Episode 667: Digest This: How to Improve Gut Health & Healing From IBS With Bethany Cameron
Child: Welcome to my Mommy’s podcast.

This episode is sponsored by Hiya Health, which is my go-to source for multivitamins, especially for my younger kids, before they can swallow pills. Typical children's vitamins are basically candy in disguise, filled with unsavory ingredients and things you would not give to your children otherwise. Most brands on store shelves are filled with sugar, unhealthy chemicals and other gummy junk that growing kids, or frankly, anyone should never eat. And this is why I'm so glad I found Hiya Health. Hiya makes children's vitamins with zero sugar and zero gummy junk and unsavory ingredients. Yet they taste great, and they are perfect for picky eaters. They're also nostalgic and remind me of the children's vitamins I took as a kid, though I probably wouldn't love those ingredients. Hiya is unique because it fills the most common gaps in modern children's diets to provide full body nourishment for our kids, with a yummy taste that they will love and you will not have to fight them over. They manufacture in the USA with globally sourced ingredients that are each selected for optimal bioavailability and absorption. And the best part? They arrive straight to your door on a pediatrician recommended schedule, so you never have to worry about running out. Your first month comes with a reusable glass bottle that your kids can personalize with stickers. So in the case of my kids, with six of them, they never get them confused. And then every month after, Hiya sends a no plastic, eco friendly refill pouch of fresh vitamins. Which means that Hiya isn't just good for your kids, it's also great for the environment as well. So you as a mom no longer have to worry about running out of vitamins, and they will automatically arrive when you need them. You can check them out and get them for your kids by going to Hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama. And you'll also save 50% on your first month.

This episode is brought to you by Plant Therapy, which has been my go-to source for essential oils for years. I love so many of their blends. They have an entire kids safe line that I love because I know it’s safe to use around my kids. And I often turn to many of their products, especially ones like Deodorizing and Tranquil that make my house smell amazing using while also providing the benefits of essential oils.

All of their oils are affordable and clean and they have an amazing customer service team to make sure that you love all of the products that you try. They have really pure, high quality essential oils, including, as I mentioned, a kid safe line for anyone with kids to make sure that kids are safe for whatever oils you’re using. Because some oils are not recommended for use, especially undiluted with kids, they have testing, safety and education with transparency that you can trust about all of their products and disclose all of the ingredients in each blend on their website so that you know exactly what you're getting. Their kids safe branded line of essential oils are safe for you and your children, and they offer free shipping and returns on all of their products. Like I said, these are a regular part of my routine in my home to keep my home smelling amazing. I personally use their Tranquil blend in a diffuser by my bed at night for amazing sleep. And my kids and I are even in the habit of getting some of their blends started in the diffusers to keep our entire house smelling amazing. And they have very specific blends for every malady you could think of, whether it's an upset stomach or respiratory issues, whatever it may be. They have a blend specific to that. And I always keep many, many of their blends on hand. You can find out more and get an exclusive discount by going to plantherapy.com/vip/wellnessmama and make sure to use the code wellnessmama for 10% off your first purchase. Again, that’s Planttherapy.com/vip/wellnessmama and make sure to use the code wellnessmama to save 10%.
Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com, and this episode goes deep on digestive health and even more specifically for anyone suffering from IBS. And I'm here with Bethany Cameron, who is the face behind the popular Instagram account called Lil Sipper, which I'll link to in the show notes. And she has a community of over half a million followers who are looking to improve their gut health through her easy to digest recipes that she creates. And she's also the author of the book Digest This and the host of a podcast of her own, also called Digest This.

As we talk about in this episode, she learned about all of this when she almost died from IBS herself and then had to work toward her own recovery using holistic health and figuring it out as she went. She talks about a lot of the surprising things that were irritating her gut that she learned over time. Some food prep tips that really helped her heal, including one that I have not heard before that might be helpful if you have any kind of digestive issue. The common offenders of irritating foods that many people eat without realizing it. A special nutrient packed fruit smoothie recipe that helped her by providing digestive enzymes. How smaller meals can help in short term for digestive struggle health, other aspects of her healing outside of food, and so much more. So very deep dive into this particular aspect of gut health and without any further wait, let's join Bethany. Bethany, Welcome. Thanks so much for being here.

Bethany: Thank you so much, Katie, for having me. I'm so excited to talk all things gut health.

Katie: Me too. And I love following your work. I will link to you on social media, which is where I found you in the show notes so people can follow you. You have such great content and you're just so positive and uplifting all the time, which I love. So I love seeing you pop up in my feed and be we get to Gut Health. I also have a note from your bio that you were also homeschooled growing up. And I was as well until high school, actually. And now I am homeschooling all six of my kids. I would love to hear a little about your experience with that and what, if anything, you think that shaped going into your adult life.

Bethany: Oh, my gosh, yeah, for sure. And I know that homeschooling is definitely catching on, especially in today's day and age since 2020 happened, everyone kind of was forced to, right? And then now people are more aware of it. But yeah. So I was homeschooled all the way from K up until I graduated high school. And in fact, during high school, I took some community college classes. So anyone homeschooling their kids, here's a tip that you can definitely take college classes when you're in high school, and then you can accumulate credits for high school and college. And then once you do get into college, you're already enrolled, which gives you priority in choosing classes and times and things like that.

