

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Hello, and welcome to Unstress. I'm Dr Ron Ehrlich. Now, wheat. It has come in for a lot of attention in recent years. And let's face it, it's everywhere. Artisan bread, muffins, cakes, certainly in many processed foods. My guest today is Cyndi O'Meara. Cyndi is a nutritionist, a filmmaker, a best-selling author, a TEDx speaker, and founder of Changing Habits, more about that later. Essentially, her greatest love is to teach people so that they can make better choices in their lives in order to enjoy greater health throughout their life. And she has also done a documentary called What's with Wheat? There's a lot more we discuss, but some of the information about wheat was new to me. I hope you enjoy this conversation I had with Cyndi O'Meara.

Welcome to the show, Cyndi.

Cyndi O'Meara: Thank you.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Cyndi, there are so many things you are involved in and you're doing, and I wondered if you could just give us a little bit of background about your journey here into healthcare?

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, I was brought up in a family that was very much into health, but a very different type of health. My dad had been a pharmacist in his early career, but by the time I was born, he was a chiropractor.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow.

Cyndi O'Meara: So, yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Quite a transition.

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, definitely because they're two very different paradigms of thinking. And one is very mechanistic and the other one is very vitalistic. My dad swang from giving drugs for a disease to adjusting people for disease. And he was very staunch and very strong and very opinionated about medications, vaccines, things like that. This was back in the '60s. I was brought up without a drug in sight. If I had an infection, he said, "Your body can deal with it." If I had a fever, he said, "Your body can deal with it." In anything, he made sure that our body was given the right resources. So, we were always outside. He was a hiker and a camper. We lived with stunning food. My mom was an amazing cook. We had chiropractic care for our whole life. And so I'm 59 this year and I've never had an antibiotic. I've never had a Panadol.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow.

Cyndi O'Meara: I've never had an anti-inflammatory. The only medication that I've had is dental, which is interesting. And that is just injections whenever they think it's going to hurt me. So, that's it. That's all I've ever had. And I-

Dr Ron Ehrlich: So, he was a chiropractor by the time you were born?

Cyndi O'Meara: ... Yes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Okay.

Cyndi O'Meara: He became a chiropractor in '59 and I was born in 1960.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow. Yeah. He learned firsthand that pharmaceuticals may not be all they're cracked up to be.

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, his first insight was, he ... Two things happened that completely changed him. One, he had this older lady that was very healthy come in for a prescription at the age of 75, her very first. And that was what it was in those days. Kids weren't on drugs. My age group wasn't on drugs. It was the older ones that were going on drugs. And she came in, and I can't remember what the drug was for, but she went on it. And six weeks later, she was back with another prescription for another drug. By the end of the year, she was on six drugs. And he realized that it was, all they were doing was counteracting the side effect of one drug and then the second drug and then the third drug.

That was his first step. The second thing is he used to have this guy that would come in, he was in Lower Hutt, New Zealand, and this guy would come in and always buy Pepto-Bismol. So, had bad indigestion. And one day, he ran into him in the street and said, "Do you know what? I haven't seen you for a while. Why aren't you coming in for your Pepto-Bismol?" And he said, "Oh, the quack up the road fixed me. I don't have indigestion anymore." And my dad goes, "Who's the quack up the road?" And he goes, "Oh, the chiropractor," or something like that. My dad went and visited him, quit pharmacy immediately, started painting with a friend of his. The two of them decided to do chiropractic together. This is back in '56. And so they started painting. In 10 months, they made enough money to get to America and do the course at Palmer College of Chiropractic.

He then learned a very different form of healthcare. So, from mechanism to vitalism. And that was how I was brought up was very vitalistically. When I went to university, and of course having an American mom, I went to the University of Colorado in Boulder. And I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I thought, "I'll do premed because that will give me a science background to do any healths that I want to do." So, I did a year of premed at the University of Colorado. Had the most amazing lecturer in anthropology, and decided that it was food that was the most important thing of all in health. And so I decided I wanted to be a dietician. So, I came back to Australia, went to Deakin University, finished my bachelor of science major in nutrition. At the end of it, I was about to go and do dietetics. And I went, "This is BS." People [inaudible 00:05:32].

Dr Ron Ehrlich: It's a means to an end, Cyndi. It's a means to an end. It's the beginning of the journey.

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, was it ever? Because I just [inaudible 00:05:38]-

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Oh, man.

Cyndi O'Meara: ... margarine, low fat, fried foods, synthetic vitamins. It was just the worst. And when I looked at what they were feeding in hospitals ... This was 1983, '82, '83. No, '83, '84 that I finished my degree. And I went, "I'm not going to be a dietician. This is just ridiculous." But not thinking I could teach my nutrition until I read Bernard Jensen, went to a week-long conference with him, and went, "I can just call myself a nutritionist and start helping people with nutrition." And that's where my journey began, and that was 1985. I had graduated and started consulting and teaching people about real food.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah. Interesting that anthropology played such an important role in that journey because the study of what our cultures are a pretty insightful foundation on which to proceed, isn't it?

