



Dr. Keesha
REVERSE AUTOIMMUNE
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AUTOIMMUNE BRAIN

Dr. Keesha ([00:01](#)):

Welcome back to the Reverse Autoimmune Disease series, everybody. This is The Autoimmune Brain, and I'm very excited to invite back Dr. Tiffany Caplan, whose passion for supporting people using functional medicine stems from her own health journey. She also has seen multiple family members diagnosed with autoimmunity after years of suffering from various obscure ailments. Since then, she's been passionate about helping those with autoimmune conditions regain their health and put their disease into remission. She's experienced firsthand how lifestyle medicine can save a person's life and is blessed to be able to educate and help such—I was going to say undeserving because that's what it looked like, but it's my eyes [Laughing]—Underserved populations! I was like, "Tiffany, are you sure you really want to say that?" Tiffany Caplan is the author of the international best selling book, *The Lupus Solution*. Welcome to the series.

Dr. Tiffany ([00:56](#)):

Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Dr. Keesha ([00:59](#)):

So whenever you hear the term—like this is how I have usually started off my interviews is, what do you think of when you hear the term The Autoimmune Brain?

Dr. Tiffany ([01:12](#)):

So the first thing that comes to mind is like all the symptoms that are associated with the brain when somebody is having an autoimmune problem. Also, just from my own experience, I had a lot of brain problems and that's what got me into functional medicine. So brain fog and depression and anxiety and how all of those things, they have an underlying reason why they're happening. Symptoms are always just the indicator in our body that there's something wrong. So when I think of like autoimmune symptoms in somebody that has—or brain symptoms in somebody that has an autoimmune disease, there always has to be a reason for it, whether it is brain fog or depression or anxiety, or whatnot. So that's the first thing that comes to mind.

Dr. Keesha ([01:56](#)):

So when you see clients in your practice and you share a practice and are co founder of the practice that you have with your husband, Dr. Brent Caplan, when you see clients that come to you, what are the top complaints that they have?

Dr. Tiffany ([02:16](#)):



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So, the biggest population that we're working with is people with autoimmune disease. Of course there's like 100 different autoimmune diseases, so it can be somebody coming for—

Dr. Keesha ([02:25](#)):

More than a hundred, actually. [Laughing].

Dr. Tiffany ([02:29](#)):

Yeah, over a hundred.

Dr. Keesha ([02:30](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Tiffany ([02:31](#)):

Just everything now. So it could be somebody coming for Crohn's or psoriasis or MS or Hashimoto's. So we're always looking at—it's an autoimmune process and not—sorry, can you repeat the question? Can we do that again?

Dr. Keesha ([02:51](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So like, what do people come to see you—what are your top lists? 'Cause when I teach health coaches at the Academy for Integrative Medicine and the health coach certification program, I say the people that come to see me, their top three sort of complaints are fatigue is one, but brain fog is another one. Then another one will be like, it can be insomnia, it can be inflammation of some kind, whether it's an inflammatory joint or nerve or connective tissue disorder or just some sort of inflammation. So I was curious, with you if you see the same kind of patterns, like brain fog being right up there, right?

Dr. Tiffany ([03:36](#)):

Yes. Yeah. That's actually the same top three. Energy is always—

Dr. Keesha ([03:42](#)):

And digestive issues.

Dr. Tiffany ([03:42](#)):

Energy is always the first thing. People just don't feel like they're as optimal or they're having problems with their energy or sleep or something in relation to that. Inflammation, so whether it is like joint pain



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or physical ailments or it could be brain fog and that's another big one is mental, like not having the clarity or having—yeah, just that fog, not being able to think and function optimally.

Dr. Keesha ([04:10](#)):

So what are—like usually when I've said to other practitioners that I've had on the summit, when I said, what do you think of when you think of the term Autoimmune Brain? They say a brain on fire and we all know autoimmune disease is definitely an inflammatory issue. Right? So when you think about that, and then you think brain fog, what are some of the root causes of brain fog? Like I just kind of want to define it to, because you and I, when we say brain fog, we know what we're talking about. So difficult time retrieving words, difficult time being able to track what's going on in a conversation or in your own head, difficult time remembering why did I just walk in this room? [Laughing] You just had a baby and you might be finding that's true for you right now, right?

