



**EPISODE 806**

# **The #1 FREE Probiotic & How The Microbiome Influences Menopause**

**With Guest Dr. Amy Shah**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Mountains of studies are now affirming that the health of our microbiome is deeply impacting the health of our brain, our cardiovascular system, our endocrine system, our immune system. And basically every aspect of human health is rooted in the health of our gut. Now on this episode you're going to be learning about the number one free probiotic to support optimal gut health. Plus you're going to find out how our microbiome, how our gut health actually changes throughout different phases of our lives. As we get older, there are changes that happen with our microbiome. And in particular, we're seeing this now in perimenopause and menopause with women and this isn't being addressed.

When we're looking at changes that might happen with hormone function, with weight gain or weight loss, and how the microbiome is influencing all that's happening through those changes. And our special guest today is going to enlighten us on how to support these changes because this is simply not being talked about enough. So we've got that in store for you and so much more. So let's get into this conversation with the amazing Dr. Amy Shah. Amy Shah MD is a double board certified medical doctor and nutrition expert with training from Cornell, Columbia, and Harvard universities. She's also a best selling author and one of the most recognized professionals sharing science backed health information throughout social media with well over a million followers. And she's here again, my good friend, to share her insights for us on this special episode of The Model Health Show.

Let's dive into this conversation with the amazing Dr. Amy Shah. We can't even say that you're a special guest at this point. You're basically family. You're faculty of The Model Health Show.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** I've returned too many times to be called a guest anymore.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And you brought it along. An intern.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** She's just outside the door now, but she sat in here with us earlier.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** I know it's special. I'm trying to like how we just talked about it, like osmosis, gut bacteria goes from one to the other. Best thing you can do is spend time with them.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And we're talking about your daughter, by the way, 14. She's 14 and you have a 16 year old son. And you just said it, the environment. And one of the things that we're talking about before the show was just them traveling with us and us taking them to these different events and things like that exposure is profound in of itself. But one of the things that I most love about it is that other people get to Educate my kids.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah, exactly.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Even though they might be saying the same thing, but it's coming from someone else. It hits different.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** 100 percent because you can just say anything to your spouse to your friends to your parents to your children. You can't make anybody do anything. You have to just show them what you do. You have to show them who you're spending time with. You have to have them exposed to different environments. That's how change happens. So it's really, it's a great education for them.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. We're going to talk about change happening today. And you've done so much work around the microbiome and how it impacts all these different aspects of our health. But I want to start off by talking about the number one. The world's number one free probiotic that some people might not know about. Let's talk about that.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah, it's exercise. Free. Accessible. I mean what else could you be doing for your gut health? That's better than that I think that is the number one thing that is like you said free, accessible, available to all. I think people think of probiotics as this expensive medication and which one should I take and there's so many and you have this accessible tool that's so important and vital for your gut microbiome right there. So I want to and I don't think people realize that exercise make the gut bacteria happy. They grow certain bacterial strains that produce short chain fatty acids. Short chain fatty acids, if we could bottle that up, it is like the anti inflammatory miracle drug. It goes all over the body, calms the brain. It goes to your muscles. All the places where you have chronic inflammation. Short chain fatty acids are just magical for our body. And sometimes people think that part of the benefit that you get from your exercise to your brain is not just the neurochemical changes.

It's also the short chain fatty acids that are helping with that inflammatory cascade in the brain, helping it calm down. So it's exercise. I can't say more about exercise and it's simple as walking. I think people don't even think of walking as exercise. And I think over the last 10 years, I've realized that people think of walking as oh, it's not even worth it. I might as well just sit and then go to my workout for an hour or 45 minutes at the gym. And that's just not

true. That walking counts. I was the last person on a planet to get an Apple watch, but I got it because I wanted to count all the steps. If I don't get a chance to go to the gym and I looked down at my steps and have 10,000 steps, I feel okay. You know what? I got my workout for the day. And I think exercise, especially walking exercise, is something that we could easily be doing for our gut brain hormone connection.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that. I think that this is flipping on the light switch for us because it's not just, we think about improving heart health, for example, with exercise. We could superficially think, you got your blood flowing, the circulation, positive chemistry, you're burning calories. But part of it is what is happening with your microbiome and the scaphas, those short chain fatty acids that are getting produced that are also supporting your heart health. It's so multifaceted, but we don't think about it. And I'm glad that you mentioned it. And I want to talk more about this because walking is having a moment right now, which is important, but it's just it's the number one human exercise, like we're bipedal creatures, it's just this is what we're designed to do.

