

Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

PWE43: Advocating for Better Endometriosis Care with Meg Bateman

Aubree: Hi, love. This is episode 43 of the *Peace with Endo Podcast*. I'm your host, Aubree Deimler. I am an author, coach and energy healer who helps women with endometriosis to naturally manage pain, increase energy and find peace with endo. On the show today I chatted with Meg Bateman, a fellow endo sister that I connected with in a Facebook support group that's all about holistic management of endometriosis. Meg is super knowledgeable about endo and how to manage it naturally. She works with brands in the wellness and allergy-friendly fields to help them with their social media strategy.

On the show today we chatted about the Autoimmune Protocol or AIP: what that entails and how it can help with endometriosis and other chronic conditions. How the emotional component, being an empath and relationships impacts life with chronic illness and how to handle that. Why it's important for us to speak up, educate and advocate for better research and care for endometriosis, and overcoming fear and creating change in your life that serves your body so that you can experience better health. So without further adieu, I hope you enjoy the show.

Hey Meg thanks so much for being on the show today.

Meg: Well thanks for having me. I'm honored.

Aubree: So let's go back to the start of your journey with endo. Do you remember how you were feeling back then? What you were thinking?

Meg: So my diagnosis story is a little bit different from most women. It wasn't, you know, going to doctor to doctor with pain and being written off like so many women end up going through. Mine was actually by accident. About 13 months ago I was in Oregon for my sister's graduation from high school and I woke up with what I thought was ovulation pain. Then we get back to California. I see my naturopath and she's like well it could just have been... I think the word is mittelschmerz, but if you want to have an ultrasound let's go ahead and do that.

So I had an ultrasound and they discovered an eight-centimeter ovarian cyst. I was like OK well I want to go the natural route. I want to take bioidentical progesterone and try and shrink it that way, because I didn't, you know, chronic anxiety. I didn't want to go through surgery. I also didn't want to have to try and find a surgeon and all of that I wanted to avoid it as much as possible. Well that was the first week of July when we confirmed that there was an eight-centimeter cyst, and then the second week of August we were in Monterey on the ocean, or coast in California and all the sudden like I couldn't move. I was in a ton of pain. I probably should have gone to the ER, but I didn't because eventually it passed and I just thought Ok it's really bad period cramps because back then I didn't realize having horrible pain with your period is not normal. I was raised on Midol, you know, it was... I was taught that period pain was normal.

So I go to the ER when I get back home the next day by myself, husband's at work. I figured Ok it might be an ovarian torsion, which my naturopath warned me about. I need to have it looked at. So of course the doctor tells me it's appendicitis we're having you do a CT scan and I'm like no I have an ovarian cyst. I'm pretty sure that's what the pain is. I need an ultrasound to see if my ovary's turned over. So they ignore me. They do the CT scan and the eight-centimeter cyst has grown to twelve centimeters, so it's pretty obvious at this point that it needs to come out and I went with the first OB that they referred me to even though this doctor basically yelled at me right before the surgery and refused to talk to me. He would only talk to my husband. I was in so much pain. I didn't care, and he told me right before surgery well your CA-125 is elevated. That means you either have endometriosis or this is ovarian cancer and then they wheel me into surgery, great bedside manner.

And he told me if it were endometriosis he would see me in a week and he would give me something for that, so I didn't think that they would give me anything if they found endometriosis that was just, you know, remove the cyst. Go home, recover. Well come to find out when I was waking up in recovery the nurse gave me a shot and I thought Ok that's just for pain or something, but he actually had them give me the first monthly shot of Lupron, and Lupron for those who don't know what it is, it basically shuts off your pituitary gland so that you can't produce estrogen or testosterone and a couple of other things and so the thinking is that it'll stop the disease and some doctors, like this surgeon claimed, it would shed endometriosis tissue. Well it doesn't do any of that because the endometriosis tissue produces it's own estrogen, so Lupron is just basically putting you through chemical menopause with a whole bunch of the side effects of menopause and no real benefit for endometriosis except some symptom relief for some women, which didn't happen for me.

