and I've written about it a lot before, but optimize your sleep environment and optimize your sleep quality, track it if you need to, but start there because that's gonna make your diet more effective, It's gonna make supplements more effective. It's gonna make exercise better for your body and less stressful. I'll put some notes related to that. But in general, some big factor there are you want it to be dark and cool, where you sleep and is relatively non-toxic as possible so that your body can get into that recovery state while you're sleeping. So, I use blackout curtains in my bedroom. I cover even the little tiny light on the smoke alarm to reduce all light in the room. And then I use a chiliPad. I'll put a link to that in the show notes along with a discount code. There's chili pad and Ooler. There are two systems. They go under your sheet, but on top of your mattress, and they let you pick the temperature that you're sleeping. So rather than cooling your whole room, you can just cool your bed. And I find I sleep really well when I have that set to about 61 degrees and you don't have to use the energy to cool our whole house. Of course, this time of year, depending on where you live, it might also be as simple as opening the windows and letting a little bit of cool air in. But the study seemed to agree that optimal sleep temperature is somewhere in the mid-60s. And my favorite sleep happens with a little bit of fresh outdoor air coming in, a temperature in the, like, low to mid-60s, a warm blanket, and a cold chilliPad, and then complete darkness. But I think you have to start with sleep when it comes to stress.

Beyond that, I think it's looking at the big factors of stress that can be harmful things in our diet or lifestyle. And just common sources of mental and emotional stress. I've talked about in-depth, but the trauma was a big one for me. Beyond that, I think breathwork is a big key. And I think things like tapping can be helpful. I've done separate podcast episodes on both of those. So, I won't recap all of that but I will link to those in the show notes. I did a podcast with the Ortners from the Tapping Solution. There's an app called the Tapping Solution as well that teaches their system. And there's an app called Breathwrk. I interviewed their founder as well. That's Breathwrk with no O. That teaches you various forms of breathing to help deal with stress and to get the body into a relaxed, parasympathetic state. And we think about this from a broad picture. Breath is really important as well because people can arguably go months or there have even been cases of people fasting for over a year from food and surviving. We can go without water for at least a couple of days. I don't recommend it. But I've heard of people dry fasting for even longer than that. But without air, we will die relatively quickly. So, from a triage perspective, air is incredibly important for the body. And how we breathe has a big impact on our brain and our nervous system. It's also not something we consciously often think about. So, starting to pay attention to our breathing and our breathwork patterns can be a way to help learn to reduce that stress response and that has been really helpful for me.

Erin asked, "What are three things that have changed your health that you wish you did sooner?" I love this question. And in light of all the changes I've been through over the last couple of years, I would say I wish I had really realized the importance of the mental and emotional aspects sooner. I discounted that for a long time. And that ended up being extremely important for me. Also making that shift to nourishing my body versus depriving my body, eating more food and focusing on doing things out of love and self-acceptance and to be myself versus trying to punish myself into looking a certain way. And then I think light as well, I discounted for

a long time. And in something totally free that's been really helpful for my health is to spend like I mentioned more time outside in the morning as soon as possible after waking up, also during the midday to get bright light, and then avoiding blue light and artificial light after dark. An easy way to do this is to get no blue light bulbs that have a lamp in each room so that after sunset, you can turn have on any bright lights and screens, and turn on lower orangish type lights, and that helps kids sleep a lot better as well.

I have gotten a lot of great suggestions from you guys for future podcast guests. So, look out for some of the ones that you guys are suggesting sometime soon. Several fun questions about being barefoot because I have mentioned this in social media a couple of times recently. A lot of pictures of me, you'll see me barefoot. I even go barefoot in public quite often, even in our area, it's much more common because we live in a kind of beach town. But I think there are a lot of benefits to not having shoes on all the time into letting the feet interact naturally with the ground. So, I try to be barefoot at home all the time and as much as possible. And then if I do have to wear shoes, I try to wear minimal shoes that let my feet move naturally and that don't constrict my toes or that don't have a heel that's raised up above the rest of the foot. Like I said, this is a... I get a lot of questions related to this, but I think it's the natural state of our feet to be barefoot. And I think being outside barefoot, there's grounding benefits. You also get a lot of biofeedback from your feet interacting with the ground. And there have been some people I've had on this podcast that suggested kids wearing shoes too much is actually harmful, potentially to their brain development as well. And so I spent a lot of time barefoot. In the winter, I will be wearing at least probably minimalist shoes for warmth. But short of that, I'm barefoot pretty much all the time, to the point that I've had to start keeping a couple of pairs of shoes in my car because I've gotten places and not had shoes before.

