



EPISODE 931

End Childhood Obesity & Protect Our Kids' Health!

**With Guests: Dr. Taz Bahita, Dr. Joel Warsh, and
Dr. Elisa Song.**

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SHAWN STEVENSON: One of our greatest responsibilities is protecting our children's health and wellbeing, and as you well know, there have been some devastating changes in the landscape when it comes to children's physical and mental health. The great news is that there cannot be a problem without a solution. It truly is two sides of the same coin. And at this point in human history, we've got to make some decisions. We've got to do some things differently. What we've done the past few decades has led to the situation that we're currently in. And today you're gonna be shocked. You're going to be shocked to find out some of these statistics when it comes to our children's health.

But also you're going to be inspired. You're gonna be inspired with some science backed strategies from some of the world's leading experts on what we can actually do to turn this situation around. And so today I brought together insights from three of the leading experts in children's health on the planet. Today you're gonna hear from multiple pediatricians. They're also bestselling authors and experts in their respective fields. This is going to be a valuable resource for yourself, your family members, friends, coworkers, so many people for years to come, that you're gonna be able to go back to and have a great overall picture.

A summary of the most important areas of children's health for us to pay attention to what's going on, what's gone wrong, and causing all of this turbulence. And again, so many science backed, practical tips. Now, whether we have children, whether we are expecting children, whether we are in the grandparent phase of life, or whether we, not even about that life, but we do care about families, we care about humanity, this is going to be incredibly valuable for you.

Now, before we get to our first expert, one of the most powerful tools in any parent's tool belt to support superhero health in our families is cooking food at home in our own kitchens. Preparing and cooking our own food is something that humans have done for thousands upon thousands, upon thousands of years, and suddenly we're thrust into this environment where we're getting our food from all these random places with all of these sketchy situations attached to it. We gotta be careful out here. Thankfully, there are some emerging companies and brands that are doing things better. But the only true source of quality control

is when it's coming from our hands to our family's hearts. So I'm a huge advocate of uplifting and continuing a healthy kitchen culture. And a part of that recently is getting something out of our kitchens that was hurting our families.

And for the vast majority of us, we had no idea that this was happening. For years, Teflon non-stick cookware was poisoning our families. One of the most notorious compounds used to make Teflon cookware is a chemical called perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA. It was found repeatedly in peer reviewed studies to contribute to higher rates of infertility liver disease in a variety of cancer and a variety of cancers. And this is just for starters. For instance, a study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute concluded that PFOA is a strong kidney carcinogen with risk increasing in tandem with levels of exposure. And just keep in mind, they only recently removed this chemical after decades of harming people's health and being able to manipulate the science and the regulatory agencies only to finally being forced, essentially to take it out, only to replace it with chemicals like Gen X, their new iteration of Teflon non-stick.

Like, oh, this is better for you only to be found that Gen X was similarly toxic. And this was according to a report from the Environmental Protection Agency. So how can we break free from this nonsense? Cooking is supposed to be one of the most healthful things that we could do. Let's get back to time tested resources for cooking.

We've got cast iron, we've got stainless steel, and of course there is a learning curve to be able to utilize those forms of cookware. And today we have even more options when it comes to non-stick cookware because it is a vibe. It is a characteristic that we enjoy as a society. And little did I know how much people value having beautiful cookware, something that brightens up the kitchen, and also having the peace of mind that they have truly safe, non-toxic, pFAS free, that's those forever chemicals, pfas free ceramic coated cookware. And that's what my family uses every single day from the amazing company our place. Just head over to fromourplace.com/model, and you're gonna receive 10% off all of their cookware and appliances when you use the code model at checkout.

And the coolest part is they have a 100 day risk-free trial, free shipping, and free returns, so you can give this gift to yourself and your family and others as well with total confidence. Take advantage of this right now. Go to fromourplace.com/model. That's F-R-O-M-O-U-R-P-L-A-C e.com/model and I'll let you in on a little secret. They often have these really special sales and cookware bundles that have even deeper discounts that you could take advantage of. And we've got a cookware set and we've also given the gift of cookware sets to many of our friends and family as well as one of my favorite gifts to give. So again, head over there to [from our place.com/model](https://fromourplace.com/model). Use the code model at checkout for an additional 10% off. Check out how beautiful science backed and safe. This phenomenal cookware is. That's from our [place.com/model](https://fromourplace.com/model). And now let's get to the Apple Podcast Review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five star review titled Shawn Knows What's Up by JG Kg. This podcast has all the health information you need in your life. Even if a topic doesn't necessarily appeal to me, I'll listen and I always get something out of it. And aside from the health knowledge, Shawn is just entertaining. The other day I was listening and he pops on with a comment about the greasers and the SOS from the Outsiders. He just gets it. Thank you for making all of this accessible, Shawn.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Those are those Easter eggs you've gotta keep an ear out for. Thank you so much for sharing your voice and sharing that incredible review over on Apple Podcast. It really does mean a lot. Shout out to the revelation of even if you think that a topic might not be something explicitly for you to listen anyways. Click play and allow that diversity of education, information, inspiration, to be able to impact your mindset, your perspective. This topic today is especially important. Again, some folks might not have kids yet, or aspirations to have kids, or maybe their kids are adults and they're like, you know, this information about, you know, young kids isn't as pertinent for me. So, you know, it doesn't really matter. But I'm telling you, when you hear information like this, it can light a fire under you that impacts so many different areas of your life.

But also, and for many of us, most importantly, impacts the lives of so many others, especially our children. Today, more than ever, we are entrusted. It is our honor to protect them, and we

need to step up in a big way, a big part of that is getting educated. And so first up, in this powerful collection of conversations with three of the leading experts in children's health, first up you're gonna hear from Dr. Taz Batia. She's a physician and bestselling author and began her career as a pediatrician, and she's gonna be sharing with you what's different about our food today that's causing higher rates of obesity and chronic diseases in our children. She's also gonna share why young boys and girls are being estrogenized.

She's gonna share the invisible stress, and this one is really powerful, the invisible stress that's impacting kids. And the shocking impact that it's having. Plus she's gonna share some phenomenal practical advice to support our kids' health through nutrition. Enjoy this first segment from The Incredible Doctor Taz.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: 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, you know, 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, you know, barriers, this is from for everyone, inner city to burbs, you know, 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 in. But the load, the, 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. Right? 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, you know, early elementary to mid elementary timeframe.

