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*\* \* \* Intro Music \* \* \**

Welcome to Supplementing Health, a podcast presented by Advanced Orthomolecular Research. We are all about applying evidenced-based and effective dietary lifestyle and natural health product strategies for your optimal health. In each episode, we will feature very engaging clinicians and experts from the world of functional and naturopathic medicine to help achieve our mission to empower people to lead their best lives naturally.

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Are you regularly exhausted, anxious, or having a hard time concentrating? These can be signs of stress-related burnout. Give yourself the support you need with Relax and Recharge. It contains Rhodiola and Ashwagandha, two powerful adaptogenic herbs, which help the body to adapt to stress. It helps to improve focus, memory, stamina and reduces the feelings of stress, making it an ideal supplement for students, shift workers, and those who need extra mental energy.

[1:32] *Cassy Price*: Hello, and thanks for tuning in to this week's episode of Supplementing Health. I'm your host, Cassy Price, and today I am joined by Jordan Bruce. She is a holistic nutritionist, located in Vancouver, BC, whose goal is to help her clients prevent illness and support current imbalances through blood analysis, life changes, and nutrition guidance. Today, we are going to discuss burnout and digestion, as well as the influencing factors such as stress level. Welcome, Jordan.

[1:58] *Jordan Bruce*: Hi. Thanks for having me.

[2:00] *Cassy Price*: This is such a diverse topic. Why don't we dive right in, and you can share with us some of the signs and symptoms of burnout that people should be watching for.

[2:08] *Jordan Bruce*: Yes. It is a diverse topic, and it impacts so many other areas. You may see symptoms across different organs and body parts. The number one symptom that I would say that's most consistent is feeling really fatigued, really tired, really exhausted. Some of my clients will have trouble getting out of bed. Others will feel really wired at night, which is a sign that cortisol, the stress hormone, is higher at night. We want it high in the morning and low in the evening.

[2:43] Other signs of burnout would be a shift in weight. Sometimes, people will hold a little bit of extra weight in the lower belly area, and also feeling very overwhelmed, and maybe something you use to cope with no problem might now cause additional stress and feelings of anxiety or depression. So, mood changes, for sure.

[3:10] There are also changes in appetite, like how hungry you are, which are pretty consistent – the same with cravings. Sometimes we crave the higher sugar foods or even the saltier, fattier foods, and then there are so many others. There are differences in changes in blood sugar levels.

[3:33] Some of you may know the common, loose nickname terms called “hangry”, which I see frequently in clients, and it’s when we get so hungry, and our blood sugar levels have dipped that we almost get angry and we need the food *Now*. Then, also, insomnia and having a hard time falling asleep, as well as changes in sex drive. If you’re exhausted, you’re not going to want to be intimate, and you’re not going to have that drive.

[4:11] I’ll list a few more. Your immune system can be quite down-regulated, meaning you’re more at risk of getting sick or higher infections and inflammatory conditions – also, brain fog. Brain fog is a big one. It’s hard to explain if you’ve never had it, but essentially, you feel foggy and not as focused as previously.

[4:41] Then, also, two common ones I see – there’s a link between our adrenal glands and the thyroid. So someone may have some thyroid symptoms like weight changes, temperature changes, bowel shifts as well as decision fatigue or getting overwhelmed by like having to make decisions throughout the day.

[5:04] *Cassy Price*: That’s a lot of different things that could be coming up. With many health conditions, you tend to have a spectrum from early warning signs to a disease state. Does that apply to burnout, and where on the spectrum would some of these symptoms fall, or are they throughout the entire thing?

[5:20] *Jordan Bruce*: Yeah, that’s a really good question. There’s a theory, and there are actually three stages with respect to burnout. The first stage would be the alarm stage. The second stage is called the resistance stage. The third is the exhaustion stage. You can tell by the titles that it’s going to get more severe, and you’re going to feel those negative symptoms more as we progress and get to the third stage, and you’re going to have more of those hormone imbalances and more negative symptoms. It’s lovely when we can get to it when it’s in the first or second stage; so, noticing those changes within your body instead of ignoring them, choosing to work with a practitioner and support them.

[6:16] *Cassy Price*: Okay, awesome. A common term that comes up a lot now, especially in the industry, is adrenal fatigue. How does that relate specifically to this burnout and those stages you just described?

[6:27] *Jordan Bruce*: That's a really good question. When I hear burnout, my brain automatically goes to adrenal fatigue. Adrenal fatigue would be the well-known term in the wellness industry and along the general population. Clinically, how I like to refer to it is HPA-axis dysregulation. What that stands for is Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis.