Growing up, I am the youngest of three, and there's an eight and ten year gap between my brother and sister. So it was almost like I was an only child because my mom had two miscarriages in between. So then there was a huge gap, and I was homeschooled apart from my brother and sister. However, we did have community classes, which I'm sure a lot of people are aware of, where you go maybe once or twice a week, you meet with kids, you have a class with X, Y, and Z subject, and then the rest of the week you just go home and do your work. So I was very involved in that. I was very involved in sports. I did softball for eight years. I did tap dancing and musical theater and things like that.
So for anyone, again, that's homeschooling or thinking about it, having that community and having that outlet of being active in different ways is super important. I was very involved in church, so a lot of people, when they think homeschooling that you're just stuck in a room all day, you don't have a social life, it's just simply not the case. It could be for some, but it's up to you to really make that decision and conscious choice to get out there and be involved.

Now, as far as it affecting, I did have some childhood trauma. I was actually molested twice when I was really young, on two separate occasions, not related to each other at all by just two different neighbors. So that was very traumatic for me, which I think still may or may not have had an effect on my adult life. And of course, there's tons of research to say it could definitely have an effect on the way that you deal with things, even gut issues and even digestive disorders. They have some people have said that traumatic experiences like being molested can alter different things and affect your digestion and health issues and things like that. So there's a lot of things that happened in my childhood. I know you did just ask about homeschooling, but all that to say is it was a different upbringing. And I'm here today, obviously, and I'm very grateful that I was homeschooled. And if I ever do have children of my own, that's probably something I will do as well.

Katie: Wow. Well, thank you for sharing all that. I definitely echo your point that doesn't mean that they're going to be isolated when homeschooled. I certainly wasn't. And now with my kids all being homeschooled, we are that total house where everybody wants to hang out. So most days I'm feeding 12 or 15 kids at dinner because there's just always extra kids around. And so my kids are certainly not lacking in a social support structure.

But also, I think that's a great point about those adverse childhood experiences and or any source of stress and the potential of it to cause gut issues as well as we know issues throughout the body in various ways. I love that there's so much more information coming into the mainstream about that mind-body connection and just how much our physiology is really impacted by it can be, at least by our emotions and our sort of mental state is as well. I've spoken on here before about how that was the case for me as well, with past trauma and an important key in my own healing for that. And I know you have quite this story as well when it comes to healing and finding your own answers. And if you don't mind, I would love for you to share some of your personal story and recovery from IBS with everyone listening.

Bethany: Yeah, for sure. So, for those that don't know, I definitely have a story about IBS and how I personally struggled with it. And first of all, I feel like IBS is almost like a blanket statement because so many people go to the doctor and they say, oh, you have IBS. Well, okay, well, what is that? IBS is just a category of so many different things. It could be a little bloating and gas, and then IBS can also be you're literally bowled over in pain and you're having gastroparesis and you're throwing up. So to say you have IBS is sometimes I feel like, it's not a traumatic word, I guess, to say, but yeah.
So I literally almost died from, quote, IBS, and doctors could not help me. I was literally skin and bones. I mean, I'm a thin person to begin with, but I was literally like 20 pounds lighter than I am today. And I was eating, but I couldn't hold the nutrition. So I would be able to eat, or I would eat, and I would see it come out the other end literally whole. Like, if I ate a piece of broccoli, I would see a piece of broccoli in the toilet. Sorry if that's TMI. But I wasn't able to absorb anything. Obviously, I wasn't digesting, so my body wasn't getting any nutrients at all, and I was in pain all the time. I had everything under the sun. I got tested for everything under the sun. And of course they came back with just a few things here and there. I did get diagnosed with gastroparesis, which is paralysis of the stomach. So your stomach muscles basically just stop working and contracting. So for anyone that if you eat something, your stomach muscles, they contract, they move, they help the food go down your digestive system. Well, for me, that wasn't happening, and food was literally sitting in my stomach rotting. And I would have to do enemas to help just get and flush my body out. And to help the food just move through, I would have to do different colonics as well, just to help that move through. I wouldn't recommend colonics necessarily for anyone unless you're in a very dire state. Obviously check with your doctor if that's okay. But for those that just do it randomly to feel better, I feel like it definitely can flush out really good bacteria and things like that. But for me at this time, it was one of the only options that I could get food to move through.

Now, all that to say, too, things were rotting. And so I was having a really bad sulfur burping spell, I guess you could say. And literally every couple of minutes, I would burp up this horrible, just sulfur rotten egg smell. And I have a book. It's called *Digest This*. And in that book, I do share what helped that. And it's basically a fruit smoothie. It's called the Digestive Boost, and it's kiwi, mango, papaya, and pineapple. And so I would drink that every single day. And that actually was one of the main keys that really helped me get my digestive system back up and working. And this smoothie was not like a huge two cup smoothie. This was probably about like 4oz. So I would just maybe call it a shot, but I would eat that every day. And I could talk about that later, about how I actually healed holistically, because some doctors were turning me away. They didn't know what was happening. I also had a huge yeast overgrowth. This is all happening at the same time. So think about everything I was experiencing at the same time. So we've got the gastroparesis paralysis of the stomach. I had a huge yeast overgrowth. I also had parasites, which I saw I had a tapeworm which I took a picture of. I think I shared it one time in my Instagram stories. This is a while ago. And people were like, oh my gosh. But of course I had to take a picture of it.