Then what we're seeing all of that do is throw people into patterns of 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 estro, which is a storage form of estrogen. Those levels are high and boys. You know, so boys are getting estrogenized, girls are also getting estrogenized. So they're going into puberty earlier and earlier. And they're also getting androgen, 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 8, 9, 10. We've got, you know, girls going into puberty earlier and earlier. We have boys getting more estrogen-like symptoms. I dunno if you've been to the beach recently, you'll see boys, young boys that have man boobs and all these other things, you know, bellies, all of these things, you know, developing. And then as we move on with that, we see sort of then the disorders associated with that. Right, right. So the androgen 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 two of those things together are now impacting, you know, what you see expressed in the exam room.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right, right. 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.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My, my kid is carrying some extra fat and, you know, they're kind of venturing into childhood obesity and, but it's okay. You know, it's just, it's, it, it is what it is. And not understanding that that early puberty is now setting her up for higher risk of Alzheimer's. Right. Higher rates of dementia. Issues with, you know, menopause. Ever since every that is getting set sooner, everything else is potentially coming sooner as a result.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Very much. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And even mentioning that androgen load too, it's really interesting. I'm so glad you brought this up, this aromatization process. You know, 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. TAZ BHAITA: Definitely. There's hormone chaos, there's gut chaos, right? You have both things happening kind of 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 are, 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, 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 like, just one activity to the next, driving around town, there's kind of a lack of just like free play. We're not getting, letting kids go outside for some re, you know, some areas is just simply not safe. But this undercurrent of stress, for lots of different reasons, is creating this high cortisol, you

know, sort of 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 show, right? Their brains are on fire. Puberty was always hard. Adolescence was always hard. We always had rebels. You always had, you always had people doing high risk behaviors, right? But they're not just doing high risk behaviors, now they're crashing and burning. You know, there's anxiety at an unprecedented level. There's a DHD, there is addiction and eating disorders. You know, we are seeing all these things go up and our kids increasingly at risk. We're, we're finding that the happy, joyful kid is starting to disappear from our landscape, you know, and that's who we could turn to for innocence and for, you know, 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, you know, are having the greatest weight in this particular moment.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. Right. And that's the, that's the importance of the individual child and paying attention to the individual. Yes. Because it's gonna 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 gonna touch on diet really quickly.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of these newly invented chemicals. You know, 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.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: We're not

SHAWN STEVENSON: Like, what happens when all these things come together in one Twinkie?

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know what I mean? Like, we're not looking at this. And again, we're just seeing the outcome, like, oh, this is just normal. You know, we've normalized what's happening with, with this dysfunction on our bodies. And you know, and you mentioned this crazy phenomenon of night. 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? And, but it's more like in certain pockets. And also, but the video gaming even then for me was like inclusive of my friends.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My little brother.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Not in isolation. Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: 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 guitar, this little.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Yeah, I remember that. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You could play it with your, for it for maybe 30 minutes. You're like, all right, let's go ride our bikes. Like, okay, that's enough. But now it's like endless. You know? It's just kind of 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. Well, you couple that with what you shared there. 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.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, we've really distanced ourselves physically as far as like our community setting, but also because we're tuning to these devices. The devices are devices.

DR. TAZ BHAITA: The device is the community. Unfortunately right now, you know, and you know, I feel like children. You know, I love that schools are now, you know, sort of 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, you know, or your device, whatever device you have. And unfortunately what's what, you know, there's another fallout to that, which indirectly impacts their mental health. It's hard to make social connection, like, you know, like not being able, you know, to simply say, hi, goodbye.

Good morning. How are you lacking empathy? You know, 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're rejecting family, they don't want family. Many of them, you know, they're like, I need alone time or downtime with my phone. You know? And that phone or that device has become sort of the soother. You know, rather than a human being or another person or, or another community member. So I think, you know, we're shifting culture. We have shifting, you know, sort of 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 like, you know, 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, you know, in terms of what their risks 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, you're having parents work against each other. You know, like, well, well why is that person letting this one do that? Or Why is that parent so crazy? All this is fine. You know, you know, that type of thing. So I feel like we need standardization like 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, you know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. 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. TAZ BHAITA: 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, you know, at 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 in the right kind and quality of fats in their diet. So the Omega-3 fats, in particular, the Omega nine fats, we know that those help to decrease inflammation. I think teaching them from an early age, you know, 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 type of things.

But I think constantly educating them, right? I think parents get super frustrated because, you know, 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, you know, helping them understand what brings them energy, you know? What energizes them, having them all just learn to read their own energy, you know? 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, you know, these are things you can do. No matter how old your child is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back.

How can we get our kids off of all this crazy ultra processed food consumption? Well, the great step in doing this is changing up what our kids are drinking. Our kids' drinks are a fast delivery system for the good stuff or the not so good stuff. And I grew up, if you grew up much like me drinking Capri Suns fruit punch, all manner of soda, the off-brand stuff and the expensive stuff, Dr. Pepper is not a doctor. All right. Grew up drinking all of that stuff, and of course, just flooding my body with high levels of blood, glucose and insulin in all manner of ultra processed, newly invented chemicals.

And so being able to switch up what our kids are drinking, provide our kids, some healthy beverages, can be a game changer. And my friends at Organifi are dedicated to this mission too. They've got a new special Superfood blend just for kids. It's called Organifi Kids Easy Greens. And it's providing our kids with some of the most micronutrient, dense superfoods ever discovered, including Morgina, spinach, coconut water and more, and it's in a tasty flavor just for kids. The reviews for identified kids, easy greens are off the charts, so kids are loving it and parents are loving it as well. You're getting a micronutrient blend with a sweet apple taste that kids enjoy probiotics and enzymes for optimal absorption. And of course, it's organic and free from fillers and additives. Head over to organifi.com/model and you're gonna get 20% off their Organifi Kids Easy Greens, and also the Organifi red Juice blend, and just storewide any of their incredible organic blends. Again, go to organifi.com/model for 20% off and now back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. I hope that you enjoyed that first segment with the incredible Dr. Taz Batia. Next up, you're gonna hear from one of the leading voices in the world in children's health. He's a pediatrician and bestselling author, and it's none other than Dr. Joel Warsh. In this segment, he's gonna be sharing the shocking state of kids' health in our society today, and you truly need to know this information. He's gonna share the number one ingredient that's destroying kids' health. He's going to be sharing why our medical system is

simply not set up to prevent diseases and keep kids healthy, and he's gonna share some practical advice to protect your children's health. Let's dive into this segment with the amazing Dr. Joel Warsh.

