

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Hello and welcome to Unstressed. I'm Dr Ron Ehrlich. Now, a few episodes ago we spoke to Professor Fred Provenza about what animals can teach us about rediscovering our nutritional wisdom. Turns out quite a lot as it, as it turns out. We touched on how clever plants were as well. They communicate with each other, with the microbes in the soil, with the predators. Apart from that communication, there are literally thousands of compounds in plants. One group of those compounds are called oxalates. I must admit, it's not one that I was very familiar with, but it is as you will hear most certainly worth considering and being aware of its possible implications.

My guest today is naturopath, educator, TV presenter and all around wonderful woman Maria Hunt. We start off our discussion with probably the best 10 or 15-minute overview of the digestive system and what your poo says about you that you are likely to get anywhere ... Anytime and anywhere. And then we get into the subject of oxalates. I hope you enjoy this conversation I had with Maria Hunt.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Welcome to the show, Maria.

Maria Hunt: Welcome to you, Ron. So good to be here.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Thanks, Maria. Listen, we hear so much about the gut. There's so much we want to talk about today, but I wanted to go just a little bit of basics here. We hear so much about the gut, we hear so much about our microbiome and we want to discuss those. Why is the gut ... Remind us. Why is the gut so important to our overall health?

Maria Hunt: Wow. Huge question there, Ron.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: You've got five minutes. No, go on.

Maria Hunt: How long have we got?

Dr Ron Ehrlich: How long is the length of a string? No, no, go on. Let's just chat away.

Maria Hunt: So much happens in our gut. It's where we absorb our nutrients from our foods and we fight off bad bacteria, viruses, parasites. What amazes me is we have two kilos of bacteria in our digestive system, and out of that, 85% is good bacteria and 15% bad bacteria, and that's fine. We can survive like that. But when we have stress, poor diet, the pill, antibiotics, environmental chemical pollution, viruses, that can knock the ratio out. So it can be 60% bad bacteria, only 40% good bacteria.

Maria Hunt: So why is that important? Is that 95% of our serotonin doesn't come from our brain. It comes from our gut. And 85% of our immune system is manufactured in the lining of our gut wall. So if our gut is out of balance, we're prone to a suppressed immune system, colds, flu, infections, inability to handle stress with the anxiety as resulting. So the gut plays a major important part in supporting the digestive system. It's our immune system and our nervous system. And with that, if we have that ratio out of balance, you've got 60% bad bacteria and only 40% good bacteria, it really sets us up for many imbalances in the future. So our gut is critical to get back into balance.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yes. Well, I like that. Almost the 80/20 rule really, isn't it? And that's how I try and live my life. If I got up to 85/15 I'd be doing really well, but good and bad keeping that imbalance. You mentioned a few things about how things go wrong. Medications, obviously. Antibiotics.

Maria Hunt: Yes. Stress, poor diet, the pill, antibiotics, environmental chemical pollutants.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Yep. Now, look we take this for granted too, but every day we put stuff into our mouth and then we hope that several times, or at least once a day, it comes out the other end. And I've always been ... I know we've spoken years ago and we often meet and talk about this. It's a great conversation. When Maria and I get together, what does the poo say about you? And we get this report card. I wonder if you could just take us on



a brief journey of our food through our system, how long it should take and what does our poo say about us? What does that report card tell us?

Maria Hunt: Okay. So with our report card, Ron. We love this. We love talking about this. We want healthy bacteria from the lips to the anus, all the way through our digestive tract. It's about nine meters long. And out of that, when we actually see food, we produce enzymes and bacteria to help break that food down. And then it's going down through the digestive tract. Our small intestine will actually absorb the nutrients within our foods, and then going down through the large intestine and being passed out and eliminated. And we've got to have good stomach juices, etc, and acid to be able to break down our food within our stomach region.

