



Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses

Dr. Sheila Kilbane



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Rebekah Kelley: Welcome to the Humanized Podcast, all about personalizing your health. I'm your host, Rebekah Kelley. Today I'm excited to have Dr. Sheila Kilbane with us. But before I introduce Dr. Kilbane, I want to remind everyone to subscribe, to get all of our variety of casts in audio, video and transcription at [HumanizedHealth.com](https://www.humanizedhealth.com). I'd also like to thank our lead sponsor, Village Green Apothecary at [MyVillageGreen.com](https://www.myvillagegreen.com).

Dr. Kilbane, I'm so excited to have you here talking about the common thread among the top eight pediatric illnesses.

Sheila Kilbane: Thank you so much for having me. I'm super excited. I can talk about kids' health all day long. So, I'll tell you a little bit about myself and then I'll talk about my new book.

I am a board certified pediatrician. I did extra training in integrative medicine with Andrew Weil through the University of Arizona. I have a private practice in Charlotte, North Carolina, and all I do is integrative medicine.

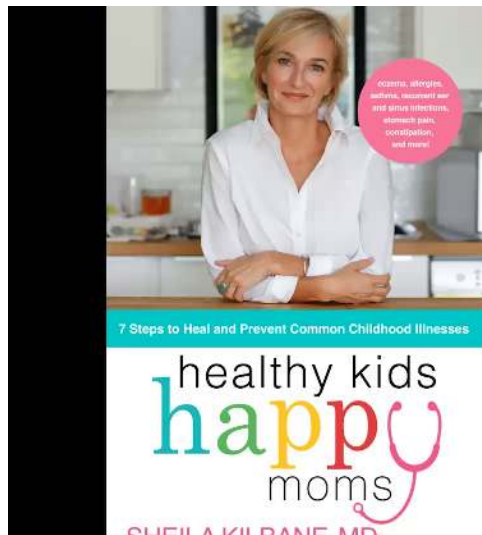


I see kids all day long who have been treated through conventional medicine, but they're still struggling. They come here and we look at food, we look at the gut microbiome, we use supplements and herbs, and mind-body therapies to optimize their systems.

It's an individualized approach, and it's so much fun because we get to see huge transformations and not only for the kids. When I work with a family, I always recommend that they do everything together; and you see great transformations in parents. I just got a call a couple of weeks ago from the dad of one of the kids we're working with. He had been trying to lose weight for 4 years and had done all kinds of different things. He's a big weightlifter. When he implemented the nutritional changes we recommended for his daughter, he lost 10 pounds. Those are some of my most fun things, when parents also have these really great shifts.

Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses

My new book is called *Healthy Kids, Happy Moms*. It is about seven steps to heal and prevent common childhood illnesses.



Common Thread of the Top 8 Pediatric Illnesses

- Reflux
- Eczema
- Recurrent ear and sinus infections
- Chronic runny nose
- Allergies
- Asthma
- Abdominal pain
- Constipation or loose stools

When I first got out of residency, I was prescribing antacids, antibiotics and steroids month after month. It was always the same kids coming into the office and having these recurrent illnesses. I'm not somebody who will continue to do the same thing over and over. So I kept asking myself, what is going on here? Why are these things happening? You do a steroid and the kids get better for 2 weeks; then they're sick again in 2 weeks. And same thing with recurrent ear infections; we'll do an antibiotic and they'll get better.

And then that chronic runny nose comes right back, and a couple months later we're having to do another antibiotic. So I realized that there is a common thread because it's reflux, eczema, recurrent ear and sinus infections, chronic runny nose, allergies, asthma, abdominal pain, constipation, or loose stools. I'm a good listener; I would hear breastfeeding moms say that they changed their diets a little bit and their babies' eczema would improve, or the child's ear infections would start to improve.

