



EPISODE 823

Obesity and Chronic Diseases Are Exploding at Earlier Ages — This is Why!

With Guest Dr. Tasneem Bhatia

You are now listening to **The Model Health Show with Shawn Stevenson**. For more, visit themodelhealthshow.com.

SHAWN STEVENSON: According to the CDC, more than 40 percent of children and adolescents in the United States now have at least One chronic disease. On this episode, we're going to be unpacking what's truly behind these epidemics of chronic illnesses, specifically in these growing rates in our children. We know that rates of chronic illnesses have gone up exponentially in adults, but now this is filtering its way down into younger and younger populations.

And we have to do something about it. It starts primarily with education. We often don't know what we don't know and awareness can truly be the catalyst to make some really powerful changes for ourselves, for our children, and for our community at large. So I'm very excited about this episode. We've got a wonderful and amazing special guest who's an expert in this field and some of the things that she's going to share today actually shocked me, truly did shock me.

And I actually had several moments of revelation and understanding things a different way when it comes to our environment and our children's health. So very excited about this and keep in mind, we're working to truly change the culture of health in our society today because our current culture, and again, these statistics should be jarring.

60 percent according to the CDC, of American adults now have at least one chronic disease and 40 percent of children now have at least one chronic disease It's now the norm to have some kind of chronic condition. So we're working to change that health culture I grew up in a health culture where it didn't really matter what you were eating Just make sure that you're taking a flintstones vitamin to make sure that you're getting all your vitamins and minerals Problem solved.

All right, now I'm pretty sure that Fred and Barney and Wilma and Dino are all taking up shop in people's cells today. Adults that are walking around having those multivitamins from the 80s that were just made of these crazy synthetic versions of certain nutrients and a conglomeration of chemicals. We are so far beyond that.

And even the conventional multivitamins, those days are over. We want to look for food based nutrients and concentrations of real food nutrients. And it shows up in peer review

data that the bioavailability of food based nutrients versus synthetic forms of those nutrients, it doesn't even compare.

And so with that being said, we can get these superfood concentrates of all these incredible micronutrients that our bodies need, that our children's growing bodies need to truly thrive. And one of my favorite ways to do that, especially for kids, is the amazing Organifi Kids Easy Greens. This incredible superfood blend, again, made for kids, but I'll be honest with you. It's one of my favorite things as well contains superfoods like moringa, spinach, broccoli sprouts, plus probiotics and digestive enzymes.

And it's green juice for kids that actually tastes good. And right now you get 20 percent off Organifi Kids Easy Greens. When you go to organifi.com/model, that's ORGANIFI.com/model for 20 percent off Organifi Kids Easy Greens. And also their original green juice blend.

For everybody as well. So pop over there, check them out, making sure that we're getting those micronutrient needs met and getting these super foods into our bodies. It's just really helping to build up real health insurance within ourselves. So head over there, check them out. Organifi.com four size model.

And now let's get to the Apple podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five star review titled "I'm The Fittest I've Ever Been" by PSL bear. The model health show is truly one of a kind, but I love that there's always a new twist. And someone else that could offer a new health related tip in a quickie. I love that the show isn't just about what you're eating, but little tweaks you can make to improve your overall health.

I get excited when I see new episodes and what their topics pertain to. Thanks so much for keeping it real.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple Podcasts. I truly do appreciate that. And now let's dive in and get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today is Dr. Tasneem Bhatia, better known as Dr. Taz, and she's a board certified physician specializing in integrative and emergency medicine, pediatrics, prevention, and expertise in women's health, weight loss, and nutrition. She's been featured everywhere in major media, from the Today Show, Access Hollywood, The Good morning America, the list goes on and on and she's a practicing physician who is seeing patients all over the country and one of the most in demand physicians to work with because she simply gets results.

And on this episode, we're going to be diving in and talking about this all important subject of the health of our children. Let's dive into this conversation with the amazing Dr. Taz.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We have the incredible Dr. Taz back with us. How are you doing today?

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: So excited to be here.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's go.

DR. TASNEEM BATHIA: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. We're talking about a subject matter that is very near and dear to my heart. We're talking about children's health today. And there are obviously some huge issues that are going on in particular with our kids.

DR. TASNEEM BATHIA: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You working as a physician for many years having kids yourself and just being able to see these things from a Meta perspective and also isolated in certain situations What are some of the big things that you're seeing with children's health right now that are alarming to you?

DR. TASNEEM BATHIA: Yeah, it's interesting. I started my career actually in pediatrics. That's how I began before I moved on to ER and everything else I do and to watch over the last 15 to 20 years actually where you know, the field of children's health is going and what our children is are dealing with is actually really upsetting and disconcerting.

I think that there's an assault to be 100 percent honest on our kids brains. I think that they are being bombarded with the level of toxins and environmental stress. That is changing their physiology is literally changing what's happening to the gut microbiome is changing their hormonal balance and their hormones in general.

And just our culture has led to one where I think the majority of our children, if we were checking it, are walking around in a high cortisol sort of what I call hypothalamic inflammation. We can get into that in a little bit. But in this sort of constant vibratory stress state. And there's, there are a lot of different reasons for it.

