Dr. Debby Hamilton (00:00):

Okay. Hello everyone. I am Dr. Debbie Hamilton, and today I'm interviewing Julie Matthews. I'm going to just give us a little background about both of us and then give an introduction of why we're here and then we'll asking Julie some questions. So as I said, I'm an integrative pediatrician and I focus on treating children with autism and A DHD and developmental issues, and also on prevention of these issues. I wrote a book on preventing autism and A DHD controlling risk factors before, during, and after pregnancy. And we are both members of the Neurological Health Foundation and Julie Matthews is a certified nutrition consultant, published researcher specialize in personalized nutrition for children in complex neurodevelopmental disorders, including autism and spectrum disorders, and A DHD as well as nutrition for pregnancy for over 20 years. Received her master's degree in medical nutrition with distinction from Arizona State University. She's the author of the award-winning book, nourish and Hope for Autism, which I have read and it's amazing.

(01:07):

And co-author of two research studies demonstrating efficacy of nutrition, therapeutic diet intervention for autism. Julie supports clinicians and families from around the world with the nutrition programs and professional training courses. Visit nourishing hope.com and individual nutrition.com. Welcome, Julie. I am glad we're speaking today and I look forward to some information from you and learning. There's a PDF handout for attendees that you can follow along. So the reason we're talking today is that the prevalence of severe food allergies and asthma in children has dramatically increased over the past recent years. And for expecting parents, this can be a very serious health issues for children. And so we're really going to talk today about what can we do starting even before and during pregnancy, and try to decrease the children's risk of these allergies and asthma. And I would also say eczema. So all of these are kind of in the allergy spectrum and they all can be influenced by some of the things we're going to talk about today. So when we, just, as I said, my introduction, what do you think about the issues? So why is this important to talk about today?

Julie Matthews (02:21):

Well, it affects children's lives so significantly. It can affect their health, their learning. It can even affect their mood and behavior and it can really affect their quality of life. And it also affects the whole family and the way that they prepare food and so many different aspects that everybody in the family needs to be aware of. And there are things that people can do. So I think it's good, as you said at the beginning, to do whatever we can to try to stack the deck in our favor of having the most robust healthy kids as possible. So I'm excited to share that today.

Dr. Debby Hamilton (03:02):

Yeah, that's great. And what about why do we think about this as something to even address before or during pregnancy? Because most people, especially moms to beat, they don't know about allergies when not even think about it until after the baby's born. So why do we need to look beforehand?

Julie Matthews (03:22):

Absolutely. Most of us that work in the field of kids autism, A DHD, we realize that there's so much that can be done not only as children but even before they're born because so much of our health depends on things like our microbiome. The microbiome is really set during our birth and during nursing and even before our birth, how we're born. All of those things play a role, the health of the mother. So all of these things can really be very beneficial to helping kids get the best start possible.

Dr. Debby Hamilton (04:05):

That makes sense. So what about organic foods or what about the thing called glyphosate? Because glyphosate is so prevalent in our food and people don't really know what it is or think about it or even what kind of effects it has in the microbiome?

Julie Matthews (04:20):

Absolutely. Well, if we start by understanding that when the microbiome is disrupted, that can increase food allergies in children. And so if we look at the health of everything from the mucosal barrier, the immune system, the microbiome, all of these aspects of our health can influence whether we end up with allergies or not. We start to see what is in our environment that can negatively affect these areas. And one of these things is a chemical we call glyphosate. And glyphosate is the active ingredient in certain pesticides. Most familiar people are familiar with Roundup. And so glyphosate actually is a registered antibiotic. So not only is it an herbicide and it's used on lots of different plants, things like corn and oats and soy and barley and all these types of things, canola a variety of different plants. When we ingested them, they actually, being that this chemical is a known antibiotic, it actually can kill off our beneficial bacteria.

(05:44):

And unfortunately it has a double negative of then not being able to kill off the pathogens clostridia, which then allow the clostridia to grow. And then without that good bacteria that further creates an imbalanced microbiome where there isn't as much competition for the bad guys. So there's lots of research on that and we won't really get into it here, but there's actually really interesting research in the world of autism and we're not doing that. So that's my area of specialty. I almost can't help. But the research comes to me that kids with autism have higher rates of clostridia and all of this stuff, but we won't go there, not what this talk is about. We're tired, talk about food allergies. And so this glyphosate can have an effect on the microbiome, and that's something that pregnant women can do in their daily lives, which is if you eat organic food, you're not going to get the pesticides, you're not going to get the genetically modified foods that tend to use more of these pesticides. But even some non GMO foods do use this. And so the more we can do organic, the more we can avoid that, and certainly with our children, but even starting during pregnancy.

