



Transcript of “Body Ecology with Donna Gates”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #122



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Dave: Hey, everyone. It's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Executive Radio. Today's cool fact of the day is that donkeys kill more people annually than plane crashes, which is why you should be more afraid of donkeys than you should be afraid of flying. Because that was a short, cool fact and we always have cool cool facts of the day, the other one is that you burn more calories sleeping than you do watching TV, even more so if you make the room colder when you go to sleep.

I'm really excited about today's podcast because today's guest is a friend and a luminary in the field. Donna Gates is the creator of the Body Ecology Diet. This is one of the first diets out there that was really looking at the role of gut health and histamine and yeast in the body. Donna's done work with all kinds of people, including autistic children, in looking at how gut health influences your brain.

Now, you may be listening to this and saying, "I'm not an autistic child. What's in this podcast for me?" Number one, you may be an autistic child and just not know it, but more likely than that you are an adult who has brain function either problems or abilities. Either way, whether your brain works perfectly as you see it all the time or whether you know you're tired and foggy some of the time, your gut health still impacts your ability to think.

That's why I've invited Donna on the show today because she spent many years in the field. Her works stands as the foundation for things like the Specific Carbohydrate Diet and the GAPS diet and things like that.

Donna, welcome to the show. Thanks for taking time today to be with us.

Donna: Thanks for having me on. I've actually been looking forward to the his all week long, all weekend long, so I hope you ask me the right questions. I mean, I hope you ask questions I can answer.

Dave: Given the times we've sat down, we usually tend to geek out and talk about all sorts of unusual gut things. I'm going to do my best to not ask you all the weird questions about specific species of gut microbes unless they're relevant to everyone out here, but I know that in all the questions I've asked you so far you've more than kept up which makes sense given as much as you've studied this.

First off, what's your background? How did you get to be the person who created the Body Ecology Diet?

Donna: I think [inaudible 00:02:27] a lot of people start off like you did, not well, and they go looking for answers, and I did, but really looking back now, I think there's a destiny sometimes to your life because I remember being a little southern girl with fried chicken and lots of vegetables. We had a lot of vegetables, but they always had fatback in them. So, really a bad diet.

I did notice that I was really into food, and I kept noticing. People, like my grandfather, poured pepper all over everything. His plate was black. I would watch people and see what was going on with them based on what they were eating. I think at an early age I was already beginning to somehow come in already probably knowing that food is medicine.

I was very fascinated. Went to college to study that. I went to work in a VA hospital just before I graduated; I was going to be a registered dietitian. It was a terrible experience. Hospitals are the last place in the world anybody would want to be. They had me down in the kitchen loading the dishwasher, and I thought, "This is a sign that this is not what I'm supposed to do with my life."

I went back to school and graduated finally with a degree in child development, which is useful actually, and then I just never stopped studying. I think twists and turns, like so many different doors opened at the right time for me to ... 10 years into the work that I've been doing now, I started working with autistic children, so they came later.

When you work with an autistic child, they have everything that's wrong with them is wrong with us too, it's just that we don't have that

behavioral brain issue going on, not like they do. Working with autistic children is extraordinary training.

Dave: You view autistic kids as kind of the canaries in the coal mine?

Donna: They are. They really are. They are truly a sign that this generation, the generation for example that your children belong to, they're really as a whole in serious trouble. The human being, we're protected, so we can't really see ... For example ... This is a little complicated, but I hope I can explain it well.

Your wife, let's use Lana for example, when your two little kids, when Lana was inside her mom, her ovaries formed right away, immediately, but in the fifth month ... the ovaries fill up with eggs in the fifth month. In other words, Lana's mother's health determined the quality of those eggs.

Then you met Lana. You had two beautiful kids. They really are coasting on two generations back. Does that make sense?

Dave: It's the whole epigenetics argument, right?

Donna: Well, it's just the fact that your children are showing you their grandmother's health, right? It takes a couple of generations before we see that the kids are in trouble. What we're going to see, like your children when they grow up, most in their generation as a whole, because your kids are unique, they are going to have trouble with fertility. They won't be able to reproduce. It's going to be a real serious problem. A lot of birth defects and sad things.