DR. TASNEEM BATHIA: But when you are starting life that way. You know in your elementary years and then you're going into your middle school years and then you're now in high school Then you become an adult that's the why that's the why we have a mental health crisis That's the why we're seeing disease expression younger and younger There's just an article out about how cancer is affecting people in their 20s now. This is This is the background of it and so I think for me, the way my medical career has evolved, where we deal with the whole family and we're dealing with everybody from zero all the way to seniors, is that being able to pull back and look at the patterns and being able to like dissect a little bit and say, Oh my gosh, you have this at this age because this happened at this other age, which was actually 10 years ago.

And being able to timeline these things out, you realize that we are doing an incredible disservice to our children because we don't have a model to track and measure, prevent and treat what they're actually dealing with. We have a very cookie cutter sort of routine. Check model that kind of checks boxes off, but still doesn't address the issues of today.

I feel like I've done a lot of different things with my medical career but I feel to not speak about this is an incredible disservice.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Thank you for saying that because really our kids are entrusting us to take care of them and to look out for them. And they're just thrust into this environment where it's really set up for them to be unhealthy.

Obviously we've seen skyrocketing rates of obesity in children. Childhood obesity tripled. Essentially in the last 40 years. That's insane and childhood diabetes We had to change the name.

Adult onset diabetes is now type 2 diabetes because younger and younger people started getting it. The allergies the autoimmune conditions the cancers all these different things have skyrocketed and you alluded to a little bit the mental health component as well and There is something awry.

Like we cannot continue to allow this to happen. We're seeing the proof right in front of us. But I think part of it is of course, like we get so busy, we get caught up in our own lives and we've just allowed a system to be created where we're treating the symptoms, even with our kids

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Very much

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so with that said, you mentioned, and this is a strong word, and I feel it's appropriate, an assault on our children's health and an assault in. In our time is multifaceted. So let's talk about what some of those components of this assault are.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Definitely. And it's sneaky, which is really what's the most frustrating thing about the whole thing.

Look, there are so many different places to go with this. I think the first place we have to go, and we've talked about this before, so it might seem redundant. But it's not. But we have to understand that food and food quality and what we are feeding our children and what they become accustomed to eating is like one of the primary determinants of why kids are getting sick.

What we are understanding, you mentioned obesity, we understand now more so than ever before that the chemical load. right? And we can name many different chemicals, whether it's preservatives, additives, high fructose corn syrup just high sugar in general, the oils, all of these things independently have been linked to obesity.

And what's happening is many of the food sources for our children. And this is across socioeconomic barriers. This is for everyone, inner city to burbs all, All across the board, the majority of the food that our Children are eating, especially when they leave our home, right? So if you have young Children, they leave the home for school and for birthday parties and for different events.

If you have middle schoolers, they're hanging out with their friends and doing sleepovers. If you have high schoolers, Oh, wow, they're independent. They're pulling into the local fast food and doing whatever they want, or they're pumping Celsius and all these other drinks. And but yeah, The load, the cumulative load of these independent toxins that have all been tracked and linked to obesity is what's making our kids incredibly sick.

It's driving up cortisol. It's driving up insulin. It's driving the metabolic pathway towards more storage of visceral fat and that in turn over a period of time then impacts hormones. So what we're seeing on the hormone front is all this chemistry is happening right from probably a newborn period all the way through early elementary to mid elementary timeframe.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Then what we're seeing all of that do is throw people into patterns of aging. Estrogenization, right? Which is where even boys are having higher expression of more estrogen like symptoms. And when we in our practice go and measure it, you can measure an estradiol and you can measure an estrone, which is a storage form of estrogen.

Those levels are high in boys, so boys are getting estrogenized. Girls are also getting estrogenized. So they're going into puberty earlier and earlier, and they're also getting estrogenized androgenized meaning they're getting a lot more sort of male derivatives of hormones floating around in their system because of this liver load that's essentially the why of why it's happening.

So we hit age eight nine ten. We've got you know girls going into puberty earlier and earlier we've got We have boys getting more estrogen like symptoms. I don't know if you've been to the beach recently. You'll see boys, young boys that have man boobs and all these other things bellies, all of these things developing.

And then as we move on with that, we see then the disorders associated with that, right? So the androgenization of girls is leading to an epidemic of PCOS, POTS, which is another disorder that we're seeing more and more of, things like MCAS, which is an autoimmune disease that has to do with histamine loads.

And in the boys, we're seeing things like declining sperm counts over time, and then definitely the mental health component as well. So it's all this continuum that The first place is food quality, but then the second place, I think, is what's happening to the liver and the load of toxins impacting the liver. And the two of those things together are now impacting what expressed in the exam room.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And what we might neglect to see is, okay, so we see these issues, yeah, okay, my, My child started puberty a little early or yeah my kid is carrying some extra fat and they're venturing into childhood obesity and but it's okay it's just it's it is what it is and not understanding that early puberty is now setting her up for higher risk of Alzheimer's. Right? Higher rates of dementia issues with menopause every since ever that is getting set sooner Everything else is potentially coming sooner as a result.