But you mentioned there's this phenomenon and the label that we give them is the active sedentary, right? So we sit all day at our jobs and our cars, at home. But then we go to the gym for an hour a day or whatever the case might be and even still that's wonderful. By the way, let's not negate that out.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay, that's amazing. It's putting you in elite status in our society, but Realistically, you're only about 4 percent more active than the rest of the sedentary population, you know We're designed to move around, and so having more of these exercise snacks as well Can you talk a little bit about this new data on doing some air squats.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Talk about that.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** You know a lot of people say to me and they probably say to you too. That's great. But I work a job where I have to be on camera or in person all day long. And I just was in New York in these meetings and I was in that situation where Literally, it is like PowerPoint after PowerPoint meeting after meeting and you're in a room. And I thought to myself, okay, I get it. So this new data came out that said every 45 minutes to an hour, if you get up and you do 45 seconds worth of squats, you can actually negate some of the negative effects of

sitting. And for people who are in sedentary jobs and where they really can't get up for eight hours outside the room.

This is a great strategy. You can get up. I mean, especially with these hybrid things where you're on zoom meetings and you have five minutes before between go to the bathroom, come to your air squats and get ready for the next one. And I think it's so empowering to think, okay, I can do something that can counteract the negative effects of sitting all day. So I thought that was great because I think people need to search for different things. Ways, like I was on an airplane, right? And I thought to myself, all right, when I get, when I'm waiting for my flight, I'm going to pace and then I'm going to do some, I could do some air squats if I want to. And then I'm ready to sit for a few hours. And I think it gives you the power back in your hands.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. I love that. And I think that the data was like, it was comparable to 30 minutes of straight walking or exercise, whatever the case might be. And it's just being more creative, like starting to see our environment a little bit differently, but.. Also, like we tell ourselves that we can't like there's a story that we have and maybe again our life is structured in a way We can't get away for 30 minutes of exercise, but doing those 45 seconds of air squats, you know every hour can get that same benefit, but it's more of a snack but because it's a snack We don't see it the same way as I get in the full buffet.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Have you, do you do Peloton? Do you know, do you have a Peloton bike? Okay. So during the pandemic, everybody was doing Peloton and Pelotons have these classes. It's 20 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, 60 minutes, whatever. And I used to hate it because I don't like to leave things early. And I thought to myself, well, if I can't finish a whole 45 minute ride or a whole 30 minute ride, like I, I don't want to start it.

And that's how a lot of people feel. You don't want to, you don't feel like you want to go to the gym because you can't be there for an hour, or you can't be there. And what I've learned is that actually you could go for 15 minutes. You could walk, go for a walk in between calls. Now I've incorporated so much in my life.

I tell people all the time, I'll say, Hey, you want to go for a walk? Maybe meet? And they're like, You want to go for a walk? And I'm like, yeah, instead of meeting for dinner or for coffee, especially with girlfriends. And it's a way to add an activity to your day. And it feels really good because you can't do a lot of other stuff while you're walking. You can't be multitasking. You can't be on your phone. And you're really paying attention to that person and connecting with them while also getting your workout in.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. Awesome. Now, there's some groundbreaking data regarding the microbiome and menopause. And this, again thankfully there's a lot of information coming out about this because.. As a lot of the research that's been conducted over the years, whether it's for pharmaceuticals, whether for supplements, lifestyle interventions, they've really been based primarily on men and men's biology. And so much about women's health has just really been ignored. That's changing rapidly right now. And this process that every woman goes through is really getting a bright spotlight put on it. And One of the biggest, again, most groundbreaking new piece of data is looking at the microbiome changes in perimenopause. So let's talk about that.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** So people don't even know that they're going through perimenopause. I had my cousin, who's like my best friend, she was visiting and I was doing a video on perimenopause for social media. And I said, I need you to be a part of it or whatever. It was like we had to have a conversation. And she said to me, But I'm not in perimenopause. And I said, Yes, you are. And she said, Well, what? So most people don't even know that they're in it. So if you're in your 40s, you're definitely going through perimenopause. Perimenopause just means like the 10 years or so prior to menopause. And so the average age of menopause is around 52.

So you're talking about your early 40s. Some people goes from 45 all the way to 52. So some people in their 30s are also starting to experience these changes. And it doesn't necessarily, there's no blood tests that tells you're in perimenopause and there's no definitive symptom. And so I think a lot of people don't realize so that, that definition being said. Those years, late 30s, 40s, late 40s, and early 50s, they can be the most tumultuous years of your life. Because it's not like your hormones just gradually go down and then stop at menopause. It's like this roller coaster.