DR. JOEL WARSH: I mean, first of all, just look at the statistics, right? We're seeing about 40, 50% of kids with a chronic disease. More than that with adults. And so we really need to get back to basics. I mean, if we're moving in the wrong direction, if life expectancy's going down, then that means that we're doing something wrong. And that's our modern lifestyle. If we're not mindful of what we're doing and we don't take ownership and start to figure out exactly what's going on, then we're never gonna change anything. And then every kid's gonna have a chronic disease. And, and as a parent, if I have two children, I don't want one of those two kids to have a chronic disease, but that's what's happening today.

Like that's what we're seeing. And it shouldn't be that way. And it wasn't that way 20, 50 years ago. It was like five, 10% just a few years ago. So it is something that we're doing, or probably many things that we're doing, and if we begin to take ownership of the things that we do have some control over, then I am sure that we can move things in a better direction. And families see that all the time.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And you, this is one of the things that is really sobering for us as parents that you shared. Is that we are inching towards about 50% of our kids now having some form of a chronic illness. And this is like, this isn't just like 10% more. This is like significantly higher rates than it used to be. Like you said, five, 10% back in the day. And specifically, you've been sharing statistics on much higher rates of things like autism. Autoimmune conditions, you know, really the list goes on and on. There's been an explosion in obesity rates. Can you talk a little bit about, again, mentioning that our modern lifestyle is a disaster for pediatrics. What is it about our lifestyle in particular with things like allergies and eczema and asthma and other autoimmune conditions? What's causing these higher rates?

DR. JOEL WARSH: Well, I think to start with the most frustrating thing is that we don't know, right? We don't know. We're not putting this as a serious priority, and we're not studying this to the level that I think we need to be because we're not identifying it as that issue. We're

saying it's better testing, it's, it's genetics, it's just the way that it is. So we don't have the perfect framework. We don't have a full understanding of the picture. But I think personally, the big contributing factors are our poor diets. So we're not getting the nutrients that we need, and then we're also getting too many chemicals. So we're surrounded by chemicals. There's chemicals in our food. We're just being bathed in a soup of chemicals and we're not getting the nutrients that we need. So how do we expect our kids to grow up and function optimally? Their immune systems are not functioning optimally. They're, they're getting to a point where they're so inflamed that it turns into a chronic disease.

And again, when we say, oh, it's just, it's just genetics, it's just. The way that it is, we're just better at diagnosis. It's not true because there are so many kids that come into integrative practitioners and you work on their diet. You improve their exercise, you improve their sleep, you clean up their home environment with and get rid of the toxins, and they get better. They lose the diagnosis. I've worked with many practitioners that a child has an autism diagnosis and they lose that diagnosis five years later. They have an autoimmune condition, they go back to their doctor and the numbers all look normal and, and the doctor says, well, look, what did you do? How is this possible?

And it's because they change up their lifestyle. Now, does that mean that there aren't any genetic components? No. Of course there are, right? Some things. You could do everything in the world and you're still gonna have that condition, but you can still improve your life. And I, I think about it like diabetes, it's a perfect example. We have, you know, type one and type two diabetes, and with type two diabetes, we know that if you improve your lifestyle, things can get better, right? If you improve, increase your exercise, you eat a little bit better, then a lot of individuals will lose their diagnosis and get back to a better place, but not necessarily as much with type one, certainly you can improve things, but it's a genetic component.

I think a lot of autoimmune conditions are like that. Yeah. And even autism, I think that the, it's, it's a diagnosis based on symptoms. And so I think it's a lot of things and, and for a certain portion of, of the population, a certain portion of individuals with autism or autoimmune conditions, there is so much that we can do and so much that we have done that's given us this diagnosis. But that means that there is a power that we have to make a change. And if we

don't say that we have some power, if we just kind of push it off and say it's better diagnosis, we're not gonna help those kids. And you know?, I definitely get into discussions and anytime we talk about autism, it gets heated, right.

Certainly does. And if you mention this then, then people get upset. But there are around 40% of kids with autism now that are nonverbal. We would not have missed that 50 years ago. Right. Where, where are those diagnoses? So sure there's such a wide range when you're talking about autism and, and symptoms and, and there are so many families that are struggling, so many kids that are struggling in their own bodies. And if there is something that we can do to help those kids, then why would we not want to explore that? It's not to shame anybody. It's not to say that we don't love these kids or we shouldn't treat them amazingly and, and, and, but it's, why are we not trying to help these families that need the help? If you don't want it, that's okay. That's totally fine. But there are so many families that do, and there's a lot that we can do.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah. I think just having more education and, and more examples of what's possible, like you just mentioned, being able to put these conditions that are becoming, again, they've gone up precipitously into remission. Those stories getting highlighted, whereas what we're really inundated with are more stories on how it's just getting worse and worse and there's nothing you can do about it.

DR. JOEL WARSH: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? And so just being able to reframe this to know that, and I love that you said this as well. Just about any of these conditions can be improved. Right. We're not just talking about complete remission, we're just talking about people getting better. And what are some of those factors for us to actually stack conditions in our kids' favor? A big part of this and also just being able to spend time with you to read your book and just to spend time in your world is removing the cause. Like removing some of the glaring issues. Like again, you start off by saying, we don't know exactly what it is with all these things. We know that the environment itself has changed dramatically. And there are multiple things in our environment that are stacking conditions in particular against our kids.

And so one of those that you highlighted just, and by the way, everybody should be following you on social media too, and one of the things you highlighted recently is the impact that a high sugar diet has on the developing brain. Let's talk a little bit about that.

DR. JOEL WARSH: Yeah. I mean, if you look at the data on sugar. We eat more sugar in some meals than we should be eating in the whole week. We eat more sugar in the first few years than adults ate their whole life even 20, 30, 50 years ago. And that's not to say that we can't have any natural sugars, but we're having so much artificial sugar and it's added to everything. And, and I can just speak as a parent, right? I, I can speak to seeing my own child. Well, I have two, two kids now, but the older one has been, you know, old enough to actually see this. And they go, you know, he goes to a party, he eats one piece of cake and he's a different kid because we don't eat that at home.