Dr. Tiffany ([05:01](#)):

Yepp, going in and out of that. Yeah. [Laughing].

Dr. Keesha ([05:02](#)):

New baby brain is what I called it. Then when I was pregnant, I called it pregnancy brain. "Oh, the baby is sucking all the oxygen from my brain." Right? So many of us that have been pregnant, know what brain fog is like, "Whoa, that was weird. I can't come up with anything." Then when people age, they can also start having some of that. So what are some of the root causes for that? Because it's not always Alzheimer's, you guys. I know that that's a big concern when people come to see me, like, "I'm really afraid I have Alzheimer's. It's getting really bad. Like my partner is noticing it." And I'll say, "Okay, well, definitely we're going to test for that." But then also there's this whole spectrum of a brain on fire, right? Where it can be raging, burn it to the ground, only ashes left, and just like a mild warmth. And brain fog can run along that same scale.

Dr. Tiffany ([06:02](#)):

Right. And it can get better and it can get worse. It kind of flares and it remisses and I think the biggest—like if I had to lump all the root causes together, the one word that describes it is stress. Stress in the body can come from so many different factors. Stress itself is not a bad thing. Like acute stress is helpful to survival mechanism, but when our body doesn't— isn't resilient towards it, or there's a chronic stress and it doesn't go away, it kind of flips this switch and gets our body stuck in this more sympathetic dominant state. So whether it is stress coming from our diet, from something environmental, from mental, emotional stress, relationship, it could be a blood sugar problem, a hormone imbalance, all those things that are going on under the surface that create a stress response in



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the body and adding all those things together, the body, it gets a little overwhelmed. We get stuck in that state of fight or flight, and that is very pro-inflammatory and pro autoimmune, so then it can set off the cascade with [inaudible] beta, turning on T17 cells to cause tissue destruction. Then we have autoimmune process. So it's like this ripple effect in the body, but that's what it all comes down to. It's really like forms, or the different types of stress that the body's encountering and figuring out what those are to be able to put the flames out or to get the body to be resilient again.

Dr. Keesha ([07:28](#)):

When that comes to my mind that we were—you were just saying, "Okay, so it's not always about Alzheimer's", and several of the interviews have gone to that direction. Like Dr. Tom O'Bryan was saying we have different kinds of Alzheimer's. We've talked a little bit about like pathologic brain on fire issues that can happen, but when I'm talking to someone that has brain fog, especially a female that's my age, I'm 55, then other things spring to mind. You just mentioned one. And there are a couple, as you and I are talking together, you can have sleep deprivation with a new baby and that's going to cause brain fog. Right? Then someone my age can have insomnia and sleep deprivation and that can be because of low progesterone. So it's like the lack of sleep can cause brain fog, but at the end of the day, is it because you need an Ambien? No, it's because there's some sort of imbalance in the body. A deficit that's causing the insomnia. So then it's getting to the bottom of that. And I think that's what's most exciting about the work that we do is we get to be medical detectives. Right?

Dr. Tiffany ([08:36](#)):

Exactly. You have to like put all the pieces of the puzzle together and look at the person as a whole and how they all relate and which ones are broken or fallen apart and put them back together. [Laughing]

Dr. Keesha ([08:46](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Because estrogen dominance is one of those risk factors, as you said hormone imbalance, for a brain on fire. And you can actually have estrogen dominance when you have very tiny little bit of estrogen, like not enough, but you have even less progesterone, right?

Dr. Tiffany ([09:03](#)):

Right. It's all about balance in the body.

