

Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

PWE21: Holistic Healing After Lupron

Aubree: Welcome to the Peace With Endo Podcast. My name's Aubree Deimler. I am an author and wellness coach who helps women with endometriosis to naturally manage pain, increase energy and find Peace with Endo.

This is episode number 21 and on the show today we have Keaira from My Endometriosis Diary. She's a fellow endo sister and advocate. She's a health and wellness blogger who's here to help and provide support for other endo sisters. I'm so excited that she's here to share some of what's worked for her. Thanks for being here Keaira.

Keaira: Thank you for having me Aubree. I appreciate it.

Aubree: So, can you tell us a little bit more about what yourself?

Keaira: Yes. Well I'm from Detroit and I'm an endo advocate, meaning that I just advocate for myself and many other women who are struggling with endometriosis or who are battling endometriosis. I began this journey a few years after I got diagnosed. My journey began with a series of ovarian cysts, and I did have to have those surgically removed. I had a surgery in April of 2009 to remove a 10-centimeter ovarian cyst on my left ovary, and then I still have some issues in between with the cysts and I ended up having another procedure done in November of the same year and that was kind of challenging.

I actually had a torsion that year, or that particular time, and you know I was looking for answers. My fiancé was looking for answers. He constantly was researching before it really was a thing to do, like around the same time that you began your research, because I know you started about two years before he did if I'm estimating that right?

They went in and tried to remove the ovarian cyst, and they tried to untwist the ovary. Now this time it was growing on my right ovary, and they thought everything was fine, and then a month later I had to go back in because there was no blood flow going to this right ovary. So it kind of flip-flopped. First surgery was left. The second

was the right, and along with the following surgery, the one that was done a month later in December they removed the fallopian tube and right ovary, and I had another cyst growing on the right side, but we had no idea what endometriosis was at that time. We were just thinking that I was battling ovarian cysts, and my fiancé said, “Well I think you may have endometriosis.”

So, we looked all over for doctors. I went to U of M, St. Joseph, Hutzler Women’s Health, St. John and those are all our local hospitals, and they’re all teaching hospitals, and by the time we got to this other doctor who did an exploratory laparoscopy they discovered that I had stage four endometriosis. It was everywhere from the intestines to the rectum and I had to have another surgery of the following year to go in and untangle my left ovary and fallopian tube from my bowels, and ever since then he’s got me on this health journey. I began blogging and you know his holistic background has really influenced me having an interest in holistic healing.

Aubree: That’s awesome. That’s great that it was your fiancé that starting advocating for you. I think that’s great.

Keairra: Yes. Absolutely.

Aubree: We need more partners like that (laughs).

Keairra: Yes we do.

Aubree: So what did you think when you first learned that there was a holistic way of managing endo? How did your journey begin?

Keairra: It began the year I was diagnosed when we started to implement a lot of the things that went along with the endo diet. So, we dropped soy. We dropped red meat, pork, just various items that we took out of our diet, and we started to see some improvement, because it was to the point where if people were coming over to my house just to get out of the bed I had to crawl to the door to let them in.

I slowly began being able to walk on my own again, leave the house when I needed to and he also started me on Dong Quai and Blue Cohosh to begin with, and it’s weird because the actual holistic journey it changes. It changes a lot because when you first get diagnosed they have you on many types of medications: the Lupron, the birth control or the add back therapy meaning that could be birth control or it could be progesterone, and you know you really have to test out these holistic practices when you’re not on the Lupron. You really have to see it because it still is trying to manage a condition, but I felt as if it really didn’t get started until after I came off the Lupron because then you have other things that you’re trying to heal yourself from.

Aubree: Right.

Keairra: Many other things from trying to keep the bones in check. So, you know how they do the bone density scans for people that are on Lupron? I'm actually a rare case. I was on Lupron for two years continuously as opposed to just two to three months, or three to six months.

Aubree: Gotcha. So what was your experience with that?

Keairra: It was to say the least terrible. I probably got down to about 97 pounds. My bones ache, ached really badly even though I didn't have any breakages or you know I didn't break anything. I didn't develop the osteoporosis like they were saying or any other type of bone conditions, but I did begin to have a lot of nerve pain, and that had been going on for awhile, but it got a little bit more worse or it got a little bit worse after the Lupron, but my experience with that was just trying my best to manage it on a day to day basis because it was almost like I had another condition on top of the endometriosis.

Aubree: So, trying to heal then from the medications.

Keairra: Exactly.

Aubree: In addition to endo. That makes sense. You started with the endo diet. How did things evolve from there?

Keairra: Yes. Well the endo diet proceeded up to me doing an alkaline diet, and we actually were going to go to Honduras, but we ended up finding out that this particular herbalist had a location in La Cienega, California. I think it's near LA, and we were able to order these specific herbs, various different tonics, capsules, tinctures, and that really got me started on the holistic journey.