We're looking at disaster, and everybody's kind of not looking at it or they're burying their head in the sand hoping that doesn't happen, but it's going to happen if we don't do something. I think that's why I'm really fascinated because there have been ... like me, I've been doing this for over 20 years. There's a lot of us that have been doing work for a long time, sometimes on our own little planet doing our thing, but what's happened right now is a whole bunch of people are coming together, like you and I meeting, and Sara Gottfried and JJ, and a whole

bunch of us are bringing our tribes together, sharing information, and helping each other.

That tells me that we're really at the tipping point, and it's very exciting. There's never been a time where so many people are bringing information. Even though there's a little bit of difference in what some of us are teaching, mostly there's the truth in what we're teaching. A lot of us say the same thing in different ways.

It's just going to be an extraordinary time for these children. I think just in time we're going to turn things around.

Dave: I certainly hope so. I can tell you I'm not that worried about a global population problem because-

Donna: [crosstalk 00:06:55]

Dave: The research for the Better Baby Book really taught me fertility rates are declining so precipitously that already one in eight couples doesn't conceive naturally. They just can't do it. You fast-forward another generation or two, and we don't have to worry about there being that many billions of people. [crosstalk 00:07:15]

Donna: I am glad you said that. I have a friend who is an endocrinologist, and he is really well known. He teaches a bunch of other ones. He was telling me that what they're seeing is that many couples are actually becoming pregnant and conceiving, but nature is very very strict. In the first 28 days of life, if that baby is not going to be really close to perfect, the woman loses ... she thinks she's having a normal period. She has no idea she was pregnant. That's happening a lot too. We are conceiving, but there's not a healthy-enough embryo to become a baby.

Dave: It's a scary, ongoing problem, and it's not just even the women. The men too. You get unhealthy men who are fathers, and then the chances of there being birth defects happens as well.

We'll say we agree that there's a major multi-generational problem. Let's take a child who is born and develops autism. They're probably born with a more hyper focus or hyper-aware immune system, so

they're getting some autoimmunity. They probably have some problems with their gut bacteria. They may have some problems with toxic metals or with mold toxins. Some externally, then it precipitates an autoimmune neurological condition.

Now, you have a series of things largely affecting gut health that can help to turn this around. What if you take those same types of things and you give those to someone who doesn't have autism? What typically happens to those people?

Donna: Almost everybody today, without realizing it or not, they have got some gut dysbiosis going on.

Dave: Yes!

Donna: Anybody is going to improve if they take sugar out of their diet, gluten out of their diet, and of course you know I'm a big proponent of fermented foods. We have to go into that because there's a subset of people who don't do well on fermented foods at first. I know you want to talk about that.

Even if you don't have a gut problem today, you could have one tomorrow. It's easy to shift the balance of the microbes in the gut. People are struggling with things that they don't even know is connected with their gut. For example, depression. Maybe you feel flat and life is just depressing simply because you have the wrong microbes in your gut.

Or obesity. You will find many people saying, "Well, I don't eat anything. I really don't." I know they're telling the truth, so that's not an issue. They really aren't eating anything, and they're not even eating bad foods. They've got the wrong bacteria in their gut, and so every little bit they're eating, no matter what they're eating, is making them fat.

Dave: I think I was in that camp when I weighed 300 pounds. I really did eat less than my ten friends. It was not about will power or laziness or any of that. It was just about, "Sorry, calories in does not equal calories out," partly because of the gut biome, partly because of hormones.

Donna: But you were in a really stressful job, and stress kills the good bacteria. That let's the bad ones grow. For many many of us, we live in a really stressful world, partly because we choose to.

Some of don't have that much ... we maybe don't have financial problems or we don't have health ... We have wonderful children, all the things that some people are having problem with, and some of us don't have those problems. Yet we do too much. We watch TV. We watch these exciting shows at night that make our cortisol go up. We don't sleep enough. We just choose to do too much.