Maria Hunt: Now, what can happen is number one, the older we get a decline in our hydrochloric acid. So first of all, our stomach is not being able to break down the food. And then we get what we call slow motility within the small intestine. So it's too slow coming through within the small intestine, the transit time, and then it becomes rancid and putrid. And when that happens, then we can be exposed to SIBO, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth. So it's really important to get from the lips to the anus, that nine metres working at an optimum level. Now, as it's being ingested and we produce the enzymes and we've got millions of bacteria with our mouth, as it's going down through the digestive tract, if we've got hiccups, then it's going to slow further down within the large intestine. So then we're getting into a report card of, have we got a healthy bum?

Maria Hunt: So how do we know if we've got a healthy bum? So if we're having the pellets ... You know when you go to the loo after the kids, they are so prone in particular to this pellet effect. Little pellets of fecal matter are just floating on top in the bowl. And this can be a sign of dehydration and a lack of beneficial bacteria. Or it can be sausage-like. Again, the dehydration and lack of good bacteria. Or it's diarrhea and we're actually losing our nutrients. So what we're after is the piece de resistance. We want two happy smiley logs each day, so that's like a banana with a smiley end. And all those viewers will know out there when you're having two of those every day, how well does it feel? Your abdominal region starts to flatten out. We can carry between two and four kilos of impacted fecal matter within our abdominal region. So it's paramount to have a healthy bum, and you'll never go to the toilet again without checking back into the bowl.

Maria Hunt: So the other one is the failure to launch. So if we're actually having this healthy smiley log and we're launching out into the bowl in the morning, that's great. However, if it launches and then just keeps floating, we've got potentially undigested fats. However, if we launch and then it's submarines, dives down low, then we have potentially undigested plant matter. So we want to launch, gently float, and subside. That's the report card for a healthy bum, with minimal smell and a walnut colour to our happy stool.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow. Maria, you just put that all so poetically. This is why I was looking forward to talking to you again. I've heard you say this before, and it's just so succinct. Here we are, we're about 9, 10 minutes into our conversation, you covered the digestive tract. You've covered the report card. Thank you so much for joining ... No, no, we're not finished yet. We're not finished yet. No, no, no. You don't get off that easily. But that's interesting, and I think it's something that people underestimate the importance of because it literally is a report. We've just established the gut is important for so many things. And here we are. We get a report card. It doesn't have to go to the laboratory. It doesn't have to be a blood test. It doesn't have to cost any money. It's there each and every day and we should take notice of it. Now, what are some of the things we can do to ensure that is healthy and that our floating subsiding smiley logs are there every day to greet us?

Maria Hunt: Okay. So for me, it's the fermented probiotic foods. I feel that is just so missed in the average diet out there. Again, we've had great marketing and publicity now with the importance of the gut and getting the fermented probiotic foods in there. And with that, the fermented probiotic foods ... I love to had a shot glass with it each day, and they're great for supporting our digestive system, our immune system. They challenge any candida symptoms such as gas, bloating, indigestion, heartburn, malabsorption, diarrhea, constipation, fungal infections. So it's essential to drip feed the fermented foods each day. And if we have shot glasses with our meal, it helps to break down the foods, extract out the vitamins and minerals of our meal, and also to eliminate the bad bacteria. And most excitingly, Ron, to recolonize the gut and bowel with the beneficial bacteria.

Maria Hunt: I love it that when we use the fermented foods over a synthetic probiotic, which is a good start, but the synthetic pro ... The fermented food can actually go down and form colonies within our digestive system, and those colonies, they're so intelligent that they speak to each other via a language pattern called talk quorum sensing. So if we're short of calcium, for instance, the bacteria, the microbiome start communicating with each other to say, "Hey, we need more calcium. Let's take it from the food as opposed to taking it from the bone." So the beneficial bacteria is paramount for health. So we need it each and every day. I like to take it daily. Again, we're drip feeding in the microbiome and it gets to thrive and it can keep that bad bacteria under control.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: And the shot glass ... So you said core and sensing. Core and sensing. That's the language of the microbiome, which is so interesting because we just have recently done a program on the nutritional wisdom of animals and plants to seek out food, and here we have the microbiome with its own nutritional wisdom. What's the shot glass? I mean, what do we got in it?