Dr. Debby Hamilton (07:05):

So in terms of microbiome, I think of the microbiome, the way I explain it is all those good bugs. It's like all those good bacteria when people take probiotics of trying to improve their microbiome, the microbiome, how it relates, part of the way it relates to allergies is a lot of our immune system is in our guts. So think about that. It's like we're focusing on the gut because that's our immune system. And our immune system needs to be strong and kind of balance so we don't go into that allergies.

Julie Matthews (07:35):

That was a

Dr. Debby Hamilton (07:35):

Great point. That's how I think about it.

Julie Matthews (07:36):

Yes, that research paper I pointed to, I didn't really go into details, but it did talk about, I'm so glad you brought that up. It talked about the health and the integrity of the gut and the microbiome, and we know a couple things. We know that they interact with each other. We know we need a healthy gut, but thank you so much for bringing up that interplay of how a healthy gut helps our immune system and how good microbes also are important for our immune system.

Dr. Debby Hamilton (08:05):

And you said about glyphosate, avoiding that. So what about we talk about organic foods and the more I'm in this field, the longer I'm in the field, the more I'm like, God, organic foods are so important. And again, before pregnancy, during pregnancy, what about processed foods? Because sometimes like, oh wow, this is processed cereal ness is organic. Do you need to worry about what kind of foods, whether they're organic, say they're organic, but what about processed versus made from home foods, things like that. Does that play a role?

Julie Matthews (08:38):

I think they're all going to be important for a variety of different reasons. Processed foods are going to have a lot of, well, again, it depends on the particular food, but many of them are ultra processed, meaning that they can contain five or more these industrial additives that we wouldn't add from our kitchen. And we know that some of these additives can affect our gut. They can really impair the health of our gut. And we didn't really quite say specifically, but allergies are regulated by our immune system. That's why Dr. Hamilton keeps mentioning the immune system and that combination of the gut, the immune and the microbiome all play a role. So anytime these additives are going to affect any one of these systems is going to be detrimental to food allergies. And so processed foods tend to include several of these. They also tend to include more sugar, more sodium. Again, not that all salt is bad, but when we have high amounts of the sugars, the additives, all of these things combined with all of that put together, we're not going to get that same nutritional value. And we tend to get a lot more of those additives that can be harmful to our system.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (10:13):

We talk about how the microbiome is so important, and you mentioned how does you get a healthy microbiome? You talked about type of birth nursing. What are the different factors that are important?
Julie Matthews (10:27):

Yes. Well, it starts with birth because if we need antibiotics during birth, that's going to wipe out some of our good bacteria the way we're born. If we come out c-section versus going through the vaginal canal like nature had intended, we go through the vaginal canal, we pick up a lot of bacteria that primes our system for ingesting and getting a lot of that good bacteria when we nurse our babies, some of that good bacteria goes through the milk and is on the skin and we get good bacteria that way. So all of those things are going to be the start of it. And the oligosaccharides or the sugars and things in our milk, those carbohydrates, they are the fuel that feed the microbiome. So not only do we get the good bacteria, but we get the good carbohydrates that fuel and feed and help to grow that good bacteria. So those are some of the foundations just when babies, before babies even start to eat food, and then of course when they start to eat food, then they start to, if we introduce fermented foods, yogurt and things when they're babies, they'll start to get their own probiotics through the foods they eat in other ways.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (11:46):

So well say your mom. I think it's amazing that nature is set up. So we want to have the mom have good microbiome because then if she's a good microbiome, they're in a natural delivery, the baby gets the good microbiome, and then nursing, they get more, some of the good bacteria, the microbiome plus some of the factors that are going to feed the microbiome, as you mentioned, I think of like we got to get all those saccharides and stuff. And I'm like, those are the probiotic food, kind of the prebiotics people talk about. That's like feeding the good bacteria, understanding nature, and then of course the nursing. But what about the moms? I needed to have a C-section. Is there something I can do because oh my god, I'm worried about that. What can a mom do if she has a C-section?
Julie Matthews (12:39):