Now I don't go around preaching about a vegan diet, even though a lot of the foods that I eat are categorized as vegan meals, however I did see more progress from that. I was eliminating many toxins and one of the things I wanted to speak about was the digestion because you speak a lot about that on your blog. Digestion plays a huge role in managing endometriosis because we have so much pressure down there. We have to eliminate the estrogens from our body, the toxins, as well as everyone does, but I feel like ours has more impact than other people's because the most brief way to say this is that it helps to decrease the pain, and you're also releasing the toxins that are causing you to have the sharp shooting aches. You still are going to have some discomfort, but it does become easily managed.

Aubree: Yeah. Absolutely. Digestion's so important. It's where the majority of your immune system is.

Keairra: Yes.

Aubree: Everything's so close together in there. I think we forget that, you know, all those reproductive organs. It's right near your gut like everything's crunched in together. So if one thing's inflamed, everything else is going to get inflamed as well.

Keairra: Yes.

Aubree: So what are some things that have helped you with your digestion?

Keairra: Well my first introduction was ginger. That was the first thing that I implemented into my diet that I felt it was actually helping. Now of course you know that ginger is just going to help you flush some things out. You definitely have to be absorbing many other nutrients so I just try my best to eat mostly plant based, so green leafy vegetables help, different omega 3's, which you can also obtain from plants, if possible. Fruits and vegetables, which also are anti-inflammatory, so not only is it helping with me eliminating myself, but it's also helping with keeping the inflammation down, which is one of our top complaints with endometriosis.

Aubree: Absolutely. So, as you were getting going on this holistic journey and making all of these changes did you have any doubts along the way? Did you consider going back to the conventional medical route?

Keairra: I definitely did because sometimes you get a little bit discouraged, but we just continued on our quest even when it came down to still utilizing Western medicine. I still went to pelvic floor therapy and then we just did physical therapy as well. So it still was a challenge. It was like a combination of some Western medicine, but mostly Eastern medicine for sure.

Aubree: I like how the Eastern looks at everything as a whole.

Keairra: Yes.

Aubree: Right? So, what do you think would have happened if you hadn't gone this holistic way, if you had continued to experience those problems, or you know gone with the birth control, Lupron route? Like what do you think would have happened?

Keairra: I probably would have got a hysterectomy. Yeah. I'm sure that probably would have been in the cards, because it's the one thing that they always suggest for people who have repetitive issues from their endometriosis. They just say, Oh why don't we go ahead and cut it out? And like you just said as far as Eastern seeing it as a whole. We both know that if you cut that out that the scar tissue is just going to go somewhere else, and the whole definition of endometriosis is that it's outside of the uterus already so I'm not too sure how they can continue to suggest a hysterectomy when the scar tissue is already outside of the uterus. So, it's kind of confusing to suggest that.

And I feel like women have so many other issues after they have a hysterectomy. They even warn against it from the osteoporosis, which is also caused by the Lupron, or they'll say that the risk of cancer's higher. All sorts of things can occur, and there are rare cases where endometriosis can get in the lungs. It can get in the brain. I literally have seen a woman that whose lung collapses every month when she gets her menstrual cycle.

Aubree: Wow. There's definitely a lot of stuff that can go on, and that's obviously a personal choice whether you're going to have a hysterectomy or not and in some cases it does help a lot of ladies especially if you've got like the adenomyosis, but definitely not the first choice by any means like how they push it.

Keairra: And you know what I wasn't even thinking about that when I stated the hysterectomy because adenomyosis it may be more beneficial for that since it's actually in the muscles.

Aubree: Right.

Keairra: However when it comes to the endometriosis when you're already stage four you know I don't really see much benefit to it because you still have to try your best to manage it on your own and I have seen some women who have a lot of issues afterwards, but I do understand how it can help because they try to minimize it, suggesting a menstrual cycle type condition. So I'm sure that that being gone eliminates that problem or that monthly issue for a lot of women, but a lot of us have pain outside of our menstrual cycle.

Aubree: Right. Definitely. And I'm not a huge advocate for hysterectomy either. I think it's suggested too quickly in the conversation so I'm glad that you brought it up. So, how has endometriosis impacted you more on a mental level? We know that it affects us physically, but how has it impacted you mentally?

Keairra: It has really changed the way that I view things just making me a bit more sensitive. It can cause some depression, which I was diagnosed with. It can just be a challenge literally you're finding out that a part of your life that you may have planned for may not occur. It can be challenging and you can't adapt, however it just it does something to your mental honestly. Like it, it's like a blow to the chest.

Aubree: So what are some things that have helped you along the way with the mental impacts?