Dr. Keesha ([09:03](#)):

Yeah, exactly. Then that can contribute to this brain on fire. So I'm so glad you mentioned some of these things that actually don't have to do with the [inaudible]



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Dr. Tiffany ([09:17](#)):

Yeah. I think, yeah, that's much more rare to have that end of the problem and more it's a functional problem, or a dysfunction in the body that's creating it. It's these things that kind of come and go, it's our daily life that contributes most to these problems. That's why the symptoms may come and go and they're not like a constant for a lot of people. It can be a constant when it's just like constant stress, but a lot of times like you had a bad night's sleep, so you wake up a little bit more brain fogged or you have tension at work and you have a little bit more brain fog and things like set it off.

Dr. Keesha ([09:56](#)):

Another stressor to the body that you mentioned is food. So different people will say different things about food, but there's a commonly known like autoimmune paleo protocol out there right now. What I've noticed is that helps several people, a lot of people, but then there's this huge outlier group where just removing sort of the same things for everybody doesn't do the trick. So it could be because everybody with autoimmune disease has got leaky gut. We'll talk about that interaction between—'cause you talked about the gut and you have to have a gut-brain connection that works, right? Leaky gut, leaky brain. Then they eat a lot of, let's say coconut oil or blueberries, right?

Dr. Tiffany ([10:47](#)):

Good things, right?

Dr. Keesha ([10:47](#)):

Yeah. All good things that you would never remove in an elimination diet and you would never take out in an autoimmune paleo protocol, but then they're still having trouble with the brain on fire and body on fire. So what do you say to that in advising people? 'Cause these lifestyle recommendations, I think people want a cookbook, like a recipe that they can follow that applies to them every single time.

Dr. Tiffany ([11:15](#)):

Yeah. And that's a good point. I mean, everybody is an individual. Everybody's body is different. It's gonna react differently to different things. I think it's a really good starting place for most people if they haven't dove into changing their diet at all. Getting away from the SAD diet, the Standard American Diet and go into like an autoimmune paleo can be pretty helpful in at least calming things down. Maybe it's not going to fix everything. But then looking at what they're eating on a regular basis. So somebody that is eating healthy and they are eating tons of coconut oil or they're eating lots of broccoli everyday, 'cause that's the only vegetable they like. Then they're having reactions to those foods because when we have leaky gut it's gonna be the things we get more exposed to that have a tendency to cause a reaction with the immune system. So we have to look at what are they eating on a regular basis. If they don't



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have a good variety, if they're creatures of habit eating the same things all the time, those are probably the problematic foods for them. Then we can dive into removing those and healing the leaky gut because once you heal that barrier and you calm down the immune response so it's not so overactive, you can gain your tolerance to food again, you can gain your tolerance to the environment. That's really—then you can add more variety back in. You don't always have to avoid those things forever.

Dr. Keesha ([12:30](#)):

Yeah. I think that's a really important point that you're not on the shrinking iceberg of food. Right? That can cause a lot of distresses and also nutrient deficiencies. Where you keep getting told, "I can't have this, I can't have this, I can't do this." It feels like everything is shrinking, shrinking, shrinking. I know a lot of my patients will feel sort of a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness and deprivation and even betrayal by the healthcare system and their bodies and life in general. So I think it's important to know like what we're aiming at is a better resilience. An immune system that's not firing off against blueberries.

Dr. Tiffany ([13:13](#)):

Yes. Yeah, and gaining that tolerance 'cause I've worked with—so many people come and they've done this, they've done the diet and the shrinking iceberg and everything. Now they eat only five foods and those are the only things they can tolerate. And it's really difficult to kind of expand from that because now they're so reactive to everything and we really have to dampen the immune response and get to a better state before we can reintroduce. But that's the goal, is to have that variety in our diet because our microbiome depends on the nutrients. We have to get phytonutrients and we have to get these things to even support our immune system and to support gut healing and our microbiome. So when we're eating five things that's not health, right? That just kind of gets people in this vicious cycle of getting sicker and sicker.

Dr. Keesha ([13:58](#)):

And emotional distress that then creates more release of cortisol into the system that breaks down the gut wall even more, which causes the problems to even be worse. So just a never ending dog chasing its tail kind of thing.