We don't add any sugar except for natural sugars to anything that he's had. He's four years old and he never really had any, he doesn't eat any of those processed foods, but if he does eat a little bit, he's a completely different kid. And, and I've always thought this my whole life, but then you actually see it in your own child. You see the difference from just one meal at a birthday party or something like that. Then what is going on in the other kids' brains that eat this food all of the time? And how much of that is when we talk about A DHD or we talk about behavioral issues, how much of that is actually just from the diet that if you clean that up, you would see a huge difference.

It's not to say again that there is an A DHD or their medications can't be useful sometime, but how much of it is actually controllable just from changing our diet and just from adjusting our lifestyles that that we can see a huge difference And, and I'm an integrated pediatrician and to me what that means is balancing the best of modern western medicine with alternative practices. I'm not against Western medicine at all, and sometimes when we talk about integrative, it's woo woo, it's it's out there. And there can be some people that do that. But why does there have to be two sides, right? Why does there have to be modern medicine and alternative medicine? Why can't we just do whatever's best on the day for our kids and, and why would we not wanna decrease a medication, if we can do that.

It doesn't mean we shouldn't ever prescribe it. Right? Sometimes an antibiotic can save your life. Sometimes the child does need a medication to function optimally, but if we can adjust their diet or remove some toxins and that decreases their medication, that gets them off their medication, that gets rid of their diagnosis, why would we not try that? Like there's, there's no downside to that. And it's like, it's these two sides fighting back and forth that are really on the same team. I mean, aren't we all on the same team? Don't we just want healthy kids? And yes, we have some different opinions maybe on how we get there, but at the end of the day, we want the same thing.

We're all in the same team. Yeah. Right. And, and medicine it seems like has moved into this world of telling people what to do, which is so frustrating. Again, 'cause we're on the same team and we're trying to. Help people to get to a better place. And, and doctor comes from the word dos, air meaning to teach right, in Latin. And that's what medicine always was. But it seems these days like we're just telling people what to do instead of coming together and, and creating a plan that works the best for the family. Right. And that's one of the impetus for the book too. It's like everybody's different. Every situation is different and we need to look at all the evidence, figure out what makes sense for that family and help them to get to a better place, but not to tell them what to do, it's just to teach them what's out there and let the parents, the family decide what's best for their kid.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right, right. That's another one of the most empowering things about your work and about the book, is you keep bringing us back to this important fact, which is we as parents are the most important people in our child's health. We are the ones who are primarily responsible for our child's health, but we have a system that has been created. In our culture that has caused us to really outsource a lot of things. And the system itself is V is really medicalized a lot of symptoms that we start to lose our own parental inquiry about. Like what can be causing this? And also our practitioners, same thing, just having a little bit more inquiry instead of just treating symptoms and targeting symptoms.

But your work is really about removing root causes. And also, yes. Whenever we have an acute situation, medicine is there to help with those symptoms as well. We can have both. And that's really the great thing about this, is that it's a both and world, you know? But most

importantly, it has to be empowering for us as parents, we have to take that responsibility 'cause we have the responsibility to pay attention to our child, our child's uniqueness. And understand there isn't any cookie cutter way. To, to parent and to care for our child's health, and you're giving us some of these tools and just staying on this topic of sugar, for example. if parents are wanting to do a little bit better, because it's a, it's a tricky landscape.

You know, we grew up just, we grew up in a sugar culture. All right. We, we grew up in a very, very, just kind of inundated with a lot of sugary products. You know, it was not uncommon for me to wake up and to have a bowl of Lucky Charms or the offbrand kind of cereal, you know, so instead of Lucky Charms, it would be like fortunate, uh, rabbits foot or something like that, you know, I was just making that name up, but it'd be like an off-brand kind. You know, and, for lunch, having a pizza, you know, a slice of pizza, you know, with a juice. And then for dinner, you know, having some macaroni and cheese and fish sticks and maybe some canned green beans of thrown in the mix, right? So this would be a normal day of eating for me. Not to mention the chips and the cakes.

DR. JOEL WARSH: Sure. Me too.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the cookies. And my, my drink of choice. My beverage of choice was like juice, right. Quote juice. Yeah. Which had 0% juice, by the way.

DR. JOEL WARSH: A hundred percent sugar.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. A hundred percent sugar. Right. And so if parents are wanting to make some shifts in how much sugar their kids are eating, and here's my question for you, because parents are like, but my, my kid wants it though. My kid wants it. What do you say to help coach that parent?

DR. JOEL WARSH: I, I totally get that. And I say to parents that it's our job to be the parents and sugar is addictive and it's not something that we need in the levels that we're eating. And it's certainly not in the added sugars that we're getting and the processed sugars that we're getting.

So at some point, we just have to take charge of our family's health and we have to make decisions that are best for their long-term health. And so, you know, I tell people if in my office, you know, blame me, it's fine, if that's what you wanna do. But I think at the end of the day, the number one thing that people can do is just start to read labels.

And it doesn't mean that you have to never give them a piece of cake. It doesn't mean that you have to go from a bag of chips to broccoli, and that's gonna be the only thing you're gonna feed your kids. But every parent can start to become savvy at reading labels. And if you take ownership when you go to the store and you purchase things that you're going to turn over that bag and you're gonna read the label. I mean, hopefully you pick some things that don't have labels, but for the most part, if we're talking about. And say a bag of chips is gonna have a label and pick the things with ingredients that you actually know what they are. If it's a long chemical name, it's probably not good for you. You don't need a PhD in chemistry to know that some word long word on a label is, is probably not that good for you.

And if they have, you know, 10 grams of sugar is, is not as good as, you know, five grams of sugar, right? You can look at that and kind of compare the two. And it doesn't have to be more expensive. Sometimes it is, but it doesn't have to be. And you can pick the better version. And if you do that for every single purchase over the next 5, 10, 15 years, it add up, it adds up. It makes a huge difference. And it's the small little decisions that we make that add up that we're just not focused on these days because we're so focused on convenience. We're so focused on money and, you know, buy things that are cheaper. And, and I get that. I mean, I understand that we wanna, we wanna do what we need to do and we have to do what we need to do, but at the same time.

If we look at our health, 50% of kids have a chronic disease. So if you're okay with that, then you keep living the same way that we are in America and Western culture right now. But if you wanna have healthy kids, then you have to look at the stats and they are what they are. That's not doom and gloom. That's not me trying to scare people. It's just saying this is what it is and I want you to be healthy. And if you wanna be healthy, then there are some things that you're going to have to do differently than what we're doing these days, or you're gonna be one of those statistics and, and that's just is what it is.

