

Ep. 11 - The Real Root Causes of Anxiety [Pt.1]

00:00:18 Hello and welcome to the Breaking Up with Anxiety podcast. I am your host, the anxiety nutritionist, gut and hormonal, health expert, yoga and meditation teacher and cat mom, Taylor Gendron. And this podcast is designed to show you how to relieve and resolve your chronic anxiety through the powerful combination of food, lifestyle changes, targeted supplementation, not throwing spaghetti at the wall, supplementation, crossing our fingers and hoping it works, supplementation, gut and hormonal, health optimization, nervous system regulation, yoga, meditation, mindset, lifestyle coaching, and more. I missed last week's episode and there's a few reasons for that. Number one, I record these podcasts on the weekend and last week, unfortunately, I had a funeral.

00:01:08 So I was spending time with my family. Number two, it was cold and rainy the day of the funeral and I'm actually so bad. I'm terrible at checking the weather. I never look at the day ahead or the weekend ahead. Even when we go on vacation.

00:01:26 Steve is constantly like he's constantly telling me you have to pack warmer clothes, you have to pack this, you have to pack that, because the weather says X. I will walk outside and 30 minutes later it's pouring rain and I'm like, why is it raining? But if I had just checked the weather, I could have been prepared. Anyway, needless to say, I was unprepared and I didn't have warm enough clothes or clothing to change into. So I drove home for about 5 hours in soaking wet little kicks and then I got sick.

00:01:57 And as you probably know by now, unless this is your very first episode or maybe you've only listened to a few episodes, my health always comes first. So if I have to pick between resting or recording a podcast, your girl is going to rest. And my congestion is still actually lingering a little bit. So if I sound out of breath or if I sound nasally, that is why. But I'm feeling much better and I really wanted to get this podcast out for you.

00:02:28 And number three, my other podcast launched this week, two days ago on Tuesday, and I had a lot more prep work than I realized to get that going. If you listen to the very first episode of this podcast, the Breaking Up with Anxiety Podcast, you heard me talk about it with very little detail because it was still kind of a hush hush surprise. A podcast that I've been working on with a client turned bestie, which is really what lit this fire under my ass to actually finally start my solo podcast. So this one, because I was actually really scared to start my own podcast. But after a few episodes recording with Jess, my co host, I realized it actually is not that scary.

00:03:12 It's super fun and I have a lot to say. So if you are an entrepreneur and you have anxiety, my newest podcast, the Just Wing Unit Podcast, is for you. This is specifically a podcast designed for the online entrepreneur, a service provider with anxiety and big freaking dreams. Jess, who is my amazing co host, and I have raw, unfiltered, imperfect conversations around all things life, business, entrepreneurship, and anxiety. We chat about all things business and mindset like launching and sales and sales, copy and contracts and boundaries.

00:03:55 And then we also dive into health related topics like Pooping, self care cycle syncing, nervous system regulation. Because here's the thing, as entrepreneurs, it's a fact that your business, your life and your health are inseparable. So we have created a podcast that blends it all together, everything you need to create a life beyond your wildest dreams. And even if you aren't an entrepreneur, I really still encourage you to listen to the health related episodes because there will always be something for you. A woman who experiences anxiety, you will always be able to glean something from those episodes.

00:04:32 Okay, enough of my little preamble. Let's dive into today's episode. Today we are talking about the six root causes of anxiety. And I'm actually going to cut myself off at around an hour. So this is probably going to have to be a two parter, and we will see how much we get through.

00:04:54 There are six root causes. I also call them the six buckets that influence the symptom of chronic anxiety and panic. And I often get a lot of questions like, what do you mean when you say chronic anxiety? When I say chronic anxiety, I mean somebody who has an anxiety disorder. And you may not have been officially diagnosed, but an anxiety disorder is when the feelings of anxiety can last for weeks or months.

00:05:21 And this has a negative impact on your day to day life. The anxiety and the panic can seemingly come out of nowhere, and for seemingly no reason, you experience the physical symptoms like nausea, racing, heart dizziness, sweating, shaking, et cetera. It feels difficult to manage because it's irrational and it interferes with daily functioning. So when the anxiety starts to impact your family life, your work, and create social difficulties, this is a symptom. And even if you only experience anxiety before your period, for example, that it happens every single month, that is also not normal.

00:06:03 It is not the normal human emotion of anxiety. And that means that you need to look deeper at your gut health, your hormonal health, your diet, all the things we're going to talk about today. I actually have a client who experiences anxiety daily, but it's like clockwork every single day. That's when she experiences it, it just comes out of nowhere. When she's winding down for the evening, usually during the work week. So she's ending her work day and she's shifting into slowing down.

00:06:35 Now, if you go to a doctor with this complaint, they will probably give you medication. And if you go to a therapist, they're probably going to look at, well, why is this happening. This is usually a nervous system response, right? Your nervous system feels like it is not safe to rest, which is great and true. But why?

00:06:54 Why does the nervous system feel unsafe resting? And yes, some of this is from programming. Some of this is a trauma response or a safety response or a learned habit. But there is also a physical body based aspect here because your nervous system is in your body, not in your mind. So what physical stressors are keeping the nervous system on high alert?