Cyndi O'Meara: I think it's one of the most insightful. I think vitalism, the philosophy of vitalism and the knowledge of our history can tell us how we survived. And I'll give you an example of this. I listened to a podcast recently and it was a gentleman talking about the ketogenic diet and how sugar feeds the lower brain and ketones feed the higher brain. And the lower brain is scarcity, staying in one place, no adventure, that type of brain. And the higher brain is an adventure and feeling abundant and all of those things. I looked at it and I tried to find the science of what he was saying. I'm going to contact him and see if there is any science.

But I looked at impractical terms of our anthropological philosophy. And what I noticed is that when there are lots of carbohydrates around and they are plants, they stay in one place. You can sit down and eat as many blueberries and oranges or whatever it is that's available to you. And what that does is

it puts fat on, enabling you to survive winter because normally it would be in the summer. And then I thought, when that plant was no longer giving and there was no food available, the only food that was available to you were animals and they wander, and you had to be adventurous and you had to get up off your butts and go and find those animals and catch them.

So, I kind of looked at it that way, and in anthropological circles, it makes a lot of sense. And there are times for us to see it and there are times for us to move. There are times for us to be adventurous, and there are times for us not to be adventurous. So, I feel like the ebb and flow of carbohydrates and eating our fat reserves, because that's what ketosis is all about is eating your fat reserves, not so much eating copious amounts of fat, but eating your fat reserves. And I kind of look at it and I go, "Makes sense." Now, I've got to go look for science because it's all got to be evidence-based and yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah. And this we know, the evidence is not everything that it's cracked up to be even when it's published in a journal.

Cyndi O'Meara: No, you just have to look back in history. And once again, we can just look back in history and we can look at thalidomide. We can look at that, was it vox? We can look at so many evidence-based things like low fat was evidence-based. And look, we've now realized that that was probably one of the biggest nutritional mistakes we made because that put us into carbohydrate scarcity, staying in one place, not thinking, not looking outside the square. And so then we become people that just stick with the status quo and don't question.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah. You've used the term vitalism a couple of times. Just explain to our listener what that means.

Cyndi O'Meara: Wherever on the planet, you go, there are always opposing everything. Black, white, love, hate. And the opposing philosophies are vitalism and mechanism. Vitalism is where we look at the body as a whole. We don't look at the heart, the brain, the blood vessels, the joints. We look at it as a whole. We look at it in the environment. We look at it in its connections to the environment. Vitalism is looking holistically. A mechanism is looking at a very, very small part, like the atom, and understanding how the atom works, looking at heart and understanding how that works. And in my way of thinking, both are very important. Both are important in understanding the human body and healing the human body.

So, if I'm having a heart attack, I don't want anybody looking at my vitalistic approach to life. I don't want them looking, "Oh, now, what's her connections in life? What nutrition is she eating?" I want them to look at that heart and get that heart working again. In my way of thinking, mechanism is very much for emergency situations. And that's where medicine is today. Medicine is the absolute best in mechanism and emergencies. But when it comes to the health of the human, the health of the planet, the health of animals, we have to take a vitalistic approach when we're looking at prevention and trying to get out of a situation that's not an emergency, such as autoimmune diseases, cancer, diabetes, the beginnings of a heart disease, not a heart attack. It's like, if you get your leg cut off, you're doing mechanism. If you've got a sore leg and you don't know what the problem is, let's look at vitalism. I hope that gives you-

Dr Ron Ehrlich: No, no. That's good.

Cyndi O'Meara: ... Yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: I mean, I think one of the problems, one of the things we all look like is a certainty. We love to know the answer, the one cause, is it right or wrong? Is it good or bad? And mechanism lends itself to that kind of thinking. Vitalism takes us out of our comfort zone and makes us realize, well, holistically, that we have to think about other things. It's something that we struggle with, with public health messages too, don't we? Some of those have got us into a bit of trouble.

Cyndi O'Meara: Yeah. Mechanism is the quick fix, vitalism is you've got to look at your whole life. Mechanism is, take this pill, it'll make you better. Vitalism is, let's approach this on a multi-prong basis. Let's

look at everything from your in dentistry. Let's look at what's happening in your mouth because we know that the mouth tells us so much. Let's look at what's ... You might have a bad gut, but let's check what's happening in your mouth. You might have chronic fatigue, but what's happening in that mouth of yours? To me, it's about, you have to take a multi-prong approach. I just mentioned that because that's your specialty. But if it's ... Mine is nutrition, mine is food, so I'm going to look at that.

As a collective group of people that have a specialty of each of these fields, we work together for the good of that patient or that client or that ecosystem or that home or that family. So, I don't believe that nutrition is the be-all and end-all. I think it's a really good place to start, but I can tell a wonderful story about my daughter and how no matter how much good nutrition we gave her, nothing was helping her. So, we ended up in the mouth, believe it or not.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Oh, right. Okay. Well, go on, tell us the story. I'd love to hear it.