And it's very frustrating as a doctor that we're not pushing the conversation back towards health and to the very little things that parents can do because it matters. And there was a great study out of Harvard where they were looking at soup, I dunno if you know, like the cans of soup study, but they, they took canned soup and they were looking at BPA levels in these, in, in these patients. They gave 'em five days of canned soup, five days of homemade soup, and looked at the BPA levels in their urine 'cause in the lining of the cans, there's a, B, P, A. And it was a thousand percent difference after five days. And I love that study because it's such a simple little study, but at the same time we're like five days cans of soup versus homemade soup. Thousand percent difference bPA. Like what does that mean for every single decision that we're making? It's, it's, you don't think about it, but you just making a few more meals. It adds up.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. I love that. And by the way, that study, I cited that study in my previous book and eat smarter.

DR. JOEL WARSH: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And why does this matter? Well, we'll put these studies up for everybody to see right now. Right now we've got. Solid data, and this just came out this year. Finding these, you know, BPA, these plasticizer chemicals. In particular, those that come from things like plastic water bottles and food products showing up in human hearts. Like half of the patients who were tested had it in their carotid artery plaque showing up in human testicles. Right. And so again.

DR. JOEL WARSH: All of them. Everyone, every testicle test.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Every testicle had plastics in 'em. Okay. Like it's integrating itself into our tissue. Also, another study found that it's integrating itself into skin. And leading to high rates of skin cancer. Like we started this off and my question was about our environment and how this environment is really cultivating a very complicated terrain for our children in particular because they're growing up in this at such a high level. And so here's the directive that you shared for everybody.

Not just, yeah, let's pay attention to those labels and let's do better to avoid added sugars. Right. We're not villainizing all sugar. Like certain foods are gonna have sugar in it naturally occurring. A little bit of added sugar is, is we don't want to beat ourselves up about. And from time to time, kids go to birthday parties, all this stuff, but let's do our best to avoid added sugars. And this was a revolutionary idea that you said. Which this is might sound crazy. Let's eat more stuff that doesn't have a label on it.

DR. JOEL WARSH: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. This is not to say we don't DoorDash.

DR. JOEL WARSH: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. But it's just like.

DR. JOEL WARSH: But how much, how often.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly.

DR. JOEL WARSH: And, and is, can we not aim to encourage people to cook more? I mean, you're a foodie. It tastes better when you make it. It tastes better when it's fresh. If you pick something off a plant and you eat it, I mean, I challenge anybody, go out to a farm, pick a tomato off, off of a plant, pick a grapefruit off of a plant, eat anything off of a, you know, tree, a plant. It is 10 times better if you eat it right then. You cannot get the same food that is packaged in a store that you can get when it's fresh. And that's the, usually the best case scenario for us is just, just cooking the food from the source. But even then, you know, if you go and you pick a berry off of a bush, how long does it last for?

It lasts for like, you know, two, three, maybe four or five days. So what is being sprayed in all of our food, even in the best case scenario, when it's shipped from another country, you know, goes in a boat or, or you know, on a train or however it gets here or in a truck, then it sits in a warehouse, then it goes to a store, then it sits in the store, then you pick it up, then you eat it. That's not three or four days.

So something's happening, something's being sprayed on basically everything that we eat to preserve it. And so these chemicals just keep adding up. But if you're not even eating that, if you're eating the prepackaged food that has all the stuff sprayed in there and put in there and to keep it as a preservative, then how do we expect to be healthy?

How do we expect our kids to be healthy? If that's what they're eating every single day and they're not eating the best case scenario food. They're eating the food that's packaged sugars, dyes, chemicals, things that are not allowed in other countries that we're just eating every single day. And then we wonder why we have a 50% chronic disease rate. We wonder why obesity is going up. It's not, it's not rocket science to me that there is a huge portion of it that's very controllable. And going back to what you said, it's the family, the parents that have to take control, the medical system is not gonna do it. Medical system is very slow to change and medicine is fantastic at identifying things that are serious conditions, but it's not set up and has never been set up for chronic disease.

And there just isn't the time in most medical offices to spend. 30 minutes talking about your nutrition. Spend 20 minutes talking about the toxins. Dive into all of these things. You're gonna spend three to five minutes with the doctor. There's no bad pediatricians out there, right? These are people that went into medicine to help kids, but there is a system that we're working in that's not set up for chronic disease and not set up to look at root cause and not set up to talk about what we're eating. And so, okay, here's a medicine, here's a pill. It does make you feel better in the short term, but it solves nothing. It solves nothing. It doesn't mean that a medicine can't help you, and sometimes we need it, but that's not the reason that so many kids are sick. They don't have a deficiency of a medicine.

They have a deficiency of nutrients and vitamins and too many toxins. And if we're finding, you know, BPA in everybody's testicles, so what about the other 10,000 chemicals that are out there, and how much of those are in our bodies? And then. What do we expect to happen when we're filled with all these chemicals? So if we're not doing everything we can to minimize that, then we're gonna see the results that we're seeing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, I hope that you're enjoying and learning a lot so far. We've got one more incredible experts. Next up in this powerful collection of conversations about protecting our children's health. Today you are gonna hear from pediatrician and bestselling author, Dr. ELISA Song. In this segment, she's gonna be sharing the truth about antibiotic use in children. Everybody should know this by now, she's also gonna be sharing a powerful insight about one of the most common childhood surgeries. And what's causing issues with kids tonsils. Plus, she's gonna share some practical advice to help fortify our kids' health today. Enjoy this segment from the amazing Dr. ELISA Song.

DR. ELISA SONG: As an integrated pediatrician, I do write prescriptions for antibiotics. It's not that it's a never, ever, it's just that we know in some studies for children, up to 70% of antibiotics are inappropriately prescribed oftentimes for things like viruses that of course antibiotics don't do a thing for. And we are now heading to the point where if we are not good antibiotic stewards as parents, as, as adults, as physicians, as public health professionals. We are in 2050, possibly headed to a point where antibiotic resistance is gonna become a leading cause of death worldwide. I mean, that is frightening.