So, that was how I got diagnosed. It was a horrible, horrible experience, but because it was a horrible experience it's really driven me to connect with other women with endometriosis and help them avoid going through what I went through and advocate for themselves.

Aubree: So he didn't actually ask you if you wanted that? He just gave it to you?

Meg: Yeah. He just put it in the orders like he had me thinking that the give me something, quotations there, would be at my one week follow-up. It wasn't here's what the options are, pick from it, which is what I wanted and I made it very clear to him that I have chronic anxiety. I have complex PTSD. I didn't want birth control or anything like that. I wanted my hormones to go to their natural levels, where they needed to be, so he knew ahead of time I would have disagreed to this, and he gave it to me anyways.

Aubree: Wow. So what was your experience then after with the Lupron?

Meg: So, I had horrible, horrible hot flashes. The depression was pretty much the worst I've ever experienced and that's with having a history of PTSD due to sexual assault when I was a teenager so for it to be that bad was just life-altering and when I met with him at my one-week follow-up and this was one week. That's all it took for my whole life to pretty much fall apart mentally. He's like, Oh it's not possible. It doesn't affect that area of your brain (laughs).

Aubree: Wow.

Meg: It's like nope. It kind of does. (laughs)

Aubree: So I assume then that you decided to take more of the holistic approach, or I suppose I assume that since I know you, so...

Meg: Yeah.

Aubree: So, what inspired you then to follow more of the holistic way?

Meg: Well prior to my diagnosis I was already very much into taking a naturopathic approach to my health and that happened about five years ago when I was on birth control and I was realizing that pretty much all of the horrible things going on with my health were linked to that and my general practitioner at the time basically laughed me out of his office saying it's not possible birth control, you know, it's not going to do all these things to you. You've pretty much put yourself in a corner and so I was like Ok if a conventional doctor is going to treat me this way and not take the time to look at what's going on with my symptoms and figure out the root cause, I'm going to find a doctor who does that.

And so I found a local naturopathic doctor who is known nationally for being really great with the endocrine system especially women's fertility, and I went and saw her. This was, yeah, five years ago, and she's been my primary doctor ever since and because I saw great improvements with my health and going off of birth control, addressing my thyroid, and a whole bunch of other things I knew that was the route I wanted to take when it came to endometriosis.

Aubree: So what has helped you feel better along the way?

Meg: So, I was one of those who didn't have the constant crippling pain like it was only during my period and I thought that that was normal like I never have pain during sex. I've never had... oh what are some of the other things? Well I've had chronic fatigue, but I always thought that that was my thyroid. I have a luteal phase defect, like all of that I thought was because of my thyroid and the birth control, so I've been trying to address all of those things with diet.

Like six years ago we went Paleo and then three years ago tried doing the Autoimmune Protocol and combined that with IgG, IGA testing to really hone in on Ok what foods trigger me because I knew carrots triggered me. I knew that garlic triggers me, like all these little random things that most people think oh that's a totally innocent food like the simple carbohydrate diet like for the first stage a lot of people load up on carrots which for me that would have made me worse. So having that IgG, IGA testing through my naturopathic doctor has really, really helped me figure out what works for me, plus the Autoimmune Protocol to see if there's anything else like nightshades, which I'm lucky nightshades don't trigger me, has really helped me along with supplements and addressing my stress and emotional stuff.

Aubree: So can you share a little bit about the Autoimmune Protocol, like what does that entail?

Meg: So the Autoimmune Protocol back when I did it. It was actually not three years ago, it was more like that five year mark when I was coming off of birth control, back then there was almost nothing out there like there's Dr. Terry Wahls who is famous for having multiple sclerosis and helping reverse a lot of that disease with food and then there's doctor Sarah... I don't know how to pronounce her last name, but it starts with a "B". She's also known as the Paleo Mom. Both of them have kind of led the charge with figuring out what foods can trigger autoimmune responses with the little different things like macrophages and a whole bunch of up there words that I will never know (laughs) and understand.