Dr. Tiffany ([14:14](#)):

Yeah. It all just kind of snowballs. Then that chronic stress wears out our adrenals ability to have resilience. Then our adrenals of course help with other hormone regulation, hormone production. So especially women kind of going through—I see a lot of times the perimenopause or menopause time when their adrenals are really taking over that function of producing the hormones.



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Dr. Keesha ([14:35](#)):

They're supposed to be taking over that function!

Dr. Tiffany ([14:38](#)):

They're supposed to be taking over. Exactly, that production of hormones. Now they're having all these normal menopause symptoms, which aren't normal, but they're experiencing symptoms because of stress in the body because their adrenals are not resilient, because of all these things that led up to that point, these things don't happen overnight. I think that's something important, people maybe see the symptoms come on overnight and like all of a sudden their brain fog, but these have been kind of in the works for years usually.

Dr. Keesha ([15:06](#)):

Right. I notice, like at 55 this year, I'm going through menopause and not quite officially has it been a year yet, but I'm in it. I started noticing, "Hmm. That word is not coming as quickly as it used to." [Laughing] "What was that word I was looking for? It starts with a P and it has to do with this..." I've been, over the last year, having more of that. Then I notice like when my patients who are having that, get anxious about it, and start to panic that actually it makes it much, much worse because if you're a zebra being chased by a lion and you think you're about to get eaten, then your mind works so much differently, your brain, right?

Dr. Tiffany ([15:48](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Keesha ([15:48](#)):

In the way that it filters information. So if you put yourself into a space of, "Oh no!" then actually your brain will just get worse. So anxiety and fear, panic, all of those things are going to make your brain fog much, much worse. If you can kind of relax into it, I think of it like the monkey with the fist in its jar, and it's got a hold of something and it's trying to get it out, but it can't because its fist is too big. It just has to let go, then it can get its fist out. That's kind of the way when we want control, or things aren't working the way we want them to, according to our expectations, if we just sort of relax and surrender into it, then everything writes itself a lot easier.

Dr. Tiffany ([16:35](#)):

Yeah. Talking about like how we kind of have to train our body to get into that relaxed state, it doesn't come naturally. We're more apt to go into fight or flight mode or be reactive to things. So we have to like work on vagus nerve stimulation, which is huge, 'cause the vagus nerve has such an impact on—I



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mean, we know that the brain controls the gut, but the gut controls the brain, too. Like 90% of the fibers of the vagus nerve go from gut to brain and not the other way around and all the neurochemicals that are produced in our gut, like serotonin and dopamine, they control our brain function too. So we have to look at both of those areas 'cause they're so interconnected and a lot of people don't see the connection between what's going on in their gut and brain fog, but there's such a direct connection that it's important to understand that too.

Dr. Keesha ([17:28](#)):

So let's talk about leaky gut means leaky brain and some ways that you can enhance the connection instead of make it be a detriment.

Dr. Tiffany ([17:39](#)):

Yes. The first thing is the vagus nerve stimulation. The vagus nerve helps with gut motility and getting our body into that rest and digest state where we make good digestive enzymes so that we can absorb the nutrients and be able to keep things moving through our digestive track appropriately. So we don't get overgrowths and inflammation and feed the wrong things. Then we also have to look at just inflammation of the gut lining. Where's it coming from? Maybe it's the foods, maybe it's stress. Cortisol can cause inflammation and leakiness. So we do a lot of work with diet to help support the gut health, but also nutrients. So using things like short chain fatty acids that are derived from ghee or butyrate that helps with the cells healing themselves or using glutamine and vitamin D and vitamin A and those types of things that support healthy gut.

Dr. Keesha ([18:39](#)):

I'm going to answer a question that's not—that might be being asked in people's heads right now, okay? So, you mentioned ghee and butyrate and I use ghee all the time 'cause I'm an Ayurvedic medicine practitioner too. And the question that's most often asked, of course, "Is this not dairy? I thought you told me to stay away from dairy." So the answer to that as we move through this is no, it's not dairy. It's had the milk solids removed.