[6:54] That tells us that there is an imbalance in the communication between the hypothalamus and the pituitary in the brain to the adrenals. It's very all-encompassing. If you went to a doctor, they would see, "Oh, adrenal fatigue doesn't exist," but clearly, people who are having these negative symptoms, and there is a dysregulation in the HPA-axis. So, I think they are very related.

[7:22] *Cassy Price*: What role does stress play in adrenal fatigue or burnout?

[7:29] *Jordan Bruce*: I think it's the main role, for sure. I think how we are living our lifestyles. Especially in North America, we're go-go-go. We're always hustling. It's almost rewarded, which is so backward, and that can easily lead to burnout or HPA-axis dysfunction. We also have to look at other things aside from lifestyle, but I do think that stress is a huge contributing factor.

[8:00] There are other types of stress, though. Are you getting exposed to chemicals? That causes stress in the body. Or, how is your gut health? Are you eating a food five times a week that your body doesn't really love and agree with? Then, that's causing inflammation within the body, which is a stress.

[8:21] Then, we have to look at emotional stress. For example, one of my clients this morning is dealing with burnout, and I know it's from a previous trauma. So, that needs to be dealt with talk therapy. Also, I have a lot of clients that eventually burnout who either work in the fitness industry or exercise really hard. Exercise is amazing, but we must realize that it's also a stress on the body. So, if we are going super hardcore and doing it very frequently, it is going to attack those adrenal glands.

[9:00] There's so much in our life that plays into it, including shift workers – pretty much every shift worker I know is going to feel burnt out if they're working 12 hours days and nights. Especially with the pandemic right now, just thinking of all those nurses and doctors and everyone in the hospital field. It must be so tiring!

[9:22] *Cassy Price*: Yeah, I can imagine. I'm sure there's also emotional stress that goes along with that too, like a role where you're taking on your patients' situations, too, on top of your own life.

[9:34] *Jordan Bruce*: Yes, definitely.

[9:35] *Cassy Price*: Do you have tips for people on how to manage those stress levels so that they can help to prevent or manage these symptoms as they're dealing with their burnout?

[9:46] *Jordan Bruce*: Yes. For some of the more lifestyle and general ones, I would say to try and start saying, "No." Sometimes, I find with my clients that they are yes-people. They're the people that want to say yes to everything. They're overextending themselves. They never rest and slow down. So, doing the things that lighten you up and saying yes to what you want to say yes to and passing on things that aren't like "Heck Yeah!" That preserves your energy levels essentially.

[10:26] Also, it's really important to pay attention to sleep. I think it is so underrated and so many people say how tired they are, and they are looking to take a supplement or potentially shift their diet. But, so often, we don't actually change our sleep quality and the length of sleep. So, looking at your sleep routine is a great tip.

[10:55] Then, other ways that listeners could manage stress would be to be mindful of your blue light at night as this impairs your melatonin production. We want melatonin high in the evening so that we have a really good sleep. Where, if you're looking at your iPhone, and you have the regular blue-light mode on, or you're watching a show on TV, that's going to definitely impair your sleep and keep the cortisol high.

[11:27] Then, there are a bunch of diet changes, which I can recommend, which I think we'll get into. I think a big one is trying to get into rest and digest. We want to calm the body, calm the nervous system. For me, that means getting into the forest with my dog. It means having slow mornings and enjoying my matcha. It means the occasional acupuncture appointment because acupuncture puts us into rest and digest.

[12:01] It varies for everyone. I love Yin Yoga – meditation, I want to focus on trying to increase meditation, and there are many free apps out there that are a nice free tool for people. It essentially is finding something that you enjoy that will lower stress, that you'll do and introduce into your lifestyle.

[12:24] *Cassy Price*: Awesome. Thank you for those tips. You had mentioned about diet. I know research has linked stress levels to digestive health issues. Is there a link between digestion and burnout as well?

[12:40] *Jordan Bruce*: Definitely, a huge link. What I've noticed over the few years that I've been consulting one-on-one is that everything is so connected in the body. Someone may say, "I'm a gut health practitioner," or "I'm an adrenal-stress practitioner," but at the end of the day, we're supporting all the body systems. If you have high stress or HPA-axis dysfunction, your digestion is 100% going to be impacted.

[13:08] When the body goes into fight or flight, it thinks it's running away from like a tiger or a bear. It can't differentiate having workday stress and knowing that it will be okay versus running away from a bear. It just considers it stress. So, some stress is okay. Acute stress is okay, but if it's chronic, long-term stress, that's what we're concerned about here. Digestive health – you may see constipation, bloating. You could even see undigested food in your bowel movements, loose bowels, gas.