But Dr. Sarah's book, [*The Paleo Approach*](#), was what I first got to understand it and she explains absolutely everything how lectins and seeds and nuts and stuff can cause our immune system to overreact and dairy, what else...? Night shades, eggs, like all of these things that people would think are just totally normal and safe for everyone because they're real food. They're not processed foods, so how can they be bad for you? It's not that they're bad for you. It's that after a lifetime of exposure to things that have triggered your immune system, whether it's a virus, chemicals, other food that you eat. Your body has changed in a way that you need to change the way that you approach your body so that it can heal and eventually re-introduce those foods.

Aubree: So I know that the Autoimmune Protocol can feel restrictive at first. There's a lot of foods on there that can be bothersome, so do you have any tips for people that may be looking into that on how to transition?

Meg: Remember that it's temporary. It's not for life. So the Autoimmune Protocol, yeah it's a lot of foods that are cut out, but it's only for three months, and after those three months your body has been able to repair and kind of flush out, that's my non-sciencey term, the antibodies that your immune system was responding to, so like those of us with celiac disease if we get glutened the antibodies for gluten are in our blood stream and causing reactions up to three months, some people as long as six months. So only three months of strict Autoimmune Protocol is all that it takes for most people. Some people do have to go six months, but it's not the end of the world.

It's temporary and there are so many resources out there compared to when I did this five years ago like this morning for breakfast I had a Wild Zora soup, which is a brand that you can even find at Walmart, and it's just a freeze dried soup that I got for traveling so that I always have something to consume if there isn't a safe restaurant near-by, and it's totally autoimmune compliant. So it was a lemon chicken soup. It's like seven dollars for a pack of 16 I think on Amazon, totally affordable and you can even find autoimmune protocol foods at Walmart, Target, Sprouts, Whole Foods like there's so many more resources where as when I did it five years ago I was having to make everything from scratch and the only way that I could get through that was bulk cooking everything and freezing it.

So I would bulk cook sausage patties for breakfast. I would bulk cook a whole bunch of sweet potatoes and I would freeze things and that was how I was able to do it, and now there's just ton of bloggers online who have meal plans, and resources, like back when I did it there was only one good brand of grass fed collagen, which I was using to help increase my protein, where as now you can find collagen at Costco (laughs) and it's grass fed and good.

Aubree: Nice. It's becoming easier.

Meg: Oh yeah. A whole lot easier but it's... even though it's easier it's still very daunting especially coming from a super processed diet and I don't recommend jumping into the Autoimmune Protocol if you aren't already Paleo, like I was able to do it because I had a year of being paleo under my belt. If I were to go into AIP without being Paleo first I think I would have burnt out after three weeks and not even do three months.

Aubree: Ok. So transitioning into it.

Meg: Yeah. There's no reason to shock your body and shock your mind into going into it head first.

Aubree: Right. Because then you just stress yourself out (laughs).

Meg: Yeah and especially when we're... our culture is so much expecting of instant results, so when people dive into something that's the strictest thing possible and don't see instant results they're less likely to see it through.

Aubree: Exactly. So you mentioned some of the emotional components as well and the sexual assault that happened to you as a teenager and I'm sorry that that happened. So can you share a little bit about that emotional component and how it's played out in your story with chronic illness?

Meg: So reflecting on it I realized that a lot of my worst moments in my life as far as health goes are all linked to super traumatic or super stressful events in my life as well and I don't think a lot of people realize that our health is so closely linked to our emotional and spiritual stability like a lot of people think that epigenetics is totally pseudoscience and that's... my understanding of epigenetics is that our genes and our body and stuff is actually altered by our own traumas and traumas of generations before us and I thought, you know, for years that just addressing my food and my sleep and just taking all these supplements that everything would come together and you know my thyroid would be better, my weight gain would be better, I thought that's all it took, but only focusing on like those little pieces of the overall picture actually made me worse.

So growing up I actually had a lot of core relationships in my life that were emotionally abusive and also very manipulative and I'm a highly sensitive person and an empath so it was very easy to manipulate me into feeling that I had to keep those connections, those relationships or I was the bad person and I couldn't see the relationships for what they were and what they were doing to me so when I started disconnecting with those relationships and pulling myself back I started to see a little bit of an improvement with my overall health and my anxiety.

