

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

# Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**<sup>®</sup>  
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 74: Improving Hashimoto's in as Little as  
Two Weeks with Dr. Izabella Wentz

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast!

Katie: This episode is brought to you by Paleovalley. If you haven't heard of this company, you are in for a treat. Paleovalley makes beef sticks from 100% grass-fed and grass finished beef. So these cows were never given any grain at all. If you go to [paleovalley.com/wellnessmama](http://paleovalley.com/wellnessmama) and use the discount code "wellnessmama10," you can actually get up to 40% off because they offer bulk discounts as well, which is how I order.

Now, if you're not familiar with this company, I think you're going to like it. Their products are gut-friendly, paleo friendly, gluten free, soy free, and dairy free. And they're made the old school way, which means they're naturally fermented. So each beef stick contains a billion CFUs of probiotics. These cows are never given antibiotics or hormones and it's one of the most nutritious snacks I found for my kids that actually works on the go. So again, check it out, [paleovalley.com/wellnessmama](http://paleovalley.com/wellnessmama), with the code "wellnessmama10" to get the discount.

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Katie: Welcome to The Healthy Moms Podcast. I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com) and I'm really excited about today's guest because besides being a personal friend, she's also one of the most brilliant people I know and has helped thousands and thousands of people. Dr. Izabella Wentz is an internationally acclaimed thyroid specialist and licensed pharmacist who has dedicated her entire career to addressing the root cause of autoimmune thyroid disease after she was diagnosed with Hashimoto's in 2009. She's also the author of The New York Times best selling patient guide, "Hashimoto's Thyroiditis: Lifestyle Interventions in Finding and Treating the Root Cause." And her new book called, "Hashimoto's Protocol: A 90-Day Plan for Reversing Thyroid Symptoms and Getting Your Life Back," is just now available and I'm so excited for you guys to be able to read and learn from that as well.

And as a patient advocate, a researcher, a clinician and an educator, Izabella's committed to raising awareness about how to overcome autoimmune thyroid disease through all of her work. And she also has a great docuseries called "The Thyroid Secret" and also a practitioner training to help clinicians understand and treat Hashimoto's more effectively. Izabella, thank you so much for being here.

Izabella: Katie, thank you so much for having me out. I'm so excited to be on your podcast because I'm such a huge fan of your work.

Katie: Oh, ditto. I love everything you do as well. And I remember when I first met you and we stayed up almost all night at a conference just talking about thyroid disease and health and all these amazing things that you know. And I'm excited to get to share you with my audience today.

Izabella: Thank you so much.

Katie: I'd love to just jump right in. I know that you're, in my mind, you're one of the top experts in this by far. And so I think you can really help give us an understanding of thyroid disease and how to know if you have it and how to find answers. I think that's a big struggle for a lot of women is maybe they have researched and found that they think they may have thyroid disease but actually getting to the root of it and finding a clinician or a doctor who can help them is a whole different story. So let's start from the beginning. Why do you think we are seeing higher rates of thyroid disease and especially in women? I know you've written about this.

Izabella: You know, it's a very good question and a lot of it has to do with toxicity in our environment. So we know that over the last years, we've looked at the rates of thyroid disorders and they keep increasing. And it's not just because we have better diagnostic methods but it's because we have all these toxins. And so various studies have found that how close you live to like a chemical plant, children who were exposed to the Chernobyl disaster and all these other places where we were basically exposed to toxins, we're gonna see higher rates of thyroid antibodies which indicate that the thyroid gland is under attack and that the person either has Hashimoto's or Graves disease, which are the primary reasons why a person would have a sluggish thyroid.

So just one example would be during the Chernobyl incident, children within close proximity of the incident, 80% of them had thyroid antibodies. Comparing that to Ukrainian children that were a little bit further away, you know, those children only had maybe 10%, 15% of them had thyroid antibodies. So why women have thyroid disease, this is something that keeps me awake at night and has kept me thinking about this quite a bit because we know that for every man that's diagnosed, we have five to eight women that are diagnosed. We're now looking at about 27% of our general population with Hashimoto's antibodies.

And Synthroid was the number one prescribed medication for like two out of the last three years. It was number two last year. Vicodin finally beat it out. The point is, Synthroid is synthetic thyroid hormone and most people that take this medication actually have Hashimoto's. And looking through all of the things that could be contributing, so we know that pregnancy, puberty, and perimenopause are three peak times when a woman is more likely to be diagnosed with thyroid disease. And so we know that hormones seem to play a role. But, you know, hormones alone don't explain the big changes because there are some women who maybe never go through pregnancy or women who haven't even been through puberty and they're gonna be more affected.