Absolutely. And we understand that things happen and we do the best we can, and we do know at this point there are lots of things that we can do. So I'll defer this a little bit to you since you are the physician, and you'll be a little more familiar with this, but they do have vaginal seeding that people can do from C-sections. There is some research on that. Of course, there's things and being careful to test for STDs and things prior. And so I'll kind of leave a little bit of the vaginal seeding to you, but there are ways to get that good bacteria that they might not have gotten after the fact. And of course there are other things mom can do. Mom can take probiotics. There are even depending on if they need formula and things, but we can get to that in a moment. But did you want to add anything to
Dr. Debby Hamilton (13:30):

The vaginal seeding? Yes. I mean basically the idea is to take a swab, take some of mom's vaginal fluid and put it in the baby's mouth, right? Because that's what a natural birth would do. So the C-section bypasses that. So you're basically adding the good bacteria to the baby, which kind sounds strange unless you think about what's the natural, what happens in nature, and you're really trying to recreate that. And I think that that's a good thing to think about because you can help. What about, you mentioned the mom probiotics, you talk about should the mom take a probiotics during pregnancy before, and then what about the baby? What about probiotics for the baby?
Julie Matthews (14:14):

Yes. I think that it's great for all humans to have a good microbiome. And so I think that some of them have a great microbiome and maybe they've been eating fermented foods for a year and have a healthy gut and have a great immune system. It'll depend on whether they take probiotic supplements or they just have a good diet that has regular probiotics in it. But I think all of us benefit, and again, when you go back to nature back hundreds, thousands, many thousands of years ago, we didn't have refrigeration. And so we had that bacteria that was in the soil that was in the milk that might've naturally gotten fermented or the vegetables that we learned to ferment or things like that. We don't have access, well, I shouldn't say we don't have access. We naturally don't do that as much as we did back then where it was more of a requirement.

(15:11):

And we have access to so many antibacterial soaps and things now that we didn't have back then that we kill off some of that good microbiome that we wouldn't have a variety of things. So in nature, we would've normally had more of that. So I think all of us benefit from that. Certainly I think pregnant mothers do, because again, we want to have good bacteria to be able to seed the baby with all that good bacteria when it's coming out. So we want a good blend of all the good guys and not the bad guys. And so I think the earlier we can get onto good probiotics, the better. So if that's before pregnancy, that's wonderful. If that's during pregnancy, that's also wonderful. So I think those are some great places to start while breastfeeding, I mean, I feel like it's never too late to get them in.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (16:10):

That's a good point.
Julie Matthews (16:14):

Nursing moms and then there are some, if moms can't nurse, there are ways to get those good probiotics for babies as well. And so there can be probiotics, they get in their formula if they need a formula. There's even prebiotics they can get in formula. So we just do the best we can with whatever stage that we happen to be at.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (16:44):

When I think of, there's so many different probiotics. So I think about, okay, there's some women's probiotics, especially the lactobacillus species that is really targeted for women's health and for vaginal health. So I think of that's because that's one area in terms of building up the microbiome that the baby's going to get. And there are infant probiotics. You wouldn't want to just get an adult probiotic for a baby, correct? Right. Certain bacteria, certain the probio bacteria that a baby's going to get.
Julie Matthews (17:21):

Absolutely. They have certain strains more than others, and the good milk sugars are feeding those strains. So you're absolutely correct. I'm glad you brought that up. This is not, what's really fascinating is that the oligosaccharides that baby's microbiome feeds on rd oligosaccharides in milk, whereas those similar, the bifido strains in adults, they feed on the vegetable plant. So it's fascinating that these bifido bacterium in infants feed on infant food, but when we're adults, they feed on plant-based foods because that's what we're going to have. So absolutely both the food that we eat is different and the probiotics that we need are different.

Dr. Debby Hamilton (18:14):

And then people are like how I used to say, I said, I'm a pediatrician. Sometimes you can just take your finger, put it in the baby's mouth if you have an infant probiotic or just on the nipple right before the baby nurses. So it can be really easy and it doesn't have to be a lot. Yes, I'm very much in terms of as you mentioned, the fermented foods and for the mom and eventually when the child does solid foods is kind of the idea. And again, thinking about if we're getting that good bacteria in our art and improving the microbiome, improving our immune system, and that helps prevent from allergies, is that kind of how you would think about it?
Julie Matthews (18:54):

Yes, yes. That is how I think about it. And also just good for so much of their gut. We want them to have, obviously the healthiest system is possible, and Hippocrates, all disease begins in the gut, so we want that gut to be healthy for so many aspects of their life, but today we're talking specifically food allergies. So yes, I would say that that's how I would look at it. How
Dr. Debby Hamilton (19:18):