00:07:18 I always explain it like this. This work. So how I support my clients is for you if you experience anxiety daily, weekly or pre period. This is for you if you've tried medication and or therapy and one or both have not been enough to release your anxiety. You may or may not have a formal diagnosis, but you are looking for natural solutions to support your mental health.

00:07:44 Even if you're on medication and you're not looking to come off. This is for you if you're committed to and ready to prioritize your health and find the answers that you need to feel safe, secure and grounded in your body. Now, this is very different than the normal human emotion of anxiety that every single person is going to experience at some point. And some people, maybe more than others, this is what is not curable, because that would be like you looking for a cure for grief or sadness, and that just doesn't exist, right? Unfortunately, but also not unfortunately, because it's really important for us to learn how to feel the full spectrum of human emotions.

00:08:32 Because without feeling the grief and the sadness, we won't feel the heightened emotions like joy and happiness. So normal anxiety is different from chronic anxiety. Normal anxiety is a reaction to a stressful event or a difficult situation. So it's often triggered by something specific, and it usually ends once that stressful event has passed. This is where relaxation practices, like taking a breath or a change of scenery, breath work, et cetera, often make you feel better.

00:09:11 This type of anxiety, you feel like you can manage it and you feel like you can move through it. So self care works really well here. I still experience this. You're not going to eliminate this from your life. And when I do experience this normal human emotion of anxiety, a few times a year when I do, I go out for a walk.

00:09:32 I take magnesium, GABA and lavender. I do some breath work. It works like a charm in this situation because it is not chronic. I no longer have an anxiety disorder, a panic disorder, or depression. This is very different.

00:09:47 And sometimes if the feeling is a little bit more intense, like the anxiety is a little bit more intense depending on the trigger, I'll do some cold exposure. So either I'll go to one of the facilities near me where I do those Sauna cold plunge cycles. If you follow me on Instagram, you see me sharing about this at least once a week, or I'll jump in a cold shower if I can't get to the facility, or even just, like, cold water splashed on my face or ice cubes. So now that we have made the distinction between what chronic anxiety is and the regular human emotion of anxiety, let's talk about the six root causes of chronic anxiety, aka an anxiety disorder, and how when you address these six root causes, that is how you actually eliminate anxiety. So we have diet, gut, health, nutrient deficiencies, lifestyle choices, stress and trauma.

00:10:44 These are the six areas of your body and your life that need attention. And I can help with every bucket except trauma. I'm not trauma informed or trained, but I do want to speak to the biology of trauma and what happens within the body. And I'm going to quote and paraphrase gabor mate here. He's amazing.

00:11:08 I've read all his books. If you haven't read his books, they are fantastic. I highly encourage you to do so. He also has a film called The Wisdom of Trauma. I will link it in the show notes.

00:11:19 So Gabor mate is a holocaust survivor. He's a Canadian physician and he's a leading expert in trauma. And he does a lot of work with addiction, which is what originally drew me to his work, because somebody I love very much struggles with addiction. It was something I grew up with, and it's a big part of my life today. And I know firsthand that people with addictions face a lot of judgment.

00:11:49 I am one of the few people who doesn't judge this person or blame them for their addiction. And I have watched this tear my family apart over the years, this misunderstanding of what addiction is and how to help people who struggle. Most people with addictions have lived through trauma, and they are not to blame for their struggles. And Gabor has this quote that I love. He says, Trauma is not what happens to you, it's what happens inside of you as a result of what happened to you.

00:12:25 It's what stays inside of you and with you long after the traumatic event has passed. It's not the bad things that happen to you, but what happens inside of you. So if we look at the origin of the word trauma, it comes from the Greek word for wound. And if we look at it like this metaphor, if a wound is not healed, it's painful to touch. We know this from the physical wounds that we've had, and the same thing is happening inside our mind and body.

00:12:58 And Gabor calls this like your psychic wound. And so what happens over a wound? You get scar tissue. And scar tissue has no nerve endings, so you don't feel as much at all, really. And it's rigid and not flexible.

00:13:16 It's very restrictive. So trauma is both sensitive and it can cause immense pain when that wound is poked, when that wound is touched. And then it's something that we need to defend against. And this defense can manifest in physical symptoms, overreactions, chronic illnesses, addictions, et cetera. And at the same time, trauma is rigid and not flexible.

00:13:43 And Gabor talks a lot about how most doctors in medical school there is no classes or lectures on trauma and how this impacts our biology, our physical health and our physical body. And they also get extremely minimal training on nutrition, by the way. They are trained to cut out and medicate and then when they graduate, they do not work for themselves. It's not like doctors are just making up their own rules. They work for a broken system where they have to follow certain rules.

00:14:14 And in the States this is very true and maybe less so, but still so in Canada, I don't know for sure. But a big reason that doctors are constantly prescribing things and that is their first go to is because they can actually get sued if they don't prescribe. They are employees. The doctors aren't the issue, it's the system. And I just really need people to understand this

because I know it can be so incredibly frustrating to not get the answers you're looking for from your doctor.

00:14:44 But it's not them, okay? It's the system they work for. And you are the one who keeps going back to that broken system and you keep looking for answers. In the wrong system, especially with anxiety, they don't have the answers. It's the functional practitioners like myself or naturopathic doctors, we have the answers in addition to therapists and other holistic modalities.

