



Episode 11: Understanding and Overcoming SIBO, Protozoa, Candida and Other Gut Infections

Katie: Christa, welcome back. I'm so excited to have you back for yet another episode and especially this one. I think it's really going to help a lot of people deep diving into gut infections, whether it be SIBO, which is small intestinal bacterial overgrowth or Candida or ... The whole lot that people may have never heard of. We left off in the last episode with a general overview of the microbiome. We were talking about step 2 in your whole 5 step process which is dealing with the pathogens in the gut. I think this is an awesome place to start now because we're really going to talk more in depth about these different types of pathogens and how maybe there is a different type of plan for different types of pathogens. To start off, can you circle back and talk about your own story a little bit and how you got so involved in gut health?

Christa: Yes, absolutely. I'm a Candida girl, that's how I got into this whole health thing in general. I had raging Candida and I wasn't breast fed, I was a cesarean baby, my dad would give us antibiotics instead of a tissue every time we sneezed. Bless his heart, he thought he was helping but I was pretty much immune to a lot of different basic antibiotics by the age of 6 and really lost my high school years and my early 20s to adrenal fatigue and low thyroid. By all traditional medical purposes, I was "healthy" and I knew I was only operating at maybe 50%. I went on this quest to be able to heal myself of Candida and that opened a gateway. We developed a process and a model to really understand the bug, understand the opportunistic infection.

That gave way throughout my practice over the last 10 years of working with people with gut infections to say, "Hey, we can't just chase the bug, we have to chase the combined genetic material of all the organisms within the gut and that's addressing the microbiome. We have to turn over the genetic code so that it's balanced and it's healthy and locking it in in a way that the immune system is now re-educated and can operate." Almost like getting a brand new operating system, it just operates so much more efficiently and effectively going forward in the future.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's a common story. So many of us have gotten to where we are in health and understanding our own health because of a problem. I love that in your case, you were able to turn your own struggle and what you learned into a process that can now help so many other people hopefully avoid some of those same problems. Let's talk about in depth, more about those problems, about what are some of the common gut infections that you see? We were talking about your whole 5 step process. How do those fit into the process of getting rid of the pathogens and is there a different process for different kinds of infections and how you address those?

Christa: Yes, so within in the 5 steps, the first step we talked about slashing inflammation and the second step is purging pathogens. I found that everybody either leans basically 1 of 3 ways. They either lean towards bacteria where they would have small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, they have H. Pylory or they lean towards protozoa or parasites has been a major issue for them or problem or yeast and fungus and Candida. What we do in our gut thrive program is we have our people fill out a customized assessment that's algorithm based that we've run for 2 years and before and after lab work to make sure that it's accurate. That determines the heaviest pathogenic burden on someone's system. Then that will determine, okay, if it's bacterial, if it's protozoa, if it's Candida then their diet changes to support creating balance for that.

Their supplements are then directed to that and their self care and cleansing techniques are also directed towards that. Because we are talking about the microbiome, I think all programs address everything.

Just because it is a heavier ... You're leaning more towards bacterial, you still have to address the yeast, you still have to address the Protozoa. You have to do it systematically. We have a major issue with small intestinal bacterial overgrowth. That's where people are now constantly bloated, they have mental fog and they're constipated, we call it inveterate constipation. They have just lost the ability for peristalsis and so much of it I would say is because of different super bugs. We know how smart bacteria is and we know we can't just hammer it with antibiotics. It's going to get smarter, we know good bugs can turn bad, bad bugs can turn good. All of these things are really important. We are also having a problem with the valve that is the gateway or the checkpoint Charlie between the small intestine and the large intestine which is the colon.

When you have SIBO, you have way too much of the bacteria that's in the colon coming up into the small intestine. When bacteria doesn't belong, it causes a ton of problems. This is also a major issue, we know about the gut brain connection and that when our gut isn't functioning well, we can't quite think straight. It is so important with SIBO or small intestinal bacteria overgrowth to address the brain gut connection as well. You want to wake up the brain and re-engage it in that autonomic function to get to the root of the constipation. You have to do that figure 8; gut, brain, brain, gut. When you're talking about SIBO, that's where a lot of the neuro activation techniques come into play. I'm sure you're familiar with [inaudible 00:06:01] work, where he talks a lot about the vagus nerve and gargling and singing and different things that can stimulate the vagus nerve.

then other things that we can do for SIBO are close that ileocecal valve, get that gateway nice and strong by closing that ileocecal valve and also keeping the bacteria moving down. That's why in our gut thrive program, we call them plan S'ers that can get put into this plan. They're doing salt flushes because it forces that bacteria to consistently move down throughout the healing process. It's move the bacteria down, close the gateway and then you reestablish order and those people, we're going to be very careful as to when and if we add in probiotics.