Yeah, and even mentioning that Androgen load too. It's really interesting. I'm so glad you brought this up. This aromatization process where our diet again with boys and our testosterone, our free testosterone getting aromatized and converted into estrogen.

And with women, it can be the opposite because of the liver, as you just mentioned, and we can get some kind of upregulation with testosterone levels and just, it's just creating this like hormonal chaos in our kids bodies.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Definitely. There's hormone chaos. There's gut chaos, right? You have both things happening simultaneously And both of those factors we have a third factor. I would say I always think in triangles, you know When I'm talking to patients, I'm always drawing these triangles and trying to show them like what are the three things that you know at play here and then the third is our culture and our environment, we have an epidemic of stress and it's coming from a couple of different places. So I'm lumping it into this one word, but it probably needs to be divided out. One place where we experience stress is our exposure to blue light.

And I think our exposure to blue light creates a chronic high cortisol level in the body for all of us, kids to adults, seniors, everybody. So that's one level of stress. The other level of stress is just family dynamics, right? We have a lot of fractured families. We have lost our sense of community kids and the structure of how they run their lives today.

It's very, I don't know about yours but I look at mine and I look back and I look forward and I look at younger moms too. There's this rhythm of take just one activity to the next, driving around town. There's a lack of just like free play. We're not getting, letting kids go outside for some some areas it's just simply not safe, but this undercurrent of stress for lots of different reasons is creating this high cortisol environment in the environment of a crashing gut in the environment of hormones.

So take all of that. It's happening over a period of time, right? And then move it year by year. as your children now enter into puberty and adolescence. And now you have just honestly a s show, right? Their brains are on fire. Puberty was always hard. Adolescence was always hard. We always had rebels. You always had people doing high risk behaviors, right?

But they're not just doing high risk behaviors now. They're crashing and burning. There's anxiety at an unprecedented level. There's ADHD. There is addiction and eating disorders. We are seeing all these things go up and our kids increasingly at risk. We're finding that the happy, joyful kid is starting to disappear from our landscape.

And that's who we could turn to for innocence and for pure joy that wasn't tainted by like the pressures of the world. We're not seeing that as much anymore. That's starting to go away. And I think it's going away because all three of these factors are at play.

And for every child or teenager that I see, I'm always trying to figure out which of these three are having the greatest weight in this particular moment.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that's the importance of the individual child and paying attention to the individual because it's going to be different from person to person. Very much. Adult to adult, child to child. And I want to go back because you mentioned something earlier. You mentioned these different factors and just, we're going to touch on diet really quickly. Many of these newly invented chemicals many of these can fall under the category of obesogens or Carcinogens, but just really alter our biochemistry in potentially negative ways And they might be studied in isolation from time to time But we're not studying the entourage effect. We're not like what happens when all these things come together in one twinkie, right?

You know what? Like we're not looking at this and again, we're just seeing the outcome like Oh, this is just normal we've normalized What's happening with this dysfunction on our bodies and and you mentioned this crazy phenomenon of like when you said free play like that sounds so good to me. You know just being able to go outside and to be free and just to play with my friends and we had video games, too Yeah, all right.

Yeah, and I remember Spending hours playing video games from time to time, right? But it's more like in certain pockets And also but the video gaming even then for me was like inclusive of my friends my little brother. And i'm wondering like what happened along the way And I don't think it was just the fact that the games got more addictive like we have video game designers who are doing certain things to make you keep playing that video game like and you don't think about that very different from Pong, you know with a tar in his little For maybe 30 minutes, yeah.

All right, let's go ride our bikes like okay, that's enough but now it's like endless it's just that FOMO. It's like a FOMO in video game form, right? But you couple that with the lower level of energy that we might have you couple that with What you shared they're part of that triangle is the separation of family and structure and also our community structure and just having friends outside or our cousins or whatever in our neighborhood just to go outside and play, right?

We've really distanced ourselves physically as far as like our community setting, but also because we're tuning to these devices.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: The device is the community, unfortunately, right now and I feel like children I love that schools are now clamping down on the whole cell phone policy.

I don't know if you've seen some of that recently, but most schools are now you have to check your phone in and lock it up and you can't have it in the classroom. But that's just this year. And I have a junior and a sophomore. But I feel like that's become everyone's community is your phone or your device, whatever device you have.

And unfortunately, what's what there's another fallout to that, which indirectly impacts their mental health. It's hard to make social connection like not being able to simply say, hi, goodbye, good morning. How are you lacking empathy? Lacking basic social skills is something that I think our children are suffering from and what we're seeing it is in the most recent generation coming up where they are rejecting family.