So I was having that again, the candida and the yeast overgrowth. I also had something which I believe I did my own research on this. This is a very rare case, but it's called Fungemia. And it's basically a fungus that takes over your entire body, in your bloodstream. And I was taking at the time, I wasn't really into nutrition and health like I thought I was. Everyone I was eating X, Y and Z, thinking I was being super healthy, doing good to my body. And one of the things that I thought that was contributing to my health, which was not, was nutritional yeast. And many people still think that's really good for you, but nutritional yeast is they say it's an inactive yeast, which I don't believe. I do believe it contributed to my yeast overgrowth and also caused Fungemia in my bloodstream. And I also have a blog post on my website, lilsipper.com, where talk about this overgrowth of Fungemia and how it was linked to it's a certain probiotic. And it's in the same family, so it's same probiotic, but it's saccharomyces. I can never pronounce it saccharomyces cerevisiae. I know I'm probably butchering the name, but that's the technical term for it. And that is a probiotic that a lot of people
think is good for you. But for me personally, and maybe good for some because again, health is always individualized. But for me, that literally is related to not the B Vitamins, but the nutritional yeast. And so it's in the same family. I don't know how long, how many months and months. I was just trying to do research because no one was helping me.

So I figured it out and it was a really good connection. And so until this day, I stay away from nutritional yeast. I stay away from that probiotic. And I really advise people to really look into that as well. Because people that I have advised to stay away or take nutritional yeast out of their diet, they say that they're feeling so much better. Again, I'm going on a tangent here, but that's probably one of the things that I will do. I'll go on a tangent down this long rabbit hole. But yes. So I had a lot of things going on with my body all at once. And I didn't want to take medication. And so I went the holistic route and I was able to heal my body. Holistically, no feeding tubes, no medication. And again, we could talk about this, but it was a form of not just changing what I ate, but how I ate it.

Katie: Yeah, that's quite the story. I'd love to hear how things are now, I know you say that you're much, much better and kind of I would love also more detail on the how. I think that's a big factor that a lot of people miss. I think we can often get sucked into that sort of even list, or the black and white of what to eat, what not to eat. But I don't think we talk about the how enough. So I would love to hear more about how you learned that process and maybe what a day looks like for you now?

Bethany: Yeah, for sure. So I was working with a holistic doctor, and he's actually a family friend, so I've known him since, gosh, I was like twelve years old. And that's where a lot of my education comes from, is from this holistic doctor who's worked with kings and princes from all over the world. Movie stars, Victoria's Secret models. I mean, he's done it all and he's the sweetest man. So I was quote, apprenticing him. And when I personally got sick, that's when I was like, okay, I need your help. And so to the point of not just what I was eating, but how, of course, I took out all packaged food, all processed foods. If I wanted bread, I would make bread. If I wanted milk, I would make my own milk. Like everything was from scratch, it was fresh. I mean, I would make my own bone broth from chicken and just do everything from scratch.

Now, the how is interesting. So because my stomach and digestive system was at such a dire state, I had to treat my stomach as a newborn baby. So I went on a puree diet for, I would say maybe five months. I mean, it was a very long time. Now, mind you, a puree diet is not a liquid diet. So I want people to make sure that I was not just drinking like juice and water and things like that. It's substance that I had to puree. So I pureed my meat and made it more like an applesauce consistency. I would eat yogurt like that's, a pureed consistency. So the fruit smoothie that I previously mentioned, so again, it's pineapple, kiwi, mango and pineapple, kiwi, mango and papaya. And so I would I would blend it for the week. So I make a big batch of it and then put it in little like four ounce cups and freeze it and then just thaw it every single morning. And all those fruits have tons of different digestive enzymes that can help with digesting fats, proteins and carbs. And each of the fruits work in different ways. So when you combine them together, it really sets you up for the day to help digest all of the things you're going to eat throughout the day. So I would have a little bit of that. I would call it my little digestive boost. And I would also, again, puree, like literally everything.
And I wouldn't eat three meals a day. I would probably eat every one to two hours. Like you would feed a baby, right? A baby can only digest so much at once. And so I had to really reintroduce food to my body because food was foreign to it, it was just rejecting it. And so eating little bits throughout the day, that was pureed and got my body and my digestive system used to digesting food and saying, okay, this is food. It's not going to sit in my stomach if I eat a big plate of X, Y and Z, right? So I had to, again, slowly just feed my body. And as you would a baby, you have to feed a baby. They're constantly just feeding and pooping, eating and pooping. And so that's what I had to do. And that was literally my job. Because I was so sick, I was not able to hold a job. So this was literally my job was to get myself better.