And then we have the theory with personal care products. On average, every woman uses 12 or so personal care products where men use about six. And I know that you talk about this through your work and your blog that a lot of the personal care products are going to be filled with toxins. So they're going to be filled with endocrine disruptors, they're gonna be filled with things that disrupt thyroid hormones, that upset estrogen levels. One example is Triclosan which has been added to the anti-bacterial soaps and it's also now added to our toothpaste. And so this is something that's recently been banned by the FDA because of thyroid disruption. And we have thousands of chemicals like that that we're potentially exposed to on a day-to-day basis. Makeup, for example, we found that women who use lipstick are more likely to have lupus, another type of autoimmune condition.

Sure, no studies have been done. But again, this is another factor that can be contributing to why women have higher rates of thyroid disorders. And then, you know, when I kind of thought about this and I went back and I thought about, like, okay, so why women...why so many women? Because I don't think personal care products can account for all this, I don't think hormones can account for all this. So what else is there? And generally, when we think about how disease develops, from an adaptive physiology standpoint it's gonna be from potentially a way that it could be protective. So the theory is that people get autoimmune thyroid disease because at one point it was protective.

Now, we know that in times of famine and war, people who don't need as many calories and people who are not as adventurous and more likely to retreat back into their homes were the ones that were more likely to survive. So one example was the Irish potato famine where people who survived the Irish potato famine were more likely to be hypothyroid because they didn't need as many calories to survive and get by. And so in a way, hypothyroidism puts us in a hibernation-like state. It helps us to get through tough times.

So back in cave woman times when we were all running around with...running away from bears and dangerous animals and were hiding from the cold weather in our caves and that helped our survival, it was possible that thyroid disease played a protective role. Also, we know that women have, you know, the primary duty of bringing new life into this world. Of course, men contribute but women, we're the ones that carry babies and we're the ones that feed and nourish them. And so we know that in times of war and famine where there's a lot of toxicity, there's not gonna be...for helping our survival, it's probably not best to be pregnant at that time.

So it really goes back to how our bodies have sort of adapted to helping us survive and helping our species survive. So that's kind of the whole theory based on adaptive physiology is basically anything that is threatening, women are gonna be able to dial into that and women are gonna be able to...our immune systems are gonna be more responsive to that compared to men's immune systems because we have the important job of bringing new life into this world.

So long story short, really anything that could be setting off your safety alarm, making you feel like you're not safe, whether that is a nutrient deficiency...so, you know, in cave woman times if you were nutrient deficient, you would likely not have enough foods around. Food sensitivities, so anything that causes you inflammation. In cave woman times we were probably not eating grasses and these other things that we're eating now that are not even considered foods. Infections can also trigger autoimmune thyroid disease. And if a woman had an infection, it would make sense for her probably not to reproduce. And we know that hypothyroidism is something that slows down fertility. And so that's another mechanism there.

And another thing that I don't think a lot of people pay attention to or think about but trauma, as well as stressful events, can actually trigger thyroid disease as well. And we have so many different studies of traumatic events, childhood abuse, sexual abuse, being prisoners of war, any things that really cause trauma in our lives can contribute to thyroid hormone abnormalities. So, you know, in a nutshell, anything that really makes us feel unsafe is going to be contributing to higher levels of thyroid disease. And generally, being a woman is not as safe as being a man in our modern world.

Katie: That makes perfect sense and it ties in so well, all of the root causes you talk about in your first book and then also so well in your second book. And if I'm remembering, you have a lot of these factors in your own life. And if you don't mind sharing a little bit, you have Hashimoto's as well but you're now in remission. Can you talk about your own journey and how you really got into researching and to have such a heart for thyroid care?

Izabella: Yeah, of course. And so, in full disclosure, I was never really interested in the thyroid during pharmacy school. It wasn't until I was diagnosed with Hashimoto's in 2009 after I had like this decade almost of strange symptoms is when I really became passionate because I wanted to figure out if there was anything I can do to stop the progression of the condition or reverse the condition. Of course, I knew that I could take medications which can be very, very helpful. But I knew that there was more to that. It was like my immune system was attacking my thyroid gland and I was just taking more thyroid hormone instead of trying to stop the autoimmune attack.

So, you know, I had a lot of different symptoms throughout. So I had, you know, of course, childhood trauma and I had nutrient deficiencies. I had multiple food sensitivities. Gluten, dairy, and soy were some of my big ones. I had four gut infections. I had a lot of stress. So I had an impaired stress response and I also had higher levels of mercury in my body. So, for a lot of people, it really is a perfect storm of root causes. Some people might just have one root cause. They might just be gluten sensitive and they get off of the gluten and then they're able to recover their health.