00:15:12 Anyway, a little tangent going back to trauma. When the traumatic event passes, it still has impacted your body, okay? It contributes to this proinflammatory state. It alters the gut microbiome, it impacts the lining of the small intestine, making it permeable. It impacts cortisol levels.

00:15:33 So your stress hormone, it impacts the nervous system, it impacts the vagus nerve, all of which are body based imbalances. And they need to be addressed. So they need to be addressed this way. You cannot address these through medication and therapy. Now, this obviously isn't an inclusive list, but here are some therapies that can be really helpful for trauma related situations.

00:15:59 EMDR. It stands for eye movement, Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy. And this can benefit individuals who've experienced trauma. The individual is asked to recount the traumatic memory while moving their eyes from side to side. And then this action is paired with the individuals or the clients or the patient's distorted beliefs and later it is coupled with a coping thought.

00:16:29 So I've never tried EMDR myself, but I hear really great things about it. If it is done in conjunction with the dietary changes, the gut health support, the lifestyle strategies, all that we're going to talk about today, if you're just doing it on its own and nothing else, it might not be as successful. There's also exposure therapy and trauma focused CBT. The trauma. Focused CBT.

00:17:00 It starts with education around trauma in general, and then it progresses towards relaxation strategies, identifying emotional states, challenging unhelpful or false thoughts, and creating the creation of a trauma narrative and exposure kind of in real life. So those are just a few examples. I'm sure there's other amazing modalities. I'm a really big fan of Somatic work. I think that's really powerful.

00:17:24 I do believe it's really important to address anxiety from both a mind and body perspective. And therefore, even though I cannot help somebody heal, quote unquote, because I don't really love that word, so I'm going to use the word integrate instead. Even though I cannot help somebody integrate and process the traumatic event, what I can do is help somebody rebalance the imbalance that has happened in the body from the trauma. So let's break down the five other buckets or root causes of chronic anxiety, and we'll start with diet. I

want to cover diet and gut health first, but I'm going to weave in nutrient deficiencies into both of these buckets, because the two biggest reasons people have nutrient deficiencies is that they aren't getting it in their diet or and or their digestive function is compromised, so they aren't absorbing it from their diet.

00:18:17 There is mounting evidence linking the role of diet and nutrition in both the development and the progression of mental health disorders. Things like higher intake of carbohydrates, especially the simple or refined carbs, the carbs that are higher in the glycemic index or higher in sugar or sugar intake. This has been linked to higher levels of anxiety, artificial sweeteners, like aspartame, sorbitol, et cetera. These have been reported to increase anxiety symptoms. Studies also show that protein malnutrition worsen anxiety symptoms.

00:18:58 So, not eating enough protein, you should be eating at least 100 grams a day. It's going to be based on your ideal body weight. I eat 130 grams a day, but ideally, most women need to be starting at 100 and then potentially going up again, depending on their ideal body weight, which is going to be based on their height and other factors as well. So neurotransmitters are made up of amino acids. Protein gets broken down into the simplest form, which is an amino acid.

00:19:31 SSRIs work by blocking the serotonin reuptake, so keeping it for longer in the space between the brain cells. But your medication and SSRI, if you're on medication, it's not actually building you more neurotransmitters nutrients such as amino acids. That's what builds you more neurotransmitters. And this can work just as well, if not better than medication, because it's part of your brain and body's natural design. Not eating enough protein is also going to have a big impact on your hormones, because amino acids are a major component of all hormones.

00:20:09 And so we will start to see hormonal imbalances when women are not eating enough protein. It's also going to imbalance blood sugar. It's going to impact stress hormones. It's going to impact your nervous system. It's going to cause nervous system dysregulation.

00:20:23 Protein is also crucial for liver function and detox. It's going to influence the balance of estrogen and progesterone. So your sex hormones, animal protein, is really high in B vitamins, which is really great because we need those again for liver detox. And eating more protein is going to slow the speed at which your stomach empties the contents into the rest of the digestive funnel. And we'll talk about that a little bit.

00:20:52 We'll take a little voyage through the digestive tract. MSG can also increase levels of anxiety. So examples of food with MSG are fast food, a lot of chip and snacky type foods. Most manufacturers are going to use MSG to boost the savory flavor seasoning blends. So you really have to look at the spices you're using and the blends you're using.

00:21:20 Frozen meals. Soups, obviously not if it's homemade and you make it yourself. Processed meats, condiments, those instant noodle products, not eating enough fat.

Specifically, the omega three fatty acids. This can influence the amount of anxiety we're experiencing.

00:21:41 You really want to think about having protein, fat and fiber with every single meal. 60% of your brain is made up of fat, so fat literally feeds your brain. 60%. That's huge. Your brain and your nervous system are dependent on several different types of fats.

00:22:01 So we have saturated, monounsaturated fat, cholesterol. Cholesterol is a fat. Cholesterol is not bad. There's different types of cholesterol, but we do need cholesterol. It's also the building block for our hormones.

00:22:15 Omega three S and omega sixes. Omega three S and six S have to be replenished through diet. They're called essential fatty acids because our body cannot make them. So we have to get them through a diet. If our diet is low in fiber, these essential fatty acids and protein, this is going to impact your stress and your sex hormones.

