

Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

PWE65: Endo, Gut Health & Your Immune System with Kristy Dishmon

Aubree: Hi, love. This is episode 65 of the *Peace with Endo Podcast*. I'm your host, Aubree Deimler. I am an author, wellness coach and energy healer who helps women with endometriosis naturally manage pain, increase energy, and find Peace with Endo.

On the show today I chatted with fellow endo sister, Kristy Dishmon, a certified Functional Nutritional Therapy Practitioner who specializes in helping women with chronic and immune illness tap into your bio-individual nutritional needs by listening to your body, identifying personal trigger foods, addressing digestive dysfunction, healing your gut, balancing your hormones and addressing nutrient deficiencies, so you can begin to support your body the way you need to achieve your health goals.

On the show today Kristy shared a bit of her story with endo and how it led her to nutritional therapy. She talked about the connection between endo, gut health and your immune system, including the hormonal birth control's impact in all of that. She also shared some first steps that you can take to start strengthening your digestion and thus your immune system.

I hope you enjoy our conversation, now on to the show...

Hey, Kristy! Thank you so much for being on the show today.

Kristy: Hi, Aubree. Thank you so much for having me.

Aubree: So will you share a bit of your story and how it led you what you're up to now?

Kristy: Yeah, so like most women probably listening my endometriosis symptoms started at age eleven when I first started my periods and they were debilitating right off the bat, just cramping to the point where I couldn't stand up straight. I would have to crawl to the bathroom. I would vomit from the pain. It was... it was just

horrendous, and just very, very heavy bleeding, like I would go and I would put on a super pad, walk out the bathroom, go into the kitchen, and my mom would be like Kristy you bled through your pants again. I'd be like Oh my gosh, like how? (laughs)

And just so really, really terrible and that kind of persisted until I was 13 or 14 when I was put on the pill for my acne and my period's symptoms and I was on the pill from age 14 to the age 21, and kind of forgot how bad my periods were, and then I got really, really anxious and depressed and my doctors were like I think it's a good time for you to take a break off birth control, so I did and then I remembered why I went on birth control. My periods came back with a vengeance.

And not only that, but then I also started to develop really, really debilitating GI pain, every day it seemed around dinner time I was... I was super bloated, you know, I'd get that dreaded endo belly, like most women with endometriosis are familiar with and you know, I'd go to the doctor and the gynecologist would just tell me everything was fine and take Ibuprofen and everything is normal here, you know, don't... don't eat out as much, try to avoid fried foods. They didn't really have much advice for me.

So, I'd go home and it... this just kept happening, so I switched birth controls a couple of times, and then I started to get these unexplained UTI's, even though when I would test them there was no bacteria in my urine, but all the UTI symptoms: the burning, the throbbing sensation, just a little bit of blood in my urine, and this would happen over and over again, and of course I would go to the doctor, and what would they do? They would give me three days of Cipro antibiotics, which... just horrendous (laughs). That probably happened for one to two years, and that was really, really terrible.

And my GI symptoms just started to worsen and worsen every single day after dinner I would be like in the fetal position. I lived off of Alka Seltzer. I was burping all the time. I seemed to react to more and more foods and it was just super frustrating and again the doctors just didn't have very much to offer me.

And finally I moved to Oregon and I got a new gynecologist and I was telling her about my periods and she first told me about endometriosis. I was 25, so I'd been struggling with this pain since I was 11, so for 14 years, before I heard the word endometriosis and she got me my laparoscopy and confirmed the... the endo, so that was very validating, of course, but my GI symptoms were still really, really bad, and she finally recommended to me that I try gluten and dairy-free diet and I did and within a month 70% of my symptoms were gone.

At that point my... my quality of life was like two out of ten. I couldn't work from the brain fog. I was in so much pain I often couldn't go up the stairs in my own home. I was really, really uncomfortable. Most of my days were spent staring at a wall. I couldn't even read because I would forget what I was reading two or three paragraphs in I'd realize that I haven't retained any of this information. It was just

debilitating, because I just loved reading so much. It was my favorite. It is my favorite.