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, my daughter was brought up the same way as me, not a drug in sight. And she's a very independent young lady. At the age of 23, she's living in Perth doing chiropractic, and she's having problems with her wisdom teeth. She finds an oral surgeon. They put her under and they take out four teeth, the four wisdom teeth. She's said that she's never had an antibiotic. They said, "We'll give you a prescription for antibiotics." Instead, they injected her with an antibiotic. Number one, she was really in a lot of pain for a good week. She blew up like you wouldn't believe.

In three weeks, I noticed anxiety. I'd never seen it before on my daughter. I was furious that this doctor did this. But anyway, it's beside the point now. I had to get my daughter well. So, I saw anxiety in three weeks. In six weeks, bloating of her stomach. She could eat any food. She could eat wheat, she could eat anything, and she was beginning to bloat. She put on six kilos of weight. She was getting chronic fatigue. She was [inaudible 00:14:53]. She was getting depressed. This all happened over 12 months. And in that time, I probably only saw her a couple of times. And one day, she came home and she ate some food and fell asleep immediately. She didn't want to go and play with her friends and party or do anything. And I said to her, "Honey, something drastic is going wrong here."

And so I put her on a protocol to heal her gut, number one. Number two, I had her mouth looked at. She had four cavitations. I don't know, I know that there are dentists and don't agree with this. But she had four cavitations that were infested with microbes. So, we had the cavitations fixed. Within 24 hours ... We did protocol first to get her ready for this. I took her to Melbourne to a wonderful doctor. I had to find somebody that would do this because a lot of them just wouldn't do it.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah. That's [inaudible 00:15:49] country for ... It's a very contentious issue in dentistry, it's true.

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, I watched ... She said to me, the dentist said to me, she said, "I cannot promise you anything, Cyndi." I said, "I don't care. Just fix these cavitations." And so she fixed them. Within 24 hours, my daughter turns to me and she goes, "I'm feeling better." And I went, "Let's just see." So, over a six month period of continuing the protocol, her cavitations fixed, fixing her bowel, she was able to eat more than five foods. And now she's a fully functioning young lady. I would say she's probably 90% well. She's still got about 10% to go yet.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: I mean, one of the challenges for people is who is the captain navigating this for you? And if you end up with a nutritionist, your approach will be nutrition. And if you end up with a chiropractor, it may be mechanical, et cetera, et cetera. But it's having someone to be captain of this journey. And I think in a way, you have to do it yourself. You're probably best to be your captain. What do you think?

Cyndi O'Meara: You do have to be your captain-

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Not easy, though.

Cyndi O'Meara: ... No, but you have to be educated. And that's tough because there is so much conflicting information out there. Let's take my daughter. If I'd taken to her to a doctor, she would've been on anti-depressants. She probably would've been diagnosed with autoimmune diseases and been on methotrexate, and so on. But because I was educated and I meet people like you, I meet people like Cliff Hawkins from Biohawk. And I meet people like this. I have them come and talk at my summits. They teach my students. They teach me. Because I've got that, even though they're not my specialty, I can see immediately where we need to go. So, I'll just go, "Go see Ron. Go see Cliffy. Go see [Kirsty 00:17:50]. Go ..." I've got a team around me that can help me with any clients that I have or any ... I get called daily. I don't consult anymore. But I get called daily.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: You refer.

Cyndi O'Meara: [crosstalk 00:18:08].

Dr Ron Ehrlich: You refer to who you think that person needs.

Cyndi O'Meara: Yes. I do refer. And nutrition, we, on my platform, I have protocols for no wheat, for if they're eating a McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken diet, I've got a protocol for that. It's all online. I've got a protocol for people who are wanting to lose weight but lose it in a way where they learn what are the right foods for them as they are doing this as opposed to just going on a calorie-counting diet. We don't do that. Ours is always about education. And I think that, and that's why I started the Functional Nutrition Academy is that everybody wanted more information from me. And I thought, "Well, why don't I formalize it and create a 12-month education course for people to help themselves and their family?" And many people do it.

I had a medical doctor do it, and she said, "I'm not doing it for my clients because I'm no longer teaching. I'm at home." And that's what a doctor is, is to teach. But I shouldn't have said that. But my patients, she said, "I want to do this for my family." So, we have chiropractors, dentists, physiotherapists, osteopaths, and the run of the mill mom that needs to know more because her child has autism or her child has allergies or food sensitivities. To become an advocate, you have to educate yourself, but you have to find somebody that you trust and that will give you that right information.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah. Now, listen, we talked a little bit about anthropology and the ancestral diet. And you've been interested in nutrition for a long time, I have too. One of the things that's fascinated me in recent years, and I can't believe I hadn't thought of it earlier, is this importance of fasting or time restricted eating. Because one of the things that almost certainly occurred to our ancestors were they didn't get three meals a day plus two snacks. What do you think of that? What do you think of time restricted eating and fasting? What's your view on that now?