About omega threes or any other supplements that support, and as I said, always for me, it's like you're going to take something during pregnancy, started before pregnancy and continue it when you're nursing. But what about omega threes? How are omega threes important in terms of the allergies?
Julie Matthews (19:37):

Yeah, absolutely. So omega threes are important for brain development in babies. Also, immune function helps to reduce inflammation and all of these kinds of things that are beneficial. When we're looking at allergies, we're looking at an inflammatory response, a hyperimmune activation response. There's good research showing that omega threes reduce the risk of preterm births. So lots of reasons that pregnant moms, nursing moms get a diet rich in omega threes because that omega, those fatty acids also go into the milk. And so the baby is going to get those wonderful things that are going to be helpful for cognitive development, brain development, good immune support,
Dr. Debby Hamilton (20:30):

And we say mega threes for those who are not as much nutrition, what does that mean and how would you get those? Thank you.
Julie Matthews (20:40):

The number one way we think of is fatty fish. So things like salmon and that kind of thing are going to be rich sources of omega. There are also plant-based sources. The body has to do some conversion to get to the active compounds that we really want the E-P-A-D-H-A, that kind of things. But even things like flax seeds, different types, certain nuts or things like that can have some of those as well. There are also non fish sources of supplements if somebody were allergic to fish that people can find. But then number one place people think of is the fish oils and the fatty fish.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (21:21):

And does it matter what fish oil? Say you're taking a supplement or you're eating salmon, is there any risk for those? What would you look for specifically?
Julie Matthews (21:32):

Yeah, so in pregnant moms and nursing moms, we do want to be careful of fish in terms of mercury, heavy metals, things like that. So we want to get typically the smaller fish, something like a salmon rather than a tuna. And so focusing on those, those are going to be good. If we can do wild salmon, that's going to be helpful as well. Also, fish oils. There's different fish oils, so there's what we call fish oil that can be from sardines and those really small fish, which are great. I love sardines, but lots of people don't, so they might tend more towards something like a salmon, but those kinds of fish. Then there's

also cod liver oil. They're going to have different ratios of that EPA and d, HA. And I feel like for pregnant moms, I don't know, I'd say consume what you can, consume what you like.

(22:40):

I mean, I like fish oil. It's higher in EPA, but whereas toddlers or young children, they need more of that. Or in nursing babies, they need more of the DHA. So some pregnant moms might do whatever's convenient. Maybe nursing moms might choose something a little higher in a DHA. Those are, I believe, maybe a little bit nuanced if I don't want to make it so that moms are so overwhelmed that they don't do anything, they don't know what to do and they don't know what's right. I would say do the best that you can. They're all going to have good beneficial properties, but some people want to dial it in, and that's the nice thing with supplements, as you said, we can dial in the probiotics, we can dial in the fatty acids if we want to.

Dr. Debby Hamilton (23:30):

So then we've talked about the benefit of the probiotics, good bacteria, getting those good probiotics and food, and then omega threes, whether supplements for me, make sure if you use a supplement that it's tested for heavy metals, like a good quality supplement, and then also getting that fish. What about vitamin D? That's another thing I think about in terms of allergies and something that you need to think about going through pregnancy and nursing.

Julie Matthews (23:57):

Absolutely. Oh, one more thing maybe before we run to that is also omega threes. You'll notice that most formulas are required to have Omega-3 now. So most formulas, if an infant isn't able to get all the breast milk or get breast milk, you want to ensure that your formula has those omega threes. Like I said, most should, but again, if you can't nurse, there are ways to get your omega threes in formula as well. And then you brought up a good point on vitamin D. So vitamin D is very important. It's really important for the immune system. It's also important for allergies. And what's interesting, and again, I don't want to overwhelm people, but I like to look at the science I feel. I don't know as much as I am a clinician, I feel that I'm a researcher. So I looked up studies on all of these things before we had our conversation, and there was an interesting study looking at what we call a U-shaped graph.