Other people, they have to do a little bit more digging. So they might have to look at, okay, what foods am I sensitive to? What nutrients am I deficient in? Do I have chronic infections? Why is my gut leaky? Do I have toxins in my body? And then how's my stress response? What can I do to either reset my current stress response? Is my life really stressful now where I'm not getting any sleep? Or am I hyper-vigilant because of some past events that I've had in my life? And so sometimes it's really like peeling back the layers of an onion. But the good news is whenever you do one of these things, you start getting better and better.

Katie: Yeah, I've noticed that in my own life as well. But I think the part that is so amazing to me is that you've had such success with helping so many people, especially women, to really find their own causes in the recovery. And I follow you on Facebook, your Facebook page. And it's amazing to see all the comments of woman after woman who has seen all these positive changes and who finally got diagnosed or finally found her own answers. And from what I understand, you've worked with thousands of people with Hashimoto's. And while some people think this is kind of a lifelong sentence or that you can never really improve, you're seeing people see improvement within even a couple of weeks, even people who have been suffering for years. So let's talk about that. How do you do that? How do you have such amazing results with these women?

Izabella: One of the things is...and when I first started, I was kind of looking at what were everybody's triggers because everybody's triggers might be slightly different. Like one person might have breast implants that created a toxic burden in their body and so their body's detox systems became overwhelmed. Another person might have mold exposure, another person might have gut infection. And there's a lot of different kind of triggers that could cause thyroid disease but there are also underlying kind of root cause commonalities. And the root cause commonalities are three different systems that are gonna be impaired. And those systems are gonna be liver detox capabilities, the adrenals--so our stress

response--and then our gut.

And so what I do is basically I go through...I don't want to say cookie cutter but they're very similar interventions for everybody, that send the safety messages to their bodies. So what I do now with everybody is I start them off on a liver support protocol for about two weeks. And the liver support protocol, it helps them clear any toxins. So we're not doing anything like a forceful detox or a heavy metal chelation which can be, for some people...you know, it can make them worse instead of making them feel better. But what we're doing is we're looking at, okay, what in your life could be potentially overwhelming your detox systems and how do we support those detox systems naturally?

And so the things we're gonna do, we're gonna be looking at getting rid of some of the most common toxic foods. Those are gonna be gluten, dairy, and soy. We're gonna be looking at trying to clean up the environment. So I might have people go on a makeup-free, personal care free two weeks where they don't use any personal care products. Or I will send them over actually to your blog and say, "Hey, use Katie's recipes for these products because...and make alternatives for stuff within your home."

Then we're also looking at getting rid of different types of things within our homes. So we're going through and getting rid of all the plastics, we're getting rid of all the anti-bacterial soaps, we're getting people a fluoride filter. So fluoride is a toxin that can suppress thyroid function. Not many people know this but it was used for people with an overactive thyroid to suppress their thyroid before medications that were more effective were invented. Needless to say, if you're drinking eight cups of water, of fluoridated water, you're probably suppressing your thyroid just with that dose of fluoride that you're getting. And then fluoride-free toothpaste.

So we go through kind of a checklist of all these things that are potential toxins within the home and we get rid of those. And then what we also do is we add in some foods that can be detoxifying and help support the liver pathways. So we're adding more turmeric to the diet, we're adding green juices, we're adding green smoothies, we're doing some cilantro, those kinds of things that kind of support the detox pathways naturally. And then we're also gonna bring in like a two-week liver support protocol where we do a liver support powder that has a lot of vitamins and nutrients in it. I do some products that help to support liver function naturally, so we're supporting phase one and phase two detox.

So milk thistle is a great example of an herb that does that. Turmeric is another wonderful supplement. And we do that for about two weeks and we kind of kick everybody off on that so everybody's on the same page. And it works really, really well. I started doing this a few years ago with my clients and just some of the things that improved were like almost miraculous. One of the biggest things I see is multiple chemical sensitivities. People who have those, those can like, vanish within two weeks. Most people will see at least a reduction about half in their multiple chemical sensitivities. Then we start seeing headaches going away, we start seeing fatigue improving, we start seeing people saying that their joint pains and body pains go away. And that's just to kind of kick them off within two weeks.

And I've done this with my clients now...it's sort of a prerequisite for working further together and it's also something I've used in my group program. And I've also surveyed people within my group program and 65% of them felt significantly better just within the first two weeks of the liver support protocol.

Katie: That's incredible, especially because I feel like fatigue and tiredness and just that feeling of thyroid disease is one of the biggest things and one of the hardest to really quantify or for a doctor to get to the bottom of. So that's incredible to see over half of the people seeing that even in a few weeks. You

mentioned that nutrient deficiencies can maybe lead to thyroid disease and also that there are times when you have thyroid disease when you actually have nutrient deficiencies related to that as well. So what are some of the more common ones that you tend to see from people who have Hashimoto's?