I choose to do ... I'm in that category. I deliberately choose to fill up my plate with too many things, so I create my own stress.

Dave: Yet you have a reasonably healthy gut biome, right?

Donna: I take care of that because I honestly do have the knowledge and the science. Years ago, when I started doing body ecology and I came up with that term ... so this is why again I think there's always a little bit of divine intervention sometimes in what happens in your life. I even came up with this term "body ecology" before I put the whole thing together and began talking about the gut ecology. We have an ecology on us and in us.

I first got into the whole thing because I was trying to get well and then along the way met Dr. Crook. He had written The Yeast Connection. I thought, "Aha! I have years of antibiotics, birth control pills, stress, those things. I have a yeast infection like millions of women do."

I thought, "I'm going to figure out how to get over a yeast infection," because his book wasn't quite strict enough. I'd had a lot of training at that point in natural medicine, natural healing, Chinese medicine, all that. I thought, "I'm going to find the answer."

I started from scratch, looking at the condition. Not that much was known about it then. Looking at truths and matching that up. Then down the road I was constantly learning more and more, and I began to

understand about the immune system. You have to have a really strong immune system to overcome candidiasis.

Also I began to stumble on information that was available only to microbiologists. We people did not have this information. I started learning about these bacteria that are supposed to be in our gut, and they're not there in many many people. I literally had to coin a term called the inner ecosystem to be able to talk to people about this world that exists inside our gut.

The inner ecosystem was a term I coined, but then I started actually finding science to show what these microbes do in the gut. That's how it all started, really.

Dave: So if we take someone who doesn't know they have a gut problem and they do something to improve the health of their gut, what are the typical things that they experience?

Donna: They're going to feel happier and everything. Literally, there's nothing that the gut doesn't affect. Your brain, of course. You become more focused. You'll have more energy. Every single cell in the body, the mitochondria, they're all benefiting from a healthy gut. There's not a single cell that isn't harmed by a gut that's got problems or a single cell that isn't helped when you fix the gut.

Dave: Okay, so there's two big things. People who are already performing well when they do things to improve their gut can get increased energy and increased focus. Now, if you're listening to this, this is why I wanted to have Donna on the show because this isn't something that is just about autistic kids or sick people or people with IBS.

The bottom line is that if you're eating a normal, or somewhat considered normal, America diet, you're eating all sorts of foods, a lot of them processed. You're eating foods that have things that kill bacteria in your gut, and you're probably putting yourself through quite a lot of stress.

If you want to be a resilient beast, which is certainly a part of being Bulletproof, is just building high-performance resilience, so yeah, you might go through stress, but your gut biome doesn't get destroyed and you don't get destroyed. That's super valuable, and this matters if you're a professional athlete, whether you're some big-time business person, whatever.

Donna, now people are interested. What are the two or three things they should do right now that's going to help their gut?

Donna: I think fermented foods, of course, are a must. Food combining I think is a great thing to do because if you eat a meal, let's say a typical sandwich with a piece of meat in the middle of two pieces of bread, that's very hard to digest. Let's say you eat a piece of chicken with rice and gravy or a steak with a baked potato. That's a really complex meal.

Typical American breakfast on the weekends is [oranges 00:15:11], maybe pancakes, French toast or something, maybe some eggs and bacon. That's really hard for the body to digest. I'm a big believer in food combining. I think using digestive enzymes is very smart. Those would be my three top things I'd say to do.

I want to point out, Dave, that I know you have a big following of people that exercise a lot. Over-training and exercising, that's a stress on the body.

Dave: It is.

Donna: That will kill the bacteria. I think everybody is under a certain level of stress, and so I think people need to be mindful all the time in protecting their gut, using digestive enzymes, eating fermented food so that you're putting this new supply of bacteria in the gut all the time on a regular, everyday basis.

Dave: One interesting point for people listening to this. A lot of digestive enzymes are made from aspergillus, the fungus. A lot of people don't do as well on those. My experience with digestive enzymes that, heck yeah,

Donna, I agree with that recommendation 100%, but look for digestive enzymes that don't come from basically a form of mold.

