



Transcript of “Hashimoto’s The Root Cause with Dr. Izabella Wentz”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #137



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Dave: Today's cool fact of the day is that goiters, or enlarged thyroid glands in your neck are a really common symptom of Hashimoto's disease. But in the late 1800s and early 1900s, a guy named Rattlesnake Pete used to treat goiters by wrapping snakes around patients' throats, letting the snake constrict and shrink the goiter. He claimed that about 85% of patients were cured with that method.

This is Bulletproof Radio, and you're listening to Dave Asprey. Today's guest is here to talk about something related, which would be Hashimoto's. Before you say, "What the heck is Hashimoto's?" Hashimoto's is a thyroid condition that affects about 20% of us, and it totally reduces your performance. So if you don't have it, or don't know you have it, the odds are that someone in your life does and may not know it. That's why you're going to get something really interesting out of this episode.

Today's guest is Dr. Izabella Wentz. She's a clinical pharmacist. She got her doctor of pharmacy degree at the age of 23, so she's one of those uber bright people, and I've had the good fortune of spending some time in person with her and getting to know all the things she knows. She also was diagnosed with Hashimoto's herself, and decided that she could hack that problem. She's written a book about it, and she's summarized 3 years of research and 2 years of testing into that book, and it's very, very worth your time if you have any sort of symptoms of thyroid. Izabella, welcome to the show.

Izabella: Hi, Dave. How are you?

Dave: Very, very well. It's a pleasure to have you on, especially because you are calling in from Amsterdam.

Izabella: Yes I am, so it's 8 o'clock right now. It's still light out, which is really cool.

- Dave: Now, I heard they changed all the pot and mushroom laws in Amsterdam. Is that true?
- Izabella: They were trying to change the pot laws, and you can still get pot here at coffee shops, so don't worry about that. But the mushrooms are going to be a little bit harder to get.
- Dave: Oh, that's too bad. The first time I ever tried mushrooms was in Amsterdam, and I enjoyed them, to be perfectly honest. Oh well. The more things change the more they stay the same. Why did you become a pharmacist?
- Izabella: I was really, really fascinated with chemistry, and how a tiny little substance that weighs micrograms or milligrams can really make a profound impact on a person who weighed 200 pounds. So you can take 1 little pill, and that could increase your heart rate. That could drop your Bruton Parish. You could take something like LSD and that can totally shift your mind and make you hallucinate. To me that was just really fascinating. The other thing is, I wanted to find a cure for something, and I really wanted to synthesize a new drug and really help people.
- Dave: Wow. So at a relatively young age, like "I want to make a new drug." That's remarkably cool. I remember when I was about 9 I'd go into the backyard and I'd mix all these different plant pieces in water and grind them up, and be like, "Maybe that's a new drug, but I have no idea how to test it." The idea of the drug discovery process, it's boring to you when you're a kid. So I always thought that would be amazing. But to go through all of the work and university to study that, as a goal, I think is really admirable and super cool.
- Izabella: Thank you. You know, it's actually just like that. You just take some plants, and you mash them together, and that's how drugs are made.
- Dave: I remember thinking, "I could give some to the cat," but the cat could get hurt, so I wouldn't do that. I'm like, there goes the extent of my clinical pharmacology experience. It was when I was 9.
- Izabella: Test is on mice first.

- Dave: That's true, and then you can have the cats eat the mice. It's like part of the virtual circle environmental. There you go. One of the things that you talk about in your book, and one of the things that is particularly interesting, is you talk about a whole systems approach. As a biohacker, someone who looks at the system of the human body, that's really of interest. So people listening to the show, most of whom are probably driving right now if they're not watching on YouTube or on iTunes, they're familiar with the idea of biohacking. What's your take on a whole systems approach to dealing with the human body.
- Izabella: Well, you know, you go to your left-hand doctor and your right-hand doctor in most cases. People will go to an endocrinologist for their thyroid, and then they'll have acid reflux, which is a really, really common condition in people with Hashimoto's. Then they'll go to a doctor for that. Then they'll have depression, and they'll be sent to a psychiatrist. They'll get prescribed a ton of different drugs. This is something that I used to see as a pharmacist. You take 1 drug for this condition, and then it causes a side effect, so then you end up going to a different doctor for that side effect, and then you get a new drug for that.
- That's really looking at each body part as though it was by itself in a vacuum. That's not how the human body works. It's all connected. When I really wanted to, when I was diagnosed with Hashimoto's, I really wanted to figure out why my thyroid was not working. I wasn't happy with just taking a pill and saying, okay, you're not making thyroid hormone. Here's thyroid hormone. That's the end of this study. So I'm a big proponent of looking at the whole body.
- Dave: Izabella, when you had Hashimoto's disease, or I suppose you could say you still have it, how did you know? What did you experience? What did you feel?
- Izabella: I didn't know that I had it for probably about a decade. I didn't know what was wrong with me, but I was just really, really tired. I was sleeping for maybe 12, 13 hours a night. Eventually my hair started falling out, so I lost probably a third of my hair. I was getting really, really anxious. It would be really ridiculous. I would be doing everyday things, and I would just be hit with these awful panic attacks. My

husband would go out jogging, and he'd say, "I'll be back in 15 minutes." Sixteen minutes would pass by and I would say, "Oh, my goodness. He must have gotten hit by a car. Or maybe he met another woman. Or maybe he broke his leg." I'd be pretty much ready to get in my car and start looking for him.