Izabella: You know, the really big one is gonna be selenium. So selenium is, there are so many studies that have shown that it can be a trigger...a selenium deficiency can be a trigger for Hashimoto's. It can be something that's a trigger for Graves disease as well as postpartum thyroiditis. And so supplementing with selenium can help all three. Generally, I recommend selenomethionine at 200 micrograms per day. You can get selenium from Brazil nuts as well except for we don't necessarily know how much selenium is in a Brazil nut because some of them might have higher levels, others might have lower levels, depending on the soils where they're grown.

And the thing to remember with selenium is it's like a Goldilocks nutrient. So we don't want to get too high amounts of it because when it goes above 800 micrograms, it can become toxic. So generally, that's something that I recommend using as a supplement from 200 to 400 micrograms a day, have people start with 200. And the results that I've seen with it are people start feeling more calm. So that thyroid anxiety goes away. They start having more energy.

So selenium helps to improve T4 to T3 conversion, as does the liver support. So that explains why people have more energy when they do these things. And then we also...what's a nice side benefit is within three months when we retest people's thyroid antibodies, in general they'll reduce by about half. And so there's some controversy on this from various types of practitioners but what I've found and what the research has shown is that thyroid antibodies can be used as one of the markers to determine how aggressive the autoimmune attack is on the thyroid gland.

And so whenever we see an intervention that reduces thyroid antibodies, in most cases this is a really good thing because that means that we've made the condition less aggressive. And so just with this one supplement, we could see a reduction in about half for people's thyroid antibodies.

So that's one of the big ones. The other ones are gonna be vitamin D. So getting vitamin D levels up between 60 and 80 is gonna be really helpful for getting into remission. Ferritin levels may be deficient. So ferritin is an iron storage protein and you need to get tested for this to make sure that you are within a good range for that. Generally if you want to have good hair, you want to have a ferritin somewhere between 70 and 90. Ferritin is one of those nutrients that's deficient in people with thyroid disease and often in ones that have trouble with their hair, energy, and are short of breath.

Then we're also looking at B vitamins. B-12 is one of the more common ones that's deficient. And also thiamine is another vitamin that's very commonly deficient. I recommend about 600 milligrams of thiamine a day. Within three days or so, taking a thiamine supplement can reverse the person's fatigue. It's quite impressive, very amazing what it can do. And then another big one I see is magnesium deficiency and this can be really a game changer for women who have menstrual cramps or any kind of pain, anxiety, insomnia. And taking magnesium citrate at bedtime can completely turn that around. I used to have severe menstrual cramps and then within the first month of taking magnesium, I was like, "What happened to my menstrual cramps? They're gone."

And I've had so many clients over and over come back with the same thing where they were taking medications, they were taking birth control to try to suppress their menstrual cramps. And within the first month, it's like, "Oh, my period came. I didn't even know it was coming today because I didn't have

any cramps." So that can be another kind of really helpful thing. And really, these nutrients can be complete game changers once you replenish them.

Katie: Yeah, that's amazing. So are these things people...do you typically recommend them trying to get it from food? Or with thyroid disease, is there a time for careful supplementation with these?

Izabella: I really love for people to get everything from food as much as they can. But as you mentioned, thyroid disease can make us have a more difficult time with absorbing nutrients from our food. And so in the short term, as you're trying to get better, you may require some supplementation. And so some of the ways that hypothyroidism can interfere with nutrient absorption, one of them is having low stomach acid. And so often times, we'll find that people with hypothyroidism either make no stomach acid or they make hardly...like very tiny bits of it. And so when you have low stomach acid, this means that you're probably not gonna be absorbing your iron or ferritin very well. Of course, one of the things to do is to work on getting your stomach acid levels up. People can do this with getting apple cider vinegar, with drinking hot lemon water in the morning, as well as using a supplement digestive enzyme called Betaine with pepsin with their protein-containing foods. And then also working on the underlying root causes.

So a lot of times we'll see a lot of gut dysfunction in thyroid disease. Part of that is basically when you have low thyroid, it slows down your gut motility. And so then you're gonna be more at risk for having things like small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, which will then mean that instead of you absorbing the nutrients from your food, that all of your bacteria are absorbing it. Also, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth is also a trigger for thyroid disease and the same with H. pylori, which is an infection that can occur in the stomach. And so a lot of times we're kind of...we're not sure if it's the chicken or the egg. What we do know is once we get rid of these infections that the person feels better and their thyroid antibodies improve and then their digestion improves and they're able to digest foods better.