Donna: Those are your plant-based ones, but hydrochloric acid, pepsin, and pancreatin are not from that sort, so those [crosstalk 00:16:25].

Dave: Yeah, those are the ones that I take.

Donna: Yeah. Those are good. The ones that are plant-based, those are the ones that come from ...

Dave: The ones that come from aspergillus, you're saying?

Donna: Yeah.

Dave: Exactly. In other words, digestive enzymes don't usually come from plants, they come from animals. Things that come from an animal, like from their digestive tract, are usually pretty good. Things like ox bile.

Donna: Yeah.

Dave: Things like pancreatin that comes from an animal source [crosstalk 00:16:51]-

Donna: They tend to be low as we stress out, as we get aged, those are the ones that we start to stop making. Replacing those makes sense.

Dave: I've been taking those with just about every meal for 15 years, and I think it's just important because even if you have a somewhat healthy gut, supporting that is just a good idea.

Donna: I totally agree with that. Me too. I'm pretty religious about taking digestive enzymes.

Dave: Let's talk about food combining. To be really open about it, I experimented with food combining a long time ago. I was really strict. I kept logs. This is more than 10 years ago when I was doing some of the nutritional stuff that I was figuring out. I kept logs. "Don't eat watermelon with this. Never eat lemon and cantaloupe together," and

all these other weird rules that honestly didn't always make that much sense, and I never detected a single difference in my health from it.

Why food combining? Why is it in your top three?

Donna: To me, lemon and watermelon are fine together.

Dave: I'm kidding. I don't remember what it was, but watermelon has special status. It was just like, "Really? Some of this is a bit excessive."

Donna: Okay, so really simply, fruit digests very very quickly, so if you're going to eat a piece of fruit it's going to be in and out of the stomach in about 30 minutes. If you eat a piece of toast, let's say, with the fruit, bowl of cereal with milk, it's all trapped in there, and it's going to cause gas and bloating. So you're fermenting that food, basically, in a bad kind of way.

Then as far as meat goes, if you have a piece of turkey, let's say you put it on a sandwich, two pieces of bread, same thing. That's very comple- That's just difficult. You're asking a lot of the digestive tract to do that. If you've got a real strong digestive tract, then forget about food combining. If you are sensitive, then it makes a big difference.

What I would put with a piece of chicken or lamb or fish or something is just vegetables, non-starchy vegetables, and there's tons of those: asparagus, green beans, broccoli, tons of them. If I were having something like resistant starch, I know that's a big term in your community, and rice or quinoa, millet, I would put that with vegetables too.

Dave: What about fat? Would you mix fat with that?

Donna: Yeah. Fat can go with anything. Good fats can go with any-

Dave: Butter goes with everything, even watermelon, right?

Donna: Probably so. I haven't done that. [crosstalk 00:19:20]

Dave: Sounds disgusting!

- Donna: Wait! You reminded me of something. I got to say this. Actually, fat would be good to have with watermelon because watermelon is very sweet, and when you put fat into a meal where there's sugar, it slows down the assimilation of the fat. So yes, that would be a good combination.
- Dave: If someone makes a watermelon-butter smoothie and drinks it, I will be shocked and amazed and only slightly disgusted, but I imagine we'll see that on YouTube, Donna, because we just had this conversation.
- Donna: I would rather them not put the watermelon in there, but they could use some other fruit. Then what I'd like to see them do is use medium-chain Brain Octane Oil instead. I think that would be a nicer, lighter combination.
- Dave: Yeah, if you're doing a fruit smoothie, certainly putting some fat in there makes it so much more satisfying and helps to stop the food cravings. Because you mentioned fruit digests really quickly. Then honestly you don't eat much fruit, and if you're going to eat fruit, eat the really high-nutrient fruit that's low in fructose. That's why the Bulletproof Diet road map has them sort of ranked in that order.
- Donna: Yeah. I love your chart, by the way. We're just so close, and our thinking is 100% [crosstalk 00:20:29]-
- Dave: Yeah, we agree on ... Well, I think I have some questions about fermented food we were about to get to, but we agree on like 99% of things. It's those little differences where some people listening are like, "Oh my god, seriously? Like, who cares?" I'll tell you who cares. People who want to kick ass care because it's those little differences that separate the winners from the losers. It's a hundredth of a second.
- Donna: Another thing that's going on, a huge number of people, I want to say at least 80% of people, have yeast infections in their body. That's another reason why fruit, especially the sweet fruits, are not good. You always have to realize that somebody who is not well, from any condition you can think of, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, whatever you can come up