It equates it to the end of the toothpaste tube. One time you squeeze it, you get a full squeeze. The next time you get a splatter. The next time you get nothing. It's, you don't know what you're going to get. And that's what your ovaries are doing as they approach menopause. And therefore, when you get a full squeeze, You'll have a normal month like you'll be your mood, your energy, your appetite, your cravings will all be kind of baseline. Then you'll get that splatter month and you'll be like, why do I feel like crap? Why am I still mad at my partner? Why do I feel not myself?

Then you go to your provider. And they say, nope, you're fine, just go home, you're just getting older. And it's frustrating, right? Nobody's really explaining what's happening. If you understood the mechanism, you could say, oh, maybe that's what's happening.

Nobody tells you that your vitamin D levels might drop, your cholesterol levels might change that your vitamin, that the way you absorb food may change because you've got microbiome changes during this time. We have hormone receptors. Even our bacteria depend on hormones. And so as our hormones fluctuate, the bacteria changes, and so the bacterial kind of ecosystem that you once had is now different. And that, to women, when I tell people that, they're like, Oh, I see, I knew it! I knew I didn't do anything different, but all of a sudden, now I have cholesterol issues, or I have vitamin D issues, or I'm not able to tolerate certain foods that I was able to eat. So that I think is not only empowering, giving people body literacy, but it also gives them solutions. So once you realize, oh, it's my microbiome that's changing, then you can think of all the solutions that could help support that and make these years maybe not out of control and stressful for you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is so good, so profound. One of the big takeaways from today for everybody is that your hormones are impacting your microbiome. And in perimenopause, you're having changes with your hormones taking place. And again, this can be a variety of different symptoms we might experience. But they can either get ignored or you're just getting older. And also, of course, perimenopause and menopause as well. Or, you get diagnosed, oh, you just have an anxiety disorder even though you're, you might have been fine the next month, right? But we're not looking at these things, we're considering that the body is changing, the hormones are changing, and we need to do things a little differently as things are changing, and helping to create an environment where that change is more graceful, is what I'm hearing you say.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah. What I think women often feel like in our culture as they approach those ages that they're being thought of as no longer beautiful or useful, productive. And I think when you explain what's happening to the body, how we can support it, we can empower women to feel more powerful, more productive, more, beautiful, more like for example, my mom said, and I think this is true for most mothers going through menopause. She just thought her body was out of control. She said, she goes, I thought I was going crazy. And I thought my body was just out of control. And that feeling that you don't know what's going on and nobody's validating it for you. Is just the worst. And I said to her, because she comes from a very strong community of mothers and sisters and women in her community.

She grew up in India where there's a lots of conversations. And she said, Nope, we had no idea what was happening. We all, the mother said we went through it. The aunt said we went through it, but nobody had any clue what was going on or Any clue how to fix it. And so I think that's so crazy to me that we have had generations of people suffering for 10, sometimes 20 years. Suicides happen, depression, anxiety all kinds of, divorces, separations, all because we're not aware of what is actually happening in our bodies.

And we just think that either ourselves or our family members or our friends or our community members are going crazy, quote unquote, or having a midlife crisis or Having some other problem when it's really coming from these changes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Mmm. Oh, love it. Love it.

Got a quick break coming up We'll be right back It cannot be overstated how much stress can wreak havoc on our mental and our metabolic health and there's one nutrient one Antioxidant nutrient that stands out above all others when helping our bodies to manage and grow and metabolize stress. Data published in the Journal of Nutrition and Food Sciences states that both emotional and physical stress can affect a person's vitamin C status. It increases the requirement for vitamin C to maintain normal Blood levels. When under stress depletes vitamin C levels in the body and reduces the body's resistance to infections and diseases and increases the likelihood of further stress.

So this truly does become a vicious circle. And when vitamin C intake is increased, the negative effects of excess stress hormones are reduced. And the body's ability to cope with the stress response improves. Now I've been sharing this information like crazy and enlightening people to this little known fact, but more and more people are realizing this, that the vast majority of vitamin C supplements on the market, those little vitamin C supplements, those little packets out there, the checkout counter, for example, are made from genetically modified corn syrup and corn starch. It is truly bottom feeders. The worst forms of vitamin C from these very low quality sources. And it simply does not work as effectively in the body. In fact, a randomized placebo controlled study published in the journal of Cardiology had people that were undertaking a pretty oxidative habit, which was smoking to have Concentrates of my favorite form of vitamin C, which is from camu berry versus Standard vitamin C supplements which come from again modified cornstarch and corn syrup.