Cyndi O'Meara: Oh, I love it. I've been teaching it for probably ... Well, I've probably been doing it myself my whole life because my mother always fasted on Mondays. So, I learned from my mother. And then when I did it myself, I did a three week, I wouldn't call it a fast because I didn't do water, just water, I did what the winter of a hunter-gatherer would do. What was happening is that I had hit my fifties, I was gaining weight, getting aches and pains. All sorts of issues were happening, and I'm going, "This should not be happening to me. I make everything from scratch. I eat well. Why am I starting to gain weight in my fifties? This isn't going to happen to me." And everyone's going, "Oh, it's menopause, Cyndi. You're never ... This is just what happens." And I went, "No. This is not what's going to happen to me."

So, I went on an imitation fast, in a way. I cut everything down to the winter of a hunted gatherer. Small amounts of lean meats. You wouldn't have had a lot of food because there wouldn't have been fat animals around. Greens are something that comes up in the winter. This is the best time to grow your greens. So, I ate lots of greens and a few winter fruits. Cut myself down to around 500 calories for three weeks, lost nine kilos of weight. Unbelievable clarity of mind. And of course, what would've happened on that clarity of mind is I would've gone into ketosis. And nobody was talking about that back then.

And I just remember on day 10 going, "I'm one with the universe. I'm one with the planet." It was the most extreme mind experience of my life. And I remember ringing my girlfriend and going, "Oh, my gosh. I'm just, I can see clearly. My brain feels like it's clicked in." And she said, "Cyndi, are you doing drugs?" And I said to her, "You know I don't do that." But this is what it was like. It was this wonderful feeling. And then all my aches and pains disappeared. Everything left. And I started to realize the importance of doing this yearly. But the most interesting thing of all happened is that when I started to introduce foods back in the diet because I lived in a western world, I like to go out, I love to make food, so I couldn't live on just meat and greens and a couple of fruit. I wanted to do stuff.

So, I'm introducing foods back into the diet, and I introduced wheat. Gained 900 grams overnight, which is just water weight. So, I knew I was inflamed. My backache returned, my hip ache returned, my brain went dead. And I went, "What just happened and why?" Because when I was introducing more meat or more vegetables like sweet potato, when I was doing that, I was fine. The minute I introduced that grain back into my body, all hell broke loose. So, for me, this time restricted and this fasting is part of our anthropological times. And we would've fasted in the winter because foods, plants were not available. We would've been chasing those animals. They would've been skinny. There would've been a tribe of us. We would've had to go, "Okay, this animal is not going to feed us. We all have to feed ourselves." We would've used the fat that we had stored, soil in the summer when the sweet fruits were available, and we sat on our butts because all the food was available to us. So, we would've used our fats, gone into a state of ketosis, clicked in the higher brain and kept moving.

So, yes. I am very much into this. And I often try and stay till about 11 o'clock before I start to consume foods. I don't always do that. But the amazing thing is, is that my body is so used to going from fat burning to sugar burning, and I have no problem with sugar burning and I have no problem with fat burning. They're both essential for us because the sugar burning gives us fat that we store, which allows our master hormone, leptin, to tell the body, "Hey, we got a storage of fat. We can have babies." Because that's what it was all about. It was all about having babies, surviving when food wasn't available. And if we look at the body and the way it works, it's phenomenal. And if we run with that, and we live in a western modern world but using anthropological principles, we can have all the energy in the world. We can sleep like babies. These things just become something that just works in your life as opposed to living in a modern western world and trying to defy nature. That's where we go wrong.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Look, now I know it's become a big issue in the last five to 10 years. And some people may think it's just a trendy thing, but there's quite a bit of history running side by side with this issue, and it's the history of wheat. I've heard you speak about this and I know you've done a documentary, so tell me, what's with wheat?

Cyndi O'Meara: That was the aha moment I had was when I realized that I couldn't eat wheat. But I know the history of wheat. I know that the first grain of wheat was probably 23,000 years ago. I know that we were probably eating wheat at that stage. How we ate it, I'm not sure, maybe in a slurry or maybe we were fermenting it back then. Maybe we had that information. So, we do know that the monoploid, which is called einkorn was the very first wheat grain. Then by 17,000 years, we had a diploid. When we know that something is new is that it ... Because plants don't divide as we do, and we always have the same chromosomes, what they do is that they just keep adding and adding and adding.

So, we know that a monoploid is probably one of the first plants. A diploid would be the second. And then you get multiploid. And triticum aestivum, which is the wheat grain of today, is a grain that was produced by a gentleman by the name of Norman Borlaug back in the '70s. And he produced this grain so it was easier to harvest. And it was part of the Green Revolution to feed a starving planet. Countries like India and Pakistan, there were lots of people that were starving to death because there wasn't enough food. So that's where the Green Revolution started. That also was the beginning ... And the Green Revolution is nothing to do with green, but everything to do with chemicals. That was when chemicals were starting to be used. DDT was used back in the '70s, which was first used in America in the '40s. It was a chemical revolution. It wasn't the Green Revolution, but we call it the Green Revolution.