They don't want family, many of them they're like, I need alone time or downtime with my phone and that phone or that device has become the soother rather than a human being or another person or another community member. So I think we're shifting culture. We have shifting food and food quality. We have a higher toxic load. And then we've got this hormonal thing going on that we have to really start screening kids for earlier and earlier to prep them. And I almost feel I wrote the hormone shift and we talked about that last time, but I feel like it applies to our children because they need a plan before they enter middle school in terms of what their risk are, what their gut health is doing, what their liver health is doing, what nutrients they may lack, where are they with their social media addiction and cell phone and blue light sort of exposure. And then parents need a plan, a very sort of organized tactical plan of this is where you guys need to focus with your kids.

And unfortunately, because we're not having those conversations. I feel like you're having parents work against each other. Why is that person letting this one do that? Or why is that parent so crazy? All this is fine. That type of thing. So I feel like we need standardization.

This is what it looks like to be healthy. These are the markers to check. This is how you prep and this is how you plan,

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it's in particular with the cell phone issue it's it's one of those things where all the other kids Have one.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Yeah Oh totally. I've been there trust me. It's not been fun.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's also because it's something that we have and our kids are modeling us. We mentioned the comfort with the phone a lot of us take that down time. Jumping and scrolling on our phone, right? And so again, this is our kids are getting born into it. This is new for us.

And so you we have a little bit more of a buffer, I think, because we can feel the feels a little bit more. This doesn't feel good after a certain amount of time, or our kids, they just get acclimated to it, like a callus. And obviously that chemistry, it's engineered in a certain way to keep us on the apps. Whatever those look like. And you mentioned something earlier, you mentioned hypothalamic inflammation.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's talk a little bit about that.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: All right, I'm going to go deep. So bear with me. All right, hypothalamus, right? For everybody sits in the brain, it's your sensor, your feeler.

I always equate it to if we were sharks, that's our fin kind of understanding what the environment's like, where's the temperature? How does it feel here? Am I in danger? Am I safe? All of those different things. But it's also the place that holds memory, that holds emotion. And also regulates your nervous system and your hormone system, both of them.

And if we want to even take it a step further, there's thought that's the region of the brain that actually holds trauma and emotions, even from past generations, because it contains mitochondrial DNA. And that mitochondrial DNA is passed untouched generation to generation, usually through the maternal line.

So you've got this sort of command center, so to speak, sitting in the brain for children born for newborns there again studies that show this when they are born under conditions of stress when there's been a lot of maternal stress, malnutrition, you know all these different things they have a higher level of hypothalamic inflammation from the get go from their starting point but as you move on when children experience trauma or any sort of physical sort of you know stress of any kind, then we again see that hypothalamic inflammation start to express itself.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: It expresses itself in different ways in the lab. If I was measuring labs, we like to look at things like a cortisol level. You can look at a leptin level. You can actually look at all the different hormones too, because you can look at the pituitary hormones and you can look at neurotransmitters.

Cause it's almost like if you look at the hypothalamus, when it gets inflamed, it's either going to impact the nervous system, which is serotonin and dopamine, or it's going to impact the HPA axis, which then acts on cortisol and you start producing excessive cortisol and androgens from the adrenal glands. So you've got this command center pulling these two different levers. So what's happening with children, and this has been really interesting for me to watch, and I definitely want to do more work around this, is that they're coming into an environment.

And then they are living out in a situation due to blue light, due to chronic stress, due to the lack of kind of fun or free time, environment quality, toxic load, all these things we talk about, that cycle of inflammation perpetuates. Some children have capacity for that. So this is where you get into the individualization and things like that.

Eastern medicine talks about this all the time. Some people are born with more capacity than others. They talked about it as chi or energy, right? And some people had a lot, some people had a little, it was your responsibility to replenish it, to grow it. No matter how you came into the world, right?

So some kids have more capacity so they can tolerate a higher toxic load, a higher stress level, right? More junk food, all these different things. 'cause their capacity is greater. But a large proportion of the kids don't have that capacity. So they're showing up with different illnesses along the way. It may start with other sort of signs and symptoms of inflammation, which include things like chronic eczema, asthma, allergies, right? Gut dysfunction, or it may present as ADD or ADHD or childhood anxiety. These are all neuro inflammatory symptoms, right? Or it may move on to depression. And then again, we are seeing things like pANDAS or autoimmune neuroencephalitis. We're seeing so many different conditions, right?

So everyone has a little bit of a different capacity to handle this. What we're doing, what historically is being done and actually still being done is that we're treating each symptom. We're treating like, Oh, you've got eczema. Here's your plan. You've got asthma. Here's your plan. You've got ADD or ADHD. Here's your plan. You've got anxiety. Here's your plan. And when you treat that way, then you've got. So if you have four or five different pharmaceuticals, or even if you're in the holistic or natural world, you have eight to 10 different supplements.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: You have a plan that is unsustainable and not really realistic because it's not getting to the root of what's happening, which is an exaggeration of hypothalamic inflammation.

So what really needs to happen is we have to dial all the way back and be like, what is the primary driver of this inflammatory response? What should we do first? And it may be that the first step, and it depends on every child, right? And every family and what's going on. And maybe that the first step in a particular situation is you pull all devices away, right?