And then it was finally reading Shannon Thomas' book [*Healing from Hidden Abuse*](#) that it was like the clouds were lifted and I could see things for what they were I could see the rainbows I could see that I was not the problem, and that it was Ok to go into zero contact with those people that were causing me so much trauma and anxiety and once I totally accepted that that I was not the problem and I did not need those people in my life that I finally started to recover and this has been a process over ten years, so it's not going to happen overnight, but it's very, very much worth it.

Aubree: Absolutely. So similarly I think digging into that emotional side for me as well was the missing piece. So I think we tend to focus so much on the food part because that's easier in a sense and something that we can control easier than digging into some of that other stuff.

Meg: Yeah. And for a lot of people there's fear, you know, fear that bringing up those things are going to make everything worse, like I read your book and you were talking about addressing things with your parents and what happened with your

grandparents was a big part of healing for you, and for me it was not having to feel responsible for the people that I was cutting off, you know, being an empath I thought that I felt so responsible for their well-being that I couldn't see the connection to how it was harming my own well-being, and I was afraid that cutting them off would do them so much harm that I couldn't exist anymore.

Aubree: Right. And one thing that comes up often, because I'm an empath as well, so I get this (laughs), is that co-dependency type relationship and you tend to attract types of personalities I think into your life.

Meg: Oh yeah.

Aubree: So having the awareness that that happens and I think setting some boundaries and like you said cutting off those that don't serve you.

Meg: Mhmm.

Aubree: Which isn't always an easy thing to do.

Meg: Yeah and for me even after I made the first significant cut I found myself falling into relationships that were exactly the same as the previous one, so like I had a client that stepped into the role of one of the worst relationships that I cut off and I didn't realize until like two years into it that that client was taking advantage of me in the same way and controlling me in the same way and it's like come on this isn't a friendship or a family member it's a client they're stressing me out so much that I can't sleep at night and I feel like I have to check my email at 6AM in the morning, like that was not serving me, and that was making me worse. It was helping me pay the bills but that wasn't worth it. What good is paying the bills if I'm physically being ran into the ground and emotionally ran into the ground.

Aubree: Absolutely. So what has helped you then deal with some of this emotional stuff?

Meg: Facing it head on, which is the scariest thing like a lot of people are afraid to go to therapy or talk about their issues because they're afraid that it'll bring up things that make them look bad or feel worse about themselves, but it actually brings healing, you know, addressing those things so that your future can be different is the way that I look at it and I recommend therapy for anybody who's dealing with any kind of stress or hidden abuse or traumas.

Like EMDR I have a lot of friends who have done that kind of therapy that has totally revolutionized their well-being because they're addressing their traumas face on and training their brain in a way that their brain isn't going to shut down anymore when they think about those things or come face to face with something that triggers them, and in addition to addressing things in that way I have several very strong relationships like I have an amazing husband who everyday I'm just oh my

goodness how... how did we ever make this connection? Like I'm so lucky to have him and like I have several best friends like growing up you think oh I have one best friend, no like it's totally normal to have multiple best friends and they're everything to me like I'm having people that I can share my deepest, darkest thoughts even and put myself out there and be vulnerable and know that I'm not going to be judged for it and instead I'm going to be supported for it was just amazing because coming from a childhood where I was taught that sharing my vulnerabilities was the worst thing that I could do and I needed to repress everything is really the root of all of my anxiety and emotional problems.

Aubree: Right. So learning to be vulnerable.

Meg: Mhmm. Facing fear.

Aubree: Right. And expressing yourself I think as well.

Meg: Mhmm.

Aubree: And setting those boundaries, which I think is huge when you're an empath (laughs).

Meg: Oh yeah. (laughs)

Aubree: Absolutely. So what then has endo taught you along the way since it's come into your awareness?

Meg: Well it... I was already in the wellness niche in my business helping bloggers with their social media strategy, but even though I was exposed to wellness and the medical field through volunteering, I didn't realize how much the medical system and medical research is biased against women, like one study that just totally blew my mind is that women are eleven percent more likely to survive a heart attack if they have a female physician in the ER, and pretty much all of medical research is done from this standpoint of the individual being male, like there's no research into the fact that one drug works totally different in men versus women.