And so, it's comical to me now, but I didn't realize what was happening. But it's all about inflammation. One common thread in particular was dairy, which can be quite inflaming for many people. It may contribute to a chronic runny nose, to eczema, to bumps on the back of the arms. Kids might even

Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses

have dark circles under their eyes. We would remove dairy and not only would the eczema improve, but also the chronic runny nose, or recurrent ear or sinus infections would improve.

So I continued to study and really look at these things. And it's all about inflammation, especially right now in our world. We've got a pandemic happening. We have viruses – we know about the repercussions from viruses. It's not always the virus itself, but it is the inflammation that gets triggered from the virus that is the problem. So we're walking around with all of this excess systemic inflammation, our cup of inflammation is really quite full. And then if we can go through and just lessen some of those inflammatory issues, we bring that cup down. When we get exposed to that virus, we're not going to get nearly as sick as we would have previously.



To bring this into a perspective, this was a little boy who came to me. You can see a big difference between the two photos. You see how he's got pale skin and dark circles under his eyes? He doesn't really even have a clear look in his eyes. He's not necessarily really looking at the camera. Then this is him on the right, at least a year later, a better school photographer probably. You see how his skin has that really great coloring. He no longer has dark circles under his eyes, and he's just got a focused, clear look. This little boy now is in college and he got a full ride scholarship.

Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses

At the time of the photo on the left, with that paleness, he had tics and they were so bad that he pulled a muscle in his neck. So what we did was we gradually went through and shifted the nutrition. We looked at the nutrients and shifted them; for him, actually, dairy wasn't the big issue, but gluten was. We took that out of his diet and that allowed his systemic inflammation to decrease. Then he was able to absorb his nutrients more effectively and efficiently from his food. It took time and it was gradual, but then he came to this really beautiful ability to absorb what he was eating. And so I love his picture because it is worth a thousand words.

And I've seen this hundreds of times. It can be asthma, chronic abdominal pain, severe constipation, or loose stool. It just happened to be tics in him, but it can be all of those different common threads.

I like to make things as simple as possible. When we look at this inflammation, we want to ask what is triggering it.

There are five main triggers. We always have our genetics. It is the way our genetics interplay with food, environmental allergies, environmental toxins, infectious diseases, and stress.



Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses

Stress can be physical and it can be emotional. Physical can be, you fractured an ankle or you have scoliosis.

Under infectious diseases, we have our acute illnesses. But also, in functional, integrative, and personalized medicine, we talk a lot about the microbiome and that's what we're looking at. We do stool studies to identify what's going on with the microorganisms in the GI tract. That's a whole other discussion that we'll talk about on another podcast.

With regard to environmental toxins, we just want to make sure that we're breathing in clean air and drinking clean water. We want to make sure we don't have any mold, any water damage in our homes.