That, that might be the first step in another situation. It may be, okay, we really need to clean up the diet. This is, we're getting too many process foods or getting too much exposure to some of these obesogens or toxic chemicals. And in another situation, and I've watched this too, you have children that have undergone extreme stress or trauma by witnessing abuse or divorce or different things within their family.

And they actually need therapy and counseling and work to calm that inflammatory response down. I worked with a patient whose parents had a really violent marriage. And the child would after a year or two, started developing this behavior of eating everything in sight. Could not get full and the mom trying to find solutions was like, do we need to do GLP one medications? Like, why is she gaining weight? She's obese. Like she eats all the time. It was trying to control her food. I could sit back and be like, this is hypothalamic inflammation.

Inflammation markers are high. Leptin markers are high. This child's cortisol is high. This control stuff is not going to work. We have got to get her nervous system to calm down. And so that was the plan that she needed, not a GLP 1. So that this is what, how I'd really to see us shift because what's happening is this chronic inflammatory response is directly responsible for the majority of what we're seeing our children go to go through today.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Holy moly. Holy moly. We've 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 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 at 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, genetically modified cornstarch and corn syrup.

What the researchers found was that over the course of the one week study, there was a 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 super food 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 and you're going to get 15 percent off. Okay. Your entire order, including their essential C complex. That's 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.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay. Two things. Thank you so much for sharing this. This is so important because again, we're trying to do what's best for our kids and also our current healthcare models doing the same thing. It's what we're trained to do to address these symptoms, whether that's through a medication or a supplement or some other form of treating. The presenting thing and not looking at the underlying cause. And so what you're sharing with us is that this underlying facet, which, now here's the thing. And as you're saying this, I'm just like, why aren't more people talking about this? It's because the brain is very

protective. So somebody might not realize that their brain is inflamed. Just neuroinflammation overall.

And just a couple of this, by the way, this is, there was a great study that was done by researchers at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. And what they determined was that hypothalamic inflammation specifically was leading to more accumulation of body fat and insulin resistance.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Yes. It's all linked. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They also found that insulin resistance and body fat was creating more hypothalamic inflammation. All right, so it's just like this vicious side directional. Yeah, and but we're not thinking about that because we've got this master gland that's regulating all this stuff. The hypothalamus is really on that Information superhighway, as you mentioned, impacting what's happening with your adrenals. Your thyroid is along that axis. And if your brain is inflamed, you probably don't know that. You're not thinking about that. And it's going to present as different symptoms in different people. So that's what I'm hearing. And so we need to create an overall environment. Internal and external that helps to reduce inflammation specifically in our brains absolutely, and I think that is the challenge because what we are actually doing is like prescribing Medicaid like prescribing ADD medicine right which treats only this portion of the brain, what about the rest of it? Probably contributing to more inflammation.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Exactly. And then we add on an anxiety medication because the AD medication triggers the, it's just a little bit convoluted and what I don't want to do is make Parents feel helpless and hopeless, right? We don't want to do that.

But what we do want to do is help them understand how interconnected the body is and how early signs and symptoms lead to bigger things as the years go by. I always talk about how. Even in within our own family that a lot of what I've seen is some of those early warning signs of having gut issues or being highly sensory very sensitive to noise and sound and texture and all of these different things.

Those are early warning signs for a chronic inflammatory response. And so the key is to pay attention. It's almost like I want to create, I probably should do this. It's like the parent's chronic inflammatory response checklist does your kid have inflammation and here are your top 10 to 20 signs and symptoms that you should be aware of.

And if you can check this off and if you're checking off the majority of these, then it's time to assess and decide where you want to start to dial back the inflammatory load and I think that's really important.

And my hope is by doing that work, our teens who I really think are suffering, like by the time we get there, they're not having this like mental health fallout like I look at my daughter The majority of her friends are on anxiety and ADHD medications there's something wrong with that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It happened so fast.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: And then they're self medicating as they get to college with other substances, which now is super dangerous because it's not fun anymore. Like our time, right now it's laced with fentanyl. It's just, how do we turn this thing around, do it earlier and address it both at home Both on our streets, both at our dinner table, and in our exam rooms. I think it's really important.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this speaks to, we don't need to wait around to implement certain things. No. And you have this great power plan that you utilize specifically for kids. So let's unpack that

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Definitely. So I think this is an acronym that i've used right in terms of you know Just trying to help parents with where you begin and a lot of it is starting with diet like start with protein make sure they're eating every three to four hours getting enough protein every meal or snack.

That's one way to keep blood sugar stable. That's one way to stop their sugar cravings and their salt cravings and their junk food cravings for sure. I think the other is really looking at the concentration of healthy fats that they're getting in. So are they getting in the right amount of fats and the right kind and quality of fats?

So the omega three fats in particular, the omega nine fats, we know that those help to decrease inflammation. I think teaching them from an early age to really move towards staying hydrated and drinking water. And then once they hit the teenage years, which is where I am right now, it becomes a little bit of a challenge with keeping them off the sodas and the Celsius and some of those types of things.

But I think constantly educating them, right? I think parents get super frustrated because they feel like they're not getting heard. But they are listening. So the more you say it and the

more you try to model good behaviors, the better. I think helping them understand what brings them energy what energizes them, having them all this learn to read their own energy what is energizing them, what is depleting them, I think that's really important too.