Like Lupron that I mentioned at the beginning was developed for men with prostate cancer, and it was to shut off the testosterone and stuff to stop feeding the prostate cancer but without any real testing into how it works in women, it's been shifted over to women and now women have side effects lasting well beyond what's been documented for Lupron side effects like I was told that I wouldn't experience side effects six weeks from that first one month dose and it's been eleven months... eleven and a half months and I'm still experiencing some side effects like I don't have the menopause hot flashes anymore. Thank goodness! But I do have issues with my hormones like my luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone that are linked to Lupron.

So for me **endo has taught me that women need to speak up**. We need to fight for our rights, like the #MeToo movement it gave us a foundation and a platform and that started to change the way things are, but we need to keep that going. We need to keep speaking up so that we can get the proper medical treatment and proper medical research so we can actually address the diseases that affect us instead of letting doctors tell us what it is, like the doctor that operated on me the first time he didn't know what he was talking about. He came up with his own theory on how Lupron helps with endometriosis. So, it's... in short endometriosis has taught me to have a voice, to stick up for not only myself and other women and fight for the truth that period pain isn't normal and we deserve better.

Aubree: Absolutely. And I still can't believe that he just gave that to you.

Meg: Yeah. Well I found out later from friends who used to work at that hospital and also friends who have delivered there and have OB's that operate out of that hospital that that doctor has never been liked and I just... I can't believe that he's allowed to continue to even be listed as one of their doctors let alone operate there and get referrals from their emergency room, so I am going through the process of trying to speak out against him so that it doesn't happen to more and more women but it's... my hands are tied there's only so much that I can do.

Aubree: So and I appreciate you and your presence, you know, on social media and I see you educating women on there, which I think is a great platform to do so. Do you have any tips on how we can change some of that?

Meg: Keep sharing stories, like keep sharing experiences like so many go through dozens of doctors before they even get diagnosed and educate your self like my endometriosis bible, what I call Dr. Andrew Cook's book on stopping endo pain that book empowered me so much to fight for what I wanted and realize that I don't have to settle for second best or even third best, like I deserve the best treatment. I deserve a doctor that listens to me and will do what I want and I got super fortunate to find a doctor that's not only an excision surgeon but she takes a natural approach to treatment and I can't believe she's even in my area, and I'm so thankful for her. But yeah just speaking out, having doctors that you totally trust speak out too. That's... that's all we can do to keep it going.

Aubree: Right and I think coming together and for me I know I've learned so much from other women with endo I think more so than I've learned from the doctors (laughs).

Meg: And we're all individuals like there's people that have like a one size fits approach to endometriosis and other chronic illnesses and it's like no we... one women's going to do great on AIP and the next is going to do great being vegan, and like your life has been totally changed by the Medical Medium and so it's... it's understanding that we need to support each other no matter what decisions we're

making and like some don't do surgery. I decided to have excision surgery and we just need to be each other's support otherwise what else do we have?

Aubree: Absolutely. And I think it's important to listen to your intuition, you know, let that guide you to really listen to yourself and does this feel right. If somebody offers you something and it doesn't feel right just to listen to that.

Meg: And that was the biggest mistake I made like my husband even walking out of the appointment before my surgery with this doctor and that doctor refusing to speak to me and yelling at me and only speaking with my husband like he was like I will take you to any other OB in the area like I do not want this guy operating on you, but I was in so much pain and I was desperate. I wasn't going to wait months because that's what all the wait was with the other doctors. I was willing to sacrifice things to have him operate right away and I just wish I had been willing to wait one more week and see if the hospital could connect me with someone else, but yeah you've got to listen to your gut. I didn't listen to mine, so people need to learn from that.

Aubree: So Meg what words of wisdom can you share with other endo sisters who may be feeling right now like there's no hope?

