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Surviving and Thriving in a Toxic World - Max Lugavere on Mind Pump • Podcast Notes

About The Author *MMiller*

11-14 minutes

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Check out the Mind Pump [Podcast Page](#)

Key Takeaways

- **If you're going to eat a piece of produce's skin or peel, buy organic**
- Protein is the most satiating macronutrient; **to facilitate weight loss, eat more protein**
- **If you're eating a healthy, whole foods-heavy diet, aim to consume 3-5 grams of sodium per day** (double what the American Heart Association recommends)
 - **Avoid sea salt—it's packed with microplastics**; Himalayan pink salt is best
- **Try to get 30 minutes of 1,000 lux intensity light before noon each day**—this helps set the circadian rhythm
 - (There are a variety of phone apps that allow you to measure an environment's light intensity)
- **Chronic use of anticholinergic drugs (i.e., antihistamines, Benadryl, and many sleep aids) is associated with a dramatically increased risk for dementia**
- One of the best things you can do to limit exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals: **stop storing/cooking food in plastic**

Products Mentioned

- To limit late-night artificial light exposure, wear [blue light blocking glasses](#) at night (*use the code "PodcastNotes10" for 10% off at checkout*)
- Another way to evening bright light exposure: light your home after dark with [Himalayan pink sea salt lamps](#)

Intro

- Max ([Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)) is the host of [The Genius Life](#) podcast (check out the [Podcast Notes](#)) and author of the new book, [The Genius Life](#)
 - Max is also the author of the NYT bestseller, [Genius Foods](#)
- Hosts: Mind Pump consists of Sal Di Stefano (IG: [@mindpumpsal](#)), Adam Schafer (IG: [@mindpumpadam](#)) and Justin Andrews (IG: [@mindpumpjustin](#))

Max Recommends Eating Organic; Why Risk the Adverse Effects of Long-Term Pesticide Exposure?

- **"If you're going to eat the skin or the peel, I recommend buying organic"** – *Max Lugavere*
- The data as to 1) Whether or not organic food is healthier and 2) Whether or not organic food is better for the environment is still up in the air
 - But why risk it? Who knows what the long-term side effects of glyphosate exposure are, especially in children and pregnant women? It's better to err on the side of safety.
 - (Glyphosate is a pesticide sprayed on crops)
 - Also: Glyphosate is a suspected endocrine-disruptor (AKA, it adversely impacts your hormone system)
- To add: **"Studies show that people who consume organic foods have lower measurable levels of pesticides in their system"** – *Sal Di Stefano*

Exposure to Endocrine Disruptors (BPA & Phthalates) Adversely Impacts the Hormone System

- Long-term exposure to these chemicals brings a host of adverse side effects:
 - **Fat storage**
 - **Feminization** (in males)
 - Why? Endocrine-disrupting compounds are xenoestrogens (meaning they act like estrogen in the body).
 - **Reduced testosterone** (in males)
- **Even minimal amounts of BPA exposure adversely affects the insulin response following glucose consumption**
 - Why? – Excess estrogen has an adverse effect on glucose metabolism, leading to insulin resistance
- Fun (?) fact: Using hand sanitizer before touching a store receipt increases BPA exposure
 - (Hand sanitizer opens up the pores in your skin, making it dramatically more permeable to environmental toxins, such as the BPA which lines store receipts)

Seek Out People with Opposing Opinions

- **“I think one of the best possible things you can do with any subject where you have an opinion that’s formed is to seek out someone who has the opposing opinion, who’s also intelligent and compelling, and see if they can change your mind.” – Sal Di Stefano**

The Problem with Veganism

- Many vegans have mental health problems
 - **“There’s a significant overlap between veganism and mental illness. The direction of causality is probably multi-directional—the vegan diet attracts people who have mental health issues, and people who try the diet aren’t getting essential nutrients, like vitamin B12, that are good for the brain.” – Max Lugavere**
- In a sense, vegans disregard self-empathy (as many people who follow a vegan diet are deficient in several nutrients) in favor of empathy towards animals

Max Gives His Take on the Carnivore Diet

- Sure, the carnivore diet is providing some people relief from autoimmune conditions, but for the general population, the diet isn’t optimal; here’s why
 - **Plants are PACKED with beneficial compounds:**
 - **Polyphenols**
 - **Plant pigments**, which are great for brain health
 - **Lutein and zeaxanthin** are essential for preventing age-related macular degeneration (they’ve also been shown to boost brain processing speed in adults)
 - The average adult consumes just 2 mg of combined lutein and zeaxanthin per day—6 mg/day improves eye health, and 12 mg/day improves cognitive function
 - Not to mention: beneficial metabolites are produced when our microbiota ferment plant fiber

The Easiest Way to Lose Weight: Eat More Protein!

- **“Your average person doesn’t realize that protein is the most satiating macronutrient. If you make no change to your diet other than trying to eat more protein, most people are going to see a spontaneous weight loss.” – Max Lugavere**
 - Sal adds: “The biggest problem with modern nutrition is that we overeat. Seeking things out that make you not want to eat as much is an excellent first step.”