And then from a dietary standpoint, getting fiber. So that's like a very like actionable these are things you can do. No matter how old your child is, but really when we take that whole idea a little bit deeper and this is where I love bringing in sort of the Eastern medical systems, right?

I do a lot of merging of Eastern and Western medicine. They would type children. They would try to educate you on the type of child that you have. So there were children that were more the best way to describe it is more air quality or more creative a little bit less grounded. There were children, they would describe them as almost like hunters, the hunter type, right?

That were very like strategic and go getters and would go after things. And then there were those that were very like. Very sensitive. They were more like empaths. They could feel and almost know everything that was happening in the environment around them. I think one of the things that we can also do is start to learn our children.

Because if you have somebody who is less grounded, then there's a plan for them. And if you have somebody that's like a hunter and a go getter that's a little bit of a different plan. And then if you have somebody that is more sensory, more, empathetic, more of a nurturing type, then chronic stress and chronic family stress for them is going to be devastating.

So it's important to understand who you're dealing with as you move past kind of the basics of trying to nurture them and care for them.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love that so much.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: You do? I thought you were going to be like, what? No. What is she talking about?

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's that, something like that is so obvious if you really think about it, because we tend to approach so much in life with this kind of blanket approach to things. And even with successful relationships, it's like learning the person.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: You have to.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we need to do that with our kids. But what that requires? Is you paying attention. It requires time. And today more than ever, we feel like we're pulled in all these directions, but a lot of this is manufactured by us and we're missing out on the most important thing that we've ever created, and so that's something that I really got to see very clearly.

Because my daughter's the oldest and then I have my middle, my son, who's the middle child. And I still didn't really get it. Because also, she was a girl, he's a boy. Okay, that's what the differences are. But when I had my youngest son, I could see how different they are with their communication style.

How they're motivated, how they're demotivated. Like my youngest son. loves to know what's happening and he will. executed. As long as he knows that, okay, tomorrow we're going to be doing such and such, we're going to, we're going to work out whatever he's on it. He'll be the first one. He's got his shoes on waiting for you.

Yeah. He likes a good plan, but he doesn't like a sporadic Hey B in 10 minutes. He's I had plans for my time. Yeah. Whereas my oldest son, Spur of the moment, right? And he wants to wait to the last minute to get things done. My youngest son wants to get things done so he can do what he wants, right?

And my oldest son wants to do what he wants and then do the thing the last minute, right? So I start to pay attention to these things and you resist them, especially if you've been parenting a certain way. It's just like, why don't you just act like such as it was just, but over time you start to see the beauty and the value and the diversity and also what it brings out of me.

As a human being, as a parent, as a man, to be able to communicate with these different spirits and so it's so obvious, but this is what I want to implore everybody to do is to pay attention carve out that time. For me, it's a daily practice now I just, I will literally just sit there and I will find something for him to talk about whatever we'll find something and I just listen to him and I listened to the sound of his voice and I pay attention to his mannerisms,

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: I've learned these lessons, unfortunately with my feet in the fire, so to speak, right? I could tell the same stories. I have two kids, very different, wired very differently. And my parenting style had to shift. I forget parenting style. I had to shift and change to adjust to each of these, right?

And what works for one doesn't work for the other. But here's the beauty. This is why I want to reimagine the exam room. Here's the beauty of Chinese medicine and Ayurvedic medicine. They actually do some of that work for you. There is diagnostics that will help you type your child. And then as they get older, they can do things like the Enneagram and the Myers Briggs and those type of things that help you a little bit further.

But in the early years, you can't do all that stuff. So what they will do is tell you this is the dominant type that your child is. These are their vulnerabilities. This is what will bring their constitution down and weaken them. These are the things that will strengthen them. And you can start to have a little bit of a roadmap.

It may not be perfect, but you can have a roadmap to understand. Now, if we link that to this idea of hypothalamic inflammation. What sets off inflammation in one person is not going to be the exact same thing. This is where the double blinded study issue becomes problematic because we are by a, we're all individuals.

So what sets off inflammation in one human is not necessarily the same thing. going to have the exact same response in another human. So if you've got this sort of Vada, kidney meridian child, water child, air child, like very airy type child, more of a creative, right? They're going to get inflamed very quickly when their diet is not consistent, when they don't have structure, and when they're not sleeping versus the sort of hunter mentality child who's like in a go for it, they're young dominant they're liver meridian folks, they're pitas Eastern medicine describes folks in those ways, those people, they're those kids, their greatest vulnerability is their gut.

And the state of their gut health and their microbiome. So if we could re imagine medicine and pediatrics in a way that provides parents with a roadmap of here's today's struggles and here are today's challenges. Every generation has them, right? But here are today's, and this is your child. This is what you need to be aware of.