Yeah. Where none of the existing antibiotics will be able to help. And so that's on a broader public health level, on an individual level because as a pediatrician, I look at this little child in front of me, or this teenager in front of me. We know the antibiotics are the single biggest acute disruptor. This immediate disruption to their developing microbiome. And our infant's microbiomes and our teenagers microbiomes are rapidly changing and affecting how their immune system is developing, how their brains are developing. So with antibiotics, yes, we want to use 'em appropriately. Although some of the, the statistics, when you look at, and I always back up here and say, you know, as a mom and as a pediatrician, both of my children received antibiotics when they were babies.

Right. I mean, my daughter, she was two to three weeks old and she had a urinary tract infection. My son at five weeks of age had strep. In fact, he had this, this really, you know, strep discharge coming from his ear. I'm not gonna mess with that. They, those are necessary antibiotics. And yet we know for infants who are, who receive antibiotics within the first six

months of life, they are at an increased risk for almost every single allergic disorder, including eczema, asthma, hay fever, ana, anaphylactic, food allergies by the time they're four.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You shared, I think, two to four times higher incidents of developing these issues.

DR. ELISA SONG: That's right. That's right. And then, you know, we look at the, the gut-brain connection and we see antibiotics at any point in life, but especially in infancy in that first six months of life, can increase and almost. Double the risk of mental health concerns by the time your child is an older kid or a teenager. And the more rounds of antibiotics, the higher the risk. And so when we understand that, A, we need to understand how to when to use antibiotics appropriately, and then B, when we do use appropriate antibiotics or inappropriate, we need to understand the disruption to the microbiome and do what we know how to do to restore their microbiome so that it doesn't have this ripple effect on their immune system or their metabolic system or their, their nervous system, either in the immediate or later on in life. I mean, even when they're adults is if this can have that trip, ripple effect.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love that you said this again. The, it's such a valuable asset that we have when we have the use of antibiotics lifesaving in certain contexts. It's just the overuse.

DR. ELISA SONG: Yep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And. You know, unfortunately we have a, a system to where also we might be as, as patients coming in, you know, just want to get our kids something.

DR. ELISA SONG: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you know, as you just mentioned, having the overuse of this could lead to a situation and what's already trending towards that, where anti antibiotic resistant infections are going to be a leading cause of death. We don't want to get that far. We've gotta make a change right now.

You talked about your training in basically coming in to offensive, taking an offensive approach and attacking if somebody's experiencing a symptom or a condition and not necessarily understanding downstream. We might, we might even hide the fire. Number one, the fire still might be brewing. And also potentially causing issues elsewhere in the body.

DR. ELISA SONG: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that's really the thing I wanna ask you about is looking at, again, the whole person, because we might not think that antibiotic use might be connected to some mental health issues later on down the line.

DR. ELISA SONG: Yeah. Well, and what you, what you said is, so right on, you know, we are often in conventional medicine. We start a medication for a symptom. Right. And then another symptom arises. So we start another medicine and then another side effect arises and we start another medicine. And eventually you have kids in adults who are on this kind of polypharmacy of medications. And at that point then we can't separate out, Hmm. Is it that their condition isn't getting better and they need a new medicine? Or is it that they're having all of these side effects that may be either additive or sometimes even synergistic and they can, you know, really interfere. And so, I see this with, with our teenagers where, if we are not aware of all the factors that can contribute to microbiome disruption, we may be inadvertently, as you've said, kind of fanning the fires of inflammation and disease without recognizing what we're doing.

And so it's time to step back and realize your, your teenage girl who maybe gets put on the birth control pill because she has horrible period cramps, right. Takes ibuprofen for this horrible period cramps, has a little anxiety brewing, so she's put on an SSRI medication. Right. Maybe has a history of eczema. So she's lathering on steroid creams, right? And, you know, maybe has some reflux, right? So is on antacid medications or allergies and is on Zyrtec, all of those medications in combination. Oh, let's not forget the low dose antibiotics for acne, right? All of those medications can disrupt the gut microbiome.

And some of those, we don't think about other non-antibiotic medications often as disrupting the gut microbiome. But some of them, like ibuprofen can disrupt the microbiome as much as an antibiotic. So we have to be aware of all these things that we're doing to try to support this child in front of us in the best way we think we're doing. And yet, if we could step back and say, look, okay, if they need to be on an SSRI at the moment, okay, let's, let's do that and recognize that we don't support her gut brain connection. First, she's not really ever gonna probably get off of that medication. Second, we're not getting to that root where we're saying, look, let's heal from the inside out.

Let's nourish her nerve, neurotransmitters, how her brain is thinking and feeling and acting, and all of that same thing goes for little kids, right? I mean, we have little kids who, infants who are fussy, maybe they're, you know, spitting up. And that happens to coincide at the same time, recognizing that all babies have some amount of reflux. They'd all all have reflux disease. But once Zantac became approved for infants, this was back in the early two thousands, all of a sudden, every baby's being diagnosed with reflux disease and putting, being put on Zantac. In the first six weeks of life, eight weeks of life, instead of saying, Hey, look, we know that the microbiomes of really fussy infants look different.

They have higher inflammatory markers. There's a difference in their microbiota. So how about restoring a healthier microbial balance in their gut so they don't have the fussiness and don't have the antacid medication that then can disrupt long-term, increase the risk for, we know disruption in those early stages can increase the risk for obesity, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, you know, all the things that now on the other end of life we're trying to combat encounter.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Mm. Yeah. Before we get into the microbiome, deeper. Let's start more upstream with the tonsils, because you had a really great insight about this in the book and this connection between the tonsils and the immune system and also the tonsils and a similarity with the gastrointestinal tract in our gut. Can you talk a little bit about the role of the tonsils and the connection with the immune system?

DR. ELISA SONG: Yeah. So, you know, a lot of people think, oh, the tonsils are just, especially when I was growing up, everyone had them removed, right? It was like the Brady Bunch, right? Everyone had their tonsils removed. And you know, they're this kind of this extra thing that we don't need anymore. But when we think about our tonsils, they are lymph tissue. And as part of our lymphatic system, they're a really essential part of sensing our outside world, communicating with our immune cells. What's friend or foe, you know, how am I gonna react? And they're sort of the, and when we think about it, they're the start of our GI tract, you know, we are one long hollow tube, you know, from the mouth all the way down at the bottom where the poop comes out. And these tonsils, we have these similar tonsil like patches called gut associated lymphoid tissue lining our entire GI tract.