And if anyone is in that dire state, that's what you have to do. And if you're that sick and you can't hold a job, what else are you going to do but get yourself better? And so I was doing that amongst just being on the internet and researching everything that I could because what else was I going to do? I was stuck at home just trying to get well, not working. So I was like, okay, this is what I'm going to do. I'm just going to read and read and research. And again, that's where a lot of what I know now has stemmed from as well. So that was really key.

Another thing was eating white rice and yogurt together. That was a huge part of the gut healing as well. And that white rice and yogurt, when you mix it together, it's actually well known in the Middle Eastern parts. And so those types of cuisines, they mix that and that actually helps good bacteria in your gut grow. There's good probiotics in yogurt if you get a really good quality yogurt. And then of course white rice. And when you mix those two together, the white rice acts as a little capsule and the probiotics kind of stick to the white rice and it helps the probiotics get down into your digestive system and flourish. So that was just a little tip again from my holistic doctor. It was about what I ate, but also how I ate it.

Katie: Yeah, I don't think I've heard that talked about before, but it makes sense. Kind of the newborn baby approach and giving yourself. It almost reminds me a little bit of like if you're getting into a new exercise of some sort, you're not going to start with these big huge weights. You're going to start off with lighter and smaller, let your body adjust and then build up. And then over time, your body can handle much more. Is that the case where you're able to eat less often if you want to now? Or larger meals if you want to now?

Bethany: Yeah, sorry, I know you asked about what my diet looks like now, but yes, for sure. So for right now, I eat. Sometimes I will intermittent fast. And so sometimes I won't eat until maybe like eleven. And that's kind of like I do have coffee in the morning. I have good fats, like ghee and gelatin, good protein, so I have something like that in the morning. But as far as actual food substance, I'll start my breakfast, lunch around maybe eleven and it is quite a larger meal and I can sit down and eat a regular meal and then it just depends on the day because I do a lot of recipes for my job. So sometimes I will be just kind of recipe testing and snacking depending on the day. And then I'll have something for dinner as well. So my job is focused on food a lot, so I am testing and tasting a lot during the day. So sometimes I will snack and sometimes I'll eat more solid meals, sometimes just two meals a day. And for me that feels so great to have set meals instead of snacking all the time. Because for the average person, a healthy person, it's not really good to snack all day long.
So you do have to remember too, what I did to heal and what I did to get my body back to able to absorb and digest food. It doesn't mean that you're going to have to do that the rest of your life. And so what some person or what this person is doing to heal doesn't mean that that's what you should be doing in your life. So you really have to take that approach and remind yourself, hey, if so and so snacking all day, maybe that's what they need to do to heal. But snacking all day isn't actually great for me and the average person, because you do need to give your digestive system a break and able to detox. And that's what's so great about fasting as well, or intermittent fasting, is that it gives your digestive system a break to digest the food and flush out any toxins. And so I feel amazing when I intermittent fast.

Katie: Yeah, and I think you brought up something so important to remember is whatever the health thing we're talking about, something you might do as an intervention approach is not the ideal for the long term in most cases. And I think that's important to remember because I know I did that with thyroid and going on the AIP diet and I felt so good for the first time when I started doing that that I was like, I'm going to keep doing this forever, but realizing hopefully you don't have to be super restrictive long term. And I started to realize also the ideal isn't to feel great when I'm eating in this very limited, very restricted sort of method of eating and taking very particular supplements and having literally no leeway in my daily schedule, because everything is only oriented toward healing. That's an important intervention. That was a very important time period for me, but that wouldn't actually be healthy long term.

And it sounds like with you, too, is like as the body heals, which it's naturally designed to want to do, but as it heals and gets more resilient, you tend to be able to have a wider range of inputs that can go in without causing sort of negative consequences. Are there any other kind of worst offender foods that you would bring up for people to avoid and or any other supplements that were helpful to you during that acute recovery phase?

Bethany: Yeah, definitely, for sure. And I also want to point out, too, that I did do a lot of smoothies during my time of healing, and that kind of has a special place in my heart. And I still have my smoothies almost daily, and I just love it. It's like eating ice cream and to the point of you don't have to think of, oh my gosh, I have to eat a puree diet. It's going to be so horrible. I try to implement different foods into my quote, smoothies, and it was literally savory smoothies. I would add some peas to my smoothies or cooked cauliflower and things like that, and I still actually do that till this day. And it's literally like eating ice cream. I add steamed cauliflower and then I freeze it. So that's something I always like to point out to people is when I make my smoothies, especially for vegetables, it's always best to steam your cauliflower or steam X, Y, and Z and then freeze it. And then that actually helps the digestive process instead of just throwing in raw, frozen cauliflower that maybe you would buy at the store prepackaged. So again, it's not just what you eat, but how you eat and how you prepare it. That's really a key as well.

The offender foods, definitely leafy greens and vegetables, I would stay away from them even till this day. I don't eat a high fiber diet. And again, each person is individualized. For me, I tend to stay on the lower fiber diet. Of course, I'm eating fruit and vegetables and for anyone, and I'm sure, Katie, all your listeners are very
health conscious. And so for anyone that is health conscious and already following a whole foods diet, they're naturally eating high fiber foods, right? And so for me, I am naturally eating high fiber foods. I don't need to focus on getting more fiber into my diet. So it just comes that way.