Maria Hunt: A shot glass of fermented probiotic food. So it can be any fermented young coconut kefir. There are so many variations out there now. We have a lot of coconut water. We ferment that. We find that highly beneficial because it's got a very good level of minerals and we need minerals every day. However, young coconut water does have a natural supply of sugars, so when we ferment, say, young coconut water, what that does ... It needs that beneficial ... It needs sugar within the coconut water to feed the beneficial bacteria. It's like the packed lunch for the beneficial bacteria when it's fermenting out. And fermentation is basically an age-old principle of breaking down the food, making it bio available so that we're not malabsorbing our foods.

Maria Hunt: What I find so interesting, Ron, is about ... You could line 10 people up, and 8 out of 10 would have a digestive issue. So they have the gas and the bloating and all of those signs there. However, if they're eating ... They can have the best diet, the best organic foods and vitamins and minerals. However, they may only be absorbing 10-15% of that meal. They're malabsorbing it. So when we put in the beneficial bacteria, as in fermented probiotic drinks, that has the potential to increase the absorption rate to 80%. So that really bangs for your buck, as instead of paying for all our organic foods ... That's what happened to me many years ago. I was paying \$400-500 a week on supplements and organic foods, and it was time cooking, etc. However, I was malabsorbing. So malabsorbing means it's going through the body and I'm not reaping the benefits of those nutrients. So when I included the fermented probiotic foods and drinks within that meal, that they had the potential to increase it to 80% absorption rate.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: I mean, we've also got the issue of prebiotics as well, haven't we? Which is bringing us back to our basic about eating real food and including lots of vegetables in that? That's prebiotic. Setting the scene for-

Maria Hunt: Exactly. We've got [inulan 00:12:55] and those ... Vegetables and grains, etc. And the prebiotic is simply to feed ... It's the food for the beneficial bacteria.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: And, of course, the stress issue is ... We often talk about this too. That if you are under stress, blood is diverted from your digestive tract into your muscles, and you could be on the best diet in the world but if you're hyper-stressed when you're eating, you again aren't going to absorb those nutrients. But now, this brings us to a topic that I really wanted to discuss with you today, and you mentioned it to me last time we met and I had to admit I know nothing about it. This subject of oxalates. And yet it is so important and it's something we should know so much about. Let's talk about oxalates. What are they?

Maria Hunt: It's so exciting, Ron. I'm so passionate about oxalates. They're being overlooked out there, and as I said, 9 out of 10 of my clients now, once they've changed the food's around, etc, and we deal with this oxalate imbalance, then they've made major changes.

Maria Hunt: So what are oxalates? Oxalates naturally occur in our foods, and they're mainly in plants, fruits, and nuts. And they act like tiny pieces of shard-like glass. So they're actual protection against predators coming in and attacking them. So [spinach 00:14:16], for instance. Instead of the birds and the predators coming in. So the oxalates are like shard-like glass that actually are on the actual plant to prevent it from being

metabolized. So how the oxalates form ... They're actually metabolized in the plant. So they appear higher in the leaf of the plant, then the seed, and then the roots, and then it goes onto less in the stem. As the plant ripens, the oxalate content increases and they ... You know when you eat kiwi fruit and spinach, you get that hairy like effect? It's irritating to the mouth. That's the actual oxalate content there.

Maria Hunt: So with that, again, we've got nuts, sweet potatoes, raw cacao, the red skin potatoes, carrots, black pepper, spinach. Sesame seeds are incredibly high. Kiwi. They're really prone to a high oxalate content. Now, with the oxalate, there's no symptom specific to oxalates. The symptoms depend on where the oxalate crystals are actually deposited in the body. So they can be deposited in our nose, joints, kidney, urethra, bladder, brain, and gut. So there's no nutritional value to the body to have this oxalate, and then normally our body is humming along ... It's normally cleared out via our urine and stools. However, it is an anti-nutrient, meaning it interferes with the absorption of some of the most important nutrients we need, as in iron, magnesium, zinc, and calcium. So it actually pulls that from our body. And so we can have that high oxalate meal with the raw cacao and the nuts and the seeds, etc. And if we're not able to number one, metabolize the oxalates or number two have the incredible bacteria called oxalobacter formigenes, which breaks down that oxalate ... If we don't have that bacteria, then the oxalate binds to iron, zinc, magnesium, calcium and leeches it out of our body.