And that makes up like 80% of our immune system. And some people have heard the saying that our skin is our largest organ. Well, our intestines, our GI tract is our largest interface with our outside world because again, we're hollow, right? So any food we're ingesting, any microbe that we're encountering, any environmental toxin has to pass through our GI tract. And the way our tonsils and our gut, our gut associated lymphoid tissue interacts with those things will tell our immune system, Hey, that's okay. You know, we'll just let it pass. Or, you know, that's, that's, you know, a broken down. Amino acid, we're fine with that, right? Or it might say, oh, okay, there's a virus going through that, that, or bacteria that I don't really like our immune system.

Hey, immune system kick in. Let's create a little bit, little bit of inflammation to kick it out. If though we get bombarded, our immune system continues to get bombarded inappropriately. Eventually our gut immune system kind of crosstalk. It can happen inappropriately. And then sometimes we start attacking our own cells and that's what happens with autoimmunity. So we can see, you know, just how important these are for our developing immune system. Now the tonsils. So, I mean, I, I write the story about my, my own son, right? I mean, he had huge tonsils. They're called kissing tonsils. I mean, it sounds cute, but it's not, right? I mean, they're literally kissing in the back of your, of your throat.

And so when he was about three or four, his tonsils were just getting bigger and bigger and he, and he had obstructive apnea from it. Right? Now, there are indications to remove tonsils.

However, we have to think, all right, well, tonsils are part of our immune system. Why is my child's immune system acting up? What is the reason? Is it from environmental allergies? Is it from some chronic infections that are kind of trapped in your tonsils? Is it from food allergies or sensitivities? What's going on? Because if we can identify those and remove those sources of immune stress and inflammation, a lot of times the tonsils can shrink and the adenoids can shrink, and we may be able to avoid removing them.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, this is such a huge insight right now that I got from you reading your book. Alright, so we've got our tonsils as this kind of frontline sensor for our immune system. And it can be hyperreactive and of course we're looking at it, this is just an obstruction. We'll just, you don't need it, just remove it instead of understanding it's responding. It's reacting to something and not realizing that your gut lining has a similar reactive tissue that you can't see though. Yeah. Not like the, not like, not like tonsils, right? And so that inflammatory response is happening elsewhere in the body. You just can't see it. And it might manifest as allergies, it might manifest as Crohn's disease. It might manifest as depression. Right. Because one of the other things that you talked about, which a lot of parents would say, okay, you know, my kid doesn't have any gut issues.

DR. ELISA SONG: That's right. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And you address that because if you don't have a blatant thing like. Belly aches, you know, some type of gastrointestinal disease. We might not realize that, as Hippocrates said thousands of years ago, all disease begins in the gut, but also all health..

DR. ELISA SONG: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Begins in the gut as well. And so being proactive at, okay, I understand you might not have specific like belly related symptoms that you're seeing, but you said with your patients, you always start in the gut.

DR. ELISA SONG: Either way, always start with the gut. And so, you know, if kids are older or, you know, parents are in the room and I start talking about, Hey, you know, let's do some detective work

We gotta think about what's happening in your gut because you know all the effects it can have on the rest of your body. And a lot of times the answer, you know, the, the, the refrain is, well, yeah, but there's nothing wrong with my gut. Poops are perfect logs, or no tummy aches, no heartburn, you know, no constipation or diarrhea. And then we have to step back and really talk about, you know, why the microbiome is so important for, as you said, if your microbiome is inflamed or there's an imbalance there, or disruption there, you might not not have any quote tummy or digestive symptoms, but you may have some itchy skin, right?

Or you may have really bad acne. Right, or you may just not be able to focus as well on your school play lines. I mean, whatever it is. I mean, there all the things that kids may be struggling with and have as their goals, right? We can tie virtually all of them back to, Hey, let's take a look at your microbiome, those trillions and trillions of microscopic tiny little friends in your belly. If they're not happy, you, you are not gonna be happy. If they're not healthy, you are not gonna be in optimal health. And that's why we always start with the gut, whether it's a poop test or not. I mean, I, I'd love to do poop tests, you know, when I can because I can't tell just by looking at you, you know, what your, what's gonna grow inside your stool and what's gonna be there.

But, but we can also suspect, hey, look, if there's something going on with your, from a mental health standpoint, from an immune standpoint, from an endocrine hormone standpoint, you know, metabolic standpoint, we have to look at the gut first. If we want their gut microbiome to be in the healthiest state possible, that's where we have to go back to the foundations. Right? We have to go back to what is going to nourish your child's microbiome, because again, they're not just like tomato seeds. You grow and you leave and you know, come back in a month and you have these beautiful tomato plants. No, you need the right amount of water. You need the right amount of nutrients in the soil.

You need the right amount of sunshine. You, you wanna talk to them, give them the right amount of love. Right? And so we need to think about our, our microbiome in the same way. And once we have those foundations, that is when we have true microbiome resilience. That is when, even if your kids need an antibiotic later on in life, or even if they get exposed to whatever microbiome disruptor, their microbiomes can bounce right back because our

microbiomes want to go back to the state they were in before the disruption. That's really important. So you get a good foundation. All right. They take a little hit fine. Get right back up and restore the foundation really easily.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Resilience is one of the most important aspects of health. You know, it's that bounce back factor. And I love that so much. And actually, you talk about these creating microbiome magic with our kids and what they're doing every day. There's five specific things. And this is again, about that foundation and creating resilience and you kick things off talking about the importance of nourishment, right. The right nutrients, you know, the right environment, the right soil that it's gonna create. And if you could, what are two or three things that we should be looking at to do for our kids, for microbiome nourishment.

DR. ELISA SONG: So, and, and with nourishment, I put in, put into two parts. There's what we wanna try to get in. But for some families, if, you know, as you write in, in your book, right, if the culture hasn't been quite shifted just yet, and it's a harder sell to get in, like a huge salad, you know, at dinnertime, all right? Sometimes the biggest shift can happen by knowing what to keep out. So there's sort of two parts. And as a parent, right, I get we're all busy. We're, we're trying to do the best by our kids. You pick the thing that's easier, right? I mean, we want this to be, we want the small wins. And as you get the small wins for you and your child and everyone starts to feel better, it gets so much easier.

And here's the thing, once you know what to take out of your diet too, it can change your palate so that then it's more acceptable, more desirable to get in the things that we want. So what are the three things we want to get in from a microbiome centric standpoint? I call them our microbiome champions, the three Fs, our fiber, our phytonutrients, which I know is a pH, but it sounds like an F.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Still got a F.