They can't handle them like other programs can. Then you go towards people who have had nasty protozoan infections, whether that be trichostema from traveling or blastocystus homonus, which is really shown in clinical studies to be a root cause of Hashimoto's thyroiditis. We talk about all disease begins in the gut and so we start to work with different types of protozoa, parasites and this is where you would change your diet. For example, pomegranate seeds, you add more of those and I'm all about food is medicine. Pumpkin seeds, they're very powerful purgatives but the also the plan is going to be heavier in the things that can work like black walnut and wormwood.

Again, not in amounts that are too high because we want to give the power and directive to the body which is infinitely wise to gently get rid of these guys instead of wage an attack. When you wage an attack with botanicals, the same way as you could with antibiotics, it's the same thing as war and you end up killing innocent civilians, which would be your symbiotic good bacteria. You also end up destroying the land, which is the equivalent of leaky gut. We don't want to cause damage in order to do healing. Then we move into Candida or the fungal track for people, a lot of people with chronic eczema and psoriasis, they fall here. A lot of people with Lyme Disease fall here and so this is where you're going to really make sure to use your anti-pathogenic herbs.

Let's say, we're using E. Coli in the SIBO plan because it's proven as effective as antibiotics at getting rid of E. Coli. We're going to be using things like oregano oil and we're going to be using cilantro and things that cleanse the body of heavy metals at the same time that they're cleansing them from Candida. It's really important to understand your health history and where you fall so that you can address these gut infections. Like we talked about in the last podcast, we can do it gently by interrupting quorum sensing. When we do that, we interrupt the way that they communicate and this means less die off, less metabolic waste, less damage to the gut lining and less damage to the immune system.

Katie, I have to say you wrote one of the best blogs I've ever read on the MTHFR genetic mutation, which now 30% of the population has and they have trouble detoxifying. That's why a lot of cleanses and detoxes make people feel worse. The new model for cellular healing is as gentle as possible, in my opinion.

Katie:

I absolutely agree, I mentioned that my husband is doing this process right now. He's actually, we think, dealing with SIBO based on ... He had his appendix removed when he was much younger. They didn't get to it in time, it had partially ruptured. He had his appendix removed and then came home from the hospital and then a few days later had to go back to the hospital because he had a secondary infection from that. He has C.Diff and then a flesh eating bacteria. He was on really high dose IV antibiotics for 10 days and then he was on oral antibiotics like multi-strain broad spectrum antibiotics for I think for a month after that.

He had a huge ... As you said, a war on his gut at that point. Even though he eats really healthy and does all the right things in that aspect, he had this imbalance in his gut bacteria that at that point, which I think now has become full blown SIBO. Even though he does eat real food and he does make sure to get sleep and he does a lot these things correctly, he still had this secondary infection. We're like you said, working on this gentle approach now to help bring that back into balance for him.

Can you explain ... I know you talked about quorum sensing just now and also in the last episode. Can you delve into it a little bit more because I think it is so fascinating and it's something that I haven't really heard from very many sources other than you. I would love if you could give people a little bit more of a deep explanation.

Christa: Of quorum sensing, yeah. Back in I would say the late 90s, early 2000, scientists started to discover, microbiologists how bacteria communicate. We used to think that they didn't have the ability to form colonies and that they were isolated, which is why we thought, "Okay, antibiotics, we'll just knock them out." Now we realize they do have the ability, they are very communal to form colonies and live together and build homes and that they don't live in an isolated way.

They have a much more sophisticated way to communicate than we do. I call it a cell phone technology, which is quorum sensing, which is basically like Katie, if you called me on my cell phone, I wouldn't have to answer the phone, I would just see that you're calling and I know everything you want to tell me and everything you feel about what you want to tell me. It's literally like a USB from your head to mine.

Their form of communication is super sophisticated, more than ours. They can get a whole lot done. They can share their genetic code instantly, they can proliferate quickly and life wants to live. That's just the basic survival mentality of every organism in this world. If you create a hospitable environment for the pathogens to live, they're going to enjoy that and they're going to set up camp and they're going to stay there and then take over your neighborhood. That's why, what we have to do is we now know that we can use different types of herbs in the right amounts and botanicals to interrupt the way that they communicate, we change the intestinal terrain and it's a lot more graceful.