[13:43] So definitely a huge connection as a previous shift worker and dispatcher for the police department. I used to work 12-hour days and then 12-hour nights. The reason I got interested in nutrition and holistic health is because I noticed when I was working those really long shifts, and they were super-high stress, that it was negatively impacting my digestion, and that's what got me interested in the topic, and I went back to school to get formally trained.

[14:20] So, definitely a huge connection here, and not one that the average person may think about. They may not realize that they have digestive imbalances because of stress. A lot of times we think, "Oh, it's a certain food I'm eating," or "I need more probiotics," or something like that.

[14:40] *Cassy Price*: Earlier, you had also mentioned food sensitivities creating additional inflammation. Is inflammation overall in the body an additional stressor, and is that something that people should be considering?

[14:53] *Jordan Bruce*: Definitely. We want to eat lots of plants and keep the inflammatory foods low. For example, canola is in a lot of foods when we're eating out, and that's highly inflammatory. If you're eating a ton of meat, that's going to be inflammatory. Just really increasing the amount of vegetables in your diet is going to reduce overall inflammation in the body.

[15:19] And then listening to your body, as well. For me personally, I don't feel great if I eat a lot of wheat, so I try and keep that low. I notice that if I do have it, I get tired, I get constipated, I get brain fog. But other people could feel totally fine on it. So, it's about tuning into your body and being mindful of ways to decrease inflammation based on how you're currently living your lifestyle and what you're currently eating.

[15:51] *Cassy Price*: Do you suggest people keep a symptoms journal, or a diet journal, or any of those sorts of things as they're trying to figure out what some of their triggers are?

[15:59] *Jordan Bruce*: Yes. That would be very helpful. I would list it, and then I would say how you feel after consuming that food. I think those are amazing, and I often recommend it for clients who are unsure what could be bothering them and doing it for three to five days. That being said, sometimes we can consume a food that our body doesn't love, and sometimes the reaction is not immediate. It could be the next day, or two days later.

[16:29] Sometimes, it does make it challenging to determine which one it is. That's when I would suggest an elimination diet, and maybe for 30 days, you eliminate wheat and dairy, or you try eating a heavily plant-centred diet. For example, we did that with one of my clients, and she was having bad joint pain, which means a sign of inflammation in the body. Now, she feels so much better. But she wouldn't have known unless she eliminated those foods for a bit.

[17:04] *Cassy Price*: That's awesome that she was able to find that out by doing that diet. Adaptogens are another thing that we hear a lot about, especially in this industry. Are there certain dietary changes or foods that you recommend people include that give them that adaptogenic support?

[17:27] *Jordan Bruce*: Yes. I love adaptogens so much. I have been taking adaptogens for many, many years, prior to nutrition school. I've even taken the AOR vegan adaptogen line, which I love. Adaptogens essentially, if anyone's not familiar with them, they help the body adapt to stress. They are an amazing set of herbs that you can include in your daily life. I would say that you want to take a small dose consistently versus a couple of times a week in a higher dose. It's more about micro-dosing over an extended period of time.

[18:10] Again, it varies so much person-to-person, so definitely work with a practitioner, especially if you are on any medication or you have to be mindful if your pregnant or breastfeeding. But I really love Ashwagandha for calming the nervous system. I enjoy that in the evenings with a turmeric elixir. I love Rhodiola for the person who wants that energy boost in the morning.

[18:39] I also really like all of the medicinal mushrooms. So, Cordyceps, Lion's mane, Reishi, Chaga – I think those are super nourishing, and I'm mindful of ensuring that I get the right quality, so those high-rated glucans.

[18:57] *Cassy Price*: Do you tend to use those in drink-form mostly, or do you cook with them a lot, or would you prefer capsules. Or do you have a preference? Does it matter?

[19:06] *Jordan Bruce*: Yeah. For me personally, I love powders now, but when I was in the thick of it, I was definitely taking three capsules every morning to support my body in a higher dose. Plus, it was more convenient because I could take them with breakfast at work, when I was working from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

[19:30] For me, when I'm working with clients, it's mainly about client compliance, and what will my client actually do? A lot of times, it's easier for them to take a pill that has all of those mixed herbs in it versus investing in three or four different bags of the Rhodiola, Ashwagandha, and Maca. I love a pill if someone is in the later stages, and we want to bring up their energy quickly.

[20:01] *Cassy Price*: Awesome. Do you find you use different supplements for an earlier stage, like an alarm stage versus more of a later stage case?

[20:14] *Jordan Bruce*: That's a really good question. A lot of times, it is based on symptoms. You've probably heard of the DUTCH urine testing.

[20:23] *Cassy Price*: Yes. Absolutely.