And so once we address these types of infections, we can start utilizing more food as a medicine rather than doing supplements. But a lot of times, once people have thyroid disease they're gonna be so nutrient depleted that it takes taking these nutrients in very high doses to kind of overcome what the bacteria need. Because when we think about what's in food, food has very like, I would say small doses of vitamins and nutrients. And it's just because you're eating it on a constant basis is how you're replenishing your stores. With the vitamins, what we're doing is we're doing megadosing in a lot of times compared to what you would get from food. And sometimes you need that megadosing to sort of, you know, feed yourself and feed the bacteria rather than them stealing everything from your food if that makes sense.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And that explains too why since there's the gut connection and the nutrient level connections, why just something like treating the symptoms of thyroid disease with Synthroid is not going to fix those other problems. So even if you're getting your numbers maybe better, you're still gonna have the fatigue and some of the other issues and you have to take other steps to really kind of fix that as well. Another question I know I get a lot from readers and that I think you have some really good answers to is what are some specific things women can do to help lose weight with thyroid disease? Because that's obviously a symptom but also it's typically very difficult to lose weight once one has thyroid disease. So how do you address that?

Izabella: Yeah, so weight gain is one of the most common symptoms of thyroid disease. And there's a few different things that you can do and I kind of would want to have you go through a checklist of things. And one of them is making sure that you are using appropriate medication if that's something that you're looking into. So making sure that you're taking not just synthetic thyroid hormone, T4, but you're also

getting some of the T3, which is the more active thyroid hormone. And you can get T3 from a medication like Armour Thyroid, Nature-Throid, WP Thyroid. You could get that through a medication known as Cytomel. And then you can also get this through a compounding pharmacist.

There are some people that have benefited from glandulars as well. So the standard process has a glandular that is known as Thyrophin PMG that has helped some people slightly in getting their T3 levels optimized and feeling better. So this is gonna be one of the first things to do is make sure that you're optimized on that. Some other ways you can support your T3 levels are gonna be through supporting your liver, supporting your stress response, so putting yourself more at ease and being more relaxed, and then you're also gonna be doing things like selenium to help with the conversion of T4 to T3.

So the theory of why we hold onto weight is because our body thinks it's starving and because it is basically saying, "Okay, we need to conserve energy, we need to conserve resources." And so I always go back to thinking about, like, well what are you doing in your life that's making your body think that it needs to conserve energy and resources? So besides, of course, getting on appropriate medication we're also gonna be trying to send those safety signals to the body. So that's gonna be...you know, a lot of women exercise a lot and then they keep putting on weight or they don't lose weight. And when you think about it, when you're doing a lot of exercise, you could be sending a stress signal to your body that you are being chased by bears all day every day. And getting actually less exercise can be helpful for some people.

So I've had a few clients that were doing a lot of walking and they were like, "Okay, I just keep on putting weight. I don't know what's going on." And so what we ended up doing is we tested their adrenals. I've had three clients like this today. And when their adrenals came back, they were in stage three adrenal dysfunction. So they were barely getting by. And I actually had them do more resting instead of more walking. So it seems counterintuitive but they actually felt better when they were getting more rest, of course. And they also started losing weight. So this is something that can be kind of counterintuitive but could be very helpful.

Making sure you're getting plenty of sleep is gonna be really important. People oftentimes will try to push themselves when they have thyroid disease because it makes you really tired and then you feel bad that you're not getting things done. And so the key is to kind of go with it because listen to what your body is trying to tell you and trying to get more rest, trying to get adequate sleep each night can be very helpful with that.

Another thing that people find helpful is using probiotics. So basically crowding out the bacteria out of your gut that extract a lot of nutrients from your food. So what's interesting is there have been studies done in people who were overweight compared to people who were of average weight. And the people who were overweight had more different types of bacteria within their gut. And these bacteria basically...if you ate 100 calories, they would take that 100 calories and distribute it throughout your body versus the people who were of average weight and the bacteria might only extract a percentage of those calories.

The other thing kind of that can happen is some people that have challenging issues may end up with something known as like, a damaged metabolism where, for example, skipping breakfast for a while or fasting or having blood sugar issues basically sent a lot of messages to their body over time that they just needed to conserve energy and that they needed to conserve resources. And in those cases, various supplements might be helpful to help reset that, to try to reset that whole response.

Katie: That's fascinating that even two people eating the same foods, their gut bacteria can actually take more and store it from someone who has those issues. That's really interesting.

Izabella: It's really interesting and I think it's really annoying too because you could be eating...if you have thyroid disease and you had an identical twin sister and you were eating exactly the same but you had different gut bacteria and you had an underactive thyroid, you could be basically putting on weight when your twin sister would just be staying the same weight. And it can be very frustrating. But it also, I think, is empowering to know all of the different factors. And one of the important things is just not to blame yourself and not listen to people that tell you that you need to exercise more and eat less because more exercise and calorie restriction is gonna tell your body that you need to conserve energy. Like it'll work in the short term but in the long term, it'll just kind of damage your metabolism.