But again, I know I'm going off on a tangent here, but offender foods, definitely kale. I don't even eat kale until this day. Just kale. It just doesn't do anything for me. I'm just like, no, kale is not for me. But yeah, definitely it can be garlic and onions. Night shades tomatoes, especially with the skins. If you are going to eat tomatoes, make sure that they're cooked and the skins are removed. That's another how you eat or how you prepare. Again, like bell peppers. I can digest bell peppers so much better if I put them over the fire and grill them. And then I take the skin and remove the skin from the bell pepper, and then it's just so much easier to digest.

And so those are just little tips like that when preparing your food can make a huge, huge difference. I would actually also almonds can be a huge offender because of the skins. Now if you soak the almonds overnight, you sprout them the next day. The skins, you can easily remove them, and then they're easier to digest. So again, it's like you really have to go and dig deep into how you're preparing it and what you're eating, how you're eating it. Did I answer the question? Did I miss something?

Katie: No, you got it. Were there any herbs or supplements that were also helpful or that you still take?

Bethany: That's right. Yes, so I still take till this day, gelatin. Gelatin, make sure it's grass fed, like the Knox gelatin or a lot of the conventional kind. They are from pork, which I don't eat. I stay from pork until this day. It's just I feel like it's a dirty meat, and I just stay away from it. It can have a lot of parasites linked to it. So I do grass fed beef gelatin, which has been known to heal and seal the gut and the gut lining, as well as slippery elm is really great as well. That's a really good supplement to help rebuild the gut lining and also get rid of biofilms as well. So different herbs like that and then gosh. I did a lot of collagen as well. Bone broth. I know that's not really a supplement or herb, but bone broth is super healing for the gut. It's also full of protein and it's easy to digest. You're literally just drinking it, and it just has amazing good amino acids in it. And so I want to share different things, but I also want to be leery because I don't want to give out too much information if someone is struggling. But those things were definitely helpful. Also spirulina to get in some greens, to get in those different nutrients, those phytonutrients, spirulina powder, or they also have capsules. Those are great. And so those can definitely help if you're looking for different things. B vitamins. It's really hard to digest meat when you're in a dire state, so B vitamins can definitely help that as well. Just think about things that you may not be consuming in whole food form. So if you're not consuming something in whole food form, definitely look for a supplement for that to help with the offset.

Katie: Yeah, you touched on something else that I think is really important to highlight, which is that any of us who have been through our own health struggle of some sort and figured out how to help our body in that state, we have figured out what works for us. And I know on a podcast I did with you, we talked about this kind of the idea of being your own primary health care provider. And so I know that you come from this as
well because we talked about it, but that this is not meant to be like a prescriptive blueprint, but merely a foundational starting point to learn more because each person is going to figure out what works specifically for them. And I think that's the beautiful journey for each of us that is continuous is to continually experiment and figure out how to best support our own bodies in this journey. And I know also from our little bit of conversation before that there were probably many factors besides just food that went into your healing and I would love to talk about some of those as well. Were there any other supportive measures or therapies that you did that were helpful?

Bethany: Yeah, for sure. So with anyone with digestive issues, you already know you have a fear of eating. You have your quote, safe foods and you're like, okay. And then you do get anxiety because you're like, okay, I want to branch out but I don't want to eat because I'm afraid is this going to disrupt my digestive system? Is this going to put me in a flare for a week? Am I going to be in bed for a week because I ate this one food or one plate of food? And so there's definitely the anxiety that comes with having digestive issues. And so yeah, for sure.

It was hard mentally and emotionally because there was this time I remember I was really like skin and bones really thin. I just felt like I was dying. And I mean, maybe I was, I don't know. And I remember it was specific, it was Sunday morning because my mom was going to go to church and I was just laying on the couch and for anyone that doesn't know so at this time I was renting a backhouse. My parents have a pretty good piece of property so they had a back house, so I was renting that. So I wasn't too far from my parents at the time. And I was in my early 20s and I called my mom and I was like, can you just come over here for a second? And I said, can you just not go to church. Because I feel like my heart's going to stop. And so we prayed and she stayed home from church that day and she prayed with me, but I was literally in fear that my heart was going to stop and I was just going to die.

To go through that mentally was really hard because what else are you going to do? You can't just go to the emergency room. They're not going to do anything and they're not going to know probably even what to do. And I really think that what helped me was I'm a person of faith, I'm a Christian. And so what helped me was just my relationship with Christ and being in the Word and having that faith and to have that was so helpful to me. To have that hope that, okay, hey, if this is my time to go, then at least I know where I'm going. And to have that reassurance was very comforting to me. But, yeah, obviously it was definitely very scary.