with, they're going to have a yeast infection. You've got to always be mindful not to feed those yeasts.

Dave: What about protein and fat as a percentage of it on the Body Ecology Diet? Where do those [crosstalk 00:21:18]?

Donna: Based on the way the body likes to function, I like for people just begin bringing protein in their diet from 11 to 2. That's the time of the day when the body is really is needing it. Well, it depends on what time you get up in the morning, but for the most part, by 11 o'clock your body needs it, maybe sooner for some people, because the brain needs that protein to wake up and to function. Also, animal protein makes us feel grounded.

By the end of the day, if you switch then to the quinoa, millet, and lots and lots of vegetables and [inaudible 00:21:51] fermented food kind of a diet, you're actually going to produce a lot more serotonin, and that calms you down. Then you start to go to sleep because serotonin turns into melatonin. I think we need that calming quality. I know that's true for blood type A.

I happen to have met Dr. Peter D'Adamo's father about 36 years ago. I actually went to him as a patient because I was trying to find answers myself. When I learned about blood type in his diet, I was really intrigued. Originally the father had a different diet than Peter has. Peter changed his father's diet, actually. I think actually the father's diet is more accurate, but from that point on, 36 years ago, I started asking everybody, "What's your blood type? What's your blood type?"

When I started working with autistic children, I asked their mothers, "What's your blood type? What's your son's blood type?" Almost all of them are blood type A. Eight out of ten of those kids are blood type A, and I had put that out into the autism community. It's much more well known now. To me, that statistically says something.

I find especially blood type A needs more of those kind of foods in their diet, the quinoa, the millet. I mean they need them on a consistent basis.

They don't need a lot, but they need it because it's got a calming quality for their body.

- Dave: What would happen if they instead just used a straight resistant starch, like a plantain flour or the Hi-maize resistant starch or even potato starch, as a way of avoiding the ... we'll call it the more aggressive fibers that are in seeds and still getting all the stuff that ferments? It's almost like resistant starch is ... it's not technically a fiber, but it oftentimes occurs with fiber. I've had negative results with most, including millet and buckwheat and there's other things. I'm trying to understand [crosstalk 00:23:38] You have a lot of experience.
- Donna: I think potatoes are fine, and for that reason we have the red skin potatoes on the diet because they are providing that resistant starch. You want to watch out for sugar, though, because candidiasis is such a problem. Red skin potatoes are the lowest in starch and sugar ... I think those are great too.
- Dave: What about lectins? Aren't those a substantial issue for 20% of people at least?
- Donna: Now what we're really talking about are people who have got problems, because we shouldn't be reacting to simple components of food like that. When I find people reacting to histamine or lectins and so on, it's because this lack this inner ecosystem, and they don't have the bacteria going in their body on a regular basis, hardy robust bacteria, diversity of bacteria that is so critical. That's what allows us to eat a lot of foods that we're reacting to.
- Dave: I've read studies that say 20% of all cases of rheumatoid arthritis come from the nightshade family. Potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, bell peppers. I've had so many clients and other people on the blog, they're like, "Wow! I thought you were nuts. I enjoy my red pepper flakes, whatever it is, but I finally for a week tried doing no nightshades, and what do you know? All of my problems resolved, and I feel like my little brain fog went away. Like wow! I didn't know I could feel this good." Others are like, "I'm pretty darn ... I tested it either way. I do perfectly fine with it."