And then we can pair it to tracking those things as the years go by. You can set kids up for all kinds of success and for not hitting these like roadblocks, which a lot of the times result in an emotional toll that I'm not good enough. I'm shameful. I'm this, I'm that, like all this negative dialogue that then throughout their adulthood, they're spending hours on a couch trying to undo. So anyhow, like I would like us to reimagine this a little bit and say let's start bringing things together because it'll give us more information than we can imagine

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. All right. So just to recap this power plan. We've got the P stands for protein and The O is Omega 3s and Omega 9s as well, the Omega family, but in particular Omega 3s is one of the biggest deficiencies. The W is water, hydration. E is energy. And R is the roughage. Really looking at the impact of fiber and fiber types, getting a variety of fiber types to feed the, Friendly flora.

TASNEEM BHATIA: Exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I want to ask you about the antithesis of roughage and high quality fiber would be the highly refined, very dense sources of sugar that are major part of our diets, but even bigger for our children.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Definitely.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. They're growing up in the environment. Many of us take that with us into adulthood, but. Yeah. These when I was a kid, let me just I'm just gonna rattle some off. I've never done this before Coke, cherry coke, pepsi Mountain Dew, of course, I was a big fan of like fruit punch and Lipton brisk, you got Dr. Pepper. Oh, yes We've got seven up, the list goes on and on. Then we've got the mellow yellows.

And then we got the whole other category in it. I think for me, this is what I saw in the inner city more so than like when I go to my grandma's house in a suburban environment, but they had Vess sodas, which was like strawberry and grape and all that kind of stuff.

But obviously again, these are. Very quick liquid forms of concentrated sugar. Then we've got the refined potato chips and cakes and cookies and all this stuff that in this environment. You can get like two for 99 cent honey buns and things like that.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: It's cost effective. Yeah

SHAWN STEVENSON: How do we deal with that? How do we deal with that? Knowing again, we've got kids that are just you know, this is just commonplace in a lot of yeah Even in schools how can we better create an environment where for ourselves and for our kids to deal with this influx of sugar.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: I think on a macro scale, we've got to work really hard to minimize the accessibility of some of these high sugar foods to our kids, because you'll have high schools and middle schools with the ability to purchase the stuff out of the vending machine.

So even when parents are trying to do their best, it's still available. But I think what we want to educate kids not just about food, but about a lot of these other players is we got to create budgets like we got to think about your food. Like you would think about a budget or a bank account.

And really the goal of, for sugar is under about 25 grams a day is we really should not be going, children should not be going over that. So helping them understand how quickly they reach that. You can reach it in one soda you can reach it in one dessert that you have. And so training them out of, and then as parents, like also practicing this, you don't need to have a dessert every night.

If you're having soda should be a treat food. It should not be an everyday food. And at the same time, what can you bring in that will minimize the pallets craving for these, for sugar is a drug. It's addictive. I actually feel like sugar should be labeled as a drug at some point.

But when you get the right fats, when you get enough protein in, When you're eating at consistent intervals and you're hydrated, your palate adapts, the pH changes so that you don't desire and crave kind of these junky snacks and sugar as much as you would otherwise. But what kids find themselves and parents find themselves is in that vicious cycle, right?

Where they've had sodas, they get the high, they get the low and then a few hours go by, they want it again, right? Or their palate has adapted to a very high salt concentration of some kind. So if something doesn't have salt or MSG, they don't wanna eat it. It doesn't taste good. So what we have to do is, at least in the home, establish some baseline rules.

You don't have to have a dessert every night. You shouldn't be having sodas every day. Those You know, that's a sometimes food. And then honestly, one of the best ways to stop this is don't eat out every day, really need to not be eating out more than about once a week. And the reason for that is parents get busy and they're grabbing food, but that food is high salt and it is high sugar, despite their best intentions.

So we're still training the palate to pick those things over and over again. So that's another thing that parents can look out for. And then bringing in at least four servings of fruits and vegetables a day. I think that's another way to control this and to minimize their desire and their seeking for sugar.

So those are some of the things that you can do. And I think that a lot of the sugar load is what's in the home, right? Like it's accessibility. If you're going to have a lot of junky snacks and sodas and high sugar things in the home, They're going to eat them, so make them less

available. And that rule also probably needs to apply to schools and to sports and to other things that children do, because the more they're available, of course, they're going to pick that first. Cause that's what feels good,

SHAWN STEVENSON: And then you just said it to the feel good, engineered to taste amazing, but also you just gave me a reframe that I never thought about before when you talked about. How essentially these are like drugs it's very addictive the highs and the lows, right?

So we have the crash and we have that You know these junk foods make us junkies, right? We're junkies. All right, this happened right here in this moment I don't know if it's ever been said before on planet earth it's a reframe and we've got so many studies on this affirming this there's the oreo study with the mice and the cocaine mice like cocaine, too I know right mighty mouse. I think that's what he actually was.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Everybody likes cocaine, but doesn't mean it works for you

SHAWN STEVENSON: So the mice would go for the oreos rather than The cocaine, same thing with sugar variants. So not just sugar, but even sucralose, right? So artificial sweeteners, mice would preferentially, even if they're already addicted to cocaine, they would switch over to the sweetness, to the sugar. And with humans, we've got so many human studies looking at the brain and neuroactivity when we are In the grasp of sugar and it changes us, it alters our neurochemistry dramatically. And so keeping this in mind that it is a very strong substance. We did not evolve having access to something so concentrated like that.