00:22:37 Also, omega three S regulate the release and performance of neurotransmitters. So they're literally helping to build and rebuild your brain. They're building your serotonin receptor sites. So the higher your blood levels of these omega three S, the higher your levels of serotonin. And it's going to help with blood sugar balance.

00:22:59 Fat is not bad for you. If you want to learn more about why so many people think this, look up the war on fat. Literally type the war on fat into Google. Just like a quick note on cholesterol. Same thing.

00:23:16 So many people think cholesterol is so bad and fat is so bad, but we have different types of cholesterol, and your body actually needs cholesterol to make your hormones, vitamin D and substances that help you digest food. And then there's HDL cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. HDL cholesterol stands for high density lipoprotein. This is good cholesterol. This is because it absorbs other types of cholesterol and carries them away from your arteries and back to your liver, which eliminates it from your body.

00:23:52 As long as the liver is functioning properly and doing what we want it to do. And then LDL cholesterol is the bad cholesterol because this is what can build up in the walls of the blood vessels, narrowing the passageways. If a blood clot forms and gets stuck in this narrow passageway, that's what can cause a heart attack or a stroke. But before panicking about this, understand that the overall picture matters and there's different particle sizes of LDL. And this is basically what the War on Fat is about, is back in like, the 1950s, the 1980s, 1940s was when it started.

00:24:36 In the 1980s was when all these kind of, like, low fat things started to come out. The reasoning at the time behind it was because they were saying, like, all fat, all cholesterol is bad and causes cardiovascular disease. And that's not true. It's just LDL. And it's certain types like the certain sizes of LDL.

00:24:58 And there's been plenty of research and plenty of studies to support this now. So we got to bring fat back into the diet. And then actually, similar to what happened with the War on fat, the same thing kind of happened around red meat. I get a lot of questions from my clients, the women in the Breaking Up Anxiety program, and just other women in my DMs, like, oh, I thought red meat was bad for you, but not all protein or meat is created equally. Just like not all fat across the board is bad for you.

00:25:34 Just certain types. Same thing with protein and meat. Whenever we're looking at big food claims like this, we have to understand the entire picture. We have to look at the context and the variables, especially when we're looking at research. So what did the participants who were studied eat with the red meat?

00:25:52 Did they consume a lot of dairy and gluten? What was their lifestyle like? Did they drink? Did they smoke? How much sleep did they get every night?

00:25:59 Are they moving their body every day? Are they exercising? What's going on with their gut health? All of this matters. And the most important question: what was the quality of red meat?

00:26:08 Was it factory farmed? Because yes, that is inflammatory because they pump hormones and antibiotics into it? Or was it organic and ethically raised? And I will say that while I respect everybody's dietary choices, especially those for religious reasons, I spend a lot more time helping my plant based women recover from the damage of plant based diets than I do with those who eat animal based protein. And there are ethical ways to consume meat.

00:26:41 Also, this narrative that plant based diets are better for the environment isn't true. This is very misunderstood. But that's a conversation for another time. Research also shows that anxiety symptoms improve when people supplement with things like vitamin C, zinc, magnesium, manganese, selenium. And this is because of the role these nutrients play in neurotransmitter production, hormone production, stress management, and nervous system regulation.

00:27:10 And of course, if you have food sensitivities, allergies or intolerances, this can exacerbate anxiety and anxiety symptoms. But a food intolerance is a symptom of gut health and inflammation. So either your digestive function is compromised and you are not making enough of the enzymes needed to digest that food, or there's intestinal permeability. And that food particle is being attacked by your immune system because it's found a way into the bloodstream where it's not supposed to be. This is why so many people, if you are considering doing a food sensitivity test, don't waste your money on that because literally all it's testing is a symptom.

00:27:55 And there is spending your money on something else, spending your money on breaking up with anxiety where we could dive into what's going on with your gut and repair the gut first. Or another functional testing like gut testing, or I wouldn't even do that. I would do the

full scan, bioresonance testing that I run in practice, that will look at food sensitivities, but it also looks at stealth pathogens and different stressors to the body, environmental stressors, hormonal imbalances, things like that. But a lot of people jump to testing. And look, if you got a food intolerance test, don't worry, don't stress.

00:28:39 I also did that. It was one of the first things I invested in when it came to functional testing because they really pushed that in my program. But all you're doing is testing a symptom. So you're going to get a list of all of these foods that you can't have, which is going to feel really overwhelming. And then you're going to remove those foods and then you're going to have this restrictive diet that is not sustainable long term.

00:29:01 And removing those foods does not solve the problem. It does not solve the root cause. The root cause is why do you have these sensitivities to these foods? And that is because there's intestinal permeability, there's something going on with digestive function. So we have to actually address the gut first.

00:29:22 And yes, some people do have food intolerances and sensitivities that even once we have addressed gut health, they're still there. But it's way less like it's way less and it's not as common. And I have somebody, for example, who just cannot have chia seeds. It happens, but it's not as common. And what happens way more often is that once gut health is restored and optimized, all of those foods that somebody was sensitive to that showed up on food sensitivity testing, they can bring back in.