Maria Hunt: So what are the symptoms of the high oxalate diet? Vulvodynia, pain in and around the vagina. I had this beautiful little three-year-old girl and she called and she said, "Maria, I'm just having these hot wees." And it was just burning urination. Diarrhea, stomach pain, kidney stones, ongoing infections, severe back pains, skin outbreaks, especially around the jawline. Joint pain with the knees, the hips, anemia, osteoporosis because the oxalate is binding to the calcium and leaching it out of the body. Arthritis, ongoing urinary tract infections, dry eyes, unexplained eczema, anxiety because it can be stored in the amygdala or we can have poor balance. Again, the oxalates can be stored in the cerebellum or poor memory, and again in the hippocampus. Ongoing sinus thyroid disease, digestive disorders, leaky gut. And also, to keep in mind if you're prone to leaky gut, what can happen ... The gaps between the cells in the intestinal walls allow the oxalates to be absorbed in large amounts into the bloodstream causing major issues.

Maria Hunt: So again, you can have a metabolic imbalance and be naturally prone to having an issue with oxalate foods, not being able to break down the oxalates, and/or you've had high dosages of antibiotics over time and that has eliminated that oxalate bacteria, the formigenes. And if we haven't got the formigenes, we can't break down those oxalate foods.

Maria Hunt: Now, sometimes the forigenes, if it's completely nuked out with the antibiotics, then we can do a stool test to see if there's some still present. We can gently feed that backup. We can't actually buy ... You know how we can buy lactobacillus and bifida now. We can't actually buy the formigenes at the moment. It's not available on the market. I contacted Sweden and they're two years out before this will be available. So you could also look at FMT, fecal microbial transplant if you were to try and get those oxalate-loving bacteria back in there. So they wreak havoc on our body.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: The oxalates?

Maria Hunt: Yes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow. I mean, these are parts of ... Naturally occurring parts of plants, and the reason we are unable ... Typically, we would use our microbiome, specifically oxalobacter formigenes ... Did I get that right?

Maria Hunt: You did. Yes.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Specifically, those microbes to deal with it.

Maria Hunt: That's right.



Dr Ron Ehrlich: But because of this imbalance in the gut microbiome, we have the symptoms. Although, they're rather diffuse. I hope that all those symptoms you listed wasn't the three-year-old girl that presented with the-

Maria Hunt: No.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Because I was really worried about this three-year-old with osteoporosis. But I take the point that it's very widespread of problems that are associated with this, and another example of an imbalance in the microbiome. Well, how do we deal with ... I mean, you talk about there isn't the probiotic to deal with this yet. How do we deal with this?

Maria Hunt: Okay. I just want to backtrack there because so many people change their diets and they all start eating healthy. So these people who have been exposed to antibiotics, etc, they have the great smoothie with almond milk, raw cacao, and beet greens. And then they'll go for lunch with a large spinach salad, nuts, soy protein, sesame seeds. Then they'll have the snack of dark chocolate with almonds, macadamia. And also, fructose converts to an oxalate. I call this an oxalate bomb, and your body is just struggling to deal with it.

Maria Hunt: So there's a beautiful researcher and she's an Australian lady. She's one of the world leaders in oxalates and her name is Susan Owens, and she has the [LowOx.info 00:21:05] site. And she's got incredible information there and a list of all of the foods and the oxalate content.