(25:02):

So for people that means that too little or too much of vitamin D is associated with allergies, food allergies and things like that. So again, most of us don't get too much vitamin DI would say. In fact, you might not even know this statistic better than I do. A vast majority of us in North America are deficient in vitamin D, even my friends down in Florida, because while they have plenty of sun and they are closer to the equator, they hardly get out in the sun so hot most of the time that sadly, most of the friends I have in Florida are still deficient in vitamin D. So it's good to just get your vitamin D levels tested, get some basic levels of vitamin D supplementation, basic amounts of vitamin D in supplementation, but getting your levels tested can really fine tune. Do you need higher amounts than someone else? And the reason I say that is you don't want to overdo vitamin D. Vitamin D can be toxic to us if we get too much and if we just look at this study too little and too much can contribute to allergies,

Dr. Debby Hamilton (26:18):

And it's a really easy blood test. You can do it as part of any kind of prenatal panel. You can do it with a regular LabCorp request. It's not a specialized test. And they agree, but there's also some genetics in vitamin D. So sometimes people feel like they get enough sun and they're low and other people really don't. They have higher levels. And I do, I think about vitamin D is the higher vitamin, is the less allergic potential. So that's going to help, especially before vitamin D is so many different benefits. So I think that those are good.

Julie Matthews (26:54):

Absolutely.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (26:55):

What about mom's diet, like mom's diet? How does the mom's diet during pregnancy or when she's nursing affect the allergy potential in the baby?
Julie Matthews (27:04):

Ooh, this is a good one because there's a lot of information. I remember 20 some years ago when I first started coming into this, there were very different thoughts on the diet for pregnant moms and what they should be consuming. Interestingly, the research actually shows that for moms that are not allergic to foods like peanuts and things that consuming these higher risk allergen foods, eggs, peanuts, milk, again, assuming they're not allergic, can actually reduce the risk of allergies in babies. So I think that's really just a good thing for moms to be aware of. Just consuming a nice, well-rounded diet, including these foods can be beneficial to pregnant moms, nursing moms at different stages.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (28:06):

And I think that I said I'm a pediatrician, and that was definitely not the recommendations. It's like, oh no, you have to avoid these allergenic foods because it's going to increase the risk of allergies. So now we're saying, so if we actually introduce moms, as I said, longs, they're not allergic. This actually prevents the child from having some of these allergies, which I get is a big deal. What about introducing foods for the baby?
Julie Matthews (28:32):

Yeah, this is true for babies as well. So having as appropriate based on how they're doing and assuming it's safe for them, and you haven't observed some reason why they shouldn't be doing that, introducing those allergen type foods in that six to 12 month, even a little younger, again, depends on your pediatrician and what they recommend in terms of age of introduction, they go down to age four months, but I didn't introduce foods to my baby that young. So again, working with your pediatrician on what would be best can be helpful. And what's really interesting is with breastfeeding while you're breastfeeding is particularly beneficial if they're able to do that. I thought that was really interesting. So remember, mom has all sorts of good antibodies in her milk. And so if mom is nursing, I think it's ideal to do those two things in combination, but there's research showing just the earlier introduction of those can be helpful as well. But what's your experience? I'd love to,
Dr. Debby Hamilton (29:45):

And that's, as I said, from being a pediatrician for several decades, I remember first saying like, oh no, you can't give this baby. They have to be age two or three before we can give peanuts. And now we're saying, no, we need to introduce it early. And then a nursing mom, like any allergenic food you're supposed to avoid. So I feel like we've really come far in learning how the immune system and kind of that immune tolerance so the body is not reacting to foods. We're kind of trying to build that earlier. So it's really, it's a big change. I think it's important, you're right, for women who are pregnant or nursing and introducing foods has really changed and it's really a very big preventative measure. And that to me is one of the things in terms of allergies, that's a really big change and really helpful to know that we're really understanding immune system more in order to be preventative essentially.
Julie Matthews (30:38):

Absolutely. And I mean, I don't know if it was just that you and I were involved in this world back then,
Dr. Debby Hamilton (30:45):

But
Julie Matthews (30:45):

It seemed like there were very loud messages to not do it. And I don't hear as many loud messages now that you should add those foods. And so I would imagine there might be a lot of people out there that are remembering that old messaging.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (31:02):

And if you think intuitively, if you don't know about the microbiome and the good bacteria and the immune system, it's like, oh, well, if you avoid it, then you're not going to create the allergies or really shifting. It's like, well, we really need to basically develop the immune system in a normal way. You know what I mean? And you almost need that kind of exposure in a healthy way for the immune system to kind of adapt so you don't get an imbalance and develop allergies. So I really need to think about that. And I think if you kind of like, okay, we're building a healthy immune system with the good bacteria, with the early introduction, we're trying to build a normal immune system.
Julie Matthews (31:42):