That was the beginning of our wheat grain changing. But it wasn't the beginning of what we're seeing today with so many people with gluten problems. In my documentary, What's with Wheat? I identify 14 things that have changed since the 1970s from the type of wheat it is. So, it's gone from spelt, it went from einkorn, emmer wheat, kamut khorasan, spelt and now triticum aestivum or modern day wheat. We know that there have been those changes. And it's a hybrid, it's not genetic modification. It's a hybrid. And then we looked at refinement, how much we eat, where it is. It's in supplements, it's in medications, it's in cosmetics. It's become a very commercial and viable thing that people grow. But they always upsell it in some way by making Weet-Bix or bread or crackers, or things like that.

We're eating it breakfast, lunch, morning, tea, afternoon tea, dinner. It's a big part of our diet. But I believe that the straw that broke the camel's back was the agricultural practice of the desiccation of the wheat grain a week to 10 days before harvest. Desiccation means drying out or killing. And what happens at that point is that you kill all the riffraff that's in the plant and you're left with the grain head so harvesting is easier. Yield is not much different, but harvesting is easier. And this was introduced probably into Australia around the year 2000, maybe a little ... And it was just introduced and it just grew in momentum.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: This actual process of desiccation?

Cyndi O'Meara: This actual process. The desiccation process happened around-

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Before they, it's still in the ground, and they allow the plant or they kill the plant? How do they do that?

Cyndi O'Meara: ... Yes. Yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: They kill the plant?

Cyndi O'Meara: They spray it with Roundup.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Oh, god. Well, there's another topic we need to talk about as well, but here we are bringing two of them together.

Cyndi O'Meara: Yeah. They spray it with Roundup. They spray non-genetically modified legumes, grains, canola. All non-genetically modified. Anything that's genetically modified, they'll just spray all the time with Roundup because it's Roundup ready soya, Roundup ready canola, Roundup ready alfalfa. But they started to ... So, Monsanto said, "Hey, let's get rid of all that riff raff so it's easier harvesting and you haven't got all that debris. This is the way you do it.

A week to 10 days before harvest, spray it with Roundup. It'll kill the plant, but the grain's going to be okay. And because Roundup doesn't affect humans' cells because we don't have the enzyme that it destroys or interrupts, then it'll be fine." In the last 10 years, 75% of Roundup that has ever been sprayed on the planet has been sprayed.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow.

Cyndi O'Meara: In the last 10 years, we've also seen, 10 to 15 years, we've also seen an increase in autoimmune disease, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, vitamin D deficiency, folic acid deficiency. And if you have a look at the mechanisms of Roundup, you will just go, "O-M-G. Why does nobody else see this?" And it was a wake-up call to me when I went and interviewed, I went around the world and interviewed Vandana Shiva from India, Stephanie Seneff from MIT in Boston. I interviewed these people and I had my jaw on the floor. Yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yes, well, I mean, this is actually ... I'm just picking my jaw up now, Cyndi. But I've heard this einkorn, emmer, kamut, spelt, ancient grain story. These are the grains of biblical times. And I've heard ... And I've, the modern wheat, I've gone out on to the countryside, and I've noticed that all this wheat is at



my knee level, not at my head level, the way it used to be, which is another factor that makes it easier to harvest. But this desiccation, wow, that's just a real aha moment.

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, as a result ... So, as a result, we now have grains, legumes, canola, and anything that's made with our food has saturated in glyphosate. Now, the Australian Agriculture, Food Standards Australia New Zealand and APVMA will vehemently deny this. But I've looked at their reporting, I've looked at their testing, and it's a farce. It is really ... When you look into this and you have a look at how they are measuring the residue levels of our wheat, of our chickpeas, of our whatever it is that they're measuring, what they do is ... And I'll try and explain as simply as possible. FSANZ, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, APVMA are our registers. They register all the chemicals and veterinary medicines, the APVMA, they register all of the chemicals that are sprayed on our foods or agriculture and all of the medicines for animals.

And the way they register it, and they have, it's a multi, it might even be a billion-dollar budget. It's a government department, and the way they are funded is number one, the company that registers the chemical pays for it to be registered. It pays an annual fee and then it pays on profits. So, if, let's say, glyphosate makes two billion dollars, then APVMA will get a percentage of that chemical or that drug, or whatever it is. Food Standards Australia New Zealand have come up with something called the maximum residual level of a chemical in any food. APVMA comes up with it and Food Standards said, "Yes, we agree with you."

And this is how it works. Let's say for the wheat grain. Wheat grain's MRL, maximum residual level, is five parts per million. Its bran is 20 parts per million. Green leafy vegetables are 0.7 parts per million. They make these MRLs considering number one, how much chemicals they're spraying on it, which is just a ridiculous thing. But anyway, that's what they do. And secondly, they've looked at the evidence of what's safe and what's not.