Don’t Fear Salt

- **“People who are on the most salt-restricted diets have the highest risk of death. The lowest risk seems to be when people consume about 3 to 5 grams of sodium per day, which is at least double what the American Heart Association recommends.” – Max Lugavere**
- Ultra-processed foods are PACKED with salt, so if you’re eating a standard American diet, definitely don’t try to consume more sodium

- That said, once you cut processed foods out of your diet and switch to eating more whole foods, it's crucial to make sure you're getting adequate salt
- What's the best type of salt?
 - **NOT sea salt; most is contaminated with microplastics**
 - **Max prefers Himalayan pink salt or Redmond Real Salt**
- Further, certain things reduce the amount of sodium in your body:
 - SSRIs, a common anti-depressant drug, for instance, can act as a diuretic and causes you to excrete sodium
 - When you sweat, you also excrete a large amount of sodium

Stop Eating Processed Foods; They Make You Eat More

- According to one study: **“An ultra-processed food-based diet causes us to over-consume about 500 additional calories every day.”** – Max Lugavere

When You Eat is Close in Importance to What You Eat

- “In the hierarchy of *what* you eat versus *when* you eat, *what* you eat is probably still the most important factor, but *when* you eat also matters.” – Max Lugavere
- The lesson: **Limit food consumption post-sundown**
 - Reason #1: We're most insulin sensitive during the day (and our metabolisms are faster)
 - Reason #2: Circadian rhythm disruption (achieved by eating a late-night meal) can alter the hormones that affect the calories out side of the calories in/calories out equation
 - (AKA, the body burns less calories from a meal when it's consumed late at night)
 - Reason #3: Late-night eating suppresses leptin levels (the satiety hormone) and raises next-day ghrelin levels (the hormone that signals hunger)

Early-Morning Light Exposure is Essential for Optimal Health (Early Morning Light is Medicine)

- Max's recommendation: **30 minutes of 1,000 lux intensity light first thing in the AM**
 - If you're curious, use the [Lux](#) app to measure light intensity (fun fact: **even on a cloudy day, the outside environment's light > 1,000 lux**)
- Another reason it's important to get light during the day: it suppresses the production of melatonin, and melatonin makes you less insulin sensitive

Limit Late-Night Artificial Light Exposure (Late-Night Light Exposure is a Carcinogen)

- First, some background:
 - “Melatonin is a sleep hormone—it helps us wind down—but it's not just a sleep hormone. Melatonin is one of the most potent antioxidants in the body; it's involved in gene expression; it's also a gatekeeper of autophagy, which is important for longevity—it helps cells clean house.” – Max Lugavere
 - So, by not allowing your melatonin to be expressed naturally in the later evening hours, you're allowing for all these adverse, potentially carcinogenic, side effects
- A few ways to limit late-night artificial light exposure:
 - **Wear blue light blocking glasses** (use the code “PodcastNotes10” for 10% off at checkout)
 - Adam, personally, has found that wearing them reduces his sleep latency
 - **Replace bright light bulbs with warmer hues**
 - **Or, do what Sal does: Light your home in the evening with Himalayan pink sea salt lamps**
 - **Never go to supermarkets/drug stores late at night** (their lighting easily surpasses 1,000 lux)

The Benefits of Cold Exposure

- “We all know the value of physical exercise, but there's another type of exercise that the modern human has lost touch with: thermal exercise. Getting out and experiencing cold—or even mildly cool—temperatures is to the benefit of our biology.” – Max Lugavere
- **Cold exposure increases your body's brown fat percentage** (the metabolically active form of fat that speeds metabolism)
 - Bonus: Having more brown fat on your body is associated with better brain and metabolic health

The Benefits of Using the Sauna

- **“Regular sauna use is associated with a pretty dramatic risk reduction for cardiovascular disease, stroke, dementia, and Alzheimer’s disease”** – Max Lugavere
- Increased blood flow/circulation throughout the body
- **Sweating is a great way to excrete endocrine-disrupting chemicals and heavy metals**
- It’s an exercise mimetic—when using the sauna, your heart rate rises to a similar level you’d see when using a treadmill
- Lastly, **using the sauna increases immune system strength**, reducing your risk of catching the common cold

Be Careful of Anticholinergic Drugs

- Examples: Antihistamines, Benadryl, and many sleep aids
- For background, anticholinergic drugs block the functioning of a neurotransmitter in the brain and body known as acetylcholine, which is essential for learning and memory
- **“Chronic use of anticholinergic drugs is associated with a dramatically increased risk for dementia”** – Max Lugavere

Two Health Tips

- When cooking, heating plastic causes it to leech in your food—**stop microwaving plastic or using plastic bags when cooking food sous vide-style**
- **In fish, selenium acts as an antidote to mercury toxicity**
 - Avoid: King mackerel, swordfish, and shark
 - Fish that are fine to consume: Tuna, mackerel, and sardines
 - Bonus: In general, studies show that women who consume more fish have babies with higher IQs

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory (NSAID) Drugs Have Multiple Adverse Side Effects

- (Acute use is fine; just don’t take them chronically to relieve pain)
- **“Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs disrupt enzymes that protect the gut barrier, negatively affect the mitochondria of cardiac tissue, and easily cross the blood-brain barrier—and we know that mitochondrial dysfunction of neurons is one of the earliest problems associated with Alzheimer’s disease.”** – Max Lugavere
- Frequent NSAID use reduces muscle strength adaptations from exercise and causes an increased risk of tendon and ligament rupture down the line (NSAIDs block the inflammatory signal which tells the body to repair tissues)
- One more: Frequent NSAID use increases *Clostridioides difficile* (C. Diff) infection risk

Additional Notes

- Mind Pump’s audience is 50% female
 - One reason for such: Men are less likely to hire a personal trainer
- Recently, a farmer who lied about his crops being organic was sentenced to 10 years in jail
- **“Living a life of counting calories—I don’t consider that a genius life. I think people ought to know how to eat.”** – Max Lugavere