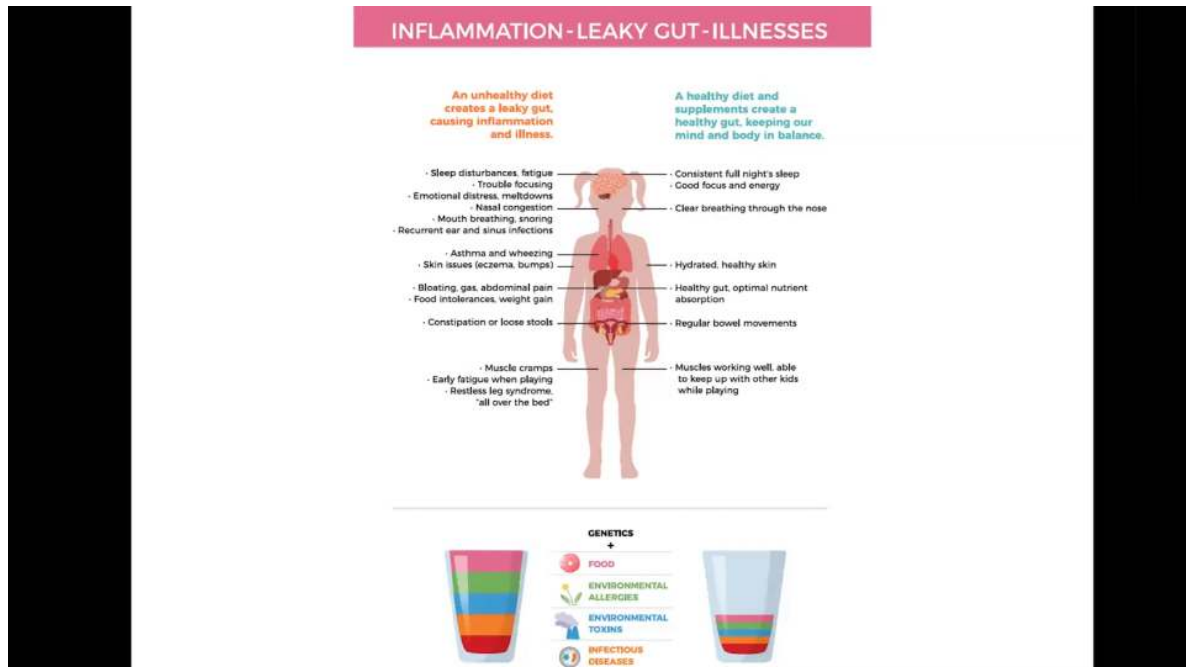
And with environmental allergens, that's something you can review with your primary care doctor or an allergist. They can check you for allergies.

And then food. Food is where I'm going to give you some good, simple tips to start with today. I talked about dairy and gluten with that little boy, but we don't have to do that yet. That's a much later step. We'll talk about some much more simple things that you can do starting today with your families to start to decrease systemic inflammation.

To give you another little visual, we've got the cup of inflammation on the left; when that cup is overflowing, we have symptoms. That's when we get the litany of illnesses and symptoms that come with all of that inflammation.

Leaky gut is another term that many of you may have heard. It's when we eat a lot of junk food, artificial dyes and colors, and maybe take some medications, like antacids or steroids, and they contribute to inflammation along the GI tract. This will also hinder our ability to digest and absorb nutrients. So again, what we're working toward is decreasing that inflammation. Then we lessen all of those symptoms. We get deeper, better sleep, less congestion, less runny nose.

Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses



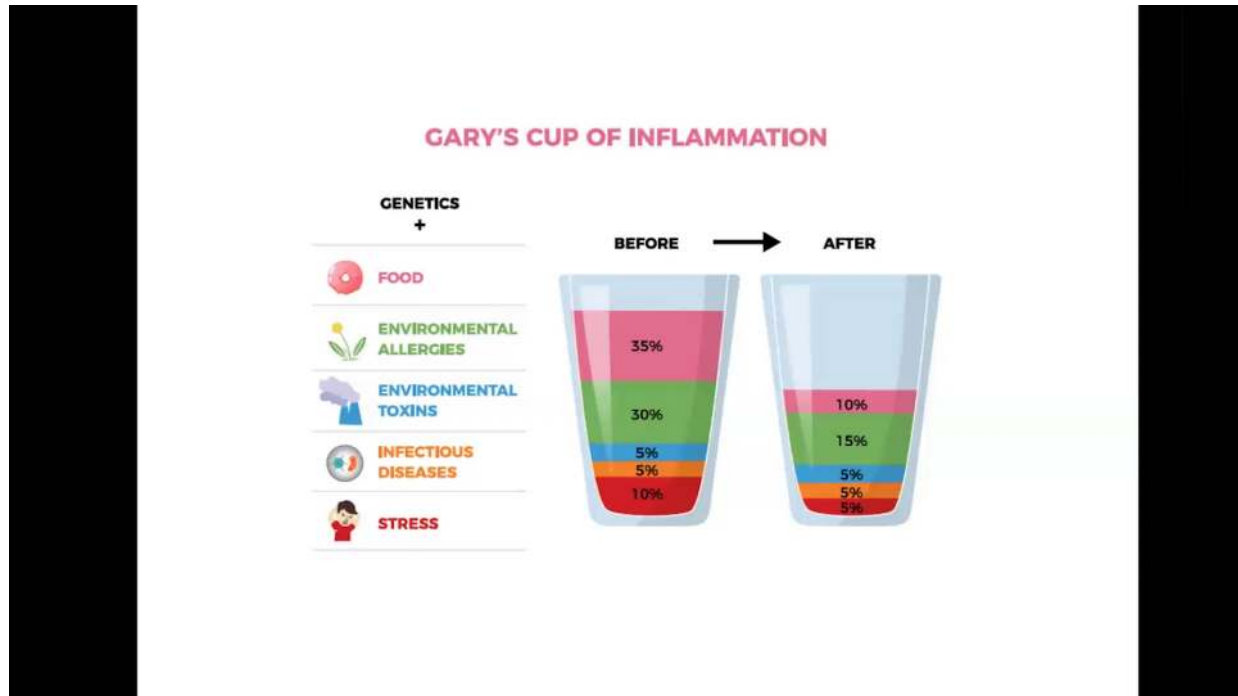
I want to solidify the point. I want to give you another case example. This was a case of a little boy. He was about 6 when I first met him and his mother. He had wheezing and recurrent sinus infections. When you get wheezy you have to take albuterol, which helps decrease wheezing in the lungs. When we went through his triggers of inflammation, he had a significant dust mite allergy, and a sensitivity to dairy. And I knew he had a sensitivity to dairy based on his history. He had had a lot of reflux and feeding issues as an infant. He had dark circles under his eyes and he was a mouth breather.