It's instead of having the cops come to a party and drag people out kicking and screaming, which is going to leave a mess, this is like, "Hey, we're going to turn off the music and take away the refreshments." We're going to hope they get the hint. It's a much more graceful way to go about it. We'll use things like for example, a low dose of oregano oil, which is going to be working on fungus and bacteria. We'll use adaptogens like schisandra, lion's mane which is a mushroom that also helps with the nervous systems and leaky gut throughout the process.

[Inaudible 00:13:16] which is an herb that's a very powerful anti-viral, goldenseal, Echinacea, we use things called the black wild carrot or [lamecia 00:13:25]. Things like clove and black walnut and wintergreen, really in their right amounts so that it's not too much of any one thing. Those anti-pathogenics that we call them for each plan have a heavier bend towards which plan that you've fallen to. Then they can do the work to interrupt quorum sensing and to knock out some of these pathogens and usher them out of the body. At the same time, you have to use things that break apart biofilm.

If we're going to kick them out of the house, we have to basically dismantle their house first. I use something called diatomaceous earth and I mix that with a very clean, powerful bentonite clay. Diatomaceous earth is going to dismantle the biofilms, the clay is going to catch the toxins and the heavy metals and then we're going to usher these guys out of the body. That's the strategy there, in step number 2.

Katie: Yeah, I love it. As my husband is finding out right now, too, there is a different diet during this process as well. Even though, like I mentioned, he eats a pretty healthy diet normally. Just some things that he is focusing on, especially right now as a part of your program. Can you talk about the diet and then also how the supplements and diet might change through the different 5 steps of the process?

Christa: Right, the diet and supplements change through every step of the process. When you're getting into your step 2, you're going to be using more things that work to get rid of whatever it is you're dealing with. You come to more anti-pathogenics. For example, we've got most people, which maybe you guys so you're making this already Katie is with the cleansing pesto where we use oregano and cilantro to have your food as medicine. We're using parsley to strengthen the kidneys and dill and really things that work towards anti-pathogenics. For parasites and protozoa, that plan has as I mentioned pomegranate seeds and they're snacking on pumpkin seeds, raw papitas and they can have pineapple and a little bit of papaya.

Everything is going to be low glycemic outside of that in terms of fruit. Our Candida folks, they're shifting to having more yeast eating foods, protozoa, parasite people, I mentioned them. Then with what your husband is on right now and the plan S and working on the SIBO, that is the most restrictive diet plan because we really just don't want to feed these bugs anymore. We're doing a 4 day... If I can say that he's on now, 4 day bone broth fast so what that does is that gives a super jump start to starve the bacteria. Especially with SIBO when you're doing that 16 day fast, you get to do a system reset. You want to get to the point where you get that gurgling in your stomach and that's going to start the autonomic function happening again.

It varies, we want to make it very customizable for people who can't fast. There is an amended food program or for vegans or vegetarians there's different broths like a baler's broth, a green broth and a vegetarian broth. Some people, they have a histamine intolerance or they have a glutamine intolerance and they can't handle broth. While their diet changes, it's also highly customizable based upon how your body is reacting. You're going to be anchored, if you consume meat, you're going to be anchored by pasteurized high quality protein. You're going to be using a lot of coconut products because they're such powerful anti-viral and anti-fungal and anti-bacterial. You really want to make sure that they're having coconut oil at least once if not twice throughout the day and try to get as much nutrition as possible in smoothies and really keeping the starches super low.

That's going to be important for plans but especially plan S because we want to get rid of ... We want to be able to have ... You feel good and feed your thyroid and adrenals without feeding the bugs. That's where resistant starch comes into play because it works really well so a half a green banana in your smoothie or the unmodified raw potato flour, we like to use cassava, making tortillas out of cassava or we have a gut thrive [pancake 00:18:07] or butternut squash pancake. Using the right types of starches are going to be really important throughout the whole process.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I love how it's just minor changes, it's not ... For most people, if they're already eating a pretty real food diet, it's not going to be a drastic change, it's a lot about timing and adding in certain herbs and you're really good about tying all of that together. You've talked about all the different steps of your gut thrive program but to review, can you walk us through a broad overview of step 1, is this step 2, is this so that people can tie it all together in their head?