It was just really ... Really I felt I was losing a lot of myself. I was losing my memory. I'd always thought of myself as a sharp person, but all of the sudden I couldn't remember people's names. I was going to work and taking notes in meetings and completely forgetting what was going on in those meetings. I had, I guess you could say brain fog. I had anxiety. I was really, really tired, and then the hair loss. Then the other thing was, which didn't seem obvious to me at the time, was that I was colder than everybody else. I was living in Southern California at the time, and I was wearing sweaters to work, and all the other ladies were wearing short sleeves. I was also sleeping under 2 blankets in the middle of the summer, in pajamas.

Dave: So you definitely had a pretty severe case of this. Now, for people who aren't familiar with Hashimoto's itself, what is the medical description, but make it relatively easy to digest. What's going on there versus just oh, I have a thyroid problem, which lots of people have heard about?

Izabella: Basically, Hashimoto's is an autoimmune condition, which means that the immune system stops recognizing our own body as ourselves. In Hashimoto's, the immune system starts to attack our thyroid. Eventually this leads to an inability to produce enough thyroid hormone. Some of the symptoms we talked about would be the hair loss, and then also depression, and feeling cold and sluggish, and forgetting things. The other interesting thing is that as Hashimoto's first occurs, people will also have transient episodes of hyperthyroid, or an over-active thyroid, where they'll feel really irritable. They'll feel really anxious. They might have palpitations. They might basically feel like they're going crazy. I know people that have been hospitalized for bipolar disorder, psychosis, panic attacks, and all of these things were misdiagnosed because they had Hashimoto's, and nobody thought to check their thyroid.

- Dave: Now the thyroid gland is kind of the energy regulation master control system in the body. So it controls all sorts of things like your temperature, like how quickly even you use calories that come from your food. So if you're thyroid's running slowly because your body's attacking it, you might gain weight, because you're not using enough food to stay warm, let's say. How do you know if it's just because your body's attacking your thyroid, or if it's something else. Because a lot of people just have good old-fashioned thyroid problems that also slow them down and give them the same symptoms.
- Izabella: That's a really good question. What's interesting is that probably 90% to 99% of people with thyroid problems in the United States actually have Hashimoto's. They just may not know that they have it. Synthroid was the #1 prescribed medication last year in all the United States. Most of those people who are on Synthroid have Hashimoto's. It's the #1 reason for an underactive thyroid in the United States, in the UK, and most of the countries that add iodine to the salt supply. You can do a test for Hashimoto's, and it's called thyroid peroxidase antibody test, as well as there's a thyroglobulin antibody test. You can abbreviate that as TPO antibodies as well as TG antibodies. These tests are going to be abnormal for maybe 7 to 10 years before a standard screening test for thyroid dysfunction will pick up that something's off about your thyroid.
- Dave: I've been recommending for years in the anti-aging group that I work with, the Silicon Valley Health Institute, as well as on the blog, that if you have energy and focus problems, that you should get a thyroid panel, and not just a normal thyroid panel, but an advanced panel that looks at all the different thyroid hormones. If you go to a normal doctor and say, "I'm a little tired. I'm a little fat. I'm a little slow. My brain isn't working very well," they give you a test for TSH, which is basically the first thing is your body says, "Hey, I want more thyroid." So the idea is if your thyroid's broken, you'll ask for more TSH. If you have Hashimoto's and your immune system is attacking your thyroid gland, are you going to see it in your TSH numbers?
- Izabella: You'll see it eventually, but sometimes not for 7 years.
- Dave: Oops.

- Izabella: So your thyroid could be under attack for 7 to 10 years. Your TSH, depending on the day you measure it, might come out a little bit low, might come out a little bit high, or it might come out normal. I had been going to doctors year after year complaining about how tired I was, complaining about all of these things. Of course they said, "Okay, you're depressed." I'm like, "But I'm happy." Then they said, "Maybe you're anemic," and they would run the tests for TSH. They would run the tests for anemia. They'd say, "There's nothing wrong with you. I don't know why you're tired." Of course, I was offered Provigil and Wellbutrin and all of these stimulant drugs to basically keep me awake. But nobody really looked at the deeper cause, which was the Hashimoto's.
- Dave: I was diagnosed with Hashimoto's as well, which is more unusual for men. Women get it more than men. Lots of men have just general good old-fashioned thyroid conditions. When I realized what was happening, I religiously eliminated everything that triggers autoimmunity that my biohacking research says, and I don't have any anti-thyroid antibodies anymore. Some people would say that I cured my Hashimoto's. Other people would say, "Well, you still have it. There's just no sign of it." So what is it? Did I cure my Hashimoto's, or is it likely that if I went out and soaked myself in environmental toxic mold and things that cross reacts with it like gluten, things along those lines, that I would suddenly reemerge with Hashimoto's. What's your take on that?
- Izabella: I like to say remission. I think remission is a great word, and a great place to be. The medical world will tell you that there is no cure, and that you really can't even put the condition into remission, that lifestyle changes don't matter. But to me, they do matter, and you can have a lifelong remission. Some people have been able to basically eliminate the toxins that affect their Hashimoto's, and then reintroduce them once they've had some healing, and still stay in remission. So it just depends on the person.
- Dave: Well, I'm not planning on adding gluten back to my life, given that it lowers cerebral blood flow and it causes so many different problems. If I was starving to death, I would totally eat gluten. But no, I'm not starving, and I'm going to eat the stuff that makes me kick the most ass, and that includes not pissing off my thyroid gland again.