Meg: There is hope. You know the journey is scary, you know, you've been told you have these lesions growing in you and no one really knows why but **don't let that fear keep you from making the changes that you need to make**, like I let fear keep me from change for years in every area of my life, like when I ... when it came to food I had a friend after me for years like hey I really feel like you have celiac disease you probably should make these changes, and I was afraid like I didn't want to have to give up gluten (laughs)

And but making those scary changes have been the best decisions ever for my health and also don't let others negatively influence your decisions to do what's best for you, so like if you get guilted for having to eat gluten-free and not eating quote-unquote normal. That change serves your health, so if someone's guilted you in that way that person's not supporting you and our culture is just so wrapped up in hustling and doing all the things, but it's at a cost to our health, so like this culture of having to, you know, work ten hour days, if that's affecting our body, that's not serving us. Yeah it's paying your bills but it's not serving our overall health so how can you actually live if you're doing that to your body?

Like how can we live if we're having to be in bed several days of the month because of the pain from hustling so much like our culture and society tells us to do, so basically in short like have hope. Don't be afraid to do what you need to do to take care of yourself even if those changes are scary and not where you saw yourself at this point in your life just know that **each and every one of those changes no matter how small or how big is planting a better future for you.**

Aubree: I love that. And I think it's coming back to having that self-love for your self, because it does take, you know, standing up and being like no, I'm doing this for me, and that can be hard, like you said with the culture that we're in. It's the opposite of that (laughs).

Meg: Yeah and like **we can keep the status quo or we can change and create a better life for our self. We can continue to hold onto the things that are causing us to just tread water, or we can dump that deadweight and fly**, like it's... it's... I make it sound black and white. It really isn't like it's a lot of choices with multiple options but like you said we have to follow our intuition and do what's best for us.

Aubree: Well thank you Meg so much for coming on and sharing some of your story and your wisdom. Do you have any final words of wisdom for our listeners?

Meg: Do what's best for you. (laughs) And if someone's going to, you know, judge you for that. Screw them. Like I know that's harsh but you've got to do what's best for you, because you can't do for others what you can't do for yourself.

Aubree: Absolutely. You have to fill your own cup first.

Meg: Exactly.

Aubree: Awesome. So how can our listeners connect with you further?

Meg: Well I don't really have a blog or anything like that for myself because I'm too busy helping others with theirs (laughs) but on Instagram I'm both @healingmeg and @ourmisadventures. The @healingmeg account is kind of stagnant right now but it's where I'll be sharing more of my endometriosis journey as I have the time because I'm moving this year and running my own business, but I do want to be more open with what I've experienced so others can learn from it and then @ourmisadventures that one's more like my every day stuff, photos of my dogs, memes that I love, little words of wisdom, so both of them might be a little helpful to your listeners if they just want some inspiration and positivity.

Aubree: And then as far as your work if there is somebody who's looking for help with social media can you share a little bit more about that?

Meg: So what I do my website is megbateman.com. I manage social media mostly for food bloggers. My specialty is special diets, so Paleo bloggers is where I really got started, but really anyone with gluten-free or plant-based like I really know all the different special diets so I know how to approach those different audiences and it's what I love to do, like I've been in the blogging world for almost 20 years now and I've seen it all but I don't have the patience to keep blogging myself so I like doing the behind the scenes stuff that bloggers don't have time to do for themselves or they don't want to keep up with all the algorithm changes, so I do that for them.

Aubree: And I'll be sure to include links to all of your accounts in the show notes for those that do want to connect with you further.

Meg: Awesome. Well thank you so much.

Aubree: Thank you Meg.

If you enjoyed this episode I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey, and please leave us a review. Reviews are everything for podcasters and it helps other endo sisters to find the show and get on track to finding peace with endo. If you want to connect with me further you can find me over at peacewithendo.com or on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. Hop on over to social media and let me know your thoughts on the show or simply say hello.

And if you're looking to make change in your life and need some help getting on track with the holistic journey then I invite you to check out my private membership program Peace with Endo Connect. Peace with Endo Connect provides education, support and community for women who want to manage endo naturally. It's been in existence now for a little over a year and the women who have participated have seen great results. They've lost weight, have less pain and more energy overall. I'm opening the doors again to Peace with Endo Connect on August 23rd, but you can join the waitlist now over at peacewithendo.com/connect and be the first to know when the doors open again.

Thanks so much tuning in. I hope you find some peace in your day today. Sending you so much love. Bye for now.

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