And of course it was very hard to go out in public because I did not look well. And so when I did go out in public, I would even go if I had to get something from the grocery store. This was so bad, Katie, but this is reality. Obviously, people would stare at me and it hard to not notice the stares. And I would purposely shop at different grocery stores just so that I wouldn't see the same checker because it was so hard for me. So I would just go around town and be like, okay, what grocery store haven't I gone to just to get what I need so that I'm not going to see these same people again? Because it was hard. What are you going to say? They're not saying anything to you and you can't really tell them what you're going through. Nor did I want to tell them my health issues and that I was like battling so many different things under the sun with digestive problems. So it was just hard mentally.
And so during my healing process, my holistic doctor, he definitely helped me mentally and emotionally as well. And I ended up going to therapy after I got better and I regained strength. But during the time, I didn't have enough strength to go to therapy. It was just so taxing on my body. But again, just being in the Word, in prayer and having family, having that support system, like my parents, they knew the truth, right? Because of course everyone's going to say, oh, she just has an eating disorder, she's so thin. Like, she just is not eating, she has anorexia whatever. And honestly, I still get blamed for that guy. I'm just a thin person. I sometimes eat more than my husband. He asked me, he goes, Bethany, where do you put it? I go, I don't know. But even till this day, it's like, you know what? People are going to say what they're going to say.

But the people that are in my life, like, even now, my husband, my parents, close friends, they know the true me, they see what I eat. And my parents at the time of healing, that was a great support system because they knew what was truly going on with my gut and they knew that I was working and doing my best to heal. And just to have that close support system is so key. So definitely find even one person that knows what you're going through to have that support. That is key.

Katie: Yeah, and I think the data really bears that out too, of the importance of community and our few closest relationships for how we are in life. And that's one of the big predictors of longevity, actually as well. One advice I got in therapy a while back was actually to make an actual list of five people in your life who are kind of like your safe people, that you can be vulnerable with, that you can share the hard things with and that have your back for support and that you know are not going to repeat things that you say in confidence or things like that. And just having that structure and that to lean on, it seems like, is such a huge factor in mental health.

This episode is sponsored by Hiya Health, which is my go-to source for multivitamins, especially for my younger kids, before they can swallow pills. Typical children's vitamins are basically candy in disguise, filled with unsavory ingredients and things you would not give to your children otherwise. Most brands on store shelves are filled with sugar, unhealthy chemicals and other gummy junk that growing kids, or frankly, anyone should never eat. And this is why I'm so glad I found Hiya Health. Hiya makes children's vitamins with zero sugar and zero gummy junk and unsavory ingredients. Yet they taste great, and they are perfect for picky eaters. They're also nostalgic and remind me of the children's vitamins I took as a kid, though I probably wouldn't love those ingredients. Hiya is unique because it fills the most common gaps in modern children's diets to provide full body nourishment for our kids, with a yummy taste that they will love and you will not have to fight them over. They manufacture in the USA with globally sourced ingredients that are each selected for optimal bioavailability and absorption. And the best part? They arrive straight to your door on a pediatrician recommended schedule, so you never have to worry about running out. Your first month comes with a reusable glass bottle that your kids can personalize with stickers. So in the case of my kids, with six of them, they never get them confused. And then every month after, Hiya sends a no plastic, eco friendly refill pouch of fresh vitamins. Which means that Hiya isn't just good for your kids, it's also great for the environment as well. So you as a mom no longer have to worry about running out of vitamins, and they will automatically arrive when you need them. You can check them out and get them for your kids by going to Hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama. And you'll also save 50% on your first month.
This episode is brought to you by Plant Therapy, which has been my go-to source for essential oils for years. I love so many of their blends. They have an entire kids safe line that I love because I know it's safe to use around my kids. And I often turn to many of their products, especially ones like Deodorizing and Tranquil that make my house smell amazing using while also providing the benefits of essential oils.

All of their oils are affordable and clean and they have an amazing customer service team to make sure that you love all of the products that you try. They have really pure, high quality essential oils, including, as I mentioned, a kid safe line for anyone with kids to make sure that kids are safe for whatever oils you're using. Because some oils are not recommended for use, especially undiluted with kids, they have testing, safety and education with transparency that you can trust about all of their products and disclose all of the ingredients in each blend on their website so that you know exactly what you're getting. Their kids safe branded line of essential oils are safe for you and your children, and they offer free shipping and returns on all of their products. Like I said, these are a regular part of my routine in my home to keep my home smelling amazing. I personally use their Tranquil blend in a diffuser by my bed at night for amazing sleep. And my kids and I are even in the habit of getting some of their blends started in the diffusers to keep our entire house smelling amazing. And they have very specific blends for every malady you could think of, whether it's an upset stomach or respiratory issues, whatever it may be. They have a blend specific to that. And I always keep many, many of their blends on hand. You can find out more and get an exclusive discount by going to plantherapy.com/vip/wellnessmama and make sure to use the code wellnessmama for 10% off your first purchase. Again, that's Planttherapy.com/vip/wellnessmama and make sure to use the code wellnessmama to save 10%.

And also, as you were speaking, I really thought about it's such a good reminder of we never know what someone else is going through. And so to just approach everything with empathy and compassion and kindness. And as one of my favorite TV shows, Ted Lasso, he says, be curious, not judgmental. And I think that alone makes such a huge difference in how we approach people and relationships in life. And I appreciate you sharing such vulnerable parts of your story. Are there now I know you are able to eat much wider range of foods. Do you have any advice for navigating social situations? Are there still things you don't eat and how do you make that work?