He was sort of a Darth Vader breather; he was sitting on the exam table and I could hear him breathing. And so we took dairy out of his diet. Since he had a dust mite allergy, the other thing we figured out was that he was sleeping on a mattress that had been his uncle's from when his uncle was in college. So that would have had a lot of dust mites. So we got into the mattress. We took out dairy. And within 2 to 3 weeks, he was a different child.

I make this case. This is a visual depiction of how, for him, the food in the more inflamed cup was taking up a lot of space with the dairy, because that was inflaming him, and then his environmental allergies with the dust mites.

Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses

Just by decreasing those, we decreased his symptoms enough that he didn't have to continue to use the albuterol and he went on antibiotics very rarely. We were able to head off the course of his illness without a ton of intervention.



It's not always easy to change your diet. But when you see the results so clearly, it's much easier to keep it up. So that's what happens with the kids.

Rebekah Kelley: Sheila, does your book allow people to understand the process, what they need to do and where they need to go? Is that something they'll be able to use as a resource? Can they go to your website right now to find out more information? What would be the next step if people suspect that they actually are having this situation with their child, they know how to address it?

Inflammation: The Common Thread in Childhood Illnesses

Sheila Kilbane: They can definitely go to the website at SheilaKilbane.com We'll have all of the resources there. We have an online course and we're updating that. We go through things step by step. I'll also provide you all with the links today, just for our mini-cleanse. These are some really simple steps that you can start doing. You don't have to take dairy or gluten out of the diet, but just start with sugary drinks and do that. You can do that day one. Day two, we just do a little mini-cleanse for kids. And this is what we start with so that it's not overwhelming. Day three, artificial dyes and colors and packaged snacks. And then day four, five and six we decreased refined sugar, decreasing processed meats, things like hotdogs.

Rebekah Kelley: This is all available online, so they can actually go and visit?

Sheila Kilbane: Yup. And we have a link. We do have a little mini-cleanse that parents can sign up for. And then this will get emailed right to your inbox and walk through this.

Rebekah Kelley: Thank you so much Dr. Kilbane. Those are valuable insights. More information can be found at www.SheilaKilbane.com.

And let me remind you to subscribe and get access to all Humanized videos, podcasts and transcriptions from all of our thought leaders on personalized health at HumanizedHealth.com.

Thank you so much for being here with us.

Sheila Kilbane: Absolutely. Thanks for having me.



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