What the researchers found was that over the course of the one week study Participants taking the concentrate of camu berry has significantly lowered oxidative stress and lowered inflammatory biomarkers. And there were no changes in the group when they're taking the synthetic form of vitamin C. Bottom line, we definitely want to make sure that we're getting in high quality vitamin C from our food and also superfood concentrates that have camu berry, amla berry, and acerola cherry. These are the top tier forms and sources of vitamin C all organic from paleo valley and their incredible essential C complex.

Head over to [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model) and you're going to get. 15 percent off your entire order, including their essential C complex. That's [PaleoValley.com/model](http://PaleoValley.com/model) for 15 percent off. Hook yourself up, hook your family up. This is the vitamin C supplement that I've been



utilizing for years, especially during times of stress. Check them out [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model). And now back to the show.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay. Let's talk about some practical things. Just knowing that you could be going through this process or are going through this process or somebody that you care about is going through this process. To support, as we know, and we've talked about on previous episodes, and we'll put your past appearances

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** TIn the show notes for people. But we know that. Our microbiome is impacting our neurochemistry. It's impacting our immune system function. It's impacting our emotions. It's impacting our Cardiovascular health. There isn't a part of us our skin health. There's an aspect of human health that isn't impacted deeply by the health of the microbiome. So with this being said in these changes, what are three things that women can proactively do to support those changes by supporting what's happening with the microbiome.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** I love that question. So it's kind of like the brain, the microbiome is kind of like the second brain, as a lot of people think of it as second brain. But it's a second control center. So I think of the walkie talkies, the microbiome, the bacteria have walkie talkies with our brain. And our brains communicating with the microbiome. So when you think about that, the inputs that you put into your gut are being translated by these gut bacteria and communicated to the brain. So that being said, nutritional changes are the best way. I mean lifestyle and nutrition is the basis of everything I'm going to say, because I think we totally believe in medications and hormone therapy and helping women through this time, but it starts with the nutrition. So number one would be fiber, and I think what happens is, Fiber in our world, 90 percent of people aren't getting enough fibers.

I think we're, we're dealing with a larger issue, but definitely as your microbiome changes, your, some of that gut bacteria that's dependent on estrogen is dying. And you need to support the growth of good gut bacteria. And how do you do that? You feed them. You feed them food that they eat, and that's fiber, right? And so in our world, and we talked about this in other episodes, ultra processed food is almost fiberless most of the time. And so we're eating 65, sometimes 70 percent food that's fiberless, or is not used by the gut bacteria.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The prebiotics.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah It's useless, the ultra processed food. And we need to be eating food that has more fiber in it, so that we can feed that good gut bacteria. I actually have a mnemonic for the three things that I tell people to do. It's 30 33. So the second thing I was going to tell you is protein. So 30 33 stands for 30 grams of protein in your first meal. 30 grams of fiber throughout the day and three probiotic foods in your day. So probiotic foods and it can go in succession. So you could start with just getting 30 grams of protein in your first meal. Start there because it's, Sounds easy, but it's going to take a little bit of work. You might have to switch your breakfast from having toast and a coffee to having eggs and cottage cheese or maybe it's yogurt and something with that.

So getting 30 grams in your first meal, it doesn't have to be first thing in the morning. I'm not, I still believe in overnight fasting. But the first meal of your day to get 30 grams, that's the first step. Protein is communication. Your gut can communicate to your brain that you are full. Your gut can communicate to your brain that you don't need any more snacks. So the cravings go down, your energy levels go up, and especially in the beginning of that day, it's really good input for your gut bacteria. And then the 30 grams of fiber, which is not easy. Especially if you're eating, the typical 50 to 70 percent ultra processed foods adding fiber to your diet means something like what you always talk about, just having more fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds You can actually get that.

It's not so hard if you're eating a ton of nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables in your diet, in every meal. So you can get to 30 grams and then the three probiotic foods that I think is the hardest when you first hear about it, because there's pretty much nothing in our typical American diet that fits into that probiotic food list, except for maybe yogurt. And so yogurt is probably the easiest way to get your probiotics. Now you can get probiotic cottage cheese also. There's even probiotic cream cheese. Lots of dairy products have now come out with a probiotic option like kefir and then sauerkraut, kimchi. Pickles!