Dr. Tiffany ([19:03](#)):

Yes. Yeah it doesn't have casein.

Dr. Keesha ([19:07](#)):

Yeah. Answer the question as it goes by. [Laughing]



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Dr. Tiffany ([19:09](#)):

That is a good point, 'cause I get that all the time too. It's different when the casein protein from the dairy has been removed and clarified, that's the protein structures, what the immune system reacts to. So that's what creates that inflammation, that immune response. So, yes. Good question. So yeah, looking at how we heal the gut through diet, through lifestyle, to stress management, through vagus nerve stimulation. So even something as simple as like a 4-7-8 breathing exercise can get somebody into more of a parasympathetic state where their guts going to function better. Their inflammation is going to calm down. You get out of that sympathetic fight or flight mode.

Dr. Keesha ([19:55](#)):

Let's demonstrate that so that people know what you're talking about.

Dr. Tiffany ([19:59](#)):

So 4-7-8 breathing, the goal is to breathe out for longer than you are breathing in. So like twice as long as you were breathing in for. So breathe in for a count of 4, and you hold it for a count of 7, and then you let it out for a count of 8. Just nice and slow. You're supposed to feel your stomach expand, do a deep belly breath. You don't want to be like chest breathing and you can almost turn this into a meditation as you're counting and holding your breath, you count the numbers, you feel the breath come through and it can work almost like a meditation as well.

Dr. Keesha ([20:35](#)):

It's actually from the ancient science of [inaudible] yoga, it's called Anya Loma Aloma

Dr. Tiffany ([21:28](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Keesha ([21:28](#)):

And it's free! You don't have to go buy like a funky electronic device, and everyone loves their electronic devices and I'm just like, no, you just have to learn how to breathe. [Laughing]

Dr. Tiffany ([21:40](#)):

Right. And do it regularly. That's the idea.

Dr. Keesha ([21:43](#)):

Do it regularly, right.



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Dr. Tiffany ([21:45](#)):

You can't do it once in a while and expect it to work miracles. You do like tricking your body to do it, 'cause sometimes that's even difficult for people. I'll talk with somebody about, "Hey, you're so stressed out all the time. One thing you could do is meditate." They're like, "No, I can't meditate." Kind of just like put it out—"Well, try to breathe." It's an easy gateway into learning how to control your body and be more in tune with your body, just by focusing on that and take like five minutes out of your day to do it. It's a really good tool.

Dr. Keesha ([22:12](#)):

In yoga, it's not just like postures, right? It's the asanas, that's not even all of yoga. They think about these eight limbs and one of them is pranayama and that you do your asanas, you do pranayama, and then you really work on one point of focus and then you meditate. So this idea that you can go, "Scramble, scramble, scramble. Oh, I have so much to do. Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh. Oh, I'm late. I'm late. I'm late. Oh, I guess I gotta meditate." Of course you're not successful! [Laughing] "Then when I get up, I have a million things I have to do. Oh my gosh..." It's just like, well of course. There's a whole preparation that you do to get yourself in a space where you can bring all of your energy into alignment and your central channel and you can allow for yourself to really drop in. It definitely—it's like trying to go to sleep when you're like "Ahh, and then I'm going to go to sleep. Okay." You have to actually notify your body. It's time. It's time to now rest. So I love having people take a detox bath before they go to sleep, it like notifies your body. No screens, just candles, not doing anything with your mind, just relaxing, and then rub warm oil on yourself and then go to sleep. Now your body knows, it's got picture like, "Oh, there's been a dimming of lights, my pineal gland can register that, it can start excreting melatonin. Now I can sleep." So we have this really funky way of expecting things from our bodies and minds. It doesn't really work according to reality. [Laughing]

Dr. Tiffany ([23:49](#)):

Yep. We expect things like right away, instantly and it doesn't work like that. [Laughing]

Dr. Keesha ([23:55](#)):

Instant gratification. "I want you to sleep now." [Laughing]

Dr. Tiffany ([24:00](#)):

Our bodies are not wired to do that. There's that saying, zebras don't get ulcers because zebras could be chased by a tiger and they're in that sympathetic fight or flight mode, and then as soon as the Tiger is gone and the threats away, they can go back to grazing and they're fine. They can turn off the stress response, but we're just—I think with everything that we have exposed to all the time, all the



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technology and everything, we go, go, go. We just don't naturally get into that state very easy. We have to like train our body to relax.