00:30:02 So I mentioned adding more fiber a few times, but we want to look at a minimum 30 grams of fiber a day. 25 minimum. Minimum, but I like to see around 30. So fiber is going to feed your probiotic bacteria and this is what builds our anti anxiety neurotransmitters and our happy neurotransmitters like Serotonin and GABA, also acetylcholine. So acetylcholine is the chief neurotransmitter in the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system.

00:30:32 So our rest digest detox heals the nervous system. It stimulates saliva and activity of the stomach and intestines. It slows heart rate. Our brain has limited ability to store tryptophan, which is the precursor to Serotonin. It is the main building block.

00:30:49 It's how we build Serotonin. And our probiotic bacteria in our gut actually manufactures up to 90% of the Serotonin from the tryptophan in our food. This is one of the reasons we want to target the gut brain connection for anxiety relief. Fiber is also going to fuel phase three of liver detoxification. So this is elimination and it gets in the way of carbs, slowing their passage into the intestines.

00:31:16 Anything that slows the passage of carbs into the bloodstream is good for blood sugar balance. For this reason, we always want to think about combining protein rich foods with high fiber foods. And then of course, we want to reduce the inflammatory foods. So gluten, dairy, sugar, corn, soy, seed oils, those vegetable oils, these are going to drive inflammation. It's going to irritate the lining of the small intestine.

00:31:43 It's going to decrease stomach acid, it's going to impact liver function. We're going to talk about all of this next and what that means for when we talk about gut health. It's also going to deplete the body. So when we eat too much sugar or refined carbs, this depletes the body's stores of magnesium, b vitamins and zinc. And these three nutrients are crucial in neurotransmitter production and Adrenal health, which is therefore our stress management, our stress resilience and our nervous system health.

00:32:14 These inflammatory foods are also going to feed our quote unquote, bad gut bugs or pathogenic gut bugs. Also, these foods are going to impact opioid receptors in the brain, creating addictive tendencies and mood disturbances. It's going to create blood sugar imbalances. It's going to increase Cortisol Dysregulation, which is going to go on to impact our thyroid and our sex hormones. Lots of stuff is happening here, so we really want to think about reducing those foods as much as possible.

00:32:43 So as you can see from the few examples I gave, or I guess that was more than a few when I was talking about diet, you can already see that diet and what we eat and the choices we make are going to go on to influence gut health. One thing did not create your anxiety, which means one thing is not going to release it. The six root causes overlap and feed into each other. Therefore, all six need to be worked on at the same time and in the right order for true resolution. This is how the body works.

00:33:16 There's no way around it. And this is why so many people this is what so many people aren't doing, mainly because their. Doctors and their therapists aren't educated on this, so they don't know. And if you're just taking medication and or you're just doing therapy, you're missing a really big piece of the puzzle. Dietary choices create nutrient deficiencies that impact gut health.

00:33:41 Impairing digestion. Impaired digestion means we're not able to extract the nutrients from our food, which is creating even more nutrient deficiencies. And then lifestyle choices create dietary choices that create nutrient deficiencies that impair digestion. Certain lifestyle choices create stress for the body. Stress is then going to shut down digestion, which is going to create nutrient deficiencies.

00:34:06 Trauma also shuts down digestion, impacting gut health and creating nutrient deficiencies. When we're deficient in certain nutrients, we cannot build neurotransmitters that tackle anxiety like the GABA and the serotonin. When we're deficient in certain nutrients, our hormones go all wacky. This is why medication isn't working. This is why maybe medication is even making your anxiety worse because of how medication is impacting the gut and exacerbating your gut issues.

00:34:36 It's because it has this antibiotic effect on the gut and that creates more nutrient deficiencies. The exact nutrients that we need to build neurotransmitters and balance hormones are the nutrients that medication depletes, creating side effects and not really doing much to

eliminate anxiety. This is why you can't therapy your way out of a Gut Health Optimization. Okay? You can't therapy your way into Gut Health Optimization is what I meant to say.

00:35:03 You cannot talk your way out of a nutrient deficiency. You cannot build more neurotransmitters this way and you cannot balance your hormones this way. So to release anxiety, we really want to look at, okay, it really boils down to we need to make more neurotransmitters. We need to balance more hormones. So we need to balance hormones.

00:35:24 So the journaling, the going out for walks, the magnesium supplements, these are amazing tools. But to really break up with that anxiety for real and for good work on addressing the actual root causes of anxiety. So we talked about trauma, we talked about diet, and we talked about some of the nutrient deficiencies. Now let's talk about gut health. You are what you absorb, not what you eat.

00:35:50 That sentence right there is life changing information. When I'm talking about gut health, what I mean is what is happening with the entire digestive process? And are there any stealth pathogens that need to be eliminated from the body? Your digestive organs are your mouth, your teeth, your tongue, your salivary glands, your esophagus, your stomach, your liver, your gallbladder, your pancreas, your small intestine, your large intestine, your anus. Digestion starts in the mouth with your salivary enzymes.

00:36:23 So chew your damn food. Very important. Your stomach sterilizes your food, digests your protein. It's how you absorb B Twelve through something called intrinsic factor. And without enough stomach acid, the intrinsic factor will not be activated.