Izabella: I agree with you fully.

Dave: Are you still on thyroid medication yourself?

Izabella: I am. Some people are able to regenerate their thyroid tissue completely. Once they get their antibodies into the remission state, their thyroid tissue starts to regenerate. Mine has been regenerating very slowly, so I am working actually on my next ... My next big project is a Hashimoto's protocol. Part of that is I'm working on technology that regenerates tissue at a faster rate.

Dave: Have you tried shining cold lasers on your thyroid?

Izabella: Well, so you're giving away some of my research.

Dave: Oh, I would hate to do that. I'm sorry. I had no idea that you were doing that. But I will tell you that on occasion I might have done that myself, and it works. But if you overdo it you'll get heart palpitations and feel crappy. If you're listening in your car, I just shined a laser on my thyroid. Not like a pen laser, but a medical laser. Okay. Sorry. Didn't mean to steal your thunder there. Do tell what you can tell that's not in your book.

Izabella: There's this awesome technology that can regenerate thyroid tissue, and they've done clinical trials on that in foreign countries, in Brazil. People have been able to get off of their thyroid medication. They have done trials of maybe about 100 people at this time. This is something that I'm going to be writing about in greater detail in the next book.

Dave: Why do all the best clinical trials happen outside the US now?

Izabella: I think there are a lot of laws that pertain to clinical trials, and they cost a lot of money. It's almost, it's just so hard to get a clinical trial, unless you're a big pharmaceutical company that has billions of dollars, unfortunately.

Dave: In my work in the quantified self realm, back in around 2003, I was with a company that had a stick-on cardiac monitor. It went through a mobile phone with blue tooth and would go up to the cloud. This was way

before the wrist band stuff, like very, very early days. We ended up doing clinical trials in Singapore, even though it was a Silicon Valley startup, because there was just not enough money in the universe to do a US based clinical trial. We're kind of getting off the edge of Hashimoto's here. But when you talk about new technologies that make such a difference like that, I'm always kind of sad to see that people in the US or even Canada don't always get access to some of the stuff, because it's getting pushed out because of this very strong regulatory things that have driven up the cost of healthcare. I would like to see more technology for healing tissues, rather than more drugs, become commonplace.

Izabella: Absolutely. I'm right there with you. I hope that this technology, I'd love to try to facilitate making this technology more available to people in the United States. Because so many people have thyroid conditions. Like we said, Synthroid is the best-selling drug. Or it was last year. We'll see what the stats are for this year.

Dave: I still take a low dose of Synthroid. I take about 44 mcg in the morning. In your work with autoimmunity, there's all kinds of autoimmunity. Are there other things that you often find in people who have Hashimoto's? The percentage of people with some autoimmune condition is, what? A third to a half of people with 1 type of autoimmunity, would you say? I've seen statistics, but I don't know which ones are right.

Izabella: I see so many statistics out there. A conservative statistic is to say 1 in 5. But I think there are so many more than just 1 in 5 people. When you look around, and when you think about all of these new disorders that have been recently classified as autoimmune. Recently I found out that hypertension had autoimmune origins, so elevated blood pressure. This was a shock to me.

Dave: It's so interesting, because some things can have some autoimmune causes and some environmental causes. They just get lumped together. "Well, your blood pressure's high." But understanding which of them are autoimmune and which ones aren't is amazing. Tom O'Brien, who I think you've met Tom probably, was on the show earlier. He's the guy who did the gluten summit, and a good friend. When we talk about this,

they did this amazing study of military blood. The military does crazy stuff like store everyone's blood that they've taken, and then they look at it years later.

Someone had the good thinking to go through and look at autoimmune markers in the blood, and they figured out they could predict things like Alzheimer's, and lupus, 7 to 10 years before they came on, just by looking at when the body got turned against itself. So if you have Hashimoto's, do you think it's much more likely that you're also going to have, say, your immune system attacking the lining of your nerves, or attacking your pancreas, or attacking your brain? Do you have statistics or knowledge of that?