Dr. Keesha ([24:32](#)):

It's the complexity of the human brain. So it should be enjoyed and relished and appreciated and even have gratitude for it. But then at the same time, have a realistic expectation of it, which is, "Oh, with all this complex thinking ability that I have, I've gotta really stored it and organize it before I go to sleep." There's gotta be some things that get to turn off and down-regulate and go to sleep just like I would do for my computer and my phone. So yeah.

Dr. Tiffany ([25:02](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Keesha ([25:03](#)):

So, what else? What are some of the other root causes that are going to—I love putting them all in the bucket of stress because people oftentimes when they think about stressing, they only think about mental stress, emotional stress, but actually the stress on the body, what we've been talking about, right?

Dr. Tiffany ([25:24](#)):

Yeah. One of the other things I find really common with my autoimmune patients is blood sugar dysregulation. A lot of people just kind of ride it off or brush it off. "No, my doctor said my blood sugar is fine. I'm not diabetic." You know? They don't even consider that that could be a problem. But a lot of times it's like reactive hypoglycemia. So you're getting low blood sugars and that's just as stressful on the body as getting high blood sugars, if not more sometimes. So the blood sugar, if you go too long without eating, and I see this really common with my female patients, because they're always trying to lose weight. So they'll go without eating and they'll get a blood sugar drop. Then the body senses that as a stress and releases a bunch of cortisol, and then that causes your blood sugar to come back up, you've released some stored sugar, and that increases your insulin. You release a bunch of insulin. So now you have two very proinflammatory responses happening, the release of cortisol and release of insulin. That just kind of further perpetuates this inflammation in the body and stress in the body. So blood sugar—

Dr. Keesha ([26:28](#)):

Then you're not gonna lose weight.



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Dr. Tiffany ([26:30](#)):

And you're not going to lose weight. You might even gain weight, not eating a lot of times.

Dr. Keesha ([26:34](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Tiffany ([26:36](#)):

Yeah. So having blood sugar problems. Then we also know that with type 3 diabetes, that they're calling type 3 diabetes with insulin resistance of the brain, when you have insulin resistance in the body, you're going to have insulin resistance in the brain and they go hand in hand. That doesn't allow proper glucose metabolism or usage. So the brain is not getting energy source. So that could be another contributing factor to brain fog or cognitive decline, memory issues. People are getting like early onset dementia and Alzheimer's symptoms from insulin problems, from blood sugar problems. That's reversible through diet, lifestyle, figuring out what's driving that response in the body. But it's all fixable. There's something you can do for it, which is so cool. It's what I love about functional medicine. When you look at the person as a whole, and you look at what they're doing on a regular basis, you can figure out what they're doing wrong and help and fix it.

Dr. Keesha ([27:34](#)):

So this actually brings to mind, we've been saying, "Oh, it's not all about Alzheimer's." But, dementia and Alzheimer's, when should people be worried? There are some tests that we do in our offices that actually test for this, mini mental exams and things like that. So when should somebody start to say, "Hmm, I think I need to worry about my spouse or myself"? Oftentimes it's easier to see in someone else than in yourself.

Dr. Tiffany ([28:07](#)):

Yeah. I think that's something just with health problems in general, you might notice it in other people 'cause you're so close to it. I think it's just when it becomes more of a constant consistent, almost your normal. Like you just know that when you walk into a room, you're not gonna remember or you always forget where you put your keys and it just kind of becomes something that defines you. You know it's more severe at that point, 'cause when it's acute and it's new, it's like, "Oh wait, why am I not remembering where I put my keys?" And it's something that you kind of get alerted to, but when it becomes more of a constant and more of you're normal, that's when it's usually getting more severe and that's when other people will notice it or maybe mentioning it, like you said. So I think that's something to look for. Then also, if you're doing everything right and you're doing stress management and you're eating well and you're taking care of yourself—you can't expect to not be taking care of



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yourself and not have problems—but when you're doing everything right, and there's still that like, "Hmm, something isn't right", you kind of just know within your body, "I think there's a problem". Then maybe doing some more investigation, more testing would be helpful.