Bethany: Yeah, so for a long time and there are still certain things that I don't eat. And obviously I'm very health conscious. I try and stay away from a lot of oats and glyphosate sprayed things. And I don't do gluten unless it's sourdough or fermented gluten. There are certain exceptions where wheat is, if I know where the wheat comes from, certain things like that. So it's definitely a sourcing thing as well. But I don't eat pork, which I know I mentioned before. I eat cultured yogurt. I don't eat any dairy except cultured yogurt or cultured cottage cheese, or if it's cultured like kefir, things like that. But as far as milk or like ice cream or other kind of dairy-based products, I don't drink milk and things like that. And I think it also during that. Sorry, the question was.

Katie: Just navigating the social dynamics because I've been there too, where you're on a restricted anything and you have to navigate a social situation and people can get offended if you don't eat the food they made and things like that.
Bethany: That's right. Thank you. I know. Okay, so, yeah, definitely social situations can be very tricky, even at family gatherings or holidays and things like that too. First of all, be yourself. Tell your friends, hey, look, just be honest, be true. Just tell them flat out, hey, look, I can't eat where we're going to eat. I'd love to come and join. Can I bring my own food? And a true friend, they're going to be like, of course you can come, we want you here. If they're not open to that or if they think you're weird, they look down upon you. Look for some new friends, I'm sorry, but they're going to want you. They're not going to want you because you're eating a burger with them. Obviously, you may feel a little bit uncomfortable at first maybe bringing your own food.

So for me, a really easy thing to do, that what I did, was I would make a smoothie and it would be very nutrient dense. It'd be like there's sweet potato in the smoothie, there's Greek Yogurt, there's protein powder, there's a little like cashew butter or something like that. So there was good nutrients in there. And I would just bring it in a little cup and bring it to whatever social gathering. It's super easy and portable and I would just enjoy it with my friends and they didn't care. And so, again, family gatherings, that's a little tricky too, because of course maybe they will be offended if you're not going to eat the pie that grandma made or X, Y and Z. And you just have to tell them, hey, look, I'm struggling here, I have my own food. Bring your own food.

But for potlucks and summer events or whatever, this is a tip. And I still use this tip today because again, I'm still very conscious about what I eat, is I will make a meal or I'll make a dish that everyone can enjoy and partake in, including myself. So I know at least at this party, there's going to be the dish I brought that I can eat. So I don't feel so like the black sheep at the party because, yeah, I'm eating something that's on the table of food. It's what I brought because I know, but everyone else is welcome to enjoy it as well. And honestly, nine times out of ten, people will come and ask you for the recipe, like, oh my gosh, this is so good, I want the recipe. And so make sure that you bring either a dish or a couple of dishes that you know are going to be safe for you to eat and also everyone else can enjoy it as well.

Katie: Yeah, that's such a good tip. And I think even too, another one I found during that time was I just offered to be the place to host everything, which I'm a homebody anyway. My favorite place in the world is home with my kids, but I was just offered to host. I'm like, I'll feed anyone in my house anytime. And that made it easier. And I also just got to kind of facilitate all these gatherings, which was a really fun experience. And I think when it comes to digestive stuff, I think people understand that it can be caused by food, and that's a logical trigger. And there's so much now understanding about that. But it seems like there are also maybe not as intuitive things that can really also affect all aspects of health, but especially digestive health. And it seems like you have a personal story with this as well, if you don't mind sharing that more vulnerably too, about something else that you had removed that ended up actually impacting that for you as well.

Bethany: Yes. So I actually had breast implants. And during the time that I was like, skin and bones and healing and all that kind of stuff, at my lowest point, I still had the breast implants in me. Now I was looking into getting them removed, but obviously I was in no health. I was not at an optimum place to go under surgery to get them removed, but I had them for about almost ten years and they served a purpose. So a little backstory, but I'm divorced, I'm married, but I had a little previous marriage and I got married at 20. Very like when.
Anyways, I won't go into it, but after my husband left me, I got my implants as a little boost, as a little self-esteem boost, and they served a purpose. Now that purpose was over. I did not need my breast to make me feel good about myself.

And so I was at that point where I was like, okay, well, I want to get them out now. I don't need them anymore. I'm confident in myself and I'm more older, I'm more mature, I don't need these. And I started looking into breast implant illness and what it could really do to the body. And it's a foreign object in your body. And there's so much more research now and confirmation that breast implants are a huge health risk and it's a huge factor in anyone's health because it is a foreign body. It's a foreign object in your body. And you begin to develop an autoimmune response, so your body begins to attack itself because it's like, what the heck is in here? This is not part of me. And so everything, autoimmune issues can be anything. It could be skin flares, it could be so many different things for different people, and so they range. But I did get them eventually removed in 2019, I got them removed and it was a total game changer. Thankfully, I was also concerned that maybe there was mold growing in there or something like that, or maybe it was ruptured. Thankfully, the doctor that removed them, she showed my breast implants and they were completely clean. Thankfully, there was no mold, nothing like that.

But even so, it was still a foreign object in my body. And the same surgeon that actually put them in, she was the same one that removed them. And so she was actually interviewed on my podcast too, which is great. And she said in the podcast where I interviewed her that this is a trend. More and more people are getting breast implants removed for health issues. So that was huge and I never regret it. If you do have them, definitely look into it. I will say also, it does take research has shown that it does take about five to six years for you to actually notice that you're having problems. So if you just got them in, or maybe you're like three years into it and you're like, well, I'm not having issues, it does take a while for those autoimmune and health issues to develop.