Now, we know at 0.7 parts per billion in water, it causes liver and kidney issues in humans, glyphosate. And yet, they're allowing five parts per million in our wheat grain. And then what they do is when they measure it, they don't give you the number that it is. What they do is that they say, "Well, it's not less than half the MRL or equal to the MRL, so we'll just give it a zero." And so when you look at the test results, you just see zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero, zero for everything.

And you go, "Well, why is there no chemical residues?" But then when you actually have people like Moms Across America, who I love, who are getting foods and testing them, they're finding Weet-Bix and crackers and biscuits and fake meat and all of those, they're finding residuals of glyphosate that are toxic to number one, our gut bacteria, number two, our kidneys and our livers. Number three, down regulates vitamin D, causes embryological problems. And we know that in 2015, it was called a 2A probable carcinogen, so.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I know that you've heard Charlie Massy, who we've had on this program before. He's written that great book, the Call of the Reed Warbler. And he was talking to me about glyphosate and the fact that it was in 12 of the beers at the October Beer Festival, that it was picked up in this residue. But I was expecting ... This is kind of, it is quite shocking because I was expecting you'd be telling me about the modern-day wheat with its higher gluten levels, but this is a whole ... Is that true? Is the modern dwarfed wheat higher in gluten?

Cyndi O'Meara: Look, it is. And gluten has the capacity to open up our gastrointestinal lining as does glyphosate. We know that they do. Put the two of them together and you have something that is opening up the gastrointestinal tract allowing foreign proteins, bacteria, viruses, heightening the immune system. Then, it opens up the blood brain barrier. We know that it's doing that. We know it's opening up the kidney tubules and we know that it opens up blood vessels. So, you've got leaking tubes everywhere. And what's happening is that then we have heavy metal toxicity and aluminium is passing into the brain, mercury is passing into the brain. We are having neurological issues that are increasing. That's one of the biggest things that we're seeing now is neurological problems.

In my way of thinking is that we've eaten wheat for thousands of years. We have not had the health problems we have today. And that would've been preparation, that would've been it was organic probably. Back then, we didn't have DDT. We didn't have these problems. And the more I've researched, the more I think the loaded gun that is being pulled by the trigger is glyphosate's the trigger. And there's a big loaded gun sitting there, but I think glyphosate is pushing it over the edge. Look, I could eat wheat until I was 50. Now, I turned 50 in 2010. That was about the time when the desiccation process of wheat was increasing as well as chickpeas and things like that.

Now, I may be buying organic wheat, but was it contamination? Was I contaminated by my council who was spraying it on my verges? Was I contaminated by forestry or Landcare or national parks when I go for my hikes? I don't know because it's become something that is seen as something safe, and so it's being used-

Dr Ron Ehrlich:                    Everywhere.

Cyndi O'Meara:                    ... everywhere. And I go up to council members all the time, council workers, and I say, "What are you spraying?" And they'll say, "Roundup." And I go, "Where's your protection and why are you not telling the public? And where's the pink dye that you should have on that so that we know that you've sprayed it?" Because you won't see that Roundup has been sprayed for a couple of days, because what Roundup does to a plant, it's broad-spectrum, it'll kill anything. What it does is it gives the plant a type of AIDS, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome by making it vulnerable to pathological bacteria that live in the soil. That's what it does.

Yes, it destroys the shikimate pathway which stops aromatic amino acids being made which are precocious to our neurotransmitters. Yes, it stops folic acid. Yes, it down-regulates vitamin D. Yes, it stops the production of enterobactin which carries iron. Yes, it does all of those things, but it makes it vulnerable to attack by pathological bacteria. And so what's happening now in the ecology of our soil is that we are destroying ... It's an antibiotic, it's a potent antibiotic, it's a potent chelating agent and it's a patent herbicide by way of the enzyme EPSP. And I'm not going to spell it out because I never can remember it anyway.

Dr Ron Ehrlich:                    Okay. It's okay.

Cyndi O'Meara:                    But it stops the enzyme EPSP, which is an enzyme that is needed for the shikimate pathway to produce amino acids, folic acid, enterobactin, et cetera. And what it's doing to us is that if it's in the food in more amounts than it should be and it's accumulative, it's not something like arsenic that'll kill you straight away. It's an accumulative effect. And so you eat it, you eat it, you eat it, you eat it, and one day, you've destroyed all the good bacteria in your gut, you're having gut issues, you've got an autoimmune disease, you're putting on weight, and all of these things. You can't fight off infection. You're getting the flu. And all of these things start to happen. And when you wake up and realize that you should be eating organic foods, non-GMO foods, eating everything from your local farmers market when you are grilling your farmer, then you will start to get better. And I've seen it.