Dr. Keesha (29:19):

There's one way you can do it at home. My husband and I do this because my husband's mother has Alzheimer's and my husband is 68 and has the APOE4 gene. So I kind of keep an eye on him. I notice, like ever since we've been married, he's been—we have this whole thing in our family where our kids will say, "Oh, dad's doing mind guy right now." Mind guy is sort of like the Uber meditator that sits on the top of the mountain that doesn't really pay attention to anything except the meditation. So my husband's a meditation teacher and he's actually lived in a cave in the Himalayas, like he's a master at meditation. So one of the things that I've noticed about him is if he doesn't put his attention squarely on something, then he won't remember it. So you can kind of, if you're worried about a family member, you can actually say, "Okay, I actually am asking you to concentrate right now on this" and see if they're capable of doing it. Because if his mind is scattered somewhere else, he's sort of like an Oxford professor type, like absent-minded professor. So I know that about him, I've seen that's his pattern forever, his whole adult life. So then I don't get so worried about the other stuff. But then if I do like probably every eight months or so, I'll do like this little check in, ever since his mom got diagnosed where I'll just go, "Okay, I'm going to think of three words and I'm going to tell you them: truck, key, and ball. Then I'm gonna want you to say those back to me after we've had a conversation over the next 15 minutes." Right? So then it makes him know like, "Oh, I have to pay attention to that." And in the meantime, what will happen if you have a mini mental exam in an office, you're asked to draw a clock face. So that's always a good one too, so I'll say, "Draw a clock face." 'Cause he was in the neurology exam when his mom was getting diagnosed. 'Cause I had diagnosed her ahead of time. I was like, "She has Alzheimer's", and I said, "This is why." So I said, "Take her to a neurologist. You go, so you can watch the exam." And when he came back, he was really shaken. He said, "Oh my gosh, like she could not draw a clock." And I said, "I know honey." So you can just like practice drawing clocks with your person. [Laughing] Can they draw a clock face and put the numbers and the hands in their correct place? And then you can say like, "What is three o'clock look like? Draw a clock face." So there are certain things you can actually challenge yourself with because you know that those—and you can Google mini mental exam and look at that and then just play with that for your own mental acuity. You can kind of examine yourself and make it fun with your partner, you know? And just sort of keep track and track it. So it just made me realize, like we were saying, "Oh yeah, it's not always Alzheimer's", but then when do you worry? It's those things. If you can't recall those three words that I just said: truck, key, and ball, you can't actually do the clock face, then that's like a trigger to go into a neurologist.



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Dr. Tiffany ([32:34](#)):

Good point. Yeah. And I like using those things on a regular basis to kind of challenge yourself, but also other puzzles, maybe crossword puzzles or doing those memory games or different apps, Lumosity and stuff that kind of challenge your brain in different ways. That's a really good idea too, 'cause if you don't use it, you'll lose it.

Dr. Keesha ([32:57](#)):

I have my parents playing one right now. They're 73—I have them frozen in time at 72, I don't know why. So, when I was young, they taught me this game and it's been really important for them now. Have you ever heard of this game called Minister's Cat?

Dr. Tiffany ([33:17](#)):

No.