Izabella: Absolutely. Whenever somebody develops 1 autoimmune condition, they're automatically at greater risk for developing another condition. When I was first diagnosed, that was something that was really scary to me, that I was going to be monitored for lupus and rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis, and that I was at greater risk for all of those things. You'll see people who don't really take the thyroid very seriously, and they'll say, "Oh, it's just a thyroid condition. I just need to take some medications, or I just need to get my thyroid removed." Then later on, they'll get another autoimmune condition, because the immune system continues to be out of balance, and the immune system, autoimmunity is progressive, unfortunately, in many cases.

Dave: Why is there so much more autoimmunity going on now than before?

Izabella: It's a really complicated question, but if I had to, I guess if I had to put my money on it, I would link it back to the environment of our gut. Recent research has shown that there are 3 things that are necessary to develop an autoimmune condition. You need the genetic predisposition, which you and I have, and a lot of people have the predisposition for the different autoimmune conditions. The second part is you need to have some sort of a trigger. The trigger could be something like a viral infection, a bacterial infection. It could be a toxin. Of course, we have a lot more toxin in our world now than we used to as cavewomen and cavemen.

Then the third piece of the puzzle is that we have intestinal permeability. So then somewhere along the lines, our intestines really help our immune system develop and grow. When we have the intestinal permeability, then these triggers are able to interact with our genes and cause a gene expression of the autoimmunity. Some of the reasons for the intestinal permeability are going to be things like an imbalance of gut bacteria. Nowadays we take lots of antibiotics. We eat a lot of starchy foods, which encourage the growth of 1 type of bacteria. We eat a lot of gluten, which I'm sure you and Tom had a chance to talk about, causes intestinal permeability, when people eat it.

Dave: Do you think that emotional or environmental stress plays a role as well? Like are people who are under enormous emotional strain, when they're exposed to this toxin, are they more likely to get autoimmunity?

Izabella: Absolutely. This is really interesting, because most autoimmune conditions ... Science, when you look at scientific studies, and I love to just scour Pub Med for these things, you'll find that most autoimmune conditions will be preceded by a very stressful time in the person's life. This is not a surprise. What happens when you have a lot of stress, your secretory IgA, which is something that basically protects your stomach lining from foreign invaders, that gets depleted. So then we're at greater risk for getting infections that occur in our gut. When you think about having a really particularly stressful time in your life, a lot of times you feel it in your stomach.

I know my uncle got in a really bad car accident 1 day, and I found out about it, and I just immediately got sick. What's really interesting is that the bacteria in our gut, they can sense the expression of different cytokines. It's almost like if you are under a lot of stress, they're kind of hatching a plan to take over and get into your blood stream, and cause this intestinal permeability. So it's really important to manage your emotions and try to reduce your stressors. Living in today's world, we're constantly in a state of fight and flight.

Dave: There may be an amygdala connection. The amygdala's one of those very primitive brain structures that's responsible for some of the fight or flight, and the very basic survival things. One of the very unusual

ways of going after multiple chemical sensitivities, these times when your immune system's just going wacky, is actually teaching the amygdala to be calm, which is a whole different ball of wax. And also this stuff hasn't been clinically trialed, but I've met a couple of people now who have gone through many hours of strange meditations around their amygdala, who have had transformative immune changes because of what they did to teach their immune systems to be calm.

When I look back on my life, I was constantly in a state of fight or flight, largely because, strangely enough, I was born with the cord wrapped around my neck. I didn't have blood flow cut off to my brain or anything, but when you're born thinking there's something choking you, it generally sets you up as an animal to be like, this is not a very friendly world I came into. It's a random thing, but none of this is thinking stuff. This is all very low level immune system. So until I learned how to calm my nervous system, I was in a state of walking around like everything could kill me. I'm like, yeah, you want to fight? Or should I get ready to run away?

I think that actually has a lot to do with the fact that I had arthritis at 14 in my knees, and I always had these autoimmune conditions. Plus, I had the good fortune of living in a basement with toxic molds, which really sets up autoimmunity. Do you know much about the correlation between exposure to inhaled spores or toxins and autoimmune conditions.

Izabella: I've seen a lot of people who basically will be triggered. So whether it's asthma or Hashimoto's, they'll be doing great, and then they'll be triggered with having mold in their home, and then they just suffer all of these serious health consequences as a result. That is a tremendous trigger for people.

Dave: It's fascinating to me. I'm filming a documentary right now. I'm producing it, so I'm in the process of flying around and interviewing experts, and finding people who have had an experience similar to mine, because it's such a problem in homes. Not only have we changed our gut biom, we've changed the biom in our homes and in our soil. So the bacteria, and in this case the fungi and yeast, they've actually started

making more toxins that tend to trigger this kind of thing. There's some toxins that will cross-react with the thyroid stuff, some with your pituitary gland, which is like 1 step up from the thyroid, and some even with the hypothalamus.

If you're thinking like a biohacker and you get to know some of these control systems in the body, it's like the hypothalamus influences the pituitary, which influences the thyroid, which influences the adrenals. It's such an amazing, complex system. But we as humans want to hack this to get control of our system, to make it work the way it's supposed to work. But there's these external factors, these molds in the environment that are also hacking them and turning on autoimmunity, and the bacteria in your gut are like, "No, no. We want to be in charge to make sure that this bag of meat that we live in always does what we want."