Donna: Eggplant and tomatoes are two of those nightshades, and they have histamine in them. Food has histamine in it, and our body, as you know, creates histamine. I usually tell people, "Stay off those nightshades for the most part except for the red skin potatoes," and that's just if they tolerate them.

One of our seven principles in Body Ecology is the principle of uniqueness. If there's something that we're saying is safe for eating because it doesn't feed yeast, it doesn't mean it should be in your body, because your body is unique and it might be bothering you.

Dave: It's kind of funny because on the Bulletproof Diet as a road map, I'm like, "Here's the cleanest, least inflammatory, least offensive things possible. Get them all. Then start adding in red potatoes or whatever else and see what you react to." I find that a huge number of people react to things that they didn't know they were reacting to, which is kind of what you would do on a food-elimination diet, which I did a long time ago. In the mid to late '90s I was working on that.

The problem is, it takes months and months to eliminate a class of foods and then add them back in one at a time. It's kind of easier to just eliminate everything and then add them back in one at a time. That explains [crosstalk 00:26:20]-

Donna: I want to add one little thing too. I disagree with [inaudible 00:26:24]-

Dave: With which one?

Donna: A statement that somebody made about arthritis, because I know another cause of arthritis is oxalates [crosstalk 00:26:30]-

Dave: Oh yeah!

Donna: Another issue is very often that they're just toxic. [They're 00:26:35] toxins. The liver hasn't for a long long time been able to really process toxins. In Chinese medicine, the liver affects our skin, our eyes, our joints, so that creaky joints and stiffness and everything is coming because our liver is getting more congested. I think it can be numerous thing, not just one thing causing that.

Dave: That was only 20% of all the cases. The other 80% ... Yeah, oxalates are a huge thing, and especially on the latest Bulletproof Diet infographic, which if you haven't heard, this is your first time hearing the show, BulletproofDietBook.com, you can download it for free. When you check that out though, what you'll find is I'm like, "You have to cook these vegetables because of the oxalic acid connection."

All these people doing this raw kale smoothie thing, I've written like, "Here's the protocol for removing oxalates and oxalic acid." Because if you don't, it is going to mess you up.

Donna: Actually, it's not just cooking them. Believe it or not, sweet potatoes and green beans are high oxalates, spinach. You need to cook them in water and then throw-

Dave: Yes.

Donna: [crosstalk 00:27:39] Water. Quinoa and millet, by the way, they're seeds. Okay, so here are your high-oxalate foods. There's [inaudible 00:27:45] chocolate, spinach, and nuts and seeds would be quinoa and millet. Then there's a whole bunch of other vegetables, like sweet potatoes and green beans, as I mentioned.

What I'm telling people to do these days now that I understand about oxalates thanks to my work with autism is I actually take a big pot of water, get that boiling like you were going to boil pasta, put in some salt, drop in your soaked quinoa or millet, boil them for about 11 minutes for the quinoa, about 13, 15 minutes for the millet, then drain all that water off.

Then catch all the quinoa at the end there, and then it's very nice, very fluffy and delicious when it's cooked like that. Also, you've gotten rid of the oxalates. You just poured them down the drain. The way food is prepared is another art, really, to making food medicine.

Dave: It's the same with kale and all the Brassicas. Dump the water, and I actually recommend something called calcium loading that I invented, the idea being add calcium to the water as calcium carbonate which will

precipitate out the oxalic acid. That way, any oxalates that are left are already put in a crystallized form so you can excrete them. Otherwise the oxalic acid enters the body, binds with calcium in the tissues, and causes way more damage. At least isolate the oxalic acid in the GI tract.

I just cringe when I see these ... A lot of my CrossFit friends are, "I'm gonna do a kale smoothie, raw kale in the morning." I'm like, "Your thyroid-"

Donna: Spinach [crosstalk 00:29:13]-

Dave: "Your joints-"

Donna: [crosstalk 00:29:13] Spinach in-

Dave: Yeah, raw spinach too.

Donna: [crosstalk 00:29:16] Big one. According to the University of Nebraska, because again oxalates are a big issue in the autism community. Kale is fine. So is cabbage-

Dave: Which species of kale, though, right? Because the [inaudible 00:29:27] kale is not fine.