Dr. Keesha ([33:18](#)):

So you do like a cadence with your hands. So on your thighs, you put down twice and then you go like this and you go... So it gives you like a count of four so that you can think, and then you do to the cadence, the minister's cat—and then you go through the alphabet—is a, and then you use an adjective. So you start with A, so the minister's cat is an agile cat, right? Would be an A. Then the next person's supposed to do a B. So you just keep the cadence going. So you don't skip. The minister's cat is a blue cat. The minister's cat is a caddy cat. The minister's cat is a dire cat. You just keep going all the way through and you go back and forth and it keeps your mind having to sort the alphabet, keep cadence, and have to think about, come up out of the blue with an adjective to match the cat. So that's been a really good one for my folks and keeping—since they retired and everything—keeping their minds kind of in that space. So that's another one that you can do.

Dr. Tiffany ([34:21](#)):

I like that. That's cool. I like making brain games fun. [Laughing]

Dr. Keesha ([34:29](#)):

Yes!

Dr. Tiffany ([34:29](#)):

'Cause if it's like some [inaudible], nobody's gonna do it.



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Dr. Keesha ([34:32](#)):

Exactly. Exactly. So you can do it like in a group or with the whole family. We used to do it with my whole family, with the kids, 'cause then it teaches the kids vocabulary too. Then we would try to come up with like the most interesting, unused adjectives in the vocabulary that we could just to kind of stretch our own heads. So, yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Tiffany ([34:57](#)):

That's awesome, yeah.

Dr. Keesha ([34:57](#)):

So, what else do we want to leave with people for the brain on fire?

Dr. Tiffany ([35:04](#)):

I think it just comes down to, like I mentioned at the beginning, stress in the body. So it's the things that we do on a regular basis. It's the foods we eat and how we move and how we think. Also being in a negative mindset and dwelling on the past and those types of things can be really harmful to our wellbeing as well and create stress. Because stress can—or mental, emotional stress can present as physical manifestations in our body, which I know you know a lot about and talk about. So it's things that we do consistently that matter the most. Getting in good habits and learning about your body, getting in tune with it where you recognize that, "I'm having these symptoms, I'm having some fatigue or I'm having brain fog or I'm having some joint pain", and recognizing that symptoms are never normal. Symptoms are the body communicating that there's something wrong and getting in tune with that and seeking out help. If you're making changes and you're not kind of getting where you need to be and working with somebody to do a little bit more digging and maybe some testing to figure out what you need to focus on is always helpful too. So don't be afraid to ask for help. Your family, friends, people around you, create a support system. You don't have to do everything on your own and you don't have to do everything at once. That's another place people kind of get caught up on is, "I have to change everything right now and I have to do it by find myself!"

Dr. Keesha ([36:34](#)):

Perfectly!



Dr. Keesha

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Dr. Tiffany ([36:35](#)):

Yeah, perfectly. And I've been there. I'm perfectionist type A and that's what got me in a lot of trouble. So I know that that's hard.

Dr. Keesha ([36:47](#)):

Me too.

Dr. Tiffany ([36:47](#)):

Just be nice to yourself. I think that's something people need to learn, be nice to yourself, listen to your body and do the things that are going to help you and make you feel good, because that's gonna go a long way in fixing some of that stress, dampening the inflammation, and getting rid of those symptoms that you're struggling with.

Dr. Keesha ([37:06](#)):

Beautiful. Thank you so much. I think you have a free gift for our audience. Do you want to tell them what it is? I felt like just all of a sudden a game show host. [Laughing]

Dr. Tiffany ([37:15](#)):

[Laughing]

Dr. Keesha ([37:15](#)):

Would you like to describe what's behind door number 8? [Laughing]

Dr. Tiffany ([37:19](#)):

Yes. You have an autoimmune recipe book that we put together. Some really yummy, healthy, easy recipes too. 'Cause, you know, we don't always have time to be hours in the kitchen. So just like easy things that follow a very anti-inflammatory approach. So you can know that what you're putting in your body is going to be helpful. Start using that today for creating better health.

Dr. Keesha ([37:44](#)):

Beautiful. Thank you so much Dr. Caplan. I appreciate you spending the time to share your wisdom with us.

Dr. Tiffany ([37:50](#)):

Thank you for having me.



Dr. Keesha

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New Speaker ([37:52](#)):

All right, everybody until next time be well.