The closest it's not even, it's disrespectful to say this, but the closest thing as far as a high sugar concentrate would be honey, right? Which honey is to say that it's a sweetener is a disrespect to honey. It's so much more than that. But we've never again This is just the last It's couple centuries that humans have had this concentrate of sugar and access to it.

But it's only in the last few decades that it's become pervasive and it's like you cannot go anywhere without sugar just being flashed in your face.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Very much and then we've been having this conversation around cortisol and hypothalamic inflammation. Sugar is one of the triggers for that.

It will drive that, right? So yeah this is a big one for kids. This is challenging in their studies too, that show even the artificial sweeteners, right? Cause some parents will be like it doesn't

have that much sugar. It has erythritol or sucralose or whatever the monk fruit, some of these other things, even those are changing neurochemistry and impacting appetite.

And remember the hypothalamus is also the center for appetite and satiety regulation too, right? So those, artificial sweeteners, right? So maybe you're doing diet Coke or whatever diet thing that's out there that's still impacting neurochemistry. And if we're going to start with the central premise that the greatest challenge to children's health today is the assault on their brains and hypothalamic inflammation, then this is a part of that conversation, right?

Like sugar, artificial sweeteners is a part of that chemical load that we talk about that's really triggering a lot of the disease and disease symptoms that we're seeing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I love that action step you shared of basically crowding out and By adding in making sure that your family yourself and your kids are hitting that minimum mark of fruits and vegetables in particular. You know for that sweet sensation eating some fruits a couple servings of fruit every day.

There's so many great fruits to choose from But that really crowds out the other stuff and also it meets certain needs and also micronutrients You're getting these things that help to reduce cravings and hunger and things like that later on.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Dopamine we could have a whole conversation around dopamine, right?

Makes us feel good, makes us happy, all of these different things. The hypothalamus is critical in production of dopamine. But what's happening is that we're losing our dopamine. Our children are losing their dopamine and they're losing it for all the different reasons we've just talked about.

So they are junkies. They're going and looking for a high and that high is either social media or their phones or it's a device of some kind or it's sugar or it's junk food. They're seeking it. And that same behavior. then translates into their teen years, and they're looking for the high in a different way.

And then they move to adulthood, and they're still looking for that high. So this issue with hypothalamic inflammation The dopamine deficit, what's happening in children, and how we rewrite, rewire this is really important for the next generation of parenting. I think it's really

important to, to dial into it, to understand it, and then to biotype or understand your child so that you can create a plan that works for them.

And you can create an environment that works for them too.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, this is awesome. You were the first person to, I've been talking about hypothalamic inflammation, neuroinflammation for quite some time. But the first expert to come on here and just this is one of the things you brought up to talk about because this is one of those things where you're hearing about this now from you. People are getting a preview of what they're going to hear a lot more about in the next couple of years, the next couple of decades. We've got to do something about this right now. And this really speaks to just the importance of just so much is fixed when you're eating real food.

That's time tested. Some researchers at Auburn actually looked at oleocanthal rich extra virgin olive oil, and they found that remarkably, it has this capacity to reduce neural inflammation, potentially to even repair the blood brain barrier, which gets damaged by High intakes of sugar, right? So there are certain things that we know are creating the inflammation.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Definitely I've been like scratching my head looking at lab work for a while both on kids I've learned some of this from my children and then some from the adults and the other epidemic that's out there is I've been seeing people spill fat.

They're just losing fat they're not absorbing it. They're not. And I'm like, Oh, this is a gut issue. And I've since realized it's not a gut issue. It's an assault. The sugar, the load of sugar and the load of toxins is impacting the pancreas to where it cannot keep up and produce enough digestive enzymes to break things down effectively.

So we've got this gut brain axis that's being impacted by all of this stuff, and so I think the more we can dial into how do we clean up food, how do we sleep peacefully, how do we minimize blue light and exposure to blue light, which is in itself inflammatory, how do we create environments of play and joy to bring back dopamine?

So our kids aren't going to look for it in other sources and in other ways. I think all of that. It needs to be a part of pediatrics and how we think about children's health.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely. Where can people get more information from you and just hang out in your universe and parents in particular in this context?

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: We have lots going on, so they can join me on social media. It's drtazmd, D R T A Z M D. They can jump onto my website. It's dr.tazmd as well. And then we have a Busy active practice so they can make an appointment at the practice if they want to learn more about their child individually. But you will see me talking and dialing into this topic more and more I really feel passionately that we need to get this information out there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, me too. I'm so grateful for you.

DR. TASNEEM BHATIA: Thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Dr. Taz, everybody. Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. If you did, you know what to do. Share it out with your friends and family, specifically share this with parents. This is information that every parent needs to know, and I appreciate you so much for being a part of this mission with me.

We've got some amazing masterclasses and world class 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 themodelhealthshow.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you 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.