Donna: [crosstalk 00:29:28] We probably both need to look into that. Susan Owens has a really good up-to-date list of ... It's a big community. Her work is probably the most advanced with oxalates. [inaudible 00:29:43] If people just type in Susan Owens trying low oxalates, they'll find her, then look into that.

Because I do really think it's a very important piece of information that people are missing, again, trying to be healthy, thinking these foods are healthy, eating a lot of nuts and seeds. I see people putting a lot of almond milk in their smoothies, and that's another extremely high source of oxalates.

What they're doing, without knowing it, is adding a lot of oxalates throughout the day, and that little piece of chocolate. That little square

piece of chocolate that we see the research that says it's good for you for all these reasons. It's also got a bad side to it.

That's one thing I want everybody to understand is every single thing we put in our body has a positive and negative side to it. It might be good for you and maybe harming you. You'll keep seeing research on this food, here's its benefits. Milk is a good example. For some people, it's a poison. For some people, they do great, particularly if they ferment it.

Were all so unique, so we need to find out the foods that are best for us. That's where this whole new world is opening up on nutritional genetics. It's called nutritional genomics, is very very exciting because we're going to ... well, we're actually even now, we can get our genes tested.

Dave: How important in your methodology is the source of the saturated fat versus just saying all saturated fats are the same? Because clearly MCTs are something different than butter. Butyric acid is doing-

Donna: [crosstalk 00:31:08] Butyric acid is very very good for the gut.

Dave: Right.

Donna: Bacteria need it too. Medium-chain triglyceride, excellent for the bacteria in the gut. The bacteria need it, and it's healing to the gut. Both of those are healing to the gut and protective to the gut lining, so that's [a whole 00:31:23] different category.

Then you have to bring in, factor the genes. Your genes, you genetically may need more fat in your diet, and somebody else will have to limit the amount of saturated fat. Quality is everything.

Dave: What happens if someone who has genes for less fat that you're talking about, what happens if they don't lower their saturated fat?

Donna: It's destroying the bacteria in their gut, and then there's the bad guys. The good guys go, and the bad ones take over, like wadsworthia. Wadsworthia causes inflammation to the gut lining. Now we have this

permeable gut lining. Things are going to begin leaking through. It's affecting every cell in the body. It's affecting the brain as well.

Protecting the gut lining ... The gut lining is one cell layer thick where our skin, I think, has like seven or nine layers-

Dave: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Donna: To penetrate it. The gut lining has one cell layer, so we have to protect that little one-cell layer, the bacteria nestled into that, and it's very easy to destroy it. Even stress destroys it. The bacteria are there to protect us.

We were talking about oxalates earlier. I wanted to mention that around the age that we start crawling we get a bacteria in our gut called Oxalobacter formigenes, and if we take an antibiotic, and who hasn't, we lose Mr. Oxalobacter. It usually never comes back again.

There's nobody eating the oxalates in the food, so a couple of other bacteria try to take over, like [inaudible 00:32:54] is a good one, [some of the 00:32:55] bifidus bacteria, Bifidus infantis. They try to do his job, but they never do it like he does it.

Again, so many things that we're talking about come back to these bacteria and what they're doing. I think the gut, the bacteria, and our genes are a key to [inaudible 00:33:12] information we're always going to need to look at, and we'll be able to. We can now because science is going there.

The other thing is the bacteria in our gut have their genes. If we have, say, 28,000 genes of our own, every single cell in our body has the same set of genes in them. We have all of our cells with all of our genes, say 28,000 or so genes, they don't know exactly the number, but then we have these bacteria and they've got way way way way more genes than we do, each one of them, and there are trillions of them. Now we have another thing going on where what we're eating is affecting our genes and our bacteria's genes.

This is like a new area of science that's just coming out. It's very exciting because it's going to clear up the controversy over, "Should I eat this, or is this good for me?" People are so confused because this expert says this and this expert says that. We have our areas hugely where we agree and a little bit of area where we disagree, but it's going to boil down to what's right for your body. The genes are going to be able to tell us that, and of course having the bacteria. We got to look at our genes, and we got to look at our bacteria.