And that does go back to that getting exposed to, I mean, this is not the topic of today, but just babies are crawling around putting everything in their mouth, so they are getting exposure to all sorts of things, and that actually builds a healthy immune system. So it kind of goes along with that I feel like and makes sense that that's how our systems would be primed to develop in a positive way.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (32:09):

My mom used to say, that's how the immune system is. You need to exercise the immune system in order to develop properly. There was something called the hygiene hypothesis. The fact that we're sterilizing everything is actually hurting our good bacteria and hurting the immune system, and so causing more allergies. So it's, as I said, kind in a way exercising and educating it in a way. So it's a different way to think about that. So what about many people know you got this good bacteria and then gly, issap and antibiotic. What if you need to take antibiotics like pregnancy? Or what about antibiotic use in a baby? We know that's going to hurt the good bacteria. So can we do, sometimes antibiotics are critical. I mean they're overused, but sometimes they can be important also.
Julie Matthews (33:03):

Yes. I mean, I'll defer a little bit onto you since you're the doctor and you prescribed the antibiotic, but we can add those good probiotics back in. And there are some probiotics and we were talking about dialing things in. There are certain probiotics that are particularly good that maybe don't get killed by good bacteria, I mean, sorry, that don't get killed by antibiotics or that are good to repopulate while we're taking antibiotics. So there are things, there's times in life that physicians like yourself have to prescribe antibiotics, but there are things we can do to try to repopulate and keep that bacteria in good balance. And I think there's times to work with a good pediatrician, and again, I'll defer to you to know to when is it really important to take this antibiotic? There are times it is versus times that maybe they get overused and maybe it isn't an appropriate time. Maybe there's more appropriate strategies. And finding a really good pediatrician to work with that can help distinguish that so that parents can really trust the recommendation of their doctor and then do their best following up with that to try to balance it back again. But what are your thoughts?
Dr. Debby Hamilton (34:24):

Yeah. Well, I think since I said I've been in pediatrics for a long time. At some point, every ear infection needed an antibiotic, but a lot of ear infections are viral and there are some good supportive immune system with probiotics and vitamin D helps fight infections and there are some good herbs that can help. So I think that that pediatrics has started to address, okay, we need to be more cautious about antibiotic use because of it leading to hurting the microbiome and leading to more allergies and more issues. At one point, we'd even give antibiotics every day to prevent air infections. And that would lead to, once we did that, you knew that the kids would have more and more ear infections, it didn't work, and then they end up with ear tubes. I think there is a shift and there's more awareness that most infections in kids,

young kids are viral and parents get scared. But knowing that that's not always the answer, and again, supporting the health and supporting the good bacteria with food and all that is important.
Julie Matthews (35:36):

Absolutely.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (35:37):

Yeah. So I think it is if you can avoid early antibiotic use, but again, you can't be like, oh no, this child has pneumonia in the hospital. We can't give antibiotics. I mean, there are cases that you need it. So I think it's wiser use and supporting for an antibiotic.
Julie Matthews (35:55):

Yes, yes, yes. And then like you said, if we're not doing it all the time, it's going to probably be more effective and do its job. And the microbiome has hundreds and hundreds of species of bacteria and also other microorganisms that create this delicate balance. So if we go in there and we just wipe out a certain thing and we do that over and over, it's hard to get that balance to the same way that it was. So I like that wise sort of judicious use I think makes the most sense.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (36:28):

And I think, as I said, pediatricians are definitely getting better and there is more awareness even in the general pediatric general pediatricians like standard, more traditional pediatricians. There is more and more awareness of when I started, the whole idea about giving probiotics was, oh my gosh, kind of like, what are we doing here? And now there's much more understanding and as parents understand that more too. So I think that there's more awareness too that, well, we got to work on this. This is really important. Absolutely. And correlating that with allergies is really important too. I don't think that is always the connection, the microbiome, the good bacteria and allergies, that connection isn't always understood as well. I think that that's important.
Julie Matthews (37:22):

Can I ask you a question about if there's a mom listening, how does she know what to ask her pediatrician? If the pediatrician just says, yes, you need an antibiotic for this ear infection, are there things that she can ask about, questions she can ask, tests she can ask for. How can she get a better sense that the doctor is making this from an educated perspective? Is there anything she can do
Dr. Debby Hamilton (37:50):