DR. ELISA SONG: Yeah, it's still got a and, and fermented foods. So those three things, if we can get in, right, and we know, I mean, fiber, I mean, here's the thing that and, and why, you know, I love everything you write because they may sound simple, but you know what?

Simple is often the hardest thing to do. Right. I mean, simple is not always easy and yet simple, and the foundations are what are going to get you the longest lasting health results. I mean, I wanna make it so that no kid ever has to biohack in their fifties, right? It's like, you know what? Let's just make, you know, healthy living a lifestyle, right? And so what do we get in?

Well, fiber, we know that 95% of Americans today don't get the recommended fiber intake and the recommended fiber intake, you know, varies on age and sex. But let's say it's about 25 grams of fiber for most kids. Well. You know, the HODs of people down in Tanzania, which has, you know, they, they're still a, a very traditional hunter gatherer society with the richest gut microbiome of virtually any population in the world. They eat somewhere up to a hundred to 150 grams of fiber in a day. So it doesn't seem like it should be that hard, except that our diets are so full of ultra processed junk that are, have like zero fiber in them that it's not easy to see why most of our kids aren't getting enough fiber in their diets.

And I make it really concrete. I give lists, you know, like a cup of raspberries is gonna be about nine grams of fiber. All right. That's your, like a third of the way there to your daily fiber intake. Right. My kids could down, like, I mean, a whole tray of raspberries if I let them, right. And then, you know, a cup of lentils is gonna be maybe 16 grams of added of fiber right there. So just, you know, trying to make it concrete, figuring out like, where can we get in a little fiber here and there. And then phytonutrients. That's a color. You know, the phytonutrients, all of these phytochemicals, I prefer the term phytonutrients. 'cause phytochemicals just doesn't sound right. You know, when we're talking about plants.

But these phytonutrients, every single color has a different benefit for our eyes, or our heart, or our brain, or for our immune system. And every single color also acts as a prebiotic. And every single color also affects how our microbial genes express themselves and influence our epigenetics. And so, and we know eight in 10 kids and adults have a phytonutrient gap in every single color, right? And so if we think about, you know, eating that rainbow, it sounds so cliché, but you know, for kids, if they're not eating a whole rainbow, well then think about, I mean, broccoli let's a lot of kids like broccoli, right? Well, getting the green broccoli and the purple broccoli that counts, right?

Same broccoli. It's not even the same broccoli, it tastes a little different, right? Bell peppers, you love them. Great. Get the red orange, you know, purple, green, I mean all of those, right? It's a different phytonutrient. So you can fill in their color gap, even just like that. And then I always talk about fermented foods. 'Cause that's probably the hardest sell for a lot of kids and grownups because they're thinking, you know, the sour, the sauerkraut. I mean, I grew up with kimchi, so it's like second nature to me, right? But there's so many ways we can get fermented foods in. And honestly, one of the best ways make it with your kids.

In my daughter's third, fourth grade combined class, there are these eight to 10 year olds, and I created the six week curriculum for them. It was honestly one of the most fun and rewarding things I've ever done in my entire life. And, you know, we, we talked all about their, you know, the tiny friends in their tummy and how they help them, what they do, and how do we nourish them, you know, with food and lifestyle. And, we made sauerkraut. We brewed kombucha and we had, we had the two ferment stages. So on the second stage, the kids got to choose different flavors and we season them up and we had a little kombucha tasting contest. We made fermented lemonade, which is one of the recipes I have in the book because these are easy ways to get fermented foods in and have kids and make 'em and want them.

And I had parents calling me saying, oh my gosh, I can't believe, you know, Emily actually took a bite of sauerkraut. She's like the pickiest thing ever. And she said, you know what? That wasn't too bad. She still don't want a huge bowl full. But, you know, that's where we get kids. If they, first of all understand, we have to give our kids way more credit than most of us do. They can understand why their microbiome is important to them at virtually any age, right? And we can empower them with the tools to know how to do it for themselves. I mean, then, then, I mean, that's our job as parents, right? Setting them up to be successful, not just, you know, from a academic or career standpoint, but how do we help them be successful from a health standpoint, you know, for long term.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this, and I hope that this inspired you to be even more proactive about protecting and supporting our children's health. As Dr. Joel Warsh mentioned later, our

medical system is simply not set up in a way that is about preventative care for our children. That's about protecting our children against chronic diseases because our current model does not unfortunately, educate parents about nutrition support, parents around exercise, around community, around family dynamics, around sleep, health, around. I can keep going on and on.

There's so many different subjects that create this patchwork quilt of our lives and of our children's lives. It's dynamic, it's fluid, it's ever changing, and the onus is on us. The power is in our hands to write the story of our family's health, and also write the story for children's health for generations to come. So we've gotta get educated and more importantly, we've gotta be proactive. We've gotta put what we learn into action and we don't have to turn our world upside down. We don't have to do a thousand different things. We can simply focus on improving one area at a time. Especially looking at what is the highest leverage thing in your family's life, or something that you care about's life right now.

That might be just focusing on getting better sleep and creating a culture around healthy bedtime routines and good sleep hygiene, good sleep habits for our family. Maybe that's where you wanna focus. Maybe it's nutrition, right? You just want to go and focus a lot more of your energy onto improving the nutrition for your family, making sure you got healthy snacks, making sure that you are mindful about what you're utilizing for, you know, busy days and, and things like that.

And having family meals together. So listen to your heart. Let your conscious be your guide. Shout out to Jimmy Cricket and more important than ever, again, this matters so much to me. It's a big, big part of why I do this work is we've got to protect our kids. They don't have the opportunity. I know that I didn't when I was a child, to make a lot of decisions about. My health, I was just kind of born into an environment that was remarkably unhealthy, and so we've got some decisions to make because here's the rub. We can normalize creating a healthy environment so that our children are just born into environments that are more fruitful and supportive of good health.

The powers in our hands. I appreciate you so much for tuning in today. If you got a lot of value outta this, you know what to do, share it out with your friends and family. Of course, you could share this on social media. Tag me, I'm @Shawnmodel. If you wanna share some love on Instagram or X, or I'm at the Model Health Show on Facebook. We've got some incredible masterclasses and world class guests coming your way very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to the [model health show.com](http://modelhealthshow.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 and powering great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.