So you really need to think about how do you make your body feel like it's safe and how do you make your body feel like food is abundant? And you do that with really good nutrient dense food, with making sure you're getting plenty of vitamins, plenty of rest, and being kind to yourself and going to the spa or staying home and taking a nap. Which of course is not the easiest when you have little children. But if you can get your family to send you to the spa for Mother's Day or for another holiday, I think that would be a great step in the right direction.

Katie: I love that. And I love that taking a nap might actually be better for weight loss in some cases than going for a run. I think that'll be encouraging to a lot of people to hear.

Just a reminder that this episode is brought to you by Paleovalley. If you aren't familiar with them, I'll explain why they're one of my favorite companies that I found recently. They make among other things some amazing grass-fed beef sticks. These are nonperishable. They don't have to be refrigerated, so they're great to take along in your purse for hungry kids. But they are even better than that. There's a lot of different meat-based products out there, meat bars, beef jerky, etc. But theirs stands out. It's made from 100% grass-fed and grass finished beef that was never given grain at all. It's also grain free, dairy free and soy free.

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Today's podcast is also brought to you by Studio Press Sites. Have you ever thought about starting your own blog or maybe you already have one? If so, you're probably overwhelmed by all the technical details required to get a site up and running. There's purchasing a domain name and a hosting account, installing Wordpress, the themes, the plugins, then setting everything up to work correctly. And this is all before you even started writing.

I've been blogging for over 10 years and I know all too well the many headaches and technical challenges that starting a blog can create, especially when geek speak is not my first language. That's why I'm super excited about today's sponsor, StudioPress Sites. StudioPress Sites is an all-in-one blog creation platform and it's a tool I wish I had when I first started out as it would have saved me hundreds of hours and

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Katie: And another thing, it seems like there's a lot of misinformation when it comes to with dieting and women and especially thyroid disease about low-carb and ketogenic diets. Which, of course, have a lot of benefits in a lot of other ways but there are some specific differences for people with thyroid disease. Is that right? Or how do you address those kind of things?

Izabella: You know with carbohydrates, I think it's a very individual thing because for some people, they might do really well on the low carbohydrate diet. There was a study done in...I believe it was in Italy, that just was published earlier this year. And it showed that people who were...they called it a "low-carb diet." And it was low-carb but it also was, I would say very close to the autoimmune Paleo diet. And they compared that to a low-calorie standard Western diet that included breads and rice and things. And they actually found that people on the lower carb diet had lower thyroid antibodies and then lost weight within three weeks. And so for some people, it does work really well. And for others, the low-carb diet might not work as well.

And so you want to think about what are some of the reasons why a low-carb diet might not work. One of the reasons could be because people who have issues with protein and fat absorption. So a person may need to, for example, take digestive enzymes to help them digest protein, may need to take digestive enzymes to help them digest fats. Another thing is gonna be for some people the low carbs can actually put them in a stress response where their bodies think that they're being deprived.

And so it really is kind of like something that I encourage everybody to experiment with and kind of modify your intake. So like I can't say that there's this one perfect thyroid diet as far as the macronutrients go because some people are better at burning fat, some people are better at carbohydrates. And some people are better at...like, thrive on protein. So it really is kind of I would say trial and error with that, trying to modify your carbohydrate intake.

Katie: That makes sense. But you do see people who, even with thyroid issues, can do really well on low-carb. Because I know there's kind of that advice out there that if you have any kind of thyroid issue, you should never do low-carb. And I feel like some people do seem to do well on it. Have you found that too?

Izabella: Yeah, absolutely. And I think it's kind of like one of those never say...it's kind of one of those myths that if you have thyroid disease, you should never do low-carb. Because I've actually seen people do really well on the low carbohydrate diet. Of course, not everybody but we'll have some people that will even go into ketosis. And that's a huge game-changer for them. So they'll start losing weight, their mood finally improves, their brain fog resolves. And it's not something, of course, that you should be...it's not something you should be afraid of, let's just put it this way. But it's definitely something to experiment with.

And I always recommend for people to not really buy into all of the diet dogmas out there because we know there are so many of them. And try to listen to their own bodies because determining the right diet for you should be based on who you are right now in the moment, your genetic background, what kind of stresses you have in your life, how your digestive capability is. There's just so many different conditions that can impact how you should modify your diet.

In my book, "The Hashimoto's Protocol," I actually have a chapter on how to modify your diet. I shared the most helpful diets for Hashimoto's, which are gonna be based on the paleo protocol or the autoimmune paleo protocol, with sort of a root cause twist where I found certain things just...for example, seaweeds don't work so well for people with autoimmune thyroid disease. But we also have a chapter on how to modify your diet if you're not getting the best results. So looking into like, okay, do you need to lower your carb intake, increase your carb intake, change your protein intake? Do you need to adjust your digestive enzymes levels, to kind of help people figure that out and troubleshoot because it can be a little bit challenging.