[20:23] *Jordan Bruce*: I offer that. When a client does that, I can make a more informed decision because I'm looking at their cortisol levels based on their urine, how much they're making, how much they're storing. When I have that, I can shift what I offer a lot more because the more testing and information a client provides you, the better outcome they're going to get, in my opinion.

[20:50] But if not, then I would probably base it more on do we want to increase energy in the morning or do we want to calm them at night? And choose adaptogens based on how they want to feel and where they think their cortisol is. If they're wired at night, I'm going to do a relaxing one. If we do take one that's more energizing, I'm going to make sure it's taken prior to noon so that it doesn't impact their sleep.

[21:20] *Cassy Price*: Okay. Awesome.

[21:22] *Jordan Bruce*: I just want to touch on something quickly because I feel like people in society, it's amazing to talk about what we can add in, but I also think that we're so busy and on the go that sometimes we need to make some dietary shifts and remove some things.

[21:37] I quickly wanted to say that being mindful of your caffeine consumption is really important because it can impact your blood sugar levels and your nervous system. Again, we want to be in that parasympathetic mode, not sympathetic. So, trying to reach for water and eating meals more frequently and better balanced with your complex carbs, greens, proteins, and a little bit of fat.

[22:02] Then, also, being mindful with sugar. Sometimes, when we're depleted adrenally, we want that boost of energy, so sometimes we'll reach for sugary foods, or we crave them when really, we're just craving energy. So, be mindful of caffeine and sugar because I often see my clients almost abusing caffeine. Like, they'll have five or six cups just because they're so tired when really, it's working against your goal and you're depleting your adrenal glands further.

[22:38] *Cassy Price*: On that note, because that's a really good point. Lots of us are caffeinated to the wazoo when you're trying to just keep up with everything going on. Do you have less-stimulating options that still help give that temporary boost while they're transitioning off of caffeine or sugar?

[22:56] *Jordan Bruce*: That's such a good question, and there are so many things that we can do. I actually have a [blog post on caffeine](#) on my website if anyone wants more information. I

think this is really important to evaluate your relationship with caffeine. Are you having it because it's a ritual, and you just enjoy it, but you don't need it? And how much are you having?

[23:17] If you're having a ton of coffee, then analyze why. My preference is, if you are doing coffee, be sure you're choosing an organic coffee, and preferably one that is decaf. It's where I go because we just want the nervous system to stay calm. Even with people that consume coffee frequently, there's still going to be that cortisol boost. That would be #1.

[23:44] Then, #2, if you're ready to try going without coffee, I love Matcha so much. Matcha has L-Theanine in it and ECGC, which is so good for the body and high in antioxidants. It gives you energy, but you don't ever feel – you're not in fight or flight. Your heart rate isn't pounding. You're not bouncing off the roof. The caffeine gets released really slowly, unlike if you have coffee – you can actually Google this – if you have coffee, there's a huge rush of energy and then a big drop, like sugar. People will often want to reach for a second cup of coffee.

[24:26] I also love chai latte. I have a chai powder at home, and I'll make it with dairy-free milk, which is caffeine-free, or I'll do turmeric elixirs, or even with working with a practitioner to see what herb you can have. I love nettle, lavender, and chamomile. I drink a lot of tea, as well.

[24:53] *Cassy Price*: Awesome. Especially as the colder months come, I think people like that cozy option when you're trying to just settle down. That's great to have those ideas.

[25:04] *Jordan Bruce*: We can even do iced teas, and they're going to be so nourishing for the body and provide so many nutrients, and it's going to taste delicious.

[25:17] *Cassy Price*: Yeah. That's wonderful. What is your website if people want to go read that blog?

[25:23] *Jordan Bruce*: It's Bruce's Roots: [www.brucesroots.com](http://www.brucesroots.com). They can search *caffeine*, and it will come up. I offer one-on-one coaching, virtually and in-person in North Vancouver. I have clients all over North America, and I focus on digestion, parasites, and stress.

[25:52] *Cassy Price*: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for joining us today. I think this has been really enlightening and definitely gives people food for thought on assessing themselves too. Where you're at, how much you're taking on, and if you're overdoing it on the regular, which I think lots and lots of us probably are.

[26:07] *Jordan Bruce*: Yes, it's so important to check-in. I'll lastly say that if you are on Instagram, I changed my name. It's no longer Bruce's Root, and people are still trying to friend request me there. So, on Instagram, my name is Jordan Bruce RHN, for Registered Holistic Nutritionist.

[26:23] *Cassy Price*: Okay. Wonderful. Awesome. Thank you so much for joining us today, and thank you to all the listeners who popped on to catch this conversation.

[26:32] *Jordan Bruce*: Thank you.

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