Christa: Absolutely. Step 1 is slashing inflammation so the diet shifts, step 2 is purging pathogens, step 3 is receding the gut with good bacteria. I am anti-probiotics until we get to this point, that's going to be really important. Step 4 is healing leaky gut and optimizing hydrochloric acid, that is a very important step that I missed in my early practice years. If you want long-term healing, it's very important to optimize HCl so you don't leave yourself susceptible for recurrence of things. Then step 5 is going to be your 80-20 balance and that's really how do you live and go forward from this process. Within step 4 and all the way through step 5, we do something called terror forming.

This term came from Star Trek and it just means to take a formerly inhabitable land and create sustainable, habitable life. You're going to be doing this with ... Basically it's like a garden, once you do the weeding then you plant the seeds, it doesn't mean you have perfect gut health after that, you have to feed and water and nurture those seeds for a few months afterwards and that's terror forming. We start to feed these seeds with fiber and the right types of probiotics and eventually work people off of supplements so you create this self-sustaining Eco System within the gut.

Now you're manufacturing a lot of your own vitamins, relying on supplements this much and it's as close as you can get in my opinion to being superhuman.

Katie: That's awesome, I love and especially because ... Going through it with my husband right now and seeing his progress, just realizing that each of these different steps has a finite amount of time which I think is so helpful because for those who struggle with different gut issues, it can seem like it's never going to get better or that it's going to take forever to finally heal your gut. Most people just try to address it with probiotics especially if they're just trying to understand gut health for the first time. I love that you have it broken down into such clear cut steps that make it easy to follow and also the person knows there's an end time. I think in any kind of health change, just knowing when the next thing is going to happen or when there's going to be an end to what you're currently doing helps stick with it so much more.

Can you also talk about, I know you've had some amazing results with people that you've worked with on this. Since the gut's tied into all aspects of health, can you talk a little bit about some of the amazing things you've seen in people's own health changes with this kind of a program?

Christa: Yeah, I could, absolutely. In the last 15 months, we've taken about 4000 people through this gut thrive in 5 process. We've seen dramatic reduction if not complete reversal of thyroid anti-bodies. We've seen people who have been weight loss resistant for decades start to lose inflammation like 30 pounds on gut thrive program when nothing they've done for decades before has helped because it releases that cellular inflammation and it turns over the genetic code. The same way as having your gut bacteria work for you instead of against you, if you're the type of person that can smell the donut down the street and gain 5 pounds then it's not your fault if you're eating healthy and you're not able to lose weight, it's the gut bacteria that's working against you.

That goes for metabolic syndrome, diabetes and then we have a major problem with autoimmunity where people have Alopecia and Celiac and they have Hashimoto's and they have Fibromyalgia and they have all of these things. One autoimmune disease opens the confusion gateway and it begets a 2nd and a 3rd. We've got a lot of gut fibers that have come to us where nothing else has worked and they go through this process, they re-educate their immune system, now their body can turn off that switch and they're having a reduction in everything. Now they're not coming back when their labs are being run, they're not coming back with these inflammatory markers, it's probably the [biggest thing 00:22:56], the immune pseudo kinds have tremendously dropped down and this is a sign you're reversing autoimmune disease.

I've had one friend who went through the program who had huge bald patches all over his head from Alopecia and the doctors told him it might take 2 years or more to get rid of which is hard to tolerate. It's hard to get out into the world when you feel like that and within 8 weeks, his hair was 100% restored. We hear that with Eczema and Cyanosis so lots of things. I just think it helps people get their lives back where they otherwise couldn't heal from adrenal fatigue because their gut infection is sabotaging all the work on their adrenals or migraines are gone, insomnia is gone and people who have had chronic colitis or Crohns.

We've heard a lot of stories coming in of, "On my 20 mile drive to work, I knew every bathroom on the free way because I had to stop five times. I went from going to the bathroom 17 to 20 times a day to just 1 or 2 or 3 bowel movements that are normal and formed." That is life changing and it translates to, "Now I can play with my kids, now I can show up for my relationships, now I can really see what I want to do creatively in the world and I have the energy to execute it." We share this with our team all the time and because it's why we do what we do.

Katie:

Yeah, I love hearing stories like that, it's awesome and I love that you mentioned autoimmunity as well because that's going to be the topic of the next episode, it's really deep diving into that. I know this is becoming an increasingly big issue across all types of auto immune disease and a lot of people listening probably struggle with that maybe in some form or another. A lot of them may be Hashimoto's or other autoimmune issues so thank you for your time in this episode. I would encourage everybody listening to join us again in the next episode to really learn more about the autoimmune and leaky gut connection and the additional factors that can help support the autoimmune factor there. Thanks Christa for being here and I'll talk to you again in the next episode.