Maria Hunt: So there's a direct correlation also between yeast and oxalates. So if someone has candida, they will actually group in with the oxalates. So to treat the symptoms, what I do is I use the low oxalate diet along with the body ecology diet because it's an anti-candida diet, and I overlay both those diets going step by step. So we need to drink lots and lots of filtered water to avoid dehydration and to flush out the oxalate content within the body. And keep in mind too that research varies when you go into Google oxalates, etc, due to the conditions of the soils, the time of harvest, the genetic differences in species of plants. So different foods are classified on different levels, say, between America and Australia. That's why I like Susan Owens's list there.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: She's specifically Australian.

Maria Hunt: Yeah. A biomedical world leader.

Maria Hunt: Now, what we can do is we can actually leach out a certain percentage of the oxalates within our food. So we can look at our food preparation. Boiling leaches out the oxalates, and then what we can do is say boil up redskin potatoes and then discard the water, and that lowers the oxalate content. So we don't actually degrade it, we just lower it. Also, fermentation is wonderful. It's really good with helping to deal with the oxalate content. So any of the fermented drinks, any fermented foods, cultured vegetables, etc. They're excellent for helping to degrade the oxalates present with ... So you can have cultured vegetables with your meal and that will help to degrade that oxalate. In particular, Lactobacillus, Bifida, and L. Plantarum. L. Plantarum is extremely hardy bacteria that works very well to degrade the oxalates.

Maria Hunt: I also like to get ... I do this for myself and my clients. Taking either calcium or magnesium citrate about 20 minutes before a meal, as the calcium will bind to the oxalate via the stool and the citrate competes directly with the oxalate, and that will help eliminate the side effects of the oxalate. So just 20 minutes before a meal, I tend to go more towards magnesium citrate, and that will help with any of the meals that you're having, any of the oxalate content.

Maria Hunt: Epsom salt baths with bicarbonate soda. It's very good because what can happen, Ron is as we send a signal ... We don't want to go from a high oxalate die and jump right down to a low oxalate diet too quickly. The reason why, that will signal the body to say, "Hey, okay, let's dump out the excess oxalates found in our body." And when we do that it's called dumping of oxalates, and that can actually cause an imbalance and make us feel quite ill. So I like to go from high ... If I go through a person's diet if they've got high oxalate and gently bring them down to a medium oxalate. And then after a period of time, down to a low oxalate. In that



time, if they were to have that dumping sensation, as in a [inaudible 00:24:27] effect, they could actually use the Epsom salt baths with the bicarb soda, magnesium chloride to help pull out and help with the detox side effects.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, tell me. There's a couple of questions that come up to my mind here. Is there any benefit? Do oxalates have a function in the human body?

Maria Hunt: No, there's no real benefit.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: No real benefit. So they're a protective thing for the plants to deal with their predators. That's one thing. The other thing is, we hear a lot about raw diets, the power of raw diets, and I could only imagine that we would be more susceptible to the effect of oxalates ... It would be more of a challenge. Is that true?

Maria Hunt: That's correct. Yep. If you've got a great metabolism for being able to utilize the oxalates, number one, and if you have the formigenes bacteria, you're fine on a raw diet. That won't be an issue. However, if you've had a compromised system and you've been exposed to multiple rounds of antibiotics and you don't have the adequate supplies of the formigenes, then you will be challenged on those raw foods. Especially the raw cacao, the nuts and going back into the potatoes. There are just so many issues there that come up with the big spinach salad with the sesame seeds on top.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: I mean, potatoes have made a bit of a comeback, haven't they? We've talked a lot, and we still do, about keeping the carbs low, and I think that is a good thing. But I've been hearing some benefits of ... Potatoes or getting a better rap when it comes to the microbiome, particularly if they're cooled down. Is that right?

Maria Hunt: That's exactly right. If you cool them down ... So what you can do is, I like to use red skin potatoes because it's got a lower glycemic index. And yes, I boil them up, discard the water so I'm dealing with the oxalate content, and then let them cool off. And a great prebiotic then. Great for the microbiome.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, Maria, you also ... It just may have passed our listener by. You made mention of the body ecology diet. And I know this has been a very big part of your professional life for what, 20 or more years?