00:36:42 And then you're going to be deficient in B twelve. Even if you're eating enough of it. And this will go on to impact neurotransmitters and hormones. And the symptoms of B twelve deficiency are anxiety, fatigue, weakness, depression. Your hormones and your neurotransmitters are made up of amino acids, which are proteins broken down into their simplest form.

00:37:02 Right? So not having enough of these amino acids, you won't make enough serotonin, you won't make enough GABA, which is quite linda, really. I know I've said this a few times, I've got to really drive this point home. Your anti-anxiety neurotransmitter is GABA. Your happy neurotransmitter is serotonin.

00:37:21 Also, if your food isn't being sterilized, this is how bacteria and parasitic overgrowth is happening, which is the final part of gut health. Gut health means are all of your digestive organs functioning properly? Do you have the right balance of bacteria in the large intestine? And do you have any stealth pathogens that need to be eliminated? So we're in the stomach.

00:37:47 We're taking this little voyage through the digestive tract. So we're in the stomach. Once food leaves your stomach, it goes to the small intestine for absorption. And food can stay in the stomach for 45 minutes to 4 hours until it becomes what's called chyme, which is this like semi

liquid food mash. And then it is emptied into the small intestine where bile from the liver comes in to do its job.

00:38:14 Your stomach acid is also crucial for stimulating the release of bile from the liver. This is so, so important, you guys. Bile is the main method for removing waste from our bodies, like excess hormones, drugs, the chemicals and metals that we're exposed to daily pesticides, our beauty products, our household products, like, there's so many things. And bile is also really important for the absorption of fats and vitamin D. And remember when I was talking in the diet bucket about how important fats are for eliminating chronic anxiety?

00:38:54 So just because you're eating fat doesn't mean you're absorbing the fat. Because we need to look at digestive function and the liver and bile to know if you're absorbing the fat. So this is where your vitamins and minerals are being absorbed, like calcium and iron. I talked about fats and vitamin D. Bile also makes stools soft.

00:39:15 So if you struggle with constipation, you're going to want to look at the liver and support the liver. And finally, bile helps to keep the small intestine free from bacteria that doesn't belong there. One of these is SIBO. And if someone has SIBO, this is also going to create the symptom of anxiety. Calcium is so important for our mental health.

00:39:37 It's the most abundant mineral in the body. But deficiencies are actually one of the most common because we need sufficient levels of vitamin D, which so many people are deficient in, in order to absorb the calcium. And vitamin D is fat soluble, so we need to be eating enough fat. We also need to make sure our liver is in tip top shape so if we don't have enough essential fatty acids, we don't absorb enough vitamin D, then we can't absorb enough calcium. And calcium deficiency has been linked to anxiety, fatigue, depression, irritability.

00:40:11 If I'm not driving this point home enough that everything in your body is connected and therefore everything needs to be addressed holistically in the right order at the same time. Keep listening because I'm going to highlight this over and over and over and over because it's really important. Iron is another really important mineral for anxiety. It's used in the pathways to create neurotransmitters in the brain. Changes in iron levels can change the balance between our calming brain chemicals and our brain chemicals that get us really excited.

00:40:46 Low iron can result in low serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, and this is going to contribute to anxiety, panic, ADHD, insomnia, irritability, poor concentration, restlessness, depression. Definitely if you're vegan or vegetarian, you're going to want to look into an iron supplement. So if you are deficient in vitamins and minerals, the question is why? You can throw all these supplements at your body, but if digestive function is compromised, you're going to remain deficient. And then also you just might be supplementing forever and ever and ever and ever until the end of time, which isn't necessary.

00:41:24 Not only are you not what you eat, but you're not even what you supplement with, you are what you absorb from the food and the supplements that you're taking. Oh, also, do you

know what else is made up of protein, if I haven't made it very clear how important protein is besides neurotransmitters and hormones, and also your immune system, which I didn't even mention enzymes. So enzymes are primarily made up of proteins, and then they also have this non protein component. It's called a coenzyme. We have over 75,000 known enzymes in our body that are needed for every chemical reaction.

00:42:07 So making energy, thinking, controlling blood sugar levels. Our body cannot utilize a vitamin or a mineral without enzymes. Our body cannot remove waste from the body without enzymes. Our immune system and our nervous system don't work without enzymes. Enzymes are used to build and break down hormones, and we make enzymes from the proteins we eat.

00:42:30 So I really cannot stress this enough, eat more freaking proteins. So the pancreas, which remembers this is part of gut health, it's going to produce a lot of these enzymes that are required to complete the digestion of carbs, protein and fat. Every day, about six cups of pancreatic juice filled with enzymes enter the small intestine. This is where we're breaking down fats into fatty acids. We're breaking down carbs into simple sugars.

00:42:59 We're breaking down protein into amino acids. We're keeping the small intestine free from bacteria, yeast and parasites. And it's helping to prevent tissue damage to the small intestine, which leads me into the next section. So when bile from the liver and enzymes from the pancreas have finished digestion, then the small intestine comes in. This is the primary site of nutrient absorption.

00:43:27 This is where the food gets absorbed, all those nutrients get absorbed. The small intestine also produces tons of digestive enzymes, and it's supposed to block the absorption of foreign substances from entering the bloodstream. And this is what triggers the immune system. But unfortunately, most people have intestinal permeability, or more commonly known by its nickname, leaky gut, which is when the normal tight junctions of the small intestine separate and they become inflamed. And this produces a whole host of symptoms.

00:44:04 So like headaches, insomnia, indigestion, bloating, constipation, fatigue, cravings, brain fog, anything on the skin rashes, itchiness, psoriasis, eczema, acne, water retention, anxiety, irritability, depression, mood swings, aggressive behavior, adrenal, fatigue, nasal congestion, frequent colds, muscle aches, joint pain. Now, why do I say, unfortunately, most people have this intestinal permeability? Because the way most people are eating and living their life sets them up for this because nobody told them otherwise. We simply are not taught how to take care of our body properly, which is really frustrating and unfortunate. And in my opinion, this should be taught in schools.

00:44:51 Maybe one day it will be. I had a client tell me once that after doing the program, she felt amazing, but she also felt sad that nobody had taught her this. She now thinks of herself as a plant. And I don't know about you, but I really struggle to take care of my house plants. I'm getting better.

00:45:08 I have a few that I've had for a year now, which is huge for me. This is like the longest I've ever gone. Unfortunately, I have killed many along the way. Everything in nature needs the right care to be able to thrive. If you don't water a plant, it dies.

00:45:23 And it's not just water, but it's like the right amount of water and some parts of the house, the plant will flourish, and other parts they're going to wither and die. I've had to change where my plants are in my house based on the season, sometimes in winter. This one plant was doing so well in summer in this one spot, and then in winter it was not doing well, so I had to move it. It's just been a very interesting process. But listen, humans aren't that much different.

00:45:51 You are also something that needs to be taken care of. And if you are a woman, that's going to change a bit throughout the month as the seasons change within our bodies. So we have the menstrual phase, which is winter. Of course, not if you're in menopause. But we have the menstrual phase, which is winter.

00:46:10 We have the Follicular phase, which is spring. Ovulatory phase is summer, and Luteal phase is fall. So the same client who felt sad that she spent over 25 years of her life not really thinking of herself as something that needed to be taken care of, she never really considered what she was eating. She just kind of thought her body was automatic. She always just thought like it didn't matter because we're basically taught this because we're not taught about how our bodies work and we're not taught about what we need to thrive.

00:46:42 And it's shocking. And then we get sick because we didn't know any better. And an anxiety disorder is an invisible illness. And if you have an anxiety disorder, you've asked yourself so many times, why is this happening to me? I used to ask myself that like a million times.

00:46:58 I probably said that. And then I would like, Google common reasons for anxiety and the things that come up are social pressure, work study or deadline related stress, financial difficulties, relationship problems, health concerns, social and housing related issues, trauma due to racism or gender prejudice, abuse and neglect. And while these are absolutely valid and a lot of this would fall under not all, but a lot of this would fall under the trauma bucket or the mental or emotional stress bucket. But what about the diet, the gut health, the nutrient deficiencies and the physical stress buckets? Because as you're learning today, and maybe you already knew this, because maybe you've been hanging out with me on Instagram for a while, but those are also huge causative factors for anxiety.

00:47:48 So yes, if you have anxiety, your neurotransmitters are imbalanced. This is why. This is the theory behind medication. It keeps neurotransmitters in the brain longer. But many of you listening want to tackle this naturally.

00:48:01 You don't want to use medication, and you absolutely can. And in order to do that, you have to ask yourself, how did the neurotransmitters come to be out of balance? And this has

everything to do with your gut. So what causes a leaky gut? What are so many people doing wrong?

00:48:20 They're not eating enough fiber. They're eating a lot of those inflammatory foods we talked about. They have high exposure to environmental toxins or just toxins in our beauty products and home. Which is one of the many reasons why women are more susceptible to mental health struggles. Because on average, women use twelve products a day containing 168 different chemicals.

00:48:42 Many of these chemicals are hormone altering. Men also use products, but fewer products, and so they're exposed to fewer chemicals. About 85 chemicals. This is all information from the Environmental Working Group, by the way, and they have great resources on all this stuff. A lot of women are also on birth control, which creates a leaky gut, or the overuse of over the counter painkillers, advil, Tylenol, stuff like that.

00:49:08 All those different things that we use for our PMS symptoms, our Cramps, every single month, this is 100% avoidable. PMS is a symptom of body based imbalances. It is not just something you have to live with every single month. Antibiotics are going to create this leaky gut over consumption of alcohol. So basically every university student has a leaky gut.

00:49:30 I mean, Frig, the amount of alcohol that I've consumed over the years when I was younger, like, no shit, I had a leaky gut and inflammation, chronic stress. We are also not really taught proper stress management. Again, this should be taught in school how to change our perception of stress, especially since our society is basically designed to keep us in fight or flight. So what do we have to do to counter this? Dehydration is huge.

00:50:01 So not drinking half your body weight, at least in ounces of water a day, and over exercising. Especially as women, we are taught to undereat and over exercise in our attempt to look a certain way. And this is so bad for our gut health, our hormonal health, and our mental health. You can exercise less or at least just get more strategic with your exercise and your movement based on where you are in your cycle and eat more and actually look amazing and actually lose weight this way. But there's a very specific way to do this, which I teach both in Breaking Up with Anxiety and in my in sync workshop.