So it's like there's all these different factors trying to make your body do stuff. For me, I'm like, I just want to be in charge of this body. I'd be so pleased. What are the things people who don't have Hashimoto's might consider doing so that they can stay in the high performance zone.

Izabella: If they don't have Hashimoto's, I would look at trying to figure out what's working for you and what's not working for you. So figuring out what makes you happy, what makes you stressed out, and really looking at those things in a way that you figure out what you're good at and do more of that. Try to outsource what you're not good at. I know with myself, I've never been very good at cleaning. Every since I was a little tiny girl, my mom would always tell me, you need to clean better, you need to clean better, you need to clean better. I used to spend hours and hours of my life just trying to clean. It just was never my thing, and I never enjoyed it. But I was really good at researching. So I eventually got somebody to help me clean, and I was able to dedicate an extra 10 hours a week to researching. That really helped my performance, because I was able to figure out and hack my autoimmune condition that way.

Dave: Imagine if instead you had just spent all that extra time cleaning and hired someone to do research. Nothing would have happened because it wouldn't have been you. I think you made the right choice there. So your

advice for people who want to remain healthy and not turn on autoimmunity is manage stress and basically don't spend ... Don't throw yourself against a brick wall if you're not good at stuff. Focus your time on the things that you love. Any other advice for people who want to not have their body attack itself.

Izabella: I would say definitely the stress component, and try to live in agreement with your body. Try to figure out what kinds of foods your body likes. Your body will tell you right away if it's not happy about something that you're eating. If you have acid reflux, if you have irritable bowel syndrome, if you have acne, those are all signs from your body that something that you're feeding it is not agreeing with you. For example, nuts used to make me go nuts. Every time I would eat nuts, I would have really terrible PMS, and I would break out. I'd have these hormonal breakouts. Then I figured out it was all the almonds I was eating. Eventually, I figured out what my kryptonite was. I had really terrible acid reflux from eating dairy because of the casein. I was very severely reactive to it. So doing things like that will help you feel tremendously better.

Dave: It's funny that you chose the kryptonite word there. Was that intentional? I don't know if you've seen it, but in the new Bulletproof Diet book, I actually have kryptonite foods there on the Bulletproof diet infographic, where I'm like, these foods cause trouble for most people, and these foods are maybe kryptonite, maybe not, depending on who you are, and then these foods generally work for most people and they cause better performance. So I love the way you think about that.

Izabella: That's exactly how I think. I always say that this is my kryptonite. Gluten's my kryptonite. It's something that I stay away from. You didn't see superman trying to take more and more kryptonite and trying to fight against it. That's what I think a lot of people are doing nowadays. They're doing things that maybe deep down they know that they're not good for them, but they just keep doing it. So whether it's going to a job that you hate, sitting in traffic for an hour trying to get somewhere, being in a relationship that is not conducive, not working for you. People put themselves in these situations because they think they need to be a certain way. Everybody eats pizza, so what would happen if I

stopped eating pizza. You really need to be in charge of yourself. Like you said, don't let other people, and don't let the microbes around you control you. Take charge of your own health.

Dave: Imagine if Lois Lane, Superman's girlfriend, had a little kryptonite ring, and was like, "Oh, I have some kryptonite air freshener," and sprayed a little bit around the house, and some kryptonite little other thingies, I'll put one in the car. All of the sudden Superman's like, "Man, I feel bad a lot of the time, and I have no idea why." I kind of think that a lot of people who aren't just feeling full of energy all the time. By the way, that's most people I talk to now. Like, I don't feel good sometimes and I don't know why. There's these little things. Superman could be like, "Well, maybe it's the ring," which would be unlikely. But he's like, okay. He says, "Well, that's not it because I got rid of the ring, and still it happens some of the time." So it's multifactorial. There's multiple things.

In my experience, if you want to really hack how you feel, the only legitimate way to do it is to eliminate everything that you can think of that's likely inhibiting your performance. See how amazing you feel. And then add them back in and see which ones knock you off. Some of them can take 4 or even 10 days in really rare extremes. If you try something on Friday, you might feel fine for 2 days, and then feel bad another couple days later. Do you know why it takes that long for us to get that feedback for things that are making us weak?

Izabella: In terms of foods, a lot of us have heard of food allergies. That's an anaphylactic reaction where your throat swells up. You can't breathe. You get hives. Think of the movie My Girl when the boy gets stung by a bee. That's the anaphylactic reaction. That's one part of your immune system called the IgE response. But there are other kinds of responses that your immune system makes. The one for food sensitivities, which is what we're talking about here, is the IgG response. This is a different branch of the immune system, and that can take a few days to manifest, so that's not going to be immediate. The symptoms you're going to see are not going to be that anaphylactic reaction. I can't breathe. I'm choking. I'm getting rashes all over. You're going to see mild symptoms, sometimes severe symptoms. I know for me, dairy caused me to have acid reflux and cough and a burning sensation in my gut. Gluten caused

a lot of tingling. I had bilateral carpal tunnel, so I had double hand braces.