And so that was hugely... that was huge, 70% reduction of symptoms. I felt like I got my life back and so I kind of started to question food and what about it was inflaming me and why making these changes led to such an increase in quality of life, and that just led to kind of started the rabbit hole of me looking into nutrition.

Aubree: Totally. So, what inspired you then to start The Rooted Life?

Kristy: So The Rooted Life is my nutrition practice where I work with women one on one. I think mostly I didn't want women to be alone during the process. It's such an isolating condition like endometriosis. We're told our entire lives that everything is fine, nothing to see here, and you know, I remember trying to talk to my friends like man you know when you're... you're on your period and you try to go poop and you get that shooting pain up your bum? (laughs) And my friends would be like no I don't know what you're talking about.

I wanted to help women with something as... eating should be simple, you know, we shouldn't have to think about it so much, and when eating is causing you pain every day it... that's just isolating on top of having a... an illness like endo, so mostly I just didn't want women to be alone, and it's so confusing trying to figure out what to eat, like I tried... I tried a lot of things. I tried low FODMAP. I tried vegetarian, vegan, Keto, low sulfur and it was... it was so frustrating not to just be able to eat, so I really wanted to help women navigate that tricky part of having like a chronic, lifetime illness.

Aubree: Right, and food plays such a key role in that and then also in the health of your gut, so what connections have you found with endometriosis, gut health and the immune system?

Kristy: So, this is super interesting. I love this stuff. So, preliminary studies are shedding light on the fact that endometriosis is connected with a leaky gut. A study actually by Endo Found is finding a one hundred percent correlation between endometriosis and a leaky gut, which is huge. So, what happens when the gut is leaky, basically our gut, when I'm talking about the gut it is our small intestine.

Our small intestine is just one single thin line of cells that separates the inside of us, our small intestine and the outside of us, like our general circulation, the rest of our organs, everything. It's just one single, small lining of tissue, so with a leaky gut something happens to those tissues and they break apart or the lining becomes impaired and foods and bacteria and anything that we digest can leak from our small intestine, where it's supposed to be digested and assimilated in a very methodical manner, it just leaks into our circulation.

This happens from time to time, so our bodies are very intelligent and place, 70 – 80% of our immune system's right outside the small intestine to help when this happens so that our body goes stranger, danger! Stranger, danger! And will enact our immune system to fight these invaders. Your body can't differentiate at that point, so when this happens our immune system is on overdrive all the time, and on a good day our immune system is a nutrient hog, so even in a, you know, healthy person, doesn't have endometriosis, it takes a lot of nutrients to run our immune system and for good reason, you know, our immune system is our first defense against pathogens and viruses and invading pathogens in our body.

So, when it is dealing with this onslaught of invaders from those undigested food particles. It just furthers this mess... furthers this nutrient depletion, so that we don't have the nutrients we need to heal the gut. We don't have the nutrients to sustain the immune function and then we don't have the nutrients to deal with the systemic inflammation of having a disease like endometriosis, so it just is this really big, downward spiral, so I...

I find that the answer kind of lies in supporting digestion, healing the gut, stopping that chronic immune response by identifying and removing the foods that trigger the immune system and supplying the body with plenty of nutrients to give the body the building blocks it needs to begin that healing process.

Aubree: Absolutely and one thing I see a lot of with women with endo is that immune system issue, so not only are you dealing with endo, but then you're getting sick all the time with colds and things that are out in the world or other type issues are very common with endo, other autoimmune type things as well so.

Kristy: Yeah or a lot of other pathogens go hand and hand with endo like I... I... you know that dreaded endo belly, for example. They're finding that most women with endometriosis have this also side diagnosis of IBS, which is kind of this big umbrella diagnosis that just means there's something going on with your digestion (laughs) we don't really know what it is, but they're finding that 70 – 80% of people who have IBS, it's actually SIBO, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth and then of course like so many women also have those unexplained UTIs.

For me, I think what it was actually was that when they actually went in to do my laparoscopy they found some endo on my ureter, so I think that when I was inflamed it would inflame my ureter, and cause just inflammation, but a lot of women do get those... those UTI's they just can't seem to curb, or Interstitial Cystitis. There's a lot of side diagnoses that are very common with endo that also have an immune component.