That's hard? That's kind of difficult. I mean, if it's one time, but it's like if every time they go in and there's, oh, there's a sniffles, you need antibiotics, a little bit of a cough, a sinus infection, or really most colds have an element of a sinus infection. So being aware, and if it's more of a chronic pattern, I'd be more concerned and then asking, well, what can I do to help support my baby's gut or digestive tract and talking about probiotics and during and things like that to support it. Because I do think it's important to be aware. And most things in medicine, it's not black or white. It's not never antibiotics or always antibiotics. Right. And I think that we're getting better, but when parents are aware
Julie Matthews (38:40):

Exactly,
Dr. Debby Hamilton (38:41):

And doctors are aware, I think you get a much better balance.
Julie Matthews (38:46):

Great.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (38:47):

And then the correlation, good bacteria, immune system allergies. Yes. How, you know, go through and how they all connect I think is really important.
Julie Matthews (38:59):

Yes.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (39:00):

So can you think of anything else that we haven't discussed that might be important for mom, pregnant moms or moms and young kids that they need to know?
Julie Matthews (39:09):

Yeah. Do we want to talk folate and folic acid?
Dr. Debby Hamilton (39:12):

Oh, sure. Yes.
Julie Matthews (39:13):

Okay. Yes,
Dr. Debby Hamilton (39:14):

Go ahead.
Julie Matthews (39:15):

Okay, great. So most of us that are pregnant, going to get pregnant, we've heard of folic acid, how important folic acid is for spina bifida and these kinds of developmental challenges and things like that. But what I think a lot of people, we always hear of folic acid, but what we don't hear about is folate and that there are different forms of folate, one of them being folic acid. There's other types, the more active methylfolate or methyl tetra hydro folate, different forms of them. And there actually was an interesting study and a variety of studies done looking at unmetabolized folic acid, and we'll talk about where that comes from. That higher amounts of that that weren't metabolized at birth were associated with the development of food allergies. And whereas that was not the case with methylfolate or the active form of folate or food. And when I say food-based folate, I mean things like vegetables, not fortified foods, which we'll talk about in a minute. But so I think that that's interesting is to understand in your multivitamin, what form of folate are you getting? Are you getting folic acid? Are you getting more of or are you getting a folinic acid or a methylfolate, what sometimes they call MTHF or that type of thing. So I think that that is helpful to know about and that concern with excess folic acid during pregnancy being associated with higher food allergies.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (41:10):

So folic acid, literally folates are a type of B vitamin. They're really important for growth and development, cell turnover, and as I said, learning about the proper form because some people can't use the the chemical form, which is in most prenatals. So then there is a prenatal vitamin guide that is available to, so I think the type of, if you have something that's a prenatal vitamin that's recommended will have some of those forms so you don't have to remember this form or that it's like, okay, this one has the types of B vitamins that are going to be the most beneficial for my child. I think of that as something.
Julie Matthews (41:53):

Absolutely. And then if people wondering where this folic acid comes from, it's as you say, it's that synthetic form. So sometimes it's in various forms of prenatals, but also is fortified in food. And we did this many, many decades ago realizing that a deficiency in folic acid led to spina bifida. And so we wanted to avoid that. So when you take a whole grain and you strip it down to that refined white flour, you strip out those B vitamins including that folic acid. So the government said, okay, well we need to fortify and add that folic acid that fol laid back in the form of folic acid. Good intentions, of course. But as you said, certain people have more of a difficulty with that particular form. I mean, it may be a problem for everybody at certain levels and for some people at other levels. So some of it is going to automatically come in some processed foods and things. So the more we can do whole foods, whole grains, vegetables, leafy greens, those kinds of things, we're going to get those natural folates might be

avoiding some of those fortified foods. And then we can get a prenatal vitamin that has the forms that are more recommended today with the new research out.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (43:18):

Right. Okay. I think that's important. It's an interesting understanding that we didn't have, definitely some of these understandings are more recent. It's important to see some of the changes. So grandma's not like, no, no, no, don't give em peanuts. Well, things have changed, so I need to think about that. Yeah. So if there's nothing else you want to just, what do you think the kind of the key points that would be important for moms and moms to be to know?
Julie Matthews (43:48):

Yeah. I think doing our best as pregnant moms to be healthy, eating a nice robust diet with vegetables and whole foods and whole grains and fatty fish and as many of these good homemade foods as we can. Oh, which reminds us, we should talk later about how we're going to be doing another session helping moms make some of those good healthy foods. I think that that alone is step number one. And if we do nothing other than just get good healthy food, I think it's a great place to start. We can also work on our gut and make our gut as healthy as possible and avoid things that might be irritating to our gut. We didn't get a chance to go too much into that, but if that's a particular issue, just a healthy gut. But we did talk a lot about the microbiome having a healthy microbiome, getting that good bacteria, whether it's in food form, raw sauerkrauts, raw, doing things like yogurts or different types of quality foods that are going to get that. Maybe it's a probiotic, maybe it's a special probiotic if we need, we're trying to have good vaginal health. Where are we? What are we trying to do? But just getting that good healthy gut.

