

What Is Leaky Gut And How Can You Treat It? with Dr. Elizabeth Boham

Most of us (including most doctors) do not recognize or know that digestive problems wreak havoc in the entire body, leading to allergies, arthritis, autoimmune disease, rashes, acne, chronic fatigue, mood disorders, autism, dementia, cancer, and more. So having a healthy gut means more than simply being free of annoyances like bloating or heartburn. It is absolutely central to your health. It is connected to everything that happens in your body. That is why Functional Medicine almost always starts helping people treat chronic health problems by fixing their gut.

In this mini-episode, Dr. Hyman is joined by Dr. Elizabeth Boham to review two patient cases focused on treating the gut.

Elizabeth Boham is a physician and nutritionist who practices functional medicine at [The UltraWellness Center](#) in Lenox, MA. Through her practice and lecturing she has helped thousands of people achieve their goals of optimum health and wellness. She witnesses the power of nutrition every day in her practice and is committed to training other physicians to utilize nutrition in healing. Dr. Boham has contributed to many articles and wrote the latest chapter on Obesity for the Rankel Textbook of Family Medicine. She is part of the faculty of the Institute for Functional Medicine and has been featured on the Dr. Oz show and in a variety of publications and media including Huffington Post, The Chalkboard Magazine, and Experience Life. Her DVD Breast Wellness: Tools to Prevent and Heal from Breast Cancer explores the functional medicine approach to keeping your breasts and whole body well.

In this episode, Dr. Hyman and Dr. Boham discuss:

- What is leaky gut, and why does it lead to so many other health issues, including food sensitivities?
- How our diet, food supply, over-reliance on antibiotics, acid blockers, steroids, and more can lead to leaky gut
- Using stool testing and Cyrex testing to assess gut health.
- The '5R' program (remove, replace, reinoculate, repair, and rebalance) that Functional Medicine uses as a guide to treat chronic issues.
 - Remove stressors: get rid of things that negatively affect the environment of the GI tract including allergic foods and parasites or other bad bugs such as bacteria or yeast. This might involve using an allergy "elimination diet" to find out what foods are causing GI symptoms or it may involve taking drugs or herbs to eradicate a particular bug.

- Replace digestive secretions: add back things like digestive enzymes, hydrochloric acid, and bile acids that are required for proper digestion and that may be compromised by diet, drugs, diseases, aging, or other factors.
 - Reinoculate. Help beneficial bacteria flourish by ingesting probiotic foods or supplements that contain the so-called “good” GI bacteria such as bifidobacteria and lactobacillus species, and by consuming the high soluble fiber foods that good bugs like to eat, called “prebiotics.” Probiotics are beneficial microorganisms found in the gut that are also called “friendly bacteria.” Use of antibiotics kills both good and bad bacteria. Probiotics in the form of supplements or food are needed to re-inoculate the gut. Fermented foods, such as yogurt, miso, and tempeh are food sources of probiotics. Prebiotics are nondigestible food ingredients that selectively stimulate the growth of beneficial microorganisms already in the colon. In other words, prebiotics feed probiotics. Prebiotics are available in many foods that contain a fiber called inulin, including artichokes, garlic, leeks, onion, chicory, tofu, and other soy products. Grains such as barley, flax, oats, and wheat are also good sources of prebiotics. Another good prebiotic source is a supplement called “fructo-oligosaccharide” or FOS.
 - Repair. Help the lining of the GI tract repair itself by supplying key nutrients that can often be in short supply in a disease state, such as zinc, antioxidants (e.g. vitamins A, C, and E), fish oil, and the amino acid glutamine.
 - Rebalance. Pay attention to lifestyle choices – sleep, exercise and stress can all affect the GI tract.
- For more information visit drhyman.com/uwc

Additional resources:

“Is Your Digestive System Making You Sick, and Fat?”

<https://drhyman.com/blog/2010/05/20/is-your-digestive-system-making-you-sick/>

“How to Feed Your Gut”

<https://drhyman.com/blog/2018/04/13/how-to-feed-your-gut/>

“A New Approach to Autoimmune Disease”

<https://ultrawellnesscenter.com/2018/06/27/a-new-approach-to-autoimmune-disease/>

“Lab Spotlight: Testing for Food Sensitivities”

<https://ultrawellnesscenter.com/2019/09/27/lab-spotlight-testing-for-food-sensitivities/>

“The Wrong Gut Bugs Can Make You Fat and Sick (and How to Fix Them)”

<https://ultrawellnesscenter.com/2017/09/21/the-wrong-gut-bugs-can-make-you-fat-and-sick-and-how-to-fix-them/>

“Top 5 Diet Changes for Autoimmunity”

<https://ultrawellnesscenter.com/2017/06/30/top-5-diet-changes-for-autoimmunity/>

“Gut & Digestive Health”

<https://ultrawellnesscenter.com/2012/10/17/lesson-4-gut-digestive-health/>