Dave: I did too! That's so weird.

Izabella: You had that too.

Dave: Yeah, I used to have to drive with these 2 little braces on. It was the dorkiest thing ever. This was like going back to the mid 90s. But it's gone now. Okay, sorry. Didn't mean to interrupt. But that's totally surprising.

Izabella: I had that. Within 2 months of getting off of gluten, my carpal tunnel went away. With the dairy, it took me ... I had this acid reflux for 3 years, so I pretty much slept upright. I had really bad coughing. I would be talking to somebody at the pharmacy, telling them how to use their medications, and then I would say, "Excuse me," and I'd start coughing and go puke in the back. It was really, really bad. Seriously, after getting off of dairy, after 3 days, off of gluten and dairy, I was like, "Oh my goodness. What happened to my chronic cough and acid reflux?" I had stacks of Tums. I had been on proton pump inhibitors. I was taking Pepcid. I wasn't eating any tomatoes. I wasn't drinking any wine. I was just trying to do everything that my gastroenterologist told me to do. I just was miserable.

But yeah, some people will eliminate 1 thing. I'll hear somebody that says, "I got off of gluten, and I still have all of those symptoms." Well, it's not always just the gluten. Sometimes you might have multiple food sensitivities. So gluten, dairy, soy, eggs, nightshades, nuts and seeds, are some of the most common foods that can cause you reactions. Some people might also have really strange reactions. I was really sensitive to pineapple, out of all things. One thing you can do is do an elimination diet, where you just eat really clean for 2 weeks, and then you'll introduce 1 food at a time. So maybe on day 1 you introduce eggs, and then you wait 4 days. Then you'll introduce dairy, and then you wait 4 days.

The other thing I like to recommend ... I had read about the gluten-free diet for about a year, and about the dairy-free diet for 6 months. I was like, "Okay, I'm going to do it next week. Okay, I'm going to do it next week." There was never a really great time to start. I actually got food sensitivity testing.

Dave: Yeah. I recommend that for people who can afford it.

Izabella: For people that can afford it. The 1 lab I like is called Alletess Lab, and it's IgG testing.

Dave: How do you spell that?

Izabella: A-L-L-E-T-E-S-S. Basically, I got my test results in black and white, and they said, you're reacting to pineapple. You're reacting to cashews. You're reacting to gluten and dairy. It took that years of hesitation of, is it going to work, is it not going to work? Should I do it? Should I not do it? For me, it really helped to see it in black and white. That was really what made me take that plunge. You could save yourself a lot of money if you just do an elimination diet.

Dave: Back in the mid 90s when I was working on hacking a lot of this, I did exhaustive elimination diets, but they're very complex, require a lot of tracking, and they take months to do right, because for this amount of time you don't have food from this category. Now wait, was the artichoke heart, was that okay? What I did, because a lot of the things that have transformed my body and turned my brain on, and just enabled me to do some of the things I've been able to do, they're not accessible to a lot of people, including testing that runs about \$300 or \$400 for food sensitivity panels.

There's a free app. It's called Food Sense, and I put it out there. It's not as good as a full allergy panel, but we've got about 50,000 people using it now, and more every day. It's on the iPhone only, and yes, it's coming for Android soon. There's a whole development team working on it. But what it's doing is it's looking at the change in heart rate before and after a meal. You probably know about this because of your training, but your heartbeat will go up by 16 beats per minute within 90

minutes of a meal. If something in the meal was kryptonite for you, it doesn't mean it's going to tell you what it was, but if you're like, "Every time I put pineapple or almonds in my meal, I get this response," then pretty soon you can zoom in.

So it's faster than an elimination diet, and it let's you track whether that restaurant actually put MSG in the meal when they said they didn't, if you're sensitive to MSG, and things like that. I want to bring this knowledge, because my experience of the world is that when I sit down at dinner and I look around me, and I look at people, you can spot the ones with autoimmune conditions, because their faces are a little bit puffier. They're skin's bad. Like, "I don't have an autoimmune condition, but I've had this rash for 10 years." I'm like, "Yeah, that would be autoimmunity towards your skin." So it's an endemic problem.

I know very few people who are walking around like, "I'm in great, amazing shape. I feel good all the time." For those people, I'm like, I really, really think your grandma kicked ass, because that's how you got those genes. If you want to swap genes, I'm down. Otherwise, thought, for the rest of us, how are we going to do all the cool stuff we could do without knowing when we're sniffing kryptonite? Any thoughts on other stuff people can do if they don't want to trigger autoimmunity, besides eliminate stress and don't eat trigger foods? You're writing books about this. Any other thoughts? I want to know. Maybe I'm not doing all the stuff I could do. If people are driving, I don't want to cause paranoia either, but it's a major issue for people. So what are the other avoid things, or your other do things on your list of importance.