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The real pickles.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yes, exactly. And then Also apple cider vinegar the raw one if you add it to your salad dressing or some water could be an easy way for you to get more probiotic foods into your life. So Probiotic foods it almost takes some intentionality to actually get them in. I mean, most people are not eating yogurt. They're not some people are eating yogurt, but they're eating like the one with the m and ms on top, and that's heat process. So the probiotics are all killed in that

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** M&M's?

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah. There's all those yogurts that have toppings. He doesn't even know about this.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Gosh, holy, holy . I mean, I know people are wilding out, out here with these foods. Yeah. But yeah, I didn't know that.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** There's all kinds of, processed ultra processed yogurts now too. You want to stick to actual yogurt. I had stopped eating Dairy for a really long time because I thought it was inflammatory for me. But what I realized is fermented dairy actually Was really helping me grow my gut bacteria. So I urge people who are staying away from dairy just because they heard it somewhere or you know maybe they don't even know if it's bothers them to try a little bit of fermented dairy like a yogurt or a cottage cheese or a kefir and see how you feel because that could really help your gut actually in some ways. Of course if you're doing it for religious or spiritual or environmental reasons, that's different, but if you're just avoiding dairy because you think it's not good for you, you may want to try this.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome, awesome.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** So 30, 33 is where I tell women often, actually anybody can do it, but really, especially in that perimenopausal range where women are feeling lots of fatigue, they're feeling the visceral fat, the fat around the midsection. They're noticing worse in sleep, which we talk about a lot. They're often noticing cravings, and like sugar cravings going up, and also Their cycles are really irregular, their mood changes, they have more anxiety all of that can really improve when you improve nutrition.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Amazing. This is, it is so simple. It's not necessarily easy, especially if you're not doing this already. No. But getting in this fiber, which functions again as a prebiotic for your friendly bacteria that you want to support as it's changing. So providing a variety of different fiber inputs, which just means eat a variety of different foods. The protein 30 grams, ideally if you can get in that first meal and what that does to even just, it does there being able to break this protein down into these amino acids to do. To build your hormones in the first place.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Exactly.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You need to get this protein and also what that does is you mentioned the satiety impact, but it tells your body that you are okay.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's a safety signal, you know It's like being able to start your day and our bodies, even though we have all this fancy stuff. I saw people piling into a Tesla as I was driving in. And they looked like some thugs, to be honest but there's just some regular guys. But it's just weird seeing these tough guys getting into a Tesla, just, it was like an oxymoron. But we have all of these fancy innovations, but our bodies are operating on this very, I don't even want to say primitive, but just ancient programming. And when you have a high quality food source, protein source, in your body, it's like you win. It's like telling your biology that you are gonna be okay today.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Oh, I love it. Yeah. I am the perfect example. I ate abysmal amounts of protein. And Probably up until maybe five years ago, because I grew up vegetarian. I am very busy and I ate a lot of salads. I was “healthy”. But when I started to learn that you lose one to 3 percent of your muscle mass in your forties, and all through perimenopause and menopause. And I thought to myself, all right, how do I build muscle? Then I started working with this trainer and they said, well, why don't you log your food for a day, a couple of days. And they're like, looking at me like you're eating like 30 to 50 grams a day. I mean, that's like what you should be eating on one meal. And so I had to radically change the way I was eating. And so I think this is something that's really empowering for women because they're like if you do this one thing You're gonna start noticing changes right away.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and it's because it's impacting everything Wow, I love this. And of course the final one was the ferments and you mentioned a bunch of different sources. We talked about this earlier before we recorded for the show, but I had a friend come over And, we've been friends for years and he's never been, like, super serious about there's some recommendation. We were talking and this show called Shogun came up somehow and he put his hand on my shoulder. He looked me dead in my eyes like, Sean, you have to watch this show. And I'm just like, OK, I'll check it out. And I get it. For me, it's beautiful cinematography. Yeah, that's. But you know, maybe it's just not there yet as far as like why he's so serious about it Maybe he's just super into those storylines But one of the scenes in there was, this foreign guy the this barbarian as they call him But he's just you know, he's a guy from the UK And I don't want to give too many spoilers by the way, but there's a scene where they give him some natto