Aubree: And another factor that you had mentioned was being on the pill for a long time, which also impacts your digestive health. Did you notice that coming off of it and what kind of impacts the pill had on you, before and after?

Kristy: Yeah, definitely. That was the height of my digestion discomfort was coming off of the pill. The first time I was just, you know, not to be graphic, but I was chronically constipated. I would go number two maybe every five or six days. It was so uncomfortable and when I would go it would just be like pebbles, just like there was barely anything there, like I know that there's more going in (laughs) I don't know where it's all going. At the same time I was like really underweight. I almost slipped underneath 100 pounds, which is not a healthy weight for me. I just couldn't keep on mass.

My body was not working the way that it was supposed to, and there is a correlation too... between a leaky gut and most medication uses, birth control is associated with a leaky gut, NSAID's are associated with a leaky gut and... you know... what are we told to use with a condition like endometriosis? We're told to take Ibuprofen and stay on continuous birth control, you know? So, you can kind of see how it just kind of really accumulates to this not ideal gut situation.

Aubree: Right. So what are some ways then that our listeners can help to strengthen up their digestion? Do you have like a good first step?

Kristy: A couple... a couple of... of good steps, so I think that the first is mostly to eat in a parasympathetic state, so or a rest and digest state, to some we have to be in a peaceful state when your digesting and that is so, so important. Digestion actually starts in the brain. It's our brain and we start to smell food and anticipate food that tells the rest of our digestive organs, get ready guys, food is coming, and when we're super stressed out, our body doesn't really have a differentiation between different types of stress.

So, that kind of means that biologically being stuck in traffic is just as stressful as being chased by a bear (laughs), so we could think of like what happens biologically when you're being chased by a bear. Your body's going to stop all digestive function. It's going to stop every thing. It's going to stop immune function. It's going to stop everything but that fight or flight response keeping you alive. So if you're... if you're eating dinner and you have a pile of bills that are stressing you out right next to you, you're not going to really be able to digest your food really well (laughs). So, really being in a calm and centered rest and digest state is super important for digestion.

Then chewing is probably the second thing I recommend the most. Chewing your food is so important, and it's so underrated I think (laughs). We don't think about it. If you're not actively thinking about it when you're eating it's really easy to just down your food, because not a lot of us want to spend a ton of time eating, right? I don't know if you can relate?

Aubree: Mhmm.

Kristy: So, chewing each bite of food 30 – 40 times, I think is a really simple way to increase digestion. That's going to mechanically break down your food, so it's easier

to process by your stomach and the rest of your digestive organs. It's going to stimulate, again, the rest of your digestive tract to get ready for food and then we also produce a lot of valuable enzymes in our saliva, so salivary amylase, in particular is really important to carbohydrate digestion. We don't have a ton of enzyme production in our pancreas for carbohydrates, so it's really important to chew and get that salivary amylase and the rest of those enzymes mixed in with our food, so that it reduces the burden of the rest of our digestive organs.

So, chewing, eating in a... in a rest and digest state, cooking most of your vegetables I think when our digestion is impaired, and I find that most of... all of my clients who come to me have like impaired digestion, whether they have endo or not, so I always recommend cooking most of your vegetables when you first start working with me, or if you're really struggling with digestion, because raw vegetable matter can actually be quite hard to break down from the stomach.

And then doing anything you can to support stomach acid. I know a lot of people are really scared of stomach acid. Proton pump inhibitors are prescribed like candy for things like heartburn or indigestion of any kind, but stomach acid is actually really important. It's... it's imperative for digestion, for not only breaking down your foods, so you don't have digestive distress, but also for triggering your liver to produce and secrete bile, triggering your gallbladder to release that bile, triggering your pancreas to release enzymes. It's also... and then also obviously killing off any kind of viruses or pathogens that are introduced into your food.

So, anything that you can do to support stomach acid, like taking digestive bitters, apple cider vinegar before meals. You can squeeze half a juice of a lemon into your water about thirty minutes before meals and drink some of that, and that will all help to... help your stomach produce quality stomach acid. So, those are my favorite tips (laughs).

Aubree: Right, and one thing that I've had success with that I've talked about previously on the show here is celery juice. I don't know if you've heard of the celery juice craze that's happening?