Izabella: Just trying to live a much cleaner lifestyle. There's really a lot of ... This really upsets me, but you know how they put all of these things in our plastics, and all of these, they put fluoride in our waters and in our toothpaste. There's so many different endocrine disruptors within our everyday life. Using BPAs in our plastics, they can cross-react with thyroid tissue. There are halogens, halogenated kind of compounds, so bromine that is added to our breads, that can cross-react with thyroid tissue. There are a lot of these different things in processed foods, and air fresheners that can actually cross-react with thyroid tissue. A lot of

our shampoos with all kinds of gunk and junk in them, they can cause you problems.

I know that I was using every product known to man, because I was reading these magazines that were telling me that I wasn't pretty enough, or I wasn't smart enough, and I needed to buy every single shampoo to make myself much better. We end up, the average woman ends up with so much stuff in her bathroom. I don't know what the average is, I think something like 100 or 200 items. I recently read an article about that. We're putting all of this chemistry on ourselves, and we're absorbing it. You're really looking at all of that stuff you're putting on your skin is getting into your bloodstream. That's basic pharmacology. You're going to absorb that, and it's going to bypass the liver, so it's going to go directly into your bloodstream, and that can cross-react with your thyroid tissues, and that can cause damage.

So I really recommend using organic products on your body, and trying not to use toxic cleaning supplies, using a water filter, a reverse osmosis filter to try to get down your levels of fluoride in your water, as well as doing a fluoride-free toothpaste. Fluoride actually used to be used to suppress thyroid function back in the day. Before they invented drugs for hyperthyroidism, they used to give people fluoride.

Dave: Now, you're advocating this for people who are in general good health, not just people who are sick and have Hashimoto's?

Izabella: I absolutely do, because I think we need to have a balance in life. We just get bombarded with chemistry on a daily basis. Whether that's from the car exhaust outside, or from the new plastic bed you have in your house. There's all of these different things that are coming at you. The greener you can live, the better off you'll be. I'm not suggesting everybody walk around barefoot and live somewhere in the forest, but you can definitely clean up, starting with your house, starting within your sleeping space. You spend a lot of time in your home sleeping. Think about what you're inhaling. Think about what you're putting on your body.

Dave: I recommend people spray extra flame retardants on their mattress and douse their bedrooms in fabric softener and other chemicals like synthetic perfumes.

Izabella: Febreze, yeah. Unfortunately, the flame retardants in ... so really great thing for people that smoke in bed, right? So they put these flame retardants in our beds, in our mattresses.

Dave: Especially babies, because babies smoke in bed all the time. That's why baby mattresses are soaked in the stuff.

Izabella: Right. If you drop a cigarette on your bed, you're not going to catch on fire, which is wonderful. But for most of us that are health conscious, and that don't smoke, we're actually getting exposed to the chemicals in that, and unfortunately they do cross-react with thyroid tissue as well. So exposure to those chemicals specifically has been found as a potential trigger for autoimmune thyroid disease.

Dave: So in case people didn't catch my sarcasm there, obviously all of those things are bad that I just mentioned. I didn't know that the flame retardants cross-reacted to trigger thyroid autoimmunity. I do know that they reduce fertility, and that they have a chance of reducing infant intelligence. That was something that we wrote about in the better baby book. It sounds weird. You're like, okay, I'm a relatively healthy man or woman, and I'm feeling pretty good, but I want to feel better. I want to do more. The degree of flame retardant chemicals in your mattress is a variable that's invisible to you.

If, let's say, you're feeling really good, and all of a sudden you get fired, or there's a death in the family, or an emotional stressor happens that you're not expecting, and you get a viral infection. Now you've got this other invisible thing in your mattress. Well, maybe that's enough to push you over that limit where your immune system's like, "Oh yeah, I'm going to go to town on you." Then turning that off can take an enormous amount of time. That's kind of a trivial example, but that's the reason that Izabella and I are both talking about taking basic steps to have a cleaner environment increases resilience.

What other hints might you have, besides clean environment, emotions, avoiding trigger foods? I know I'm digging deep here. Those are 3 big categories. Anything else floating around out there that comes to mind for you?

Izabella: You know clean eating. The other thing I recommend is for people to invest in themselves and invest in their health. Doing things ... I see women all the time, and I used to be one of them, that would spend \$500 on a pair of shoes, or \$1,000 on a new purse. It's good for 1 season. Then it goes out of style. Then you don't use it anymore. You're going to have the digestive system that you have now for the rest of your life. So if you have any of these symptoms like acid reflux, or irritable bowel syndrome, or slight joint pains, or if you're not feeling well, if you're feeling off, you're not feeling 100% of your game, I would encourage you to do some functional medicine testing.

So looking at your gut. I recommend doing, and this is kind of embarrassing for some people, but it's very important, is doing stool testing to see what kind of level of good bacteria versus bad bacteria you have, as well as if you have something growing inside of you that can potentially disrupt your intestinal lining. There are different pathogens that may sort of sit dormant for 5 to 7 years. Eventually they'll cause IBS, and eventually that will lead to autoimmunity. The common story is, someone will have a period of high stress, and then they have food poisoning, or they have this bout of really bad diarrhea. They just feel really crappy for a day or 2, or 3, sometimes longer.