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** To eat.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And the Japanese people in the room, they're just like, don't, don't even try to give this to him. He's not gonna like it. And he started eating. He was like, this is kind of like cheese. It reminds me of this. And they're just marveling at, but also he's, at this point he's clearly hungry for, he's just, he just wants to eat stuff. But just seeing in this culture in Japan and this, what we talked about earlier, 5 percent obesity rate versus here in the United States inching its way up to 50 percent and significantly lower rates of all manner of chronic diseases heart disease Alzheimer's the list goes on and on There's something there's a lot of things right with the culture.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** One of the big standout ones and this is affirmed in the data now is the nutrition.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah that natto, do you have you had natto?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** My son said on tik tok. It was like there's a trend about how to eat natto from people who love it. And they say you have to whip it with rice. And once you whip it, it has a different flavor and texture. And so we would regularly go to Japanese restaurants to have that with them because they thought it was cool because they saw it on TikTok. And I was like, great, a way to get in fermented foods for these kids. It's really hard, right? To think of different ways to incorporate fermented food. It's one thing as adults to say, okay, I need to eat more kimchi or sauerkraut, but it's another thing to have your kids who don't usually eat any of that stuff to incorporate it into their lives. So that's a I but I love Japanese culture because there's so many fermented foods still today that they eat.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah when I was working at the university that I attended. You know, I got to work with people from all over the world and this was a couple, obviously, it was a couple years into it. But I started to see some of the data about fermented foods And I just start to ask people from different countries if they had a fermented food. Every culture has cultured foods.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There was some folks. I was training from Ethiopia that had some form of bread that they would have a fermented bread.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yes, they have it's like a sourdough.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and the name escapes me. I know somebody's like shouting..

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Injera.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Injera! Yeah, but then again, I didn't really know about kimchi, but then, just finding out about that from, Korean folks obviously, and my mom used to eat sauerkraut, when I was a kid. Shout out to the folks in Germany. But there are versions of this in every culture, some kind of fermented food. And I love the fact that it's called cultured foods and every culture has them, but we've kind of gotten away from that. We've gotten into this place of more and more ultra processing, more and more demonization of bacteria.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So this super sterile Twinkie.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That no bacteria can even break down if it tried to right?

**DR. AMY SHAH:** It can live for you know.. Remember that McDonald's meal that they found from years and years. It's like still intact.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Barely even broke down. It's crazy

**DR. AMY SHAH:** It's and I was actually talking to this researcher about Who's from India and you know in Indian food, there's a lot of fermented food, but they cook it like they steam it or whatever. So I said to him, well then Bacteria dies right because you're cooking it and he's like Bacteria are so hardy. There are bacteria that live in that air even when you cook these fermented batters or whatever. You still have things that live in there that actually go and feed your gut. And so it's like sourdough bread, for example, you're cooking it, but there's still some fermentation process left or some ferments left in there. And so I thought to myself, okay, well, it's not so hard then in our lives to start incorporating these foods, but you'd never do it if you're eating the typical American diet. I mean, there's just no way.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, this reminds me of we've got all these different microbes. Fungi. We've got viruses, we've got bacteria. We also have archaea.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And some of these things they're finding like even residues from lava. Volcano lava.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yes! That's what he was saying.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** These things still survive in these crazy conditions. Frozen obviously. They can be frozen in the Arctic and they're finding different viruses, which is kind of creepy. By the way, But...

**DR. AMY SHAH:** That's example he gave was the volcano bacteria that live. And volcanic rock, he's they're subjected to extreme high heats. It's crazy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And we take on in a weird way, some of these properties, unless we make our property value go down. See this analogy is pretty fire. But keeping our property value high, what are some specific nutrients as well? Because there's certain nutrients that the microbiome absolutely love and help to thrive, create a thriving environment. What about something like omega 3s?

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah, omega 3s and polyphenols. Those are two things that come jump out at me besides fiber and fermented food. Omega 3s are vital. As we know, we talk about it a lot for the brain that they're so vital in our brain health. But they're also vital in our cardiovascular health and in our, for our gut health. Omega 3 fatty acids are not as easy to get sometimes. And I think that's one of the things that I personally supplement with because people always ask me like, what do you supplement with?

And I say, if you can get omega 3 fatty acids from your foods, amazing. But some people, we don't, in cultures that live really close to the ocean, they're getting a lot of omega 3 fatty acids from fish. But often in our modern cultures, we have to actually create a diet that has more omega 3 fatty acids or take supplemental omega 3 fatty acids. And if you don't eat fish, then you need to take plant based algae, omega 3, and that can be really beneficial to you. There are some studies that show that people that don't eat omega 3s actually do don't eat fish, sorry, are better at extracting Omega 3 from the foods that they do eat. Our bodies are so smart. And so there is, it's even if you're not from a family that eats a ton of fish, but if you're good about incorporating some omega 3 fatty acid foods, your body will extract that.