Kristy: I love celery juice!

Aubree: Yeah, and that's helped me a lot with my stomach acid and it's amazing how much stronger my digestion is just by doing the celery juice in the morning.

Kristy: Yeah, celery juice really helps to create that really quality bile too, so it helps with the stomach acid, but it also really helps with detoxification and getting those spent hormones out of your body. It's not something that I recommend to my clients a ton, just because there are some concerns with blood pressure and it can interact with some medications and supplements and stuff, but for me personally, if I'm going to be doing any kind of a reset or I'm feeling funky, I'll definitely start my day off with about 16 ounces of celery juice.

Aubree: And it is very powerful so (laughs) If you've got digestive issues, yeah it can cause some discomfort.

Kristy: It works (laughs) Yeah. I would be close ... I would stay close to a toilet the first couple of days when you're trying it out because it definitely gets things moving.

Aubree: Absolutely. So, Kristy do you have a client success story that you can share in relation to endo and gut health?

Kristy: I will say that all of my clients who have come to me have had success with their endo management. I've had clients be able to... and this is kind of like... I'm not urging women at all to go off of birth control, but I have had clients be able to come off of birth control and manage their symptoms more naturally. I've had clients be able to cancel like second surgeries that they were planning to manage their symptoms, because they didn't have any more pain.

All of my clients usually have about a 20% reduction of symptoms within the first six weeks of working together, so I'll have them take what's called a nutritional assessment questionnaire at the beginning of our working together, and I'll ask you questions like do you experience bloating within an hour after meals, and if you do, do you experience it daily, weekly or monthly? And we're trying to methodically work from, you know, having those daily symptoms to weekly symptoms and then hopefully monthly symptoms and then ideally never at all, right?

So, a 20% reduction in symptoms within the first six weeks of working together is usually a pretty good... if they don't reach that 20% reduction of symptoms within the first six weeks of working together, I know they're not being compliant. (laughs) They're probably not taking their supplements regularly or not sticking to their protocol as often, but yeah most... all of my clients who have endometriosis, who are compliant, will definitely feel better.

Mostly I do find that all of my clients who have tested for SIBO, did have SIBO, so being able to work with them and their doctors to identify and manage SIBO overgrowth and then continuing to heal the gut is really how we get success with managing those endometriosis treatments.

Aubree: So how are you feeling now after all of this, personally?

Kristy: So after... after I kind of got out of the dark days, what I call my endo dark days, I went gluten and dairy-free and I... to me I felt 100% better (laughs). It took... what I was doing to not being able to walk up the stairs, to be able to, you know, workout and... and live a semblance of a normal life and work a little bit was huge, and then I kind of felt this like extreme urge to help other women go through what I was going through, not alone, and so I kind of went on this obsessive adventure, if

you can call it, to find like a holistic therapy for me to basically go back to school for, to help women.

So, I tried acupuncture and chiropractor and pelvic floor therapy and physical therapy and therapy, therapy and massage and all these different things and they all helped a lot and I would definitely recommend adding those tools to your toolbox, if you're able to, but it wasn't until I heard about nutritional therapy and it... I... it's just kind of one of those moments in life where I remember where I was sitting. I remember what I was wearing. I remember the cup of tea that I had next to me and I was just like nutritional therapy, that's what I'm going to be. I'm going to be a nutritional therapy practitioner.

So I started working with one and she helped me discover, not only did I have SIBO, small intestinal overgrowth, but I had three parasites (laughs) so that was... that was a gasp, so after managing those with herbal antibiotics and certain therapeutic diets and eradicating the parasites and testing negative for them, I didn't have any endo symptoms, and I haven't had an endo symptoms since.

Right now I'm just dealing with a little bit of fatigue and I think that that's from my mercury amalgams. I haven't got those taken out quite yet, so right now I'm kind of trying to strengthen my immune system back up and then get those out so I can start a pretty comprehensive detox protocol to get that mercury out, and then hopefully that will help with the fatigue that I'm still experiencing, but other than that I'm so grateful to not be in debilitating pain every day, and to be pooping every day! (laughs)

Aubree: (laughs) Yes! That's always a good thing.