I just watched Secret Ingredient, the documentary. And I do, I advise anybody to watch it because it's a bunch of families with ... One family in the beginning has 21 diseases between the four of them, kids to adults. And all they do is go back to organic, non-GMO, chemical-free living. And it changes them. For my daughter, we couldn't have done that. We were already doing that. We had to look further. But at least it's a good start. It's a really good start to go. Yeah.

Dr Ron Ehrlich:                    Yeah. And this raises a whole issue that people naively accept, and that is, look, if it's out there on the market, it must've been tested. It must be regulated. But when you hear the APPMA are the regulators and they're getting a cut of whatever is sold, it's a beautiful economic model, isn't it, Cyndi? Just terrific.

Cyndi O'Meara: Oh, it's a wonderful, wonderful. We have 596 chemicals that they have registered with glyphosate in them here in Australia alone. And I have petitioned them to at least stop the desiccation with anything that has got glyphosate in it. I petitioned my council to stop using glyphosate in playgrounds and play areas and sports ground. And when those court cases came out in the US, over 2 billion dollars is being paid out to people that have been exposed to glyphosate and have got non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, when that was all coming out, within 24 hours, APVMA came out and said, "It's perfectly safe if used using the directions." Perfectly safe.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yeah. I know. Look, I mean, this is a whole story, isn't it? We can down the path of the electromagnetic radiation. That's a whole other story as well. It's this kind of naivety that we've had come to. We've seen it actually with lead in petrol. There's a whole story there. We've seen it with tobacco, the Tobacco Playbook. We're seeing it with Roundup. We've seen it with the electromagnetic radiation. I mean, at the end of the day, this is why taking control of your own health's the best alternative.

Listen, I think you've already answered this, but if someone was faced with a health crisis and say a diagnosis of cancer, and they always thought, "Hey, I'm on a great diet. I'm doing all the right things." Someone's just got that information, what would you say to them? What would be your first line of advice to someone like that?

Cyndi O'Meara: Well, let me take you back to my mother. My mom was born in Iowa, USA, and that's where my dad met her. She was brought up on a farm. She was the oldest of 11 children. She was heavily sprayed with DDT because that was what was happening in the corn farms. When she was first born, they sprayed arsenic lead on her property that she lived on. She came to Australia, she ate beautifully. She was under chiropractic care. She exercised. She didn't drink, she didn't smoke. She did everything right, and she got mesothelioma and died within a couple of months at the age of 69.

I hate to say it, but we have to look at our exposome. Exposome goes back to before we're born. We have to realize that we have been exposed heavily to chemicals and that even though you're eating a good diet, it is your responsibility right now as mothers, as parents, as grandparents to start to consider future generations. We have generations now that are very sick. Our kids, 45% in Australia alone have a chronic, not one, under the age of 15 ... You can go to the Australian Bureau of Statistics and see this. If not one, but many chronic diseases before the age of 15.

Look, I've seen miracles happen. It didn't happen with my mother and it didn't happen with my sister because she was also exposed to DDT. And I guess I thank my sister every single day of my life because I know that mom couldn't eat for the first three months of that pregnancy. And she probably dumped all of her DDT, arsenic and lead and any other chemicals that she was exposed to in the chemical revolution on my sister. And she was diagnosed with CREST as a 24-year-old and was gone by the age of 46.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: CREST? CREST mean?

Cyndi O'Meara: CREST is an acronym for five autoimmune diseases, calcinosis, Raynaud's phenomena, esophagitis, scleroderma and telangiectasiae. It was devastating. It devastated her body. It crippled her. It was not nice. And so-

Dr Ron Ehrlich: And while you're giving definitions, explain the exposome too for our listener because they may have just missed that.

Cyndi O'Meara: ... Okay. An exposome is looking at what your life has been like and what you're being exposed to before you are born, so as your mother gets pregnant. But I actually believe the exposome goes back generations. I look at my grandmother. She would not have been exposed to anything. She lived to 95. But I look at every single one of my mother's siblings, there were only three left, and mom was the oldest and she's 81. She would've been 81 a couple of days ago. With only three left, you have to consider what the hell happened. And they were in the middle of the wheat and corn bout of America where the chemicals were just

being sprayed. I have diseases in my family called Budd–Chiari. We've got type 1 diabetes, mental illness, psychosis, schizophrenia. It's rampant.

For the person who says, "I've done everything right. This shouldn't be happening to me." Yes, you've done everything right, and no, this shouldn't be happening to you. But you have to become that person that can help our future generations, that shows and thinks about your exposures. And if you're a young mom that's listening to this or a young woman or man that wants to have a baby, do the clean out first. Do that fasting and that intermittent fasting and the protocols that I do to clean that body out so that you do not dump that on your child. And we're going to have to do this, and we've always done this in anthropological times. This was a sacred time. This was a time for cleaning out. This was a time for taking the right herbs.