Keairra: The mental impacts that I've had were like depression like I was saying. So before I actually got diagnosed with depression I was taking a lot of St. John's Wort and B-12, and more so now I take Magnesium in the form of Calm. I think it's called Magnesium or the actual scientific name is Magnesium Citrate, Holy Basil, just various other herbs that if I feel down I'll take those before I go to sleep and the next day it's... you have a really good outlook.

I'm one of those people who still smiles through pretty much everything that they're going through (laughs) for the most part. So, you know that is also a challenge. You're trying your best to adjust and be as open as you can with your loved ones so they can understand too because another thing with endometriosis that can make you kind of sad is the fact that people can't see it. So that's probably one of the more challenging things to adapt to as opposed to just certain aspects of your goals that may not be able to be obtained.

Aubree: And I think it's Ok to feel as you feel. That's something that took me a long time to learn, because I got really good at numbing those negative type emotions but I think it's Ok to feel those things as they come up and allow them to leave you rather than you know trying to you know sugar coat it like everything's fine, everything's great. It's Ok to feel those feelings that come up with endo and allow them to leave your energy so you can move on.

Keairra: Absolutely.

Aubree: So have you made any other lifestyle changes? It sounds like diet and adding in the herbs. Have you done... made any other lifestyle changes to help with physical and mental impacts?

Keairra: Yes. On a day-to-day basis I do self-hypnosis and that helps tremendously. There are some days that I skip, but for the most part I try my best to do that and trust me I notice a huge difference when I'm not able to do that (laughs). It's very similar to meditation because it's something that you're doing on yourself, as well as meditation. I implemented yoga into my practice right after I was diagnosed.

I do go for walks. Now I don't exercise as much and I don't really consider walking to be exercising, but I do that occasionally. It's just on the light side of things, because I still experience the twisting and torsion feelings so I don't really want to pull too much. Even when I lift weights per say, the next day it literally feels like the times when I've had certain procedures so walking, yoga, meditation, hypnosis, those are my preferences, and we also did a few years of acupuncture. So, that was awesome.

Aubree: Nice. And I definitely think that walking is exercise, at least it is in my book. (laughs) and you know I see this with my husband too who's always like this isn't exercise. We need to be running, and getting our heart rate up, but honestly I think that higher impact exercise isn't always good for those of us with endo, especially if you've got hormonal type issues. So, just throwing that out there I think walking definitely counts.

Keairra: That is very true. I guess I'm saying that in the sense from other people who may think that we're overly stressing ourselves out by going for a walk when you know I hate to go back to this but even in the hospital after procedures and when you've been there for a few days the one thing they make you get up and do is

to walk to get the blood circulating. So, I think it's like imperative that we do that, however, like you said that strenuous exercise that's not for us and then you're changing the hormones when you do that even though people may think that you know the testosterone that you may get from exercising is more beneficial for the endometriosis it may not always be the case.

Aubree: So, it's all about listening to your body, figuring out what works for you.

Keairra: Exactly. Yes.

Aubree: So what words of wisdom can you share with endo sisters who feel like there's no hope?

Keairra: I would say that there is hope. Try your best to find an online support group, either Peace with Endo or even just the spoonie community that's online in any social networking setting. There are tons of support groups, Facebook groups, even the different hashtags that you can type in on Instagram. There is so much. I've found that finding that support actually helped. It helped a lot to be able to reach out to someone that you know you may not know personally but just to gain some knowledge about your condition and how to handle it, to see how other people are handling it. Even though social media can be a bit of a facade for a lot of people, but for people like us that are in the spoonie community, I believe that it can be a great tool.

Aubree: Absolutely. And it's also important to pick and choose I think who you surround yourself with.

Keairra: Absolutely. That's great.

Aubree: Because I know I've struggled with some of the support groups out there that... it's easy to get negative, right? When you're dealing with such a painful condition.

Keairra: That is very true.

Aubree: So be aware of who you surround yourself with and thank you for the shout out on my group. I do have a group called Finding Peace with Endo on Facebook. I try to keep it positive if ladies are looking for a space. So Keairra how can our listeners connect with you further?

Keairra: You guys can connect with me on Instagram: @myendometriosisdiary. As well as on YouTube: same name My Endometriosis Diary, blog spot and Facebook.

Aubree: Awesome. Do you have any final words of wisdom for our listeners?

Keairra: I would suggest taking your health as serious as possible. Don't beat yourself up if you feel like things are challenging. Things are not supposed to be as easy as we think they are, you know, be patient with yourself, and try to eat better because it will definitely help you feel better mentally and physically.

Aubree: Absolutely. Food is so important. Well thank you so much for being on the show today and sharing some of your story with us.

Keairra: Thank you for having me Aubree. I appreciate it so much.

Aubree: If you enjoyed this episode I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. If you want to connect with me further you can find me at peacewithendo.com or on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. I hope that you find some peace in your day today. Sending you so much love. Bye for now.

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