This episode is sponsored by Hiya chewable kids vitamins. It's a new company I found that my kids are extremely excited about. Do you know that most typical children's vitamins are essentially just candy in disguise? Many have as much as two teaspoons of sugar, along with some food dyes, some other unhealthy chemicals, or gummy junk that kids should probably never eat as a dentist would probably agree with. Hiya is the complete opposite. It fills the most common gaps in children's diets with full-body nourishment and a yummy taste they love without any of that junk. While most children's vitamins might contain as much as 5 grams of sugar, it can cause a variety of health issues. Hiya has created a zero sugar, zero gummy, junk-free vitamin that tastes great, and as my kids will attest, is delicious. It's perfect even for picky eaters. Also importantly, it's manufactured in the U.S. with globally sourced ingredients, each selected and screened for optimal bioavailability and absorption. What's cool is they send us to your door on the pediatrician recommended schedule. And the first month, you get a reusable glass bottle, that you can personalize with stickers. So every month thereafter, they send a no plastic refill pouch, which means it isn't just good for your kids, it's also good for the environment, and it reduces waste. My kids love the little glass jar that the vitamins are in and I love how it's low waste. You can find out all about them, and their sourcing, and the many benefits by going to [hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama](https://hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama).

This episode is brought to you by Gladskin, an incredible new product and resource for anyone who is struggling with eczema. This product is rooted in a really unique scientific understanding of the skin's microbiome. Gladskin has unearthed an innovative new way to solve eczema that helps to treat the root and not just the symptom. It's a new category of non-prescription eczema treatment rooted in endolysin science, and has received recognition from today's leading dermatologists and pediatricians. While most microbiome

studies have focused on the health implications of what's found deep in the gut we're now finding that healthy skin, just like a healthy gut, requires a balance of bacteria. In fact, four out of five people with eczema have a specific type of imbalance in their skin bacteria or their skin microbiome. And this is where Gladskin comes in. When the skin balance bacteria gets out of balance, eczema is more likely to flare. So a targeted approach to that takes into account the microbiome's good and bad bacteria is critical to relieving the redness and itching of eczema. Although new and unique in its approach in the U.S., this has already been a proven solution for eczema in Europe for five years and received recognition from leading dermatologists and pediatricians. It's also been accepted by the National Eczema Association and is a different approach altogether compared to steroid creams and traditional over the counter moisturizers. The best part of Gladskin is hypoallergenic and free of steroids, fragrances, drying alcohols, and harmful preservatives. It's stored fresh in a pharmaceutical quality bottle so they don't need to use the chemical preservatives found in most over the counter creams and lotions. I hear from a lot of you whose children have eczema, and I'm so excited to get to share this resource. You can find out more and get an automatic 10% discount by going to [wellnessmama.com/go/gladskin](https://wellnessmama.com/go/gladskin). To get a 10% discount, it should be automatic, but you can also use the code WellnessMama10 if you have any trouble.

Somebody else asked a follow-up question. "Why do you exercise with your mouth taped shut? What are the benefits?" I had posted a picture of this. And that was what I mentioned a few minutes ago. The contralateral movements with our mouth taped shut, that was for the aerobic benefits. But also when your mouth is taped shut, you're not breathing through your mouth, which helps the body get into a parasympathetic state and also increases aerobic capacity more rapidly than when you're breathing through your mouth. I found my heart rate went up a lot faster when we first started doing that. And like I said, within two weeks, I saw a really dramatic impact in my aerobic capacity.