So I think omega 3s is something that you can easily either get from foods or start to supplement with. So that's something easy. Polyphenols is the blueberries, the green tea, it's

the coffee, it's a, it's these antioxidants that live in these foods that are brightly colored. And so Nature is so smart, like you talk about this all the time, like nature is so smart, they're giving us signals like eat this food, it's bright, it's colorful cabbage, all these purple and blue and brightly colored fruits and vegetables, they are giving us a ton of polyphenols and these polyphenols are antioxidant, so anti aging. They so oxidation is what really ages your cells, so you're anti aging.

And this is really important for our gut bacteria as well. They love polyphenols. They use polyphenols to make post biotics. Have you ever heard of duralithin A? It's another compound. It's like a post biotic compound. There's companies that you can supplement with it. When you eat polyphenols, your gut bacteria make these amazing life lengthening compounds, longevity compounds, like urolithin A. So polyphenols is something that is really important. I think you probably talked about this in Eat Smarter, but, blueberries, what I love about them, and I tell the kids all the time, is that they have some immediate cognitive Boosting it's like within 30 to 60 minutes of consuming a cup of blueberries.

You will get the cognitive benefits So not only are you feeding the gut bacteria? Not only are you making post biotics, but you're also Boosting your brain at that moment. So I think those kind of things Or something you can add to your diet. So I, when you, when I say 30, 33, the 30 grams of fiber, I'm assuming, and I usually tell people to break that down into fruit. Including berries and vegetables, including leafy greens, because all of those have high polyphenol content. And that automatically gives your body the polyphenols and then nuts and seeds that give your body the omega threes and also the fiber. So that 30 grams of fiber, really, if you're eating real food, you're already getting all the things you need to.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our microbiome plays a huge role in the health of our immune system, brain health, metabolic health, and so much more. And there's one beverage that has been proven to support the health of our microbiome. A recent study published in the peer reviewed journal Nature Communications uncovered that a unique compound called theobrownin found in traditional fermented teas called Puerh has some remarkable effects on our microbiome. The researchers found that thea browning can positively alter our gut microbiota and directly lead to a reduction in something called Lipogenesis, or the creation of new fat. Another study published in the journal of agriculture and food chemistry found that pu erh may be able to reverse gut dysbiosis by dramatically reducing ratios of potentially harmful bacteria and increasing ratios of beneficial bacteria. What's so remarkable about Puerh is its concentration of polyphenols that are incredibly important for healthy gut flora.

The only Pu erh that I drink is a fermented Pu erh that's wild harvested, making it even more concentrated in polyphenols. And it's also triple toxin screened for one of the highest levels of purity. Not many folks realize that a lot of conventional teas, even organic teas, contain things



like heavy metals and toxic molds. This is the only company that is going above and beyond to make sure that this is the highest quality tea. T available, and I'm talking about the folks at pique life, go to [pikelife.com/model](http://pikelife.com/model). That's P I Q U E L I F E .com/model and use the code model at checkout. And you're going to receive up to 15 percent off free us shipping. And you can even get a free sample pack of 12 teas along with their wonderful Puerh bundles. You're going to get access to over 20 delicious award winning flavors. And of course they're amazing Puerh blends. Go to [pikelife.com/model](http://pikelife.com/model). Again, that's P I Q U E L I F E .com/model. Use the code model at checkout for up to 15 percent off plus many other bonuses. And now back to the show.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now with this process and more education going towards perimenopause and menopause. Another critical aspect of this and longevity as well. And we were talking about this earlier too, in how evolution gave this precious gift of grandmothers, right? And being a species that's pretty unique and seeing past menopause lengthy lifespan with humans that isn't really seen anywhere else in any other species. With that being said, we have to protect and cultivate a culture that supports women as women are aging. Recently, in the last few decades in particular, this has been fractured. And we're turning this around, we're changing this right now. There's an important role with relationships. That plays into menopause and perimenopause and longevity and I want to talk about that next.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So what is your recent research saying about the importance of relationships for women's health?

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah, I think you know you pointed what you were saying before about women humans, human females being one of the only species on planet earth. That, and a few whale species, that actually can live past menopause. So I can live well past menopause. Their ovaries may be done, but they're able to live. And why would that be? Most other animals, once they stop procreating, once their ovaries don't function, they die. And the theory is that women have been essential in evolution. Humans, they take care of their own children and they take care of their grandchildren.

