

**EPISODE 220****[INTRODUCTION]**

**[00:00:10] AVH:** Welcome everybody to Paleo Magazine Radio. Today, we are talking about digestive health with an expert who has had more than her fair share of digestive health challenges. Aglaee Jacobs is a registered dietician and nutritionist with more than 12 years' experience. She is the author of *Digestive Health With Real Food* and she has suffered from IBS, CEBO and PCOS. In addition to that, she overcame nearly two decades of disordered eating, poor body image and binge eating disorder. She has a lot of experience and a lot of hard work in her past. She's now passionate about helping people who are struggling with these health issues.

Especially helping women heal their relationship with food and their bodies and that's where the book came from. We're going to do a giveaway of this awesome book as well on social media so make sure you head over to Instagram, @paleomagazine when we post about this for your chance to win one of her books.

I'm not going to give away the whole chat before we get into it. One of the key takeaways for me was around mindfulness of your food and of the eating process. I know I am absolutely guilty of eating while I'm on my phone, while I'm looking at my laptop. Scarfing down the food without really thinking about it.

Even though we know that it's better to slow down, it's better for our digestion, to really pay attention and enjoy what we're eating, to chew more, all of that stuff. It keeps you from overeating, it makes you more satisfied, it's just a good mindfulness practice overall.

Many of us are distracted while we eat. It can be really tough to tear ourselves away from screens and distractions. Something I would really like to try this week is a slowdown and eat challenge. I'm going to challenge myself and anyone else who wants to try to have at least one meal every day where you would normally be looking at a screen and eat it with zero distractions.

You could have a friend with you, sure, family. But no screens. Really, take your time, you know, put your fork down between bites, pay attention to how you feel, are you anxious because you're not reading something, do you feel better, maybe you eat less, maybe you enjoy your food more, maybe you have an epiphany about life, or maybe you just enjoy your meal.

I don't know, let's not go too far with that but let's try it okay? I'm going to use the hashtag #slowdownandeat on social media on my own Instagram @themusclemaven and I'm going to document how it goes for me. I would love for you to join me in that, it would make me super happy and honestly, I just don't want to do it by myself.

Follow that hashtag, follow me on social media, let's try this together and we can consider it our good deed for ourselves this week, okay? All right, that is just the tip of the iceberg as far as this conversation goes. I hope you enjoy it but before we get into it, here is a quick word about our show sponsor Chomps.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[00:02:55] AVH:** Chomps makes healthy meat sticks that are multiple *Paleo Magazine* best of award winners, you don't have to take my word for it, these are very popular in the paleo community and they really do a good job of hitting those salty, meaty beef jerky cravings but they're infinitely healthier and tastier than your typical gas station variety, they are made with 100% grass fed and finished, open pasture beef which not a lot of meat sticks can say for themselves, they have nine grams of proteins, six grams of fat, zero carbs.

Perfect for all you low carb folks and they are non-GMO, they have no added sugar, gluten, soy, dairy or fillers, binders, MSG, none of the bad stuff, all the good stuff and they have four awesome flavors, they've got original beef, one was cranberry, one with salt and pepper and for those of you who like it spicy, like I do, there's a jalapeño flavor as well which is really good.

You can go to [chomps.com](http://chomps.com) to learn more and I have an exclusive promo code for you if you want to get some, you can put in the code "paleomag" at checkout for 15% off your entire order and free shipping. Do yourself a favor, get some awesome paleo snacks, go to [chomps.com](http://chomps.com) and let me know what you think.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:04:14.0] AVH:** All right, Aglaee, thank you so much for being here, welcome to the podcast, how are you?

**[0:04:19.9] AJ:** I'm great, thank you so much for having me, I'm excited to talk about some of my favorite topics today.

**[0:04:24.0] AVH:** Yeah, it's so nice to have a fellow Canadian on the podcast, it's nice to hear that French Canadian accent, I love it. I'm so used to talking to Americans, not that there's anything wrong with that but it's really nice to have another Canadian on the podcast, so welcome.

**[0:04:37.4] AJ:** Thank you.

**[0:04:39.3] AVH:** You wrote a book, *Digestive Health With Real Food*, congratulations on that by the way. I would love for you to, before we get into some kind of drilled down questions that I have from reading the book, I would love for you to give our listeners just a little bit of background about yourself, how you came to write the book and I know you have some sort of personal experience with digestive challenges as well.

If you could tell us about that, that would be great.

**[0:05:02.0] AJ:** Definitely. I am a registered dietician and with trained conventionally with all of the crazy nonsense, with the food guide and food pyramid and all of that and I practiced for a little bit, following those guidelines and then I decided that I kind of lost hope, I lost faith in food as medicine, just you know, wasn't working. Because of course, I was following the diabetes guideline which are not really the best way to help people with diabetes get their blood sugar under control.

So I kind of lost my hope that food could work as medicine and I was actually ready to quit my career. I sold everything I had and decided to just take some times for myself to think about

what I really wanted to do and I decided to go backpack in South America for a few months and there, I found a lot of very unexpected answers that around that time, in 2010, the world of podcasting was still very different but I was listening to some podcast from Rob Wolf and learning about paleo which was really outside of the box for someone who was trained as a conventional registered dietician.

I was just learning about those new ideas and while I was in South America, I caught a parasite which completely destroyed my digestion, my digestive system and things never went back to normal, even after treating it and even as a registered dietician, even you know, even with a bachelor and master's degree in nutrition, I still didn't have any of the answers to help me get better. From that point on, I knew that it was something to do with food, but I really had to go back and redo my own education and relearn and really challenge everything I had learned and try a lot of different things by myself.