I think I've got four or five questions related to Notion, which is an app I use for organization. And I've mentioned this in passing a few times. I will link to it in the show notes. But it's just you Google Notion App, you'll find it. And I'll share some of the common ways I use it. But at the recommendation of a couple of you, I have just connected with someone who has a whole course about this and who does best practices. And I hope to have her on the podcast soon as well. But I use this to manage all of my projects. I keep a to-do list. And even my life goals list, quarterly goals, a lot of stuff in Notion because it's on my desktop and my computer, and it's updated in real-time.

Let's see. Lots of book-related questions. I'll put some suggestions in the show notes for those as well. And then lots of follow-up related to genetic testing and weight loss. So, again, I will put that link in the show notes. But I use a system called Nutrition Genome. And I have a discount code for that, I don't remember it off the top of my head, but it will be in the show notes at [wellnessmama.fm](https://wellnessmama.fm). They give you a very detailed report that helps you figure out the foods that are gonna be most supportive for your specific genes. It also helped me pinpoint supplements and helped me figure out what I needed to be avoiding. And then I went and did a lot of experimentation beyond that. But that's where a lot of my original information came from.

Lots of follow-up weight loss questions. I'll put both of those posts in the show notes as well, where you can look up podcast Episode 309, which was about the inner work side of that. And then I recently did a post about the weight loss and the factors that went into that. I'll linked to both of those.

I probably got about 100 questions related to how do I manage my time with homeschooling and working from home and six kids? And I've touched on this in some previous podcasts as well. But I am just finishing up a book about this, that I hope to have out early next year sometime. And the working title is "Zen and the Art of Dirty Dishes." The short version of this is that I did not always do this well and probably came very close to a nervous breakdown years ago trying to figure out how to manage it all. What I realized was that my stress wasn't coming from working and from the business side. My stress was coming from everything I had going on at home. And that was a very illuminating realization to know... And I started delving into, why was work not stressful? Why was the home side so stressful? And what I realized was that I was managing my work life very intentionally with systems and I had goals and KPIs and things I was measuring. And I knew where I was going and I knew how I was gonna get there. Whereas at home, I was managing our entire family life, and our household, and everybody's appointments and schedules, and meals, and emotional needs, all in my head. So I had all these open loops constantly. And I was taking on the emotional stress of that, myself. And so, I basically started implementing similar type systems at home, that I would use and work, obviously, with modifications to make them family-friendly. And it dramatically changed our home life and my kids were happier, the home was calmer, things ran much more smoothly, and I wasn't stressed. And I realized, I think this is a tough point for a lot of moms. I think moms are the most effective, but also the most busy people on the planet. And so I spent a lot of time this past year, putting this in an easy to use format so that I could share it with you guys. And I'm, like I said, just finishing up that book and hope to be able to share much more with you guys soon.

Lots more thyroid-related questions. Again, my best advice is to work with a doctor or a specialist, maybe start with Isabella Wentz and Alan Christianson for figuring out some of the root causes. Steady MD has doctors who are thyroid-specific who have been incredible. And then lots of personal experimentation.

It's been asked, "Are you still using your headstand trainer?" And I am. I love it. I have a headstand bench. I can link to that in the show notes. It has helped me get a little bit more comfortable being upside down and now can do headstands even without it. And I'm working up to two handstands. After having kids, I think my vestibular system changed. And I still have trouble being upside down, especially if I feel out of control, which seems to be a common theme with moms. But I am still working on it. And I'll share that as well.

Somebody asked, "Have any of your kids ever had cavities or needed braces?" I love this question. And oral health is one of the early things that got me into researching health. The direct answer is no. I don't know if any of them will need braces as they get older. But we were conscious to try to make sure their palates were expanded as they were young and were growing, but none of them have needed braces yet. And their teeth are coming in really pretty straight, nor have any of them had cavities. My oldest is only 14 though, so, we'll see. But some resources that I loved here, I read Dr. Weston A. Price book "Nutrition and Physical Degeneration" years and years ago. And that was the first one that really brought to mind for me, the idea of what we eat affecting oral health beyond just, you know, sugar on the teeth potentially causing cavities.

He went into saliva and fat soluble vitamins and how dietary intake directly impacts both bone development and tooth development, how teeth come in, and also the risk of cavities. So, that's something I've known since my kids were pretty little and tried to really focus on. And I will link to all my oral health post there as well. That's also the reason that one of the first products I wanted to develop with Wellnesse was a remineralizing toothpaste, because the minerals in the mouth are so, so important. And a lot of oral care products have things that are actually harmful to the oral microbiome or that get in the way of remineralization. So I started making my own toothpaste over a decade ago. I think that for those of you who haven't heard, I reversed several small cavities in my mouth. And I'll link to the post about how I did that. But I also started making my own toothpaste that was focused on the microbiome and focused on the mineral balance in the mouth. And that is now the basis for the toothpaste that I have at Wellnesse. And I'll link to that as well or you can find it at [wellnessee.com](http://wellnessee.com). It's wellness with an E on the end. And that's been a really helpful formula for a lot of people.

Let's see. I also got a lot of questions about the sauna. It was really timely. I'm in just a minute going to end this recording to go jump on a podcast with a new friend about saunas. But saunas are a big part of my health routine. I don't think they're gonna be helpful for everyone, but I love them for a lot of reasons. So, there's been a lot of talk on this about parasympathetic. And saunas can help the body shift into that parasympathetic state. And I've written before about the many benefits of sauna, but one being that the sauna is essentially an exercise mimetic, which means you can get a lot of the same benefits of exercise from the sauna.

Without exercise, you're not gonna get the muscle growth, but you get a lot of the cardiovascular and aerobic and blood benefits, plus all the detox benefits of sweat, which we should all be doing every day anyway. And there's a whole lot of different ways to incorporate sauna and heat into your life. Personally, in our house, we have a barrel sauna outside, which is an old school wooden finish type sauna. But we also have an infrared sauna inside that I've been experimenting with, who's the woman I'm gonna be interviewing and I'll link to hers in the show notes. It's called Creatix Solutions. And it's a much less expensive model that uses near-infrared and is low to no EMF. She's test for that. And it heats up very, very quickly. And it gets very, very hot. So all the studies that focus on sauna use, the heat is the beneficial mechanism. So, the fact that hers gets very hot, it has low EMF, I think this can be a great solution for a lot of families. And hers is also easy to take down and put up, and can fit a lot more easily in the house. So I will link to that in the show notes. But sauna has been a big help for me. And I think it was a part of my recovery as well.

Still a whole lot more questions. Somebody asked, "Any suggestions for loose skin on the belly from losing weight and having babies?" And I definitely have loose skin, especially from six pregnancies and now from losing 85 pounds. I think some of that is just there to stay and that is what it is. And I've accepted the fact that my body has created six humans and that some loose skin comes with that. But that says some things that seem to help reduce that and it's been helping my skin tighten are, I've been doing cold water immersion. And that really seems to help quite a bit. Red light therapy seems to help quite a bit. And consuming enough protein probably because of the hormone and collagen component has been helpful as well.

And then last question I will tackle on this one, there's still so many more. We'll have to do another rapid AMA soon. But somebody asked, "What did you say about putting your legs up against a wall before bedtime, and what does that help with?" And what this person is referring to is the idea of laying on the ground, flat on your back with your feet up against the wall straight up so that your leg is completely vertical. And the idea here is you can drain fluid from your legs from being on your feet all day. But also having your arteries and your big arteries in your legs vertical helps reduce the stress response and this can drop cortisol and tends to improve melatonin for better sleep. So, it's a completely free thing you can do that, at least for me makes a really drastic difference in sleep quality.

All that said you, guys are amazing with your questions. There's still many, many more. If you like this, I will keep doing these solo episodes and tackling as many of these questions as I can. You guys keep sending them. I will put all the resources that I've mentioned in the show notes at [wellnessmama.fm](http://wellnessmama.fm) so that you guys can find them and continue to follow up and, of course, post any follow-up questions there as well. I'll do my best to answer. And as always, I'm so grateful for you, for your time, for spending your most valuable resource with me. I'm so grateful that you're here, that you're part of the community, and that we got to spend this time today. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of "The Wellness Mama Podcast."

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