But we don't do that now. We just think, "Oh, we'll drink and smoke and we'll eat crap food, and we don't care about it and we'll just get pregnant. We'll have a baby if we can get pregnant." And then we have that baby and we wake up because that baby is sick and has allergies or asthma or food sensitivities or autism or hyperactivity. I'm from the '60s. That wasn't happening in the '60s.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, I remember, actually, a friend of mine who's a teacher who's been in primary school for 30 years said when she started teaching special needs in a class of 30 was one kid with maybe a puffer. And nowadays, out of a class of 30, there could be 10 or more who have some kind of allergy or medication or this or that. As you say, it's a sad and sorry picture.

Cyndi O'Meara: Oh, in actual fact, it is sad and sorry. But we have to wake up. We have to realize that it's a brilliant business model. Let's feed you crap, let's feed you drugs for the rest of your life. Lets, I'm sorry, but vaccinate you within an inch of your immune system's life, and let's keep you on drugs. Whether you believe in vaccines or you don't believe in vaccines, I don't care. But check out the ingredients and decide whether you want to put that into your body. I look at what I want to put into my body in the way of food through the gut. I'm going to check everything out. I'm not just going to check out my food. I'm going to check everything that you are going to put into my system or you think that's going to be mandatory for me to put into my system.

It was so funny, my daughter had a little infection in her finger, and we were going Outback. I thought, "Oh, I better just take her to a doctor and just see, and maybe she'll give me some antibiotic cream if it gets any worse." So, I go to the doctor and she prescribes antibiotics internally. And I said, "It's an infection in her finger." And she says to me, "Well, that infection could go to the hand and up the arm, and your daughter might lose her arm."

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow.

Cyndi O'Meara: Really? But this is what she said to me. So, I go, "Okay." I go to the pharmacist. Now, my daughter's 25 now and she was probably three at the time, maybe four. This is back 20 years ago. I go to the pharmacist and I go, "Can I please have the antibiotic without flavours, food colours and sweeteners?" And he looked dumbly at me and he went, "It just comes as it comes and it all has food colours, flavours and sweeteners." And I went, "What?" [crosstalk 00:51:38].

Dr Ron Ehrlich: It's not listed on there. Not listed on the-

Cyndi O'Meara: ... It's not listed on there. No. And then they said to me, "And your daughter wouldn't take it. It's so bitter." And I'm thinking, "Oh, okay. Fine." In the end, I took them. I thought, "Well, if worst comes to worst and she loses her arm, I'm going to have to give her antibiotics. This is the mechanistic way of looking at it." So, I took them and never used them because she healed very quickly. And that was my doubting vitalism. That was my doubting my child's ability to heal. And we do that as parents. We doubt and we go to medicine instead of realizing the innate intelligence of the human body and that it's survived millions of years without a Panadol to stop a fever or an antibiotic to heal an infection, so.



Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, listen, we're coming to the end and I just wanted to ask you one last thing. I mean, taking a step back from your roles and educator and all the things that you do. Because we're all on this health journey in our life, what do you think the biggest challenge is for people on their health journey through life in our modern world? What do you think that might be?

Cyndi O'Meara: I think the conflicting messages. And I believe if you have a philosophy of how you're going to deal with your life and how you're going to deal with things across the board, I think that's your guiding principle. And if your philosophy is veganism, that to me is a new philosophy. It's not an old philosophy. So, I think we need to look back in our history lessons, don't look at the propaganda. Don't read the newspapers because they're all owned by Murdoch and he's just, he's not going to tell you the truth anyway.

My thing is find a reliable source. If they're loving you, then obviously you are really vetting your interviews, the people that you interview. And if you aren't happy, you will make a statement and say, or you won't put them on the air. Find a reliable source and run with them. And if they can help you to educate you to make the right choices and back it up with real evidence-based or even, look, this is what this person did. You can only try it. Because this is what we are, we're individuals. Not one thing works for everybody. We can have a guiding principle, but for me, I should be able to eat wheat. Why can't I eat wheat? Well, now we know why we can't eat wheat. I had to go on an investigation to do it, but. So, yeah. I think it's the conflicting that's out there. And it's about number one, having a philosophy and a guide to help you through that.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Cyndi, thank you so much for joining me today and sharing your wisdom. We'll have links to all the things that you're doing, your Changing Habits and all of that. So, thank you again for today.

Cyndi O'Meara: Oh, thank you, Ron. It was a wonderful chat.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: As we've said many times on this podcast, by making informed decisions, simple changes, you can reduce your toxic load. And helping you make those informed choices is what this podcast is all about. Now, Cyndi is a wealth of information and resources. We'll have links to her changing habits website and the documentary, What's With Wheat? But don't forget, we have our own Unstress app, some free webinars, some eBooks, and of course, my own book, A Life Less Stressed, which I'm rather proud of to say came out in the US this year and in November, is coming out in Turkey in Turkish. You can get the book on Kindle or even audio, the English version I mean. That was quite an experience actually to record the audiobook myself, but I'm not expecting to be asked to do the Turkish edition. Although I must admit, I can't wait to hear it. Until next time, this is Dr. Ron Ehrlich, be well.

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