Tada, I managed to heal myself and then decided to write the book to share with others.

**[0:06:58.2] AVH:** Okay, I have a bunch of questions from the story already. You were struggling – were you struggling with health issues or digestion issues prior to going on your trip?

**[0:07:11.0] AJ:** Not at all, no. I mean, I had an appendicitis and appendectomy but not really. Maybe that would have, maybe that made me even more prone to having a parasite infection who knows, maybe there was something brewing in there but no, I never had any complain about my digestion. Health wise, I was pretty healthy although I had been kind of struggling on and off with my weight.

For a long time, I was diagnosed with PCOS later on, which I totally had for many years prior to that but yeah, over all, you know, pretty standard average kind of health.

**[0:07:46.2] AVH:** Okay, do you know exactly how or where, when, you caught the parasite and then how did you heal from that initially?

**[0:07:55.1] AJ:** Yes, I know exactly, it was in the Peruvian jungle, I got so sick on that trip from probably the food there, I was not the only one who got sick but from there, everything started to

not work as it should. I was having a lot of bloating and indigestion and just yeah, started feeling very unwell and so I really know that's when it happened. For so many people with digestive issues, it starts that way whether it's about a food poisoning at home in their home country. When they go traveling and in other countries, yeah, after a few months of that, I felt in my gut that I knew, my intuition was telling me that I had a parasite, so I got kicked out for it and luckily they were able to confirm it and I went on some extra treat it. It helped for a little while but then things just yeah, there was definitely something that was off-balance in my gut, a lot of damage and inflammation caused by the parasite and then some imbalance caused by taking the antibiotics that made me want to look deeper.

**[0:09:04.2] AVH:** It's crazy, the things that are fixing you are also causing new problems, it's like a never ending cycle. Then, you mentioned you have PCOS as well, is that something that you, and forgive my ignorance for this but is this something that you always have, you can't necessarily, like eradicate it or fix it but can it go into like remission or you can just manage it so well that your symptoms are basically invisible or how does that work?

**[0:09:31.8] AJ:** Good question, just in case, some of the listeners are not teachers, what I'm talking about, PCOS stands for polycystic ovarian syndrome. It's one of the most common female hormonal disorders, one of the number one cause of infertility in women and there are many ways that we know that we can manage that we can make it better, that we can control the symptom that we can improve fertility. But what I would like to tell listeners is that, I think that every case of PCOS can be very different from each other.

But personally, I have been able to get the number of cysts in my ovaries down significantly, because at diagnosis, I had 60 cysts on my ovaries and then three years later, I think two or three years later, I had my ovaries checked again and the number was down to 18. This is like about a 70% reduction or something and I'm sure, now it's been four years so I'm sure that it has probably gone down again. I think it can heal.

**[0:10:31.9] AVH:** That's with no surgery?

**[0:10:34.1] AJ:** Exactly, no, just with diet and lifestyle changes alone and supplements, yeah.

**[0:10:39.1] AVH:** Crazy, wow. Okay, I know we're spending a lot of time on this back story but I'm interested, when you were taking some time off and feeling maybe a little bit frustrated and you were listening to some of these podcasts by Rob Wolf and folks like that. How did you get into that, what made you kind of start to look in these different directions for other answers to how we should be fueling our bodies? Because I know a lot of people have different stories for how they – You know, everyone kind of, at one point gets frustrated with the standard kind of diet system. What made you decide to look elsewhere and how did you find some of these other resources?

**[0:11:18.3] AJ:** Yeah, that's a good question because I actually started looking to that before. Everything happened kind of the same time, I started opening my mind, my eyes, to this other way of doing things, this other way of eating and this whole other side of nutrition and health that I wasn't aware of and then got diagnosed with my digestive issues and my PCOS.

I think that what really started it is that I was just – it's interesting because as registered dietitians, we're taught that you know, we know everything about nutrition. We're the authority on nutrition, like everybody else that says otherwise, that says something that is different, they just don't know what they're talking about.

I had kind of that mentality too, that's how I was trained but at some point, I was just so fed up. It was not working with my clients, the people that was working that had type two diabetes and telling them to eat like 60 to 75 grams of carbohydrates per meal, that was just not working. I thought I have to look elsewhere. I was just looking for just a single thread that would give me hope that there was something about nutrition that could – where food could really be used as medicine.

**[0:12:26.7] AVH:** Right. You're a registered dietitian, is there ever an issue with being a registered dietitian and also encouraging or studying in this sort of real food, maybe even ancestral, a little bit of an ancestral kind of diet approach to helping people with their gut health issues?

I ask this question because I was just at an event called Paleo f(x) where I was speaking with a woman that's written for a magazine, *Paleo Magazine* in the past and she literally officially got

rid of I guess her registered dietician status because folks I guess in the industry, whatever, were kind of pressuring her to not use this approach that's sort of maybe a little bit higher fat, a little bit lower carbs, a little bit more whole foods approach and she felt that she just wasn't maybe like welcomed in that sort of community because she was doing something that was so different than sort of the party line that people are you know, the way they're telling you to eat. I don't know if it's different in Canada too.

Do you ever feel like there is an imbalance with like the registered dietician side and then this other kind of approach that you have?

**[0:13:37.4] AJ:** Definitely. I think I know who you're talking about but yes, it's very similar in Canada and the US. Actually, you know, a lot of people ask me that question like, "Is there an issue with you we're committing something that's not in line with Canada's food guide or you know, the US food plate?" Or whatever.

Actually, it's not part of my being a registered dietician, I don't have, it's not mandatory for me to endorse that, what is mandatory is that we practice in an evidence-based way and as you know, plenty of evidