THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 906

The 5 Major Causes of BELLY FAT & How to Get Rid of It FAST

With Guest Dr. Sean O'Mara

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Today we're going to unlock the secrets of burning belly fat. We have on the foremost expert in the world in understanding visceral belly fat. This individual has the roadmap, number one, to what's creating abnormal amounts of belly fat and also the roadmap to eliminating it for good. And I'm telling you some of these factors that's contributing to our epidemic rates and prevalence of belly fat. Some of these factors are misunderstood, little acknowledged but important nonetheless. And I'm telling you, once you get this information in your hands. That is the catalyst for change because you might be missing out on or doing one of these things that's creating all of the problems. And so yes, we wanna stack conditions in our favor, but we absolutely want to know what we're up against.

But we need to have some strategies and insights to help us to address this issue once and for all. And also, what was so cool, which I highly recommend you pop over to the Model Health Show YouTube channel, he brought in a monitor, an actual monitor to put these images up on screen to look at what's going on in our bodies, specifically in regards to body fat. And so he was able to show this visually what healthy muscle looks like and what fat invaded muscle looks like, and he's gonna talk about this intramuscular fat epidemic as well. So you could pop over to the YouTube channel, which you should be subscribed to the Model Health Show over on YouTube.

Anyways, we create some incredible original content over on the YouTube channel, and just to be able to hang out in the studio with me is always a good time. So definitely hop over to the YouTube channel and check out the video episode of this interview as well. Now before we get to our special guest, a major part of our fitness and functionality is centered in our cellular health, and particularly the health of our energy power plants in our cells. You know the name, the mitochondria. Our mitochondria require key nutrients in order to function to make the energy that our bodies need for everything that our amazing bodies do. One nutrient of importance is the electrolyte magnesium. In fact, your mitochondria requires magnesium in order to make copies of itself and making more mitochondria, also known as mitochondrial genesis is dependent on magnesium and other key electrolytes, in particular, sodium and potassium.

Now we need to be mindful of getting in plenty of these key electrolytes for all of our cellular functions. So number one, make it a mandate to get in plenty of foods that are rich in these key electrolytes. And this is one of those places, especially if you're training, especially if you're about that life, especially during this time of year when you might be sweating more than you usually would. This is a great place to supplement, and right now you can get access to the number one clean electrolyte supplement in the world that has no sugar, no artificial dyes and results that you notice. And right now, just for a limited time for the summer, for the summer, bunny suns out, buns out, suns out, guns out, whatever out.

LMNT has a brand new lemonade salt, again, available for a limited time. And by the way, with every purchase of their incredible electrolyte drink mixes, or their sparkling electrolyte performance drinks, you're going to get a free sample pack to try out two packs of each of their four most popular drink mix flavors. As always, LMNT has a no questions asked, money back guarantee. So you have nothing to lose and only better hydration and performance to gain. Go to drinkLMNT.com/model to take advantage of this right now. That's drinkLMNT.com/model to take advantage of all this goodness, check out their lemonade salt available for the summer only Summer bunnies. Make sure that you take advantage of this right now. Go to drinkLMNT.com/model and now let's get to this very special YouTube comment of the week.

YOUTUBE REVIEW: Another YouTube review from Devin Yerger. Such a great episode. First time leaving a review on anything. Been listening for years. It seems as if your episodes come out exactly when I need 'em, even if I'm listening out of order, they align with the issue I'm having at that time. Super uncanny. Regardless, this episode will be on repeat for someone who struggles with ADHD. The small steps listed really map out how I can improve. Less to say I'm not as bad as it could be, but hyped enough to say there's way more I'll be achieving. And this episode will be another tool I will use in my tool belt of self-improvement. This can apply to my job, my hobbies, and most importantly, myself as a father. Teaching this to my little hatchling will not only set him up for success, but help me stay consistent and help me learn and retain. I look forward to seeing the results. I'll be sure to keep you posted. Appreciate you reading my novel. Thank you so much for what you do. Keep up the amazing work, my friend.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No, thank you so much. I appreciate you so much for taking the time to share that incredible message. Grateful to be a part of your amazing story and listen, this really does mean more than you know. Please pop over to whether you're listening on Apple Podcasts, watching on YouTube, Spotify, you can leave a comment for each episode as well. It really does do my heart so much good to hear the impact and to share your voice. So please just take a moment and share your voice wherever you can. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Dr. Sean O'Mara is a world leading expert in visceral belly fat. He's been a physician for a US president, vice president, multiple secretaries of state and other government officials.

But getting to this prestigious place came from unexpected origins. Dr. O'Mara started off in law enforcement working as a police officer, including undercover assignments in both narcotics and organized crime. Then he graduated with honors from Penn State and went on to attend and graduate from Villanova University School of Law, where he then practiced for three years as a criminal prosecutor in Philadelphia. All the while Dr. O'Mara trained as an emergency medicine physician during his time in the US Army Corps, and this is where he uncovered his true passion, which is human longevity and true health and wellness. Today, Dr. Sean O'Mara is a world leading expert specializing in health and performance optimization.

He works with individuals and corporations interested in biological optimization of humans through innovation and safe, natural lifestyle interventions. Let's dive into this masterclass on getting read of Unwanted Belly Fat with Dr. Sean O'Mara. Alright, folks, we've got a sex symbol here at the studio today, Dr. Sean O'Mara. Good to see you. Thank you for coming to hang out with us.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah, Shawn, great to be here. Thanks for the invitation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, of course. Let's start off by talking about the five biggest influencers of belly fat. What's going on with belly fat accumulation In our cultures today, there are five major causes. You've identified them as a leading expert in this subject matter. Let's break down what each of these five are.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah, so for 13 years I've been following visceral fat and scanning people and extensively repeating these scans. So, the five biggest things I'll start with cortisol. Number one is stress and stress is a killer and people underestimate just how really bad stress is in their lives and they're not perceptive to it. And so we would see individuals that had higher levels of stress coming into the life. They would have higher levels of visceral fat and higher levels of fat around the heart. And when the stress would be abated, the visceral fat would start to be eliminated.

And we saw this repeatedly over seven years, that as they went in and outta stressful conditions, we could see the waxing and waning of visceral fat and fat around the heart and fat within the muscle. And so people, it's remarkable how little they're aware of stress in their life. So it is like this exposure that sneaks in that unless you're vigilant and you know how to check for it and really actively trying to suppress it, this causes the direct accumulation of visceral fat, which is structural disease. It is disease that has structure inside your body. It's much more than just a collection of cells floating through your body. It is a mass that is accumulating inside your abdomen, choking, surrounding your heart, surrounding your coronary artery. So stress, I would say, is probably the number one to start off with and talk about.

And then the second one would be processed foods. We saw an enormous contribution of processed foods to causing visceral fat and heart fat. And people again, underestimate the influence of processed foods. They aren't aware, they're not able to track it. It's easy to take and consume. It's hyper palatable, but nobody is really aware when they consume it about the consequences of it. It's this kind of thing that's sneaks into you. But we would see within days of somebody starting on a processed food diet, the accumulation of visceral fat very quickly. Friday night scan, somebody get them started. They'd try out processed foods, we'd scan 'em again Monday, and we'd be able to show them where visceral fat was forming in their abdomen around their heart.

The third one would be poor sleep. So that's another one that can be elusive to people. They are not necessarily aware that their sleep is being compromised. Sometimes it's obstructive sleep apnea. Other times it's just, they, it escapes 'em. It's they're just driving around in a

state of existence without awareness that their sleep is compromised. And individuals who aren't getting adequate sleep, restful sleep, then visceral fat will form and fat around their heart, fat in their muscle. So it's important to understand that sleep plays a huge role. The fourth one is alcohol and alcohol has this, you know, tradition of being acceptable, but alcohol is a toxin.

And we say when you drink, you become intoxicated. And so you need to understand it is a poison that attacks your metabolism. And when your metabolism is compromised, you start accumulating visceral fat. So people that are regularly drinking that would come to us to eliminate visceral fat and fat around the heart. Let's say somebody has a heart attack, but they continue to drink. It makes it refractory to being eliminated if they continue to drink alcohol. So we work really hard to leverage the fact that, hey, you have a health condition, heart disease, and this is your time to give up alcohol. And, very often that becomes a motivator for people, that allows them to make a step where they've never done before, and begin cutting back alcohol or completely eliminate it.

And once they do, we see their physiology change and they're able to eliminate that visceral fat. The fifth cause is a surprising one and it's a durational exercise. So people that are doing distance running, people that are doing distance cycling and people that are doing like distance row and anything where you're exercising a lot. So what's surprising and surprises people in general is that you can be very thin, like a marathoner or a bicyclist, you know, they're very thin guys and women on these cycles. And you scan 'em and they got a big chunk of fat around their heart and fat deep within their abdomen, but they have no.

Superficial, no subcutaneous fat. It's all concealed within them. And so it's shocking to them. And they imagine because they're accomplished as athletes, they're competitive cyclists, competitive runners with this hidden fat inside of them. So we would get them to give up the durational exercise and then we were able to eliminate this fat. So it's important to get scanned, Shawn, to see where you're at because it allows you to really get insight about the reality of what's happening inside your body. So I have this old line. I tell people, the MRI ends the lie. You're not as healthy as you think and otherwise you're just bicycling. You're cycling,

you're drinking, you're not getting sleep, you're eating processed foods. And you're simply unaware of this danger of growing within you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's powerful. You know, most of us today are stacking conditions against ourselves. You know, we've got several of these factors, you know, boxes checked, but it could be just one of these things that are throwing off your metabolism, leading to excess belly fat. I can think about the person and people who are listening right now, who they're eating really well. They're minding their sleep and they're exercising in a, you know, in a smarter way. But they've got so much excess stress in their lives. And this could be, again, they're just because we're not taught about this, and I want to ask why stress can impact our belly fat like this. But that is that box that they might not think about. And if they address that, address the stress in their lives, they could see that belly fat start to melt off. Why is it what's going on with stress? Why does stress lead to more belly fat?

DR. SEAN O'MARA: It's through the action of cortisol, and when you got stress in your life, it's like you become a prisoner of war. And so stress what happens to you as you get that, you develop this fat within you and cortisol from a hormonal perspective causes your, it is catabolic to muscle. So it metabolizes muscle, means it erodes muscle, consumes muscle, but it's anabolic to visceral fat. And so, it is actually increasing the internal fat with inside of you while it's shrinking your muscles.

So you lose capability, you lose strength, and it leads to disease. Now, cortisol is a wonderful hormone, and people would wonder, well, why do our bodies create cortisol? Well, cortisol is very useful. If you're involved in a fight for like, you know, conflict for one day you're hunting, then it's valuable. But if you are going to be hunting and a long campaign, you're gonna be in, involved in conflict for like, like a war or something for many days, then it becomes problematic for you. But ancestrally, we're designed to hunt and we have one fight and we're done. And that's important to point out because we have this idea that, you know, we should be going to work and we can tolerate like the fight every day, the grind, but that's not how we lived, ancestrally.

We would go and have a hunt occasionally where we'd have this, you know, brief period of exertion where cortisol we'd go up or we would have a, you know, a fight with another challenger or you know, we would have some sort of conflict, but it would be brief. But today, Shawn, we have people that have sustained conflict in their lives, in the forms of vocations, their jobs, their professions, and it's the silent killer. And not enough is being said about it. And you're exactly right. They could be dialed in completely to a healthy lifestyle. They're eating all the right foods. They're not eating any bad foods. They're swimming, they're exercising, they're getting good sleep, they're insanely, focused and dialed in on their health, but then they have this stress, and we would show them clients that come into our practice that they have this continuation, this persistence of this fat around their heart and within their abdomen until they could deal with that stress.

So I think society has a responsibility to promote awareness of stress. I think we need to do a lot more within the workplace and among each other to challenge and check each other out about stress levels that are going on. Because for the most part, it's not appreciated in the life of somebody that has it. They just kind of grow accustomed to it, and meanwhile it's killing them.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Belly fat can be like a reservoir, like a container of magnet for that stress in our lives. The receptor sites themselves. You know, the sensitivity, you know, if we just wanna reframe it and think about belly fat as being more sensitive to the signals of stress than any other fat on our bodies.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Really good point. Yeah, it really does. And it just breeds manifestation of disease when we encounter stress. So I find it helpful to tell people to mitigate stress. And one of the things I like to use the analogy that exists in nature. Antelopes are stressed out when the tigers and lions are milling around them getting ready to hunt. It just puts 'em on nerve and they're very stressed out. And so the tigers and lions in our modern existence are problems that we're gonna have. So, what I tell my clients is, kill the lions and tigers. Solve your problems. If you can't solve your problems, then you need to migrate to greener pastures where there are no lions and tigers, or fewer lions and tigers.

Not as much stress solve problems or get a new job, go somewhere else. But you need to solve the problems or get rid of 'em. But sometimes you can't either kill the lion or tiger and you can't migrate away. You can't get a new job, you're stuck. And other times maybe it's a sick child, maybe it's something that you don't have an option to just abandon and walk away from that problem. Yeah. And so what do you do in that kind of a setting? Well, what nature does is that lion or tiger will attack it, will rear its ugly head and chase after that antelope. But it's in the attack that the antelope actually mediates and mitigates. That stress because it sprints very fast to get away from that threat.

And either it gets killed and caught or it escapes. And through the adrenaline rush and the cortisol rush of, you know, that spike that happens when there's an attack, the antelope is actually able to mitigate the sustained stress it had before the attack. And so, the attack actually leads to action, biological action of the part of the antelope through sprinting that actually helps the animal adapt and to lessen the effects of cortisol. So I tell my clients to make sure that they engage in maximally intensive exercise, not jogging. Runners think, well, I'm gonna go out and jog, I had a bad day and I'm gonna go out, run for an hour. Well, when you run for an hour, you increase your cortisol. And here's what happens different from a sprint.

You elevate that cortisol and it continues to be elevated after you finish that run. Now you might have endorphins and you might feel good, but that cortisol stays up. Now contrast that to a sprint. When you sprint, cortisol goes up and then immediately goes down and it drops lower than it was before. So if you got stress in your life, you wanna sprint, you wanna do maximum intensity exercise, you want to engage in physical activity, that's gonna produce what's called myokines.

These messaging molecules to go out through your body and they tell your body to do two things, build muscle and burn fat. And that's what we need to be doing. We need to be burning this fat and building muscle. So Myokines get produced, and the way you do that is lifting weights, resistance training, sprinting, and not doing durational. Things like jogging, running, cycling, rowing a super long time. But really what engages your fight or flight response physiologically, you know, this has been with us. It's an adaptive response. The

better you're at in fighting or flight, the longer you live and the better your quality of life. And it's been that way since Adam and Eve, since it all started.

So fighting and flight is our adaptive response. It's our sweet spot. And when people are really good at that, they have low visceral fat and low heart fat, and low muscle fat. And when they aren't good at that and they don't do it. They have visceral fat, heart fat. They don't live as long and they don't live as well.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. So we're talking about being intentional with these hormetic stressors making ourselves more resilient. Especially, and I'm glad that you went right into a tip for everybody, because obviously we live in a stressful world more than ever, but giving us the tip number one, solve what you can solve. And that requires us to pay attention instead of outsourcing our attention to all these other mediums. So taking back a little bit more of that attention, investing it in, solving the issues that we have. If we can't, if we're dealing with something that is just insidious and difficult. Train, train your body, train your mind so that you're more resilient.

But you're helping us to reframe that training because for some people, like I, I'm stressed, let me go out for a long run. We need to pump the brakes on that and utilize intelligent sprint sessions because it's gonna help our body to adapt better to those stress hormone signals. And with sprints, this can obviously be sprinting. This could be on a stationary bike. This could be ski air, this could be battle ropes. This could be things where you can do intervals of all out intensity in a safe way, smart way for yourself and build up that reservoir.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Exactly. A hundred percent right. And I tell people they want to mix things up. Nature would bring variability. So sometimes conflicts were longer and and sometimes they were shorter. And so we never knew the particular style or the intensity of a particular conflict, a hunt, or if we had to fight another male or fight another female or whatever was a particular threat in our lives, or a fight, a predator, another animal.

So, ver nature favors variability, you wanna mix things up and it's the same model. Not only has it been ancestrally present within our species as homo sapiens, but it's a model that

exists, Shawn, in nature. I mean, if you look at animals they also have a fight flight, adaptive response. You don't see animals in the wild going to gyms, working out for an hour and a half. They basically lounge around, exist, kind of graze. They're walking around milling, and then they have, you know, very brief episodes of maximum intensity whether it's fight or flight. And you know, how and why we got away from this, you know, from a conventional health standpoint, escapes me.

But, you know, this really should be taught in medical school. And you know, it's, we understand the physiological response, but what we weren't taught is how valuable it is to be promoting it. And unfortunately, I'm of the opinion that a lot of what we learn in medical school and don't learn is by design so that people continue to accumulate disease that, that becomes a marker of commerce. I mean, literally, we can target and exploit the fact that people get better. I mean, just ask yourself and look. What does a man or woman look like at the age of 20 when they start going to a doctor and what do they look like at the age of 60? Do you think that, you know, after 40 years of going in that medical practice that they actually have gotten better?

No, they get worse. You accumulate disease if you live correctly, Shawn, and you have the appropriate insights how to live. You should go from age 20 to age 60 and get better. You should get greater insights in how you should be living. And so my impression is that the greatest super humans that we had were the alpha leaders. You know, the alpha male and the alpha females that ran our tribes, our clans 'cause they developed those skill sets. And we assigned such such importance to 'em that we would follow that leadership and eventually they became the monarchy. But as we, you know, for a variety of things, events happened in history.

The monarchy unfortunately started accumulating wealth, the monarchs of say 50,000 years ago, there was no money, there was no currency, there was no ability to store anything. You know, you had one animal skin that you could wear. And so they didn't have the accumulation of wealth and they didn't have any purpose to store things. I mean, you just ate for the day and that was it. And those people were super humans. But the monarchy today, our leadership today, suck. I mean, they live in larges, they have excess in their lives. And nobody

would look to the monarchy or leadership today as examples of health. But that wasn't always the case.

You know, on a ancestral level, we put the men and women that were in the best shape in leading the hunt to make critical decisions about the existence of our clan and tribe that allowed us to have the best lifestyles. So my thing today is I really am extremely interested in the biological optimization of human beings. And I look forward to one day working with political leaders of today and maybe the monarchy today to help them become better biological versions. In the meantime, it's the, the early adopter, the innovative man or women that's mid management or maybe an executive level of a company that finds out about me and says, well, this makes a lot of sense, biological optimization.

And I'm not just gonna stop at good numbers on my laboratory study. I wanna see what's going on in disease from a structural standpoint into my body. And so they'll come to me and they've provided rich sources for me through the National Science Foundation to study these people, to figure out what you have to do to become the very best biological versions of themselves. And what happens is people look better, they perform better. They become more intelligent, they have better cognition, and whatever they're responsible for doing improves across a variety of different tasks. So they perform their jobs better. They play ping pong better. They play chess better. They play the piano better. They play tennis better. Whatever it is, all across every aspect of their life that gets better. It's not just one particular area, right? Because literally your body gets better, your physiology gets better, you're gonna execute better.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's a fact. That's a fact. Thank you for that. We've got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back.

Many of us are well aware that coffee can improve mental performance, but few people know that regularly drinking coffee has been shown to help prevent cognitive decline and reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease. This attribute referenced in the journal Practical Neurology is yet another reason why Smart Coffee consumption makes the list of neuro nutritious beverages. Now, what happens when you combine the

highest quality organic coffee with science-backed medicinal mushrooms? Like lion's made scientists at the University of Malaya discover that compounds and lion's made are able to significantly improve the activity of something called nerve growth factor in the human brain.

Nerve growth factor is essential in the regulation of growth, maintenance, proliferation, and survival of various brain cells. This is powerful stuff. Combining high quality organic coffee with science backed organic medicinal mushrooms like lion's mane like Chaga. This is what four Sigmatic has been delivering for years. Four Sigmatic is now found in major grocery stores and even pharmacies around the country, but you can get access to up to 20% off their phenomenal organic coffee blend called their Think blend. When you go to foursigmatic.com/model, that's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/model. You're gonna get up to 20% off plus access to some other goodies according to the prestigious mine site brand health study that was just published. Four Sigmatic is ranked number one in customer satisfaction. So you're absolutely going to love this coffee and absolutely love the company behind it. Head over to foursigmatic.com/model right now for up to 20% off. And now back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: By the way, everybody, we're just scratching the surface. We're just scratching the surface. And if anybody can talk about service to people in extreme positions of power, it's you know, working with previous presidential administrations and you know, just your experience period. And what got you here. It's so fascinating, which I want to get into that in just a moment because it's just mind blowing. But just to reiterate this point with stress, you've already gave some game changing insights about this and you know, something we've talked about in the past. Also, when it comes to stress, a lot of that, especially today, is our perception, right? Your perception is your reality. So regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in being able to have tools to reframe, being able to fill ourselves, you know, our cup, our mentally and emotional and our mindset cup by connecting with people, connecting with information like this that's empowering.

So there's so many tools for this, but we've gotta address our stress. The other thing you mentioned was, you said this word accumulation, and it got me thinking about the

accumulation of all these ultra processed foods. And so this is another one of those things that is a hallmark of belly fat accumulation. I wanna talk a little bit more about, because there's something about ultra processed foods that's causing this issue. It isn't just the nature of the chemistry itself. There are obesogens that are coming along with all these newly invented foods, and also that the impact that it has on our blood sugar as well. Let's talk a little bit about why ultra processed foods are so dangerous when it comes to belly fat.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah, so one of the big problems with ultra processed foods is that they are a food source for bad microbes that start to accumulate insider gastrointestinal tract. So if you create an environment with a lot of eucalyptus trees, you're gonna get a lot of koala bears that are gonna show up. If you create a lot of processed foods available, you're gonna create a species of life form that are called obesogenic microbes. These are microbes that their chief food source is hyper palatable, mostly carbohydrates, and also with it the concomitant consumption of fats. So this combination of processed foods, carbohydrates, and fats in the form of hyper palatable foods ends up changing the species of microbes within your gut.

So I help my clients understand their problem isn't that they're obese. Their problem is they have an untreated infection within their gut that they don't understand. And so the solution to treating that infection isn't antibiotics. It is changing your lifestyle. Cutting out processed foods. So you eliminate the source of provision to those microbes. They literally will start to death, will stop the cravings for those hyper palatable foods, those processed foods, and then you need to replace them by replacing those bad microbes with good guys, good microbes that are aligned with helping you promote health. They actually are designed to live within their host in a symbiotic relationship.

And this again, isn't taught in medical school, but you're aware of the benefits of fermented foods. And one of their chief ways that they're beneficial to us is that they literally help to change the composition of the collection of these microbes that reside with in our gut that we're just really starting to understand in a way that they're now residing within us and they help us. They create metabolites that are aligned with our health that, you know, lower our blood pressure, improve our metabolism. Help us to eliminate visceral fat, help us to form

muscles, help us to generate our neurotransmitters, improve our mood, improve our functionality, our executive functionality, our memory.

All of these microbes are aligned with our lifestyles. And so you basically, it is an invitation to the en enlightened man or woman to live their lives better, purposefully, intentionally, to get more of these beneficial microbes within our gut and fewer the obesogenic microbes. So you gotta cut out processed foods and then replace the bad guys with fermented foods that have these living microbes in those fermented foods that go down and start living within your gut. But if you're just eating a chunk of meat or you're just eating a vegetable, you're not getting. Those microbes that were formerly part of our lifestyle and how we ate, you know, 50,000 years ago, we would hunt the microbes from that animal would be transferred to the meat that we would eat and they would be part of our daily existence.

We would drink water from creeks, rivers, and lakes and be getting all of these you know, living beneficial microbes. Unfortunately today we drink chlorinated water with without beneficial microbes. They typically are pathogenic ones, if anything, in the water sources that we do drink. And so one of the biggest concerns I have from a health optimizing physician is so much of our moderate data lifestyle is depleting our most important asset in our body, which is our microbiome. And there are almost no physicians today that are aware of what you have to do to create a better microbiome.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Can you give us three specific foods for us to intentionally incorporate? So you mentioned fermented foods, would that be number one?

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah. I would say fermented foods and within fermented foods there are a couple of varieties. One is fermented vegetables. So I promote, you know, a diet that, that I don't have any financial interest. I just coined the name to help people understand, called the Living Carnivore Diet. And I call it the living carnivore diet because there are a lot of people eating the carnivore diet. It's dead meat, it's good meat. I mean, I'm not gonna complain about it. I eat meat, but it's meat devoid of microbes. But if you eat a living carnivore diet, then you're eating meat with fermented foods. And so that includes fermented vegetables.

Vegetables that have living microbes in it. So kimchi, fermented sauerkraut, fermented beets, fermented beet juice, kavas.

These fermented vegetables bring a variety and diversity of living microbes that are aligned ancestrally, traditionally and across thousands of years, humans have been eating these fermented vegetables, and they've been a practice for us passed on. Why? Because ancestrally, we paid attention to the fact when these were introduced into our diet and they were consumed by individuals, it promoted better honey, better performance, better health. But when it was resisted and eliminated, people declined. And so it became a tradition so that you consider to do that. So today we see that among the South Koreans, they always are eating fermented kimchi. And there are a number of traditional people always have some sort of a practice of eating fermented.

It's the second time is fermented dairy. So that's an animal product that you can ferment milk. And so I recommend people not consume dairy unless it's fermented. Some people can consume, you know, dairy without being a fermented food. And they may not experience ferment inflammation from it. But for the majority of people, I think dairy in a non fermented form risk the likelihood of being inflammatory of the body. So what is fermented dairy yogurts unflavored, no sugar, no fruit. It's plain, the sour yogurt. I know a lot of people don't like that, but you'll get used to it. And just cut out those flavors and sugars and things.

And the other form of a fermented dairy is keifer, which is kind of like a yogurt and a very interesting, it's not technically yogurt, but a very interesting form of fermented milk out there is L. Reuteri. and L. Reuteri, for people that don't know about it, they should take a look at it. It's largely been promoted by a cardiologist named Dr. William Davis.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. He sat right in that chair and told me about it.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Oh, did he?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Okay. So you've covered L. Reuteri and I promote it to my clients. I have noticed myself one of the, since I added the end, one of the things that has happened to me is I became a lot more empathetic with people than what I had previously been. It's interesting. So, I feel people more, it's very interesting. It's like this deficit where I was previously. Detached from a sense, a feeling for people, but it's literally, it's.. Shawn. I've lived 60, you know, 62 years. And now with this L. Reuteri in me, I just feel people a lot more and I'm like, wow. I feel like I haven't been living in this with this emotionally connected manner that this L. Reuteri yogurt, but it's also associated with decreased sarcopenia a promotion of oxytocin improvement of your overall health. So I think L. Retueri fermented dairy is a good form. And then fermented dairy in the form of cheeses.

Old world cheeses. We're not talking craft American singles with plastic wraps around it. We're talking, you know, cheese wheels that are in a circle that are cut with those kind of, you know, kind of angular shape to them. Ideally really fermented with like blue cheese, Gar Gonzolas. Roker fruit. The more fermented the better. And then the other aspect to foods besides ferments are meat. And here's an interesting point that I think is important to to point out today. We just get supermarket food and most people buy meat in a supermarket. Our ancestors of old would hunt a particular animal in a herd of animals and they wouldn't just hunt the first one that would come along.

They would be intentional about trying to find the healthiest. And that was for two reasons. Our ancestors, because they were healthier than we are, they used their brains in better ways. They were more intelligent, Shawn, than we are today. We might know more from a knowledge standpoint, but my God, they could process information so they could detect the smallest little changes in animals and be able to tell which one was the healthiest to get better sources of nutrition. And then here's the interesting thing, the better sources of these microbes. So the healthiest animal in a herd would have better microbes. And those microbes are important to our ancestors because they would be transferred to us when we would hunt that animal and we would field dress it, process it, and wear that animal skin.

And so today, we never get that transfer of those microbes. You know, you buy sterilized meat packaged in a aseptic environment from U-S-D-A monitored and, you know, inspected

facility. It's and saran wrap and we don't get those microbes anymore. But you can hunt intentionally in a counter of meat and look for, learn about reading, disease and health in the particular stake. So maybe I'll show you a picture of what I mean about that to kind of give an example of that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, and by the way, everybody who's listening to the audio version of this episode, make sure to pop over to the YouTube channel because you're gonna get a look at what's going on inside of our bodies when it comes to our muscle. We're gonna talk about intramuscular fat and also to be able to see these specific examples. Dr. O'Mara actually brought in a monitor and is showing us, classroom style, masterclass on what this stuff looks like. So definitely pop over to the YouTube channel and join us in the studio, as you were saying.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah. So we're looking now at two, two photographs, or one photograph of two different types of steak. So the steak on the right here is from a cow that's fed a conventional diet and a can, and a combined, combined animal feeding operation. So it's a typical kind of a meat ranching scenario where it's fed a lot of grains and carbohydrates. And we know sadly, unfortunately, today these cattle or even fed candy carbohydrates, sadly Skittles and a whole host of expired candy from the candy industry is going to these cattle y to create this, which is these white streaks that you can see interspersed within the skeletal muscle.

So this is intramuscular fat within the muscle. And this has a medical term in humans called myosteatosis, or the other way to explain is fatty muscle replacement. So it's literally the replacement of muscle with fat. So if you're looking at this and you're, or maybe you're just listening to this show on a podcast somewhere without visualizing the, when I say your muscles are being replaced with fat, you should immediately start to think, wow, I wonder how well those muscles work when fat is replacing it.

And you're right to do so, and you're quickly concluding, I bet they don't work as well. And they don't. So animals that don't have that type of fat, they literally walk better, stand better. They copulate better. So animals like Wagyu cattle that have a huge intentionally, large

amount of marbleization to 'em. They can't even fornicate to have you know, ability to reproduce. They have to have reproduction in a test tube where a sperm and a egg from cattle or combined through and in vitro fertilization, and then the animals, so, lacking in health that it can't, the fertilized embryo can't go back into a Wagyu cattle.

It goes into a Charmaine. Isn't that interesting? How about that? They're not telling you that when you're buying that Wagyu beef. These animals have a hard time standing much less walking. Can't, copulate can't reproduce, they can't even carry, you know, a fertilized embryo. And yet you're paying a hundred dollars a pound for that disease meat. Silly, you, they've got you fooled. And this is going on with the food industry all over processed foods. So you might think this food is safe to eat, but it's not. It's disease. You wanna be eating meat like this that I'm pointing to now, which is free of that intramuscular fat. It doesn't have marbleization and the fat is either good or bad based on how that animal has lived.

And the same thing with us. So the fat on the edge there. This fat cap is actually very healthy in this animal that's grass fed and grass finished because that fat is rich with vitamins and nutrients that are very beneficial for us. Now, this fat on this, the end cap on this animal is very inflammatory because the animal has lived a lifestyle where it's usually con confined. It's not walking around and grazing in a pasture field out in sunshine with fresh air and good water sources. It's gonna be more in like an industrialized center. So you need to be selective when you go to that supermarket meat counter. You need to pick out the healthiest animal in the herd that's in that counter, and you tell that butcher guy to be selected. I want that third ribeye back through that one with the least amount of marbleization in that one right there. So be intentional about how you hunt for meat, even in a modern day setting. And almost nobody does that today.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. So the number one takeaway, which there's many, is just looking at the context of what we're eating and understanding that this is the exact same phenomenon that's happening in the human body as well. Right? And so we are being marketed to, to eat sick animals that traditionally we wouldn't be going after. And coincidentally, we have this marbling taking place within our own bodies. And so humans are becoming more and more marbled and having higher amounts of this kind of intramuscular

fat. So it isn't just the subcutaneous, it isn't just the visceral fat issue, it's the intramuscular fat. And we are making ourselves far less resilient and capable. And now you're gonna show us what's going on in our bodies. And it looks eerily similar to those stakes we were just looking at.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah. And you know, Shawn, it was from research on human beings that we figured out the disease within animals. So what we're looking at now are two MRIs through the abdomen of two different human beings. So one is an Olympic sprinter, and on this MRI, you see a lot of dark structures in there. So, on an MRI, muscle shows up as dark and fat shows up as white. And this individual and this scan has visceral fat, is just that one little area here. These other little white areas down there actually retroperitoneal and not as problematic as that visceral fat right there.

And the fat, the weight on the outside is subcutaneous fat. So what this guy mostly is enormous amount of muscle. This guy interesting, when this scan was done, he never lifted weights. It didn't go work out. He developed this massive core. If people ever wonder what the core is, these are the l Elio sous muscles right there relative to his vertebral body. These were about four times larger than his vertebral body. Now contrast it with the guy skiing up here, who's a 52-year-old couch potato who would have to swing his arms to get his body out of a couch. His ilio sous muscles are about the same size as his vertebral body, and he has all this white area inside a mass amount of visceral fat.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Whoa.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: But what we found out when we started scanning legs is in proportion to the amount of visceral fat that you have. Is how much fat you have within your muscle. Intramuscular fat. So this Olympic sprinter's muscles are really free of intramuscular fat. They're very lean, just like his muscles in his abdominal MRI scan these obliques that look like gigantic, you know, eggplants. And I call the, his core muscles look like birch trees inside his abdomen. Meanwhile, this guy's obliques are super small and you can see these white streaks within his abdominal musculature and interesting, his erect a spinal muscles. And this is what keeps your spine erect. And when you start having fat replace your spine muscles, you get

bent over and then you get this curve shape to your back and you get, you know, this curved spine and you get a hunchback look as you're older, but you can also see this fat forming within their legs.

And he looks like Wagyu beef from the amount of intramuscular fat that's developed winning here. So when we noticed that people like sprinters and wide receivers in the NFL people that really did a lot of intensive sprinting and that they had less of this fat within their muscles because they had less of the visceral fat, we understood this important relationship. And then I realized how diseased a lot of our food sources is from an animal perspective and nobody's talking about this. And here's my perspective as an MD, you know, trying to help this species called homo sapiens get healthy. I want them to have the best source of food to eat. And, you know, the majority of people are eating marbleized steak and they have no idea about it.

And then when I talk to veterinarians, they don't know it's disease. It's crazy. They're treating animals sadly. Just like modern day physicians treat patients. Physicians, MDs do not recognize that when this, these intramuscular fat is seen on a CT scan or MRI, not a word is spoken about this. There's no mention in any the MRI reports or CT reports. This isn't taught in medical school. It's not taught in residency. Radiologists do not know about this disease. It's really shocking that this is allowed to develop and visceral fat and it's because I'll just say it's being suppressed from the curriculum in medical school so that people continue to fall apart and it makes the system a lot of money.

How much money? Large part of our economy. Yeah. It dwarfs oil energy. Anything else in our economy is less than healthcare and 90% of our healthcare is treating chronic disease. So it's an enormous money maker and that's why it's kept from medical school. I am a pawn. I was trained to be a pawn. I just operated like an automaton to make the system money. And part of the system is big pharma. Part of it's big healthcare, part of it's big health insurance and part of it is big food. Everybody is at the trough collecting and exploiting the progression of human disease. And they're all clapping. They all love it because they make more money. But who are the heroes of this?

Guys like you? Social media. That's coming up. Say time out. We don't have to be a part of the conventional system. I have noticed I gotten healthy. You are writing books. You got these insights and you can challenge the conventional system. So I like to promote the contribution. They're coming from social media influencers like yourself and say, Hey, these are the modern day heroes that are going to disrupt conventional healthcare and go against the system. And we need more awareness so that people understand what is disease and what is health.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My mind's blown. My mind's blown, and again, I hope everybody's popping over to the YouTube channel to take a look at this because seeing is believing with some of this stuff. One of the other areas that you are enlightening people about is epicardial fat. Right. So cardiovascular disease is still the number one killer in the modern world, especially here in the United States. We're the champion of it. Absolutely. And again, we're looking at it superficially, and you know this, even in conventional training from the best universities, we're not talking about this issue with heart fat. Like that's something that just isn't a part of the curriculum in any significant way. And this is something that we could see today more than ever. And so show me what you've got on the screen.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Here for us now.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: So we're looking at two photographs of hearts. And this is a photograph intraoperatively, it's taking place. Within a surgical procedure on an infant. And what we see is a heart that's just beautiful. It's vibrant, it's red, it's vital looking, it's well perfused, and it has almost no fat on it whatsoever. Contrasting with this heart that's been removed from the individual's body because they had a heart attack and died. They're coated their entire surface, their entire myocardium is completely concealing. Every tiny square centimeter of that heart, it's concealed by that disease. This inflammatory fat that's all constricting around the heart and what's it's completely kept out of medical school and training. And so people walking upstairs are short of breath and they think they're just outta shape. You're not outta shape. You've got a diseased heart. You've got constricting fat around your heart.

How can your heart beat when you've got that much fat around it? Why don't cardiologists tell you about this? You wanna have a good conversation. Go ask your cardiologist about epicardial fat. Tell me about heart fat. You're telling me about cholesterol. Shouldn't I also be worried about heart fat? Watch how short that conversation is. They don't know anything about it. Even though here's reality. A human being cannot have a heart attack without this heart fat. You can have high cholesterol, you will not have a heart attack if you do not have that fat around your heart. It's this fat that causes inflammatory changes to the cholesterol and causes disease. This is what you need to find about, you're watching Shawn's program today. You're learning about the number one cause of the number one killer. It's heart fat, this epicardial fat around your heart.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Boom. And so we gotta look at the external appearance of these. Let's look inward with this MRI of the heart.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah. So this is how people are gonna find out. They'll get an MRI or ct and here's a guy who dropped and had a heart attack in a parking lot and he came one month later and you see all that white look how thick that fat is formed around his heart at exact same level. See that line? Here's a heart that has none of those fat, exactly the same level. There's no fat around there. That 61-year-old Sean O'Mara, Dr. Sean O'Mara, expert in this fat, I better not have fat around if I'm pulling myself at the world's expert in this type of fat and visceral fat. And that's what you want. You wanna find out if you have this, and this can go away in weeks! Weeks. It doesn't take, when you do an enlightened approach we can make that go away and you can live like this.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing, this might be my favorite thing about you, the audacity. You put your own scan up here to compare it and to show what's possible. You're a walking talking example of what you talk about. And when you said you were 62.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: 62.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I just looked around and my guy's in the studio here. By the way, again, if you're not watching the YouTube version, come over to YouTube and see Richard Gere

Stand in. The Healthier Richard Gere, by the way. And it's just it's amazing. You know, you are one of those people that is inspiration for me to know what's possible, and you're giving us these keys. And so what I wanna do is before we leave everybody to provide some more tips and strategies on making sure, again, reducing their risk of the number one killer, and also again. Just even superficially or just for our own, you know, feelings of self-confidence. People want to get rid of this belly fat as well. So we talked about limiting ultra processed foods and some things that we should be adding in proactively. We talked about addressing stress, which is that it's probably the number one most misunderstood or ignored factor.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Huge.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you even embedded in there some information about the durational exercise. But what we didn't talk about were alcohol and poor sleep quality. And so if we can get a couple of tips in those categories before we let everybody go and also direct them to more of your work, because again, we're just scratching the surface. So let's talk about the impact of sleep deprivation on this whole body fat equation.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah. So one of my chief strategies to help people sleep better is to get them more ancestrally lined with how we lived without artificial fake light. I mean, we need to be spending more time outdoors getting up early where your eyes are actually most sensitive to light when your eyes are closed. And so the influence of a sunrise on closed eyes wakes up a human being. And gets us to go out and experience those rich infrared first light. And also we would work up to last light, and you get sunrises, sunsets to sleep better, cut out artificial light, especially blue light rich devices like technology, LEDs phones, iPads, laptops, and work more outdoors.

There's a, I don't have any financial interest, but there's a, a computer company that creates this tablet out there. It's called Daylight Computer. And Daylight Computer doesn't have blue light in it. And it's also technology that allows the sun shine the light on the screen and you actually see it better. So your cell phone and you know, your iPad and laptop, you can't see good and sun. But these ingenious people figured out technology, it gets people outdoors. So

that's why they call it the daylight computer. So I think getting rid of the blue light is a really important source to sleep better.

The healthier man and woman just sleep better. The disease man or woman don't sleep as well. So if you wanna sleep better. Get healthier, and that's critically important. So, those would be my biggest tips right away on sleep, get healthy, cut out, artificial light, stop, look into your devices at nighttime, turn your lights off. And we switch to and the OER household to to candles, beeswax candles. And we also use pink kamay and salt lamps at nighttime. They're red glow. My whole house is like a gigantic campfire. Inside my house at nighttime, there's no lights at all. It's just these pink kalene salt lamps and beeswax candles everywhere. It's divide. We sleep really good in the O'Mara household.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love that. I love that. I could feel that. I could feel that, you know, and this is, again, it's just you're creating an environment that makes it easier to be healthy.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, these simple things.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: And build that environment.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Just really quickly on why, if you could talk a little bit about, just a tiny bit about the impact of sleep deprivation. Why does this contribute to more belly fat?

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah. So sleep deprivation just causes disease. It is so metabolically disruptive to your metabolism, your physiology, that you cannot process the intake of food and your physiological processes better. It athletes have figured out how important it is to their performance. It also goes to your physiological performances. So if you're a man or woman out there and you're cutting, you're burning the candle at both ends and you're not getting sleep, you're not gonna deteriorate your performance, you're going deteriorate your body. And so the healthy body can process foods and metabolism correctly so that you build muscle and don't accumulate visceral fat.

The unhealthy man or woman who has disruptive sleep contributes this inflammatory fat within their abdomen, within their muscles where surrounding their heart, and they have this steady decline, accumulation to disease that literally poor sleep makes you less attractive. Yeah, you can see it in just one night. Well, think about this. The slow accumulation of poor sleep over years really deteriorates your appearance and your performance, and so you actually are contributing to cognitive decline, memory impairment, dementia, heart attacks, strokes, atherosclerotic, cardiovascular disease, and even diabetes. So chronic, all forms of chronic disease are accelerated and amplified by poor sleep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There it is. One of the fastest ways to get ourselves into metabolic chaos is to be sleep deprived.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: That's it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that's a fact. Lastly, and this is the one, it might be a little inflammatory for some people. You know, such a big part of our culture is alcohol.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Alcohol.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this could be that thing that is the number one channel of fat storage for some people. Again, and just looking at our own lives and getting some honest information about this. What about alcohol? Why is alcohol contributing to belly fat? And what are some tips in regards to alcohol?

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah, so alcohol is one of these things that's socially acceptable, and it's been around for so long that unfortunately people misinterpret the existence of alcohol as something that maybe is just something we can tolerate and continue having in our lives. But as it is eliminated and it's studied. People just become more healthy as it gets eliminated from their bodies. And so we have studied it now for 13 years and when people start to proportionally eliminate the intake of alcohol, we see the resolution in the elimination of fat within the muscle, fat around the heart, and fat within the abdomen, and the concomitant benefits that happen.

And it's not just from a quantity standpoint, these fatty depots in terms of how much you have, but when you start cutting out alcohol and you cut out other things that are contributing to it, the quality of that fat changes, it becomes less inflammatory. And so almost immediately you start to feel better when you start cutting out alcohol. And I have yet to have a single human being out of the thousands of people that have come to work with me, ever give up alcohol and ever regret, or, here's a cool thing, go back and start drinking again. Once it's eliminated from their lifestyle, they have such profound improvement and awareness that they never want to go back and drink again.

So if you're somebody who's drinking, just recognize that almost to every single person. There might be some other exceptions out there in the internet, but you will profoundly improve the quality of your life and your existence, and you'll never miss alcohol again. If you give it up and there's something going on today, more and more people are giving it up. And I think it's, social media is helping to challenge this notion about the acceptability of alcohol that's promoted in movies and conventional channels and TV commercials and stuff. But in the media, we're starting to, social media, we're starting to offer an alternative to this where there are a lot of people, you know, going sober and they're, the profound benefits that they're experiencing are being promoted, and it's becoming deeply attracted to people. Give it a try. Get off alcohol.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Dr. Sean O'Mara, thank you so much for sharing your genius with us. What's the best place for people to learn more?

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah, so people want to learn more, particularly if they want to come and work with me to become the best biological versions of the Souths possible. Dr. Sean O'Mara, D-R-S-E-A-N-O-M-A-R a.com. That's working with me 1 0 1. I cannot work with all the people that wanna work with me, so, I am selective about who I can take on. But the other place that you kind of work with me through my medical practice and I have lots of programs, how to get rid of visceral fat, heart fat, muscle fat is growingbetternotolder.com. Growingbetternot older.com 'cause that's what you should be doing. You should be getting better, not just older the longer you live.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love this so much. Thank you so much. This has been great. I am so appreciative of you. Thank you for sharing your voice and being a model for all of us.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Yeah. This has been awesome. Well, my pleasure I really appreciate what you're doing in this particular space. Keep it up and let's do more things together.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Already done.

DR. SEAN O'MARA: Alright, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The one and only Dr. Sean O'Mara, thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. This is something that we can do something about. Yes, we could talk about the superficial aspects when it comes to visceral belly fat, but also we've got to be mindful of the massive detrimental health implications that this comes along with. Dramatically increasing our risk of cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular events, heart attacks, strokes, increasing our risk of dementia, of cancer, of diabetes. The list goes on and on. This is something that is far beyond the superficial, but something that we can, yes, we can improve our self-esteem.

We can feel better about ourselves, we can get ourselves healthier and fitter, but we need to do this for something bigger. And the power is in our hands. We've got the knowledge. We've absolutely got the knowledge. We've got the leading expert in the world on this subject matter, letting us know exactly what's causing this big issue and some of the science backed strategies that we can implement to do something about it. So take at least just one of these two things that you picked up today, and to put it into practice for yourself on a consistent basis. That's what it's all about. We've got some incredible masterclasses and world class guests. Lined up for you is gonna blow your mind. We're just scratching the surface.

We're just getting warmed up. 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 notes. 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.