Then everything kind of comes back to normal. They feel pretty good for 5 to 10 years. All of a sudden they maybe have another period of stress, and all of a sudden they start getting joint pains, or they might start getting IBS, and all of these little subtle things that you don't really take seriously. The pathogens, they can actually cause intestinal permeability. I think a lot of people will say, we're using parasites to help reduce autoimmunity, or modulate the autoimmune system. You hear these very common headlines in the news. I think that's really cool. But you have to keep in mind that that's just 1 type of pathogen.

So just like there are good bacteria and bad bacteria, there are good parasites and bad parasites. Some of them can cause intestinal permeability. Some of them can help heal your gut, and help protect your gut. Knowing what's growing inside of you, I think, is something that is really, really important, and looking at prevent before it develops into something further. IBS is something that precedes autoimmunity for 5 to 7 years, sometimes 10. I know I had IBS. I got IBS around age 21, and then all of a sudden it was just a little bit worse, a little bit worse. Of course you think, oh, I'm stressed out. I'm in school. I've got all these things going on. I'm not going to worry about that. But yeah, you should be worried about it, if there's something off about you right now. Let's talk about prevention. It's so much easier to prevent the damage on your thyroid than it is to grow a thyroid back.

Dave: Very well said.

Izabella: Unless you've got a laser.

Dave: Yeah, unless you've got a laser. That's right. We are on the brink of a whole bunch of new technologies that change the way cell membranes work, the way cells regenerate, the way signaling molecules work. It's probably the most exciting time for ... I don't even know if you can call this medicine. Electrical medicine? I don't know what to call it. But I have this fascinating collection of devices, half of which probably the FDA's never even heard of, but that people somewhere have made and sent me and whatnot. I've found there's things that are possible that shouldn't be possible, according to traditional things. I couldn't be more excited to read your next book when you talk about making things happen that, really it's not a drug, it's not just an exercise, but it's a device that took control of parts of your body and made things happen.

We're coming up on the end of the show, Izabella, and there's a question that I ask everyone on the show, and one I'm really interested to hear what you say for. The question is, given everything you know, not just in your books or whatnot, but your whole life experience, your top 3 pieces of advice for people who want to perform better. If you want to kick more ass, do these 3 things. I don't mean perform athletically, just perform in life, whatever it is you're here to do.

Izabella: Find your kryptonite. It's like you're saying. Basically figure out what's causing you harm, and what's making you happier, what's making you less happier. You could just start off by going with a list, making a list and say, makes me feel better, makes me feel worse. So whether that's toxic people, whether that's cleaning your house, whether that's your job. Whatever's making you unhappy, it's okay to let it go. If the news makes you stressed out, let it go.

The second thing would be really investing in yourself. Take some money that you would spend on a nice purse, on a nice pair of shoes, and do some of this functional medicine testing. If there's something off about you, make sure that you invest in yourself.

The third thing is, really do all the knowledge to take charge of your own health. Learn as much as you can. Don't let somebody else tell you that there's nothing wrong with you, that you're a hypochondriac, or that you don't deserve to get better, or that you should feel guilty because other people are starving and all you have is a little of weight gain, or a little bit of a rash. Take charge of your health and don't let anybody else tell you that you can't get better.

I guess the third would be find somebody who's as weird as you, and that you can share your passions with them, somebody who appreciates you for you. That just makes life so much easier than trying to be somebody else, or trying to please somebody else. Somebody who gets you. I think that makes life so much better.

Dave: That's classic. In about 130 episodes there's common themes, but find someone as weird as you is not a common theme. That's a way cool one. I love it. Izabella, where can people learn about your existing books and any new projects you're working on. Where can they catch up with you about your work.

Izabella: They can go to thyroidpharmacist.com. I have a blog that I update on a weekly basis. I have lots of research on Hashimoto's and autoimmunity in general, and how to live a better life that you can find there. I have a book that's available on Amazon. It's the longest title in the whole world. It's Hashimoto's Thyroiditis: Lifestyle Interventions for Finding



and Treating the Root Cause. I guess at least the title is self-explanatory. It's about finding out your triggers and eliminating them so you can put yourself in remission.

Dave: So if you went to Amazon and you typed thyroid Izabella, you'd probably find it, and that's with a z, I-Z-A-B-E-L-L-A.

Izabella: Absolutely. So if you type thyroid, it'll come up too. It'll be like the first or second book.

Dave: Izabella, thanks again for joining the show today all the way from Amsterdam.

Izabella: Thank you for having me. It's been a pleasure.

Dave: If you're looking for a way to know which foods are making you weak, check out the free app called Bulletproof Food Sense. You do this before a meal, and you do it after a meal a couple times. Based on changes in your heart rate, the application can help you to identify which foods are causing an immune response in your body.

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