They take care of people in the community and they contribute to society. And when you think about that, it's Oh my gosh, these women are so vital in society that evolution had picked them to live longer well past 30, 40 years past menopause. And I think that's beautiful. It just shows you that we do have a role and a purpose and a contribution to society. And that if you engage in that so I tell women all the time in perimenopause and menopause, Hey, you need to engage in your purpose, in your role, whatever that is for yourself. And get involved

with something you've always wanted to do. Help the people you've always wanted to help. Connect with the people you've always wanted to connect with. Because not only is that helping the community, that's helping yourself. Live a long and healthy life.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You're the best. I love talking with you. And our past conversations have planted little seeds that are now blossoming into things like a new show that you have. You have a new podcast. Tell everybody about that.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Well, I want to thank you because you are, well, we're just a guest on my new podcast. And I tell people all the time I, by the way, I tell people this freely all the time. There's a few people that have been so key in my career as this new career. After, I would say medicine is my overall career, but being a doctor in the clinic was my first career. And then being a doctor outside the clinic is my new career. And you've been one of the most influential people in that journey. And I don't think I say it enough. I know I've said, I don't say it a lot, but I don't say it enough because I think that people need to celebrate those people who help others and help you, help guide the way.

And like I said, I think sometimes when you see that someone sees something in you or that they think that you're doing a good job or something, it also plants that seed in your own head and it helps you manifest that because you're like, Oh, well, someone sees something in me and someone is supporting me on my journey. I should do it or I can do it and I think that's been really important.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You're the best.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Thank you. .

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh my goodness. I'm so just happy for you, but I knew this was going to happen. Of course. It's so funny, sometimes, like you said I was just like, why are you not bursting out of the room with confidence about all these things? Like you're all the, you're checking all these boxes, but you know, it's just, it's a process. Especially when you have a certain life and this is for everybody listening. And this even ties back to what you said earlier with menopause and you know still understanding and embracing. That you have a purpose. That you have value. That you matter. And for us also to celebrate that and to start to cultivate more of that in our lives and in our relationships. Especially with women who, we talked about this a little bit earlier, but just the fact that medicine has been so negligent of actually including women in research because there's so many different things going on with women's bodies, women's brains. But we treat women like as, my colleague, our colleague Dr. Lisa Mosconi says, we treat women like smaller men.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And just look at where that's gotten us and we could turn all this stuff around. And your unique experience and education and Communication style and walking the talk and having your daughter here, you know who's interning and all this stuff, is just really special. And so can you share what the name of your podcast?

**DR. AMY SHAH:** It's called save yourself with dr. Amy Shah and you can find it, you know everywhere our podcasts are now audio, video, like we said, everywhere. And I think what we, what I realized is I was just started and I did a few episodes and what I saw really resonated were these kind of conversations that we're having today about women's health. Because I think that when I talk about gut health, I'll talk about sleep and we talk about the immune system and communication. And when I talk about women's health, especially perimenopause, all of a sudden it's like I can't even, people cannot get enough of it because they don't hear it. And they're not told like, what am I supposed to eat?

What am I supposed to do? Okay, my microbiome is changing. What does that even mean? What do I? And I saw that there was such a hole in our community as a wellness community about communicating these kind of things to women. And there's this whole huge population, obviously 50 percent of our population that needs to know this knowledge. And the nutrition side and the sleep side and all the things that we talk about. So that's something that I've been focusing a lot on the podcast.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. So everybody can check out your new show, save yourself with Dr. Amy Shah. And of course we're going to do this more. My favorite people.

**DR. AMY SHAH:** Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. Dr. Amy Shah, everybody. Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. Please find it in your heart to share this out with somebody that you care about. This information is priceless. It can absolutely change somebody's life, change the course of their health and change the course of their happiness and their satisfaction in life and their overall wellbeing, knowledge, is power one aspect but knowledge applied is really where the magic happens But we've gotta get that first step. We've got to get the knowledge in our hands and Being able to hear from incredible experts like Dr. Amy Shah again is priceless. To be able to hear from some of the best in the world and their respective fields is just, it's one of the great things that we have access to today. And listen, we are just getting started.

We've got so much more in store for you, but please share this out with somebody you care about. Take a screenshot, share this out on social media, tag Dr. Amy Shah. Tag me. I'm @Seanmodel. Share the love and just be ready. We've got some incredible masterclasses, we've got some amazing guests coming your way very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to the model health show.com. That's where you can find all of the show. You can find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome. And I appreciate that so much and take care. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.