Maria Hunt: Yes, definitely.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Tell us a little bit about the body ecology diet.

Maria Hunt: Okay. So the body ecology diet is a system of health and healing, and the founder is Donna Gates in the States. I go back there each year and study with her and she's a wealth of information. We're currently working on overlapping the DNA into the body ecology diet of the epigenetics. And so it's all about dealing with the candida aspect and getting the beneficial bacteria back into balance. And so, that's where we'd been dealing with fermented foods for 15, 20 years and to help get the microbiome back into balance. So it's a system of health and healing. It has seven principles with that and each person is unique. So it's going in and designing the protocol specifically for your symptoms. And it's been so well received. It's into its 30th year this year.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Wow. And those seven principles, can you give it to us in a nutshell? Or is it-

Maria Hunt: Yeah. There's the principle of uniqueness, and with that everyone is totally unique. We have to experience that from different temperatures, different climates, different belief systems and approach our system with that. There are expansion and contraction. So we like to eat foods that are in the middle. So if we eat too many sweet foods, we're going to crave more and sweeter. If we eat too much of the protein, it puts us out of balance. So we come back in and we use the expansion and contraction and we eat in the middle of that continuum, and we have a balanced protocol there with the vegetables. There's the acid-alkaline. And so,

with the acid-alkaline is that it's balancing where we have a meal where it's that 80/20 rule where we have 80% of it is our vegetables or our salad and only 20% of our protein. This makes a big difference within our digestive system, also leading to 80% sense of fullness so that we leave 20% there for the digestive process.

Maria Hunt: When we put all of this together, then we can use the next principle, which is step by step. And step by step is taking just small incremental steps and implementing them, but so that the person doesn't get overwhelmed and that the body then has to adjust to all the different changes that are going on. When we start making the changes, say, with the oxalates and candida, we've gotta be very careful to dance with the body so that the body can cope with that detox mentally, physically, emotionally. So that it's able to go then through the next step and then be able to receive it. We've got to get the beneficial bacteria back into balance, and that's where Donna has done an incredible job putting together the body ecology diet.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Okay. And now, the other one is candida, because people hear that and of course ... This is all back onto our original, which is about the gut microbiome and a balance of good and bad. Candida. Give us candida 101, Maria.

Maria Hunt: Oh my gosh. It's so prevalent now. With the itchy skin, the coming back in and that foggy brain, the gas, the bloating, indigestion, all of these are signs and symptoms with the candida. The tinea, fungal infections with the feet, all of this is caused by candida, which is a bad bacteria that's come into the body and starts taking over. And it has claw-like little tentacles that burrow down into the digestive tract. So I liken it to a garden and that if you've got a garden there and if it's nicely mulched every now and then you'll get a weed in the garden and you can pull that out when it's got lots of good mulch in the garden. However, if the garden is bare it exposes it to many different varieties of weeds coming in, and one of those weeds can be candida or parasites, like blasto and frigidis. And they come in and they start strangling and taking over the garden.

Maria Hunt: So what we always need to do is we need to re-mulch the garden. So we need to get the beneficial bacteria back in. That will actually take over from the candida and crowd it out. And we need to starve out the candida from any of these sugars. So sugar is like a smorgasbord for candida. It's prolific. It grows on it and it will take over. So when we starve it out and then we come back in and re-mulch the garden with the beneficial bacteria, that helps to prevent those weeds, those different candidas coming in and taking over the garden.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: And of course our prevalence ... Our preference for sugary sweet foods and our use of antibiotics have set us up for an epidemic, which often goes undiagnosed, doesn't it?

Maria Hunt: Yes, with the sugar and the antibiotics ... Look, there are a time and place with antibiotics. I have no qualm there. However, it's to do our best to avoid as much as possible because they will kill off the beneficial bacteria and the bad bacteria, the pathogenic, and that make a haven for the candida to come in and take over. And it just loves sugar, and sugar is in so much of ... It's unseen sugars that are prevalent now.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, Maria, people will listen to this because we have covered a lot of territory here, and the listener may be sitting there going, "You know what? This week I'm going to get my gut in order and I'm going to start." It's a process. What would be two, three, four, a couple of tips that you might give our listener to begin that journey?