Kristy: Yeah the constipation was... I learned very early on after having endometriosis that it was very important for me to have daily bowel movements, so anything that I could do to help that was most... that was probably from the methane dominant SIBO, there's two kinds of SIBO, methane dominant and then hydrogen dominant. Methane dominant is more constipation prone and then there's hydrogen dominant, which is more diarrhea prone. It's not always cut and dry like that, but for me it definitely was the case, so, after I managed the SIBO I... I started to have daily bowel movements and... and that was a game-changer.

Aubree: Nice. So, what then... what has endo taught you, like what has this whole journey taught you?

Kristy: That's a good question. I think it's... it's really taught me a lot. I think that we're stronger than we know, mentally, but also physically, like **our bodies aren't broken, you know? They're trying to communicate with us. They're trying to tell us what's going on and the body has this amazing capacity to heal.**

And not to pigeon hole it all down to endo. There was a lot going on, and something like endo is... you know... it's systemic and it affects every organ of our body and that's why so many other diagnoses are so frequent, and then there's that autoimmune component. It's not technically an autoimmune disease, but there is an autoimmune component that makes us so much more prone to getting other diagnoses.

So I really think that it taught me to listen and to trust myself, and trust my body's capability to heal, and trust that I was, you know, strong enough to conquer this. There's such a prevalent message in the endometriosis community that there's no cure, and I think it's really easy to... to fall back on that, especially when we're feeling low, because there are low moments, you know, even after healing. We still have to be more careful with how we eat and how we move our bodies and... and with our health in general and... and that can be... you know... hard.

But yeah, so I think just not... not to pigeon hole everything down to endo, listen to your body, try different healing capacities and trust that your body can find relief, I think.

Aubree: I love that. Yeah and I feel the same way with the no cure message that's so strong out there and it's easy to... I think your mind plays a big role in all of it too, like you have to believe you can get better, so there's that whole mind/body connection that's, like you said, it's easy to fall into that, well there's no cure.

Kristy: Especially... yeah... especially right after diagnosis, like that kind of played over and over in my head, over and over again, like the words chronic disease and no cure just kind of played on repeat in my head, and you know I remember reading your book and I remember you... You saying that you just kind of had this nagging feeling like I call shenanigans, like there has to be something that I can do, and I loved that, and that was a very powerful message for me when I first got diagnosed, so thank you for that.

Aubree: Absolutely, and thank you for coming on and sharing your story and some inspiration with our listeners. Do you have any final words of inspiration?

Kristy: Mostly just... yeah... you're not broken. You're capable of healing and just because there's no cure doesn't mean that there's not things that you can do to strengthen your body and heal.

Aubree: Absolutely, so Kristy how can our listeners connect with you further, if they want to work with you or connect with you online?

Kristy: I'm most prevalent on Instagram. My tag is @endo.foodie or you can go to my website, therooted.life or email me at Kristy@therooted.life, and my name is with a K and a Y, K-R-I-S-T-Y (laughs)

Aubree: Excellent and I'll be sure to include links to those in the show notes for those of you that do want to connect with Kristy further and see how nutrition can help you feel better.

Kristy: Yay!

Aubree: Well thank you again Kristy for coming on and sharing with us today. I appreciate it.

Kristy: Yeah, thank you so much. It was a... it was a pleasure and honor to be invited. Thank you.

Aubree: If you enjoyed this episode, I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. Please leave us a positive review and share with your friends so more endo sisters can find the show and get on track to finding Peace with Endo.

If you want to learn more about endo, gut health and the immune system I do cover a lot of this in my book, *From Pain to Peace with Endo*, as that connection's been a key part in my healing journey as well. You can pick up an autographed copy over at peacewithendo.com or it's also available over at Amazon.com.

Also over at peacewithendo.com you can connect with me further and see how we can work together or let's connect over on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. Thank you so much for tuning in. I hope you find some peace in your day today. Sending you lots of love. Bye for now.

All information provided within is for informational and educational purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice or instruction. No action should be taken solely on the contents on this podcast. Please consult your physician or qualified health professional on any matters regarding your health and wellbeing on any opinions expressed.

When trying any suggestions posed, please do so at your own risk. You are responsible for consulting your own health professional on matters raised within.