00:50:42 So I will link both of those in the show notes. And here's the thing. The gut is not going to magically repair itself on its own without some help when it has been chronically damaged like this year after year after year by everything that I just mentioned. For example, it takes a minimum of six months to repair the gut lining. If you are someone who eats a lot of gluten, that doesn't mean that it's going to take you six months to feel better.

00:51:10 It's just that the minimum amount of time it's going to take to begin to really repair the gut lining is going to be six months. Oh boy. We are getting up there to the hour. So I'm just going to finish up with gut health for today and then the rest will be a part two as we continue our voyage through the digestive tract and how gut health influences anxiety. This brings us to

our final stop, the large intestine, your colon, to a little something called Dysbiosis, which is the imbalance between the beneficial neurotransmitter building gut bugs and your pathogenic.

00:51:48 I said it right this time, I think. Gut bugs. So you're like bad gut bugs. If your beneficial gut bugs are too busy fighting for space in your colon, they do not have the time or energy to build you neurotransmitters. Your nervous system is actually divided into three parts.

00:52:08 The one we know so well if we have anxiety, the sympathetic so the fight or flight. The one that we're trying to spend more time in, that we're trying to get into the parasympathetic, which is the rest, digest, detox and heal. And then the one that no one seems to know about is called the enteric nervous system, which is your gut nervous system. And the enteric nervous system is what is referred to in the holistic health space as the second brain. It is found in the tissues lining your digestive tract and it can actually operate independently of the brain and it makes more neurotransmitters than your brain, which is super cool and just shows how important the gut really is.

00:52:51 Something else that happens commonly in the colon for women is a Candida overgrowth. So Candida is one of those opportunistic. That's what I should have been calling it, instead of pathogenic, which is a word that I apparently cannot say, I should have been calling them opportunistic bacteria. So Candida is one of those, it is a yeast that is meant to be in your gut, but in small amounts, in certain amounts. So the issue is not that it's there, the issue is when it overgrows.

00:53:22 And a lot of the factors that I mentioned when I was talking about how people get this leaky gut, a lot of those are also the factors that disrupt the balance of the bacteria in the colon which allow Candida to overgrow. The birth control pill is a big one, which is why I said especially for women, as a lot of women are on this long term, I was on it for ten years and yes, I had Candida and I had to bring the levels down and that took about four months. So low stomach acid is also going to contribute to a Candida overgrowth. Parasites, SIBO, h, pylori, inflammatory foods not eating enough fiber, toxins not being cleared from the body in a timely manner, which has to do with liver function. You see how everything is connected.

00:54:10 And stress from lifestyle habits is a big one, which segues into the next bucket, which is lifestyle. And we will pick up there next time. When we do part two of this episode, we'll talk about stress as well in part two, and we'll be talking about physical, mental and emotional stress. What the differences and the strategies are different depending on the types of stress. But for now, I really hope that this episode, part one of the root causes of chronic anxiety, has inspired you to get serious about your diet and your gut health and to look at nutrient deficiencies.

00:54:54 Because really, I say this from experience, I say this from personal experience, and I say this from having worked with hundreds of women now over four years. You have no idea how good you can feel, but it will require that you do the work. So if you are ready to deep dive

into this work if you are ready to release your chronic anxiety by learning about targeting and improving your digestion, your gut health, your hormonal health, your nutrition if you're ready to learn and implement more consistently the strategies needed to regulate your nervous system. If you want support, accountability and community, click the link in the show notes and join us in the Breaking Up with Anxiety Group Coaching Program. I really hope to see you inside.

00:55:39 If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me at hello@tajondro.com or to send me a message on Instagram at [tay genre](https://www.instagram.com/taygenre). And you know what? Maybe a four month program isn't for you. That's how long breaking up with anxiety is. Maybe that's not what you're looking for.

00:55:57 And if not, I have single workshops that address everything I talk about today in detail. I tell you step by step by step by step what to do with gut health and diet and hormones and all of that good stuff. And those can be found in the show notes as well. I will link it or on my website at www.tajondro.com workshop bundles. See you in part two.

00:56:33 And that is a wrap. Thank you so much for listening to today's episode. I have one quick favor to ask you before you go. If you love today's episode, I would so appreciate it if you left a review on whatever podcast platform you are listening to right now. My goal with this podcast is to reach as many people as possible, to spread awareness that anxiety is not this incurable disease.

00:57:00 It's not something we just have to live with. It's definitely not just part of your personality, and there are body based imbalances that need to be addressed in order to truly be free from chronic anxiety. With awareness comes action, and the more people this podcast can reach, the less people will struggle with anxiety, and positive reviews are the number one way to help new people discover the show. You are the best. Thank you so much for being here.

00:57:31 I appreciate you so, so much.

00:57:46 One last thing. My legal medical disclaimer, the Breaking Up with Anxiety podcast with me, Taylor Gendron, is for general information and educational purposes only, and the advice and recommendations I give or my guests give throughout the episodes do not replace medical advice. The consumption of this podcast does not qualify as a practitioner-client relationship with me, and the use and implementation of the information discussed are at the sole discretion of the listeners. Yes, I am a nutritionist, but I am not your nutritionist, so please discuss any changes with your primary healthcare provider. Okay, that's it until the next episode.

00:58:30 Bye for now.