Maria Hunt: Okay. First one is either to cut down as much as possible the sugar and look on the back of the labels where you've got these hidden sugars in there. Now, cut down the sugars as the first one, and then look at the good oils. Make sure you've got the good oils. They're not the canola and the vegetable oils, etc. We want all of the healthy oils, the olive oils. Then you can go back into the avocados. All of these different avocado oils, olive oils, they come back in and they're putting the beneficial bacteria ... It's helping with the beneficial bacteria instead of making the body rancid and acid. So the good oils are very, very important for that.



Maria Hunt: And the other one, especially for people wanting to lose weight. Most people are wanting to lose one or two kilos or so. Eat to 80/20. So when you sit down for the meal, just have 20% protein and 80% of a salad or your vegetables. And you'll really notice the difference of how much lighter your body feels.

Maria Hunt: I would just add one more in there is food combining, and that's so easy to help with weight loss, where we avoid putting meat and potatoes together. You can still have your meat, but with non-starchy vegetables, your broccoli, your carrots, cauliflower, zucchinis, etc, and you can still have your say redskin potatoes, etc. But have that with your quinoa millet. Not putting meat and potatoes together. It's too hard to digest causing gas and bloating, and those foods can become rancid and breeding bad bacteria. Candida, for instance.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, listen, we're just going to finish up here and I wanted to ask you one last question. Taking your step back from your role as a naturopath and nutritionist and advisor. What do you think ... Because we're all on a health journey in our lives. What do you think the biggest challenge is for people on their health journey through life in our modern world?

Maria Hunt: I think it's stress, Ron. Totally convinced it's stress. As you and I both said, we have the best diet, the best vitamins and minerals. If we're stressed, we're not able to break it down. We're causing so much inflammation in our body with stress, and oxidative stress as well with our body. So if we can get our stress levels down simply ... Just start meditating. Just 10 minutes a day, 5 minutes a day on the loo. Taking time out. Find something that's fun to do where you can get lost in it, whatever it is. It could be cross stitching. It could be your notice staring out at the wall. Whatever it is, whereby it gives our mind a rest and we can bring the cortisol levels ... We can bring our adrenaline down.

Maria Hunt: And have a good laugh. Go out, see a good movie. Get good friends together. But laugh. Everything now is so stress oriented. We're under the pump and it's that treadmill. Step off for that moment. Put people around you where it's fun, there's laughter, and you're really experiencing each other, and gratitude.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Maria, what a great note to finish on. I'm so grateful to you for joining us today, and we will, of course, have links to your website with all its wonderful resources. Thank you so much for sharing your knowledge with us today.

Maria Hunt: Yeah. Thank you, Ron. I really appreciate your time.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: So there it is. As I said, we will have links to Maria's site.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, I wanted to remind you all that we now have an Unstressed app and it's available on the App Store for download, also on Google Play. I've said this podcast is my own learning experience, and as I get to talk with so many people who know so much more than I do, and amazingly they answer my questions. I learn a lot and I hope you do too.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: Now, the app was born out of frustration. I worked out that to listen to my own podcast, it took about six clicks to get to each episode. So I thought, "Well, let's have an app." Turns out, an app is a great way of accessing other resources, and we are building lots of those. Free webinars, my book, of course, but also an Ebook, which is The Practical Guide to the Five Pillars. And there's a dropdown menu which has a health assessment tool, and you can also practice various breathing rates. And there is a great breathing exercise for switching on the parasympathetic or rest and digest part of your nervous system. It literally takes a minute. It's something you should do before each meal and just after lights out before sleep, or for that matter whenever you are stressed. That's the Unstressed app.

Dr Ron Ehrlich: So until next time, this is Dr Ron Ehrlich. Be well.



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