(45:21):

I think those types of things are going to go a long way. Getting a good quality prenatal vitamin. Gosh, those are I think some of the big things that would come to my mind to get those organic. So a good healthy, organic whole foods diet, rich in those omega threes, those natural folates, all those types of things, making sure that we've got good levels of vitamin D. So that good quality prenatal is going to go a long way along with a good healthy diet, incorporating a variety of foods, maybe a little bit of those common allergenic foods that we tolerate. And then continuing that. A lot of times pregnant moms will think, Ooh, I'm pregnant. I need to eat those good foods. And then once the baby's born, obviously we have so many things going on, it's hard to even eat food, but let's try to continue those good wonderful principles. They're going to matter after birth while we're nursing as well.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (46:35):

Right. And it's also, if you are eating well, you're going to introduce your child eating well, and then so you want to start as early as you can to get those good habits for both you and everybody in the family. Everybody makes a lot of
Julie Matthews (46:48):

Sense. Absolutely. And actually there's a little research on that actually. It's showing that nursing moms that eat a more varied diet have less picky eaters when their babies are little. And that's likely because there's going to be slight little flavor differences probably in that milk from all those different foods. Or I have to look at the research. I know that research is true. And I don't know if it's the little flavor differences or if it's something visual that they pick up on. If it's something emotional that the babies notice about mom's joy of eating these berries. I'm not exactly sure, but I do know that that research, I've seen that research. So there's lots of great reasons to eat good foods when we're nursing,
Dr. Debby Hamilton (47:33):

Where even the smell, if there's smell, the different foods and the different aromas and think about how smell is a very interesting quick response to the brain and very, yes.
Julie Matthews (47:45):

Good
Dr. Debby Hamilton (47:45):

Point. Anyway, it's good. It's
Julie Matthews (47:47):

Good. It's
Dr. Debby Hamilton (47:48):

Good. It's just good. That's all. Yeah. So I mean, my summary, you went through all the points so well, and I always say, because allergies can be really, really severe with kids and really influence and allergies. I mean eczema, that itchy allergic rash to food allergies, to seasonal allergies, to asthma, can we have a really significant negative impact on these families in this child's life? And the fact that we can do things and some things with foods and supplements and some kind of awareness can make a big difference that can influence the parents' lives, the child's lives. I think it's important to know, and I'm glad we really covered this. So do you want to say, as somebody who busy women busy lives, talk about what we're some of the cooking things or what we're going to talk about on Monday?
Julie Matthews (48:47):

Yes. We're going to talk about all sorts of ways to incorporate good, healthy, whole foods into your life that does not take a lot of time, that you can just set it and forget it and come back and have these wonderful foods while you are, it's sort of doing all the work for you while you are having your busy day caring for your baby. So we're going to get into that
Dr. Debby Hamilton (49:12):

For people. That's great. You're right. Healthy foods easy.
Julie Matthews (49:17):

Yes, yes.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (49:18):

And people that connection's important to know that it doesn't have to take hours in the kitchen. People need to understand that.
Julie Matthews (49:25):

Absolutely. Absolutely. And it's so important, but we know how busy it can be having a newborn, all of that. So all these are going to be practical ideas to make it easy to do it
Dr. Debby Hamilton (49:45):

Practical, easy. So I'm looking forward to that. I said there is a PDF handout to kind of go through, and I think after that I'm just going to say thank you so much taking the time. I always learn from you. It is great to have a discussion. And I said, I'm glad that we can really inform and educate people to help basically have healthier children and hopefully make life easier and happier from preventing some of these chronic illnesses that are happening in our kids.
Julie Matthews (50:19):

Absolutely. And I always learn something new too. So thank you so much. It was fun. Yeah.
Dr. Debby Hamilton (50:24):

Alright, great. Thank you. Thank you everyone. Bye-Bye.
Julie Matthews (50:28):

Bye.