Katie: I agree. And I'll make sure to link to that and also to your website, which is [thyroidpharmacist.com](http://thyroidpharmacist.com), because you have so many good resources for people really trying to pinpoint that. Another thing that seems to be really popular right now is intermittent fasting. And I know that there are also some specific things you want to be aware of, especially as a woman and especially with thyroid disease. So what's your take on the whole intermittent fasting craze right now?

Izabella: I think it could work really, really well for very healthy people, you know what I mean, that are just trying to optimize and improve their health. But when you have thyroid disease, a lot of times you have a lot of broken systems within your body. There are certain types of interventions like heavy metal chelation, fasting, there's different types of enemas that people have done, vegan diets, that are very trendy and can be very helpful for the average healthy person. But when you're dealing with hypothyroidism, one of the issues that you have is adrenal issues and then blood sugar imbalances. And any kind of fasting can actually potentially worsen the adrenals. So it's not something I recommend for most people with thyroid disease unless they know that their adrenals for sure are not the issue.

I would say in my experience, about 90% of my clients, and I work with more advanced cases, 90% of them have some degree of adrenal dysfunction. Only about 10% have normal adrenal tests. And for that 10%, intermittent fasting might be fine. That might not set them off. But what I've seen with my clients and fasting is that they actually feel worse and then their bodies sort of start breaking themselves down, which we don't want. So most people with hypothyroidism are in like a catabolic process where their body is breaking itself down for fuel. And you want the opposite. You want the anabolic process where you're...if you think about anabolic, you think of these bodybuilders that build anabolic steroids. And that's sort of an offshoot of that but basically, you want your body to build itself up. And the fasting can actually put our body in that breaking down when we're hypothyroid especially.

Katie: Gotcha. So it would be better to focus on just those really nutrient dense foods and just nourishing your body and resting, especially if you're kind of in that acute phase basically?

Izabella: Yeah. And actually, eating a lot of foods and just kind of sending your body those safety signals like, "Hey, there's plenty of food around and we're getting you nourished." Because you're gonna be so nutrient depleted that the fasting can worsen that. And you don't want that.

Katie: That makes perfect sense. And so I want to kind of wrap up with hope for anyone listening because for years I was looking for a practitioner who could help me find the root of my own problem and eventually really helped my thyroid. And it took a long time and a lot of years and I wasn't close to any of these people. In fact, the doctor I finally ended up working with is a four-hour plane ride away, which is hard for most people.

So I send people to your blog all the time because you have so many resources to help people figure out as much as possible their own issues and to start addressing them. But for someone who maybe doesn't have a doctor who's knowledgeable about these things or is trying to just figure out as much as they can on their own, what would you recommend, just from dietary and from your own website? You have so many great resources but where can they start?

Izabella: Yeah, so...and just as a quick reminder, I also have a doctor database on the thyroid pharmacist website, so people can look for that and just look for local practitioners. We have patients that have submitted practitioners that can help. And so, you know, finding doctor right is always kind of a big challenge. It's looking at making sure the doctor is familiar with all types of thyroid medications, not just T4, it's making sure the doctor practices from more of a root cause functional medicine approach. And a lot of that has to do with you really calling the doctor's office and interviewing them. So that's kind of a big thing with finding doctor right.

But I love what you just said. It's like, okay, so yes. There can be doctors that can help us but what are the things that we can do in our lives right now that can help ourselves? And I think the biggest things are gonna be making sure that you can get your nutrition dialed in. So you alone hold the key to changing up your diet. So we can give you all the tools and resources and I have...you know, you have plenty of them on how to go gluten free, dairy free, soy free, and I have some as well. And so starting off with that is making sure you're eating a diet that's free of the reactive foods in thyroid disease, which are gluten, dairy, and soy, to a starting point.

Making sure that you're properly nourished with nutrients. So I have a quick starter guide and some blogs on various nutrients like selenium, vitamin D, thiamine, B vitamins, that you can start taking on your own. And of course, it's always good to check with your doctor if you have any health condition. Really thinking about how you deal with stress and your stress response. So stress is one of the biggest things that makes people with thyroid disease worse. And so thinking about how you can reset that, so that's gonna be getting plenty of sleep, making sure your blood sugar is balanced and doing any kind of mindfulness technique, whatever you could figure out, something to calm yourself, whether that's doing yoga, whether that's doing meditation.

I'm not one of those people that's super sit in a corner and meditate, so I actually had to get something to get my monkey brain into meditation. And I've done different types of apps and neurofeedback, as well as there's a new thing out called Muse that I think is really great. And it kind of teaches how to put your brain in that calm state so that you're not as likely to be hyper-vigilant, which we talked about can be something that happens when people basically go through...have a history of trauma. They can become hyper-vigilant and getting just a few minutes a day of really calm thinking can help reset that.