Katie: Yeah. This is another topic that I feel like was not even on the radar for a really long time, and it was just assumed that they were safe and this was a very common procedure. It seems like it's more difficult to get them out than to get them in, from what I've heard from a lot of women. But there seems to be much more talk of this amongst women. I know there are whole support groups for this online and a lot of information, like you said, research on safe ways to get them removed and all the issues they can cause. But I hear from more and more listeners and readers who have had the same experience as you, and I'm glad this is at least entering the conversation and that there are support groups for women who are going through that. One last topic related to IBS, specifically that I want to touch on is the exercise topic. And if there's any other exercise or lifestyle things that should be adjusted when someone's going through that recovery phase, and also what that looks like for you now.

Bethany: Yeah. So for anyone that does have a severe IBS issue and is currently just going through it, I would definitely go very low impact or just no exercise at all. I think walking is great. I love walking. I do. It still today. My exercise routine today is definitely not as intense as it was even prior to getting really sick. I used to lift super heavy weights. I would leg press 300 to 350 pounds like I was at the gym every single day, hour, hour and a half lifting weights and then so obviously I don't do that today and so definitely go low impact. Yoga is
also a great tool if you just want to do some light stretches. There's different types of yoga, so there's really intense yoga for someone that's really struggling right now. I would definitely just do the more of like the lighter stretching type of Yoga than a more like workout yoga, but Pilates, that's great too, if you feel up to it.

But I would say start out walking. And walking is so underrated and it really does help clear the mind too. So don't just walk on a treadmill inside, try and get outside in the fresh air, breathe the different senses and take it all in because that can really help the mind-body connection when you walk outside versus just inside on a treadmill. If you’re in a place and it's snowing or you just have kids, you can't get out or whatever the case may be. Obviously walking on a treadmill inside is still a great tool, but definitely just go low impact because intense workouts can put stress on the body and that's just one more stressor that you don't need.

Katie: Yeah, I will echo your recommendation. When I was healing from Hashimoto's, I was dealing with the opposite problem in trying to let go of excess weight, but in the process of losing about 80 pounds. I really did not work out during that acute healing phase because I realized my body needed to feel safe, it needed to rest. So I did walk. I think humans are designed to walk a lot more than we walk in modern society and that also to your point. By being outside I was getting sunlight, which I think was really pivotal for my healing as well. Not just for circadian rhythm and light syncing, but also the way that light interacts with our cells so far beyond just vitamin D. And so I think incorporating even just ten or 15 minutes walks after meals is one of those easy, free health hacks that all of us can hopefully do that makes a really big compounding difference over time.

So I love that you offered that as advice too, and especially to echo what you said, anybody who is in intense healing recovery phase, that's a time to be gentle with yourself and to give your body a little grace and safety. And when you recover, then you can go back to those things if you want and do more intense things. But I had the same experience as you of needing to just treat my biology with kid gloves for a little while and now I feel great and can do the heavy lifting again if I want to. So I appreciate you saying that. And a couple of questions I love to ask at the end of interviews. The first being if there's a book or number of books that have profoundly impacted your life and if so, what they are and why.

Bethany: Yeah, so I would say the Bible for sure it impacted especially Job and Psalms in particular, those books, because if anyone's familiar with Job, I mean, he literally just his story is amazing and it was very inspiring to me. He literally lost everything, including his family, his wealth, and God brought it back and restored it. And so that was just a super encouraging book for me, as well as Psalms. It's just a super comforting and encouraging with the different Psalms that are in there that are just reminding me that God's got me.

Katie: And lastly, any parting advice for the listeners today that could be related to digestion and gut health or it could be entirely unrelated life advice that's been helpful to you?
Bethany: Yeah, I would just say comparing. It's so easy to compare and even with someone's health journey you had mentioned earlier, it's really hard to or it's easy to just look at someone and just assume. But we should never just assume something because you really don't know what another person is going through. And so be gentle to that person. Be kind and be kind to yourself because what you need to do to heal, it won't be forever. So maybe you do need to take six months off of working out, or maybe you do need to change your diet, but guess what? That's not going to be your forever. I mean, six months compared to the rest of your life is nothing. Okay? So remember that there's different seasons in your life and we all go through them. There's ebbs and flows. And if we didn't have the struggles that we are going through today, we wouldn't be the person we are and will become and we won't get stronger. And so if we didn't have struggles, we wouldn't be as strong and we wouldn't be the best version of ourselves.

Katie: I think that's a perfect place to wrap up for today. I'm so grateful for everything that you've shared and for the work that you're doing. And like I said, I will make sure that we link to your book and all the places people can find you online in the show notes. You guys check her out. Her Instagram is really, really fun to follow. Bethany, thank you so much for your time. This has been awesome.

Bethany: Thank you, Katie.

Katie: And thanks as always to all of you for listening and sharing your most valuable resources, your time, your energy and your attention with us today. We're both 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.