Dave: Definitely agree. More genetics and more bacteria analysis, hugely important. When I talk with Bulletproof people about what tests you want to do. You want to look at your inflammation levels. You want to look at what's going on in the gut biome, and you want to look at your 23andMe results so you can see where your detox protocols are.

When you get those things, you're like [crosstalk 00:34:38] you can learn a lot.

Donna: Yes, very important. I totally agree.

Dave: Top three recommendations for people who want to perform better? I've asked every guest on the show, except one, that question. Not just for gut health, just your entire life and all of your wisdom, what are the three things that people should know?

Donna: Not about diet, you mean?

Dave: It can be about diet, but whatever the most important things you've learned in your path. Give us your most important-

Donna: I think that the most important thing I've learned is that it takes courage to live in this world. There's a lot of things that keep ... obstacles that present themselves in front of us. You just have to really pull up your courage from somewhere and keep on going. I don't see that people have enough courage. I think we are in a mess right now because people ... they're not coming from a place of courage.

I also think people don't understand the long-term effects. For example, I'm really really concerned about the future of our children. We're

selfishly living. We eat what we want, for example. The waitress comes to the table and says, "What do you want?" and your mom says, "What do you want to eat?" We shouldn't be eating that way. We should be eating what our bodies needs.

Our body will tell us what it needs. We have to train ourselves. In other words, tune in to the body and say, "Hm, what do I need right now? I need some protein. I want some kale. I'm needing a little more salt in my diet right now." Our body does tell us what it needs. I would say develop that intuition, that relationship with your body, and start giving your body what it needs, not what you want. That's a very selfish thing that we're doing.

Then, of course, I guess I'd have to say diet-wise you got to get the sugar out of your diet. You got to get the good fats in your diet, and I think fermented foods and having that healthy gut microbiome is really really key. I say that because literally we've helped hundreds of children who were very very sick totally turn their life around and become well because they started with the fermented food, so I have to stick to that.

Dave: I am not opposed to fermented foods, Donna, and I appreciate this as a chance to [inaudible 00:37:00] the most important things you've learned. They may be the opposite of what I've learned. By the way, like I said, I am a big fan of fermented foods, especially when they're fermented with the good stuff. [crosstalk 00:37:12]

Donna: Also, I am a big fan of your's, Dave. I don't think a day or even certainly not a week goes by where I'm not constantly recommending the Brain Octane. I sat down with a little tea in my cup and added the collagen. Wonderful collagen. You told me that people sleep better when they have it at bedtime. I tell everybody that, because lots of people have sleep problems today. I'd say that's a bit of advice. If you're having a sleep problem, you got to fix that right away because you won have energy. [crosstalk 00:37:41]

Dave: Also, your gut biome gets stressed if you don't get enough sleep, right?

Donna: True, yeah. [crosstalk 00:37:46]

- Dave: It's kind of funny, that affects your bacteria. Yeah.
- Donna: No, you've got great products, and I appreciate that. I'm always the first person to tell other people about other excellent products on the market. Your particularnessness, I mean whatever you call it, your standards for yourself and for other people are so high, that's why you bring out these high-quality products, and I'm very grateful for that.
- Dave: I appreciate it, and likewise, the way you've hacked bacterial fermentation in order to create resistant [inaudible 00:38:19] Cocobiotic. That's an achievement right there, and just anytime you can help one autistic kid, you've done something good, and you've helped thousands and thousands. It's very well acknowledged.
- Hey, I'm an admirer of your work as well, and I'm excited to be on your summit tomorrow.
- Donna: Great. I got to get busy making up some questions to ask you.
- Dave: That would be no problem. Thanks a ton for being on the show today, Donna, and would you just drop your URL one more time so people know where to find you?
- Donna: Just BodyEcology.com.
- Dave: All right. One of the original places to learn about the gut biome. Donna, thanks for being on the show.

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