And these are things people can do just in their homes right now. It doesn't take a doctor telling you to do that. And I consider these the fundamentals of healing, is making sure you're getting plenty of sleep, making sure you're taking time for yourself to relax and just be mindful and then nourishing yourself.

Katie: Yeah, I think that's huge and I think even if you are at the level where you need a doctor, doing those things first or while you're searching for the right practitioner is gonna also give you such a leg up when you're working with someone and you won't have as far of a distance to have to cover with them. And you maybe will notice even a bigger difference from the interventions they do because you've already been trying to support your body nutritionally. So I think that's such awesome advice. And I'll make sure to link to all the posts that you've mentioned and also to your book which I'm so excited about. Can you talk a little bit about the book and how people can find it?

Izabella: Yeah, absolutely. So my new book is called "The Hashimoto's Protocol." And one of my readers actually gave me this idea because my first book was about my journey and all the research I did. And I just presented a whole bunch of information out to people that I did for myself to recover my health. But I think a lot of people loved digging for their health and I kind of gave them the framework to do that. And we've had, I think over close to maybe a thousand success stories that have come from that book. And I'm very, very proud of that and I'm very humbled by it as well.

And I met one of my readers when I was doing a talk in Chicago and she said, "You know, it would be really great that...you know, I love digging for my health but it would be really great if you could just give me a protocol, just give me exactly what I need to do." And as a health nerd, at first I didn't really get that. But then I went to a pilates class with a really intense instructor who was like, "Okay, Izabella, you're gonna have pilates homework. This is the muscle you're working with this exercise." And I was like...her knowledge was just lost on me. I was like, "Just tell me how to raise my leg because I want to...you know, it's swimsuit season. I want to look good in my swimsuit."

And so I wanted to kind of boil it down for people so they don't have to necessarily become Hashimoto's experts to recover their health, where I give them a plan of all the different things they can do on their own to start recovering their health. And it goes through the liver, adrenals, and gut protocols. The liver is two weeks, adrenals is four weeks, and gut is six weeks. And these are interventions that are gonna basically support your liver, support your stress response, and support your gut, that are gonna be helpful for just about everybody with thyroid disease. So that's gonna be the first part of the book known as the fundamental protocols.

The second part of the book is based on my few years of working with various people with thyroid disease. So I've worked with over a thousand people now and I've identified some really interesting root causes and have come up with a series of assessments to help people pinpoint their root causes. So we go through an assessment section where we have basically a whole bunch of questions. Not that many but enough. And the questions will take you to which of the advanced protocols you need to do. So there's also six advanced protocols within the book that deal specifically with toxins. They deal with trauma, optimizing the diet, optimizing nutrients, optimizing thyroid hormones, as well as looking over some additional types of triggers and root causes that may be a little bit more rare for the average person.

So we really go through that to give people a comprehensive plan. And rather than spending all this time trying to figure out what your individual causes are, what you can do is you can start doing the interventions that are gonna support the three body systems that are impaired right away as you start digging for some of those more advanced root causes if that's still a need for you. A lot of people just with

the fundamental protocols will be able to recover their health. And I'm really, really excited about getting this book out there. And Katie, you know how hard it is to write a book and I've been writing it since 2014. I've worked really, really hard to make it as approachable and as helpful for people as it possibly can be. And I'm really hopeful that it'll help people recover their health. I'm really aiming for getting 5000 success stories from this book within the first year. And people can find it on Amazon.

Katie: Absolutely. And I will link to it as well but I'll also echo what you said because I got to read an advanced copy and it's amazing. And I think you are going to change so, so many lives with it. And more importantly, you're gonna give people hope because having been through thyroid disease myself, I think that's almost the hardest part is sometimes you just feel so hopeless. And you make it...like you said, it's very approachable, it's very easy to do. It's almost like a checklist that you can just take and apply without having to understand all the science unless you want to. And I think that's gonna just be a game-changer for so many people.

Izabella: Thank you. That really means a lot coming from you.

Katie: I can't wait. And I would definitely encourage anybody listening who has any of the symptoms of thyroid disease or who's unsure and trying to figure it out to check it out also because I think it's...like I said, it's gonna really help so, so many people. And I'll make sure to include links to everything you talked about as well for anyone who wants to look at the show notes on [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com). And you also have so many resources on [thyroidpharmacist.com](http://thyroidpharmacist.com) that they can look up as well.

And thanks to all of you so much for listening. It's always so much fun to be able to share such wonderful people like Izabella with you. And if you enjoyed this episode, please go check out her blog and her book and let her know how much you enjoyed it. And thanks all for listening and Izabella, thank you so much for your time and being here.

Izabella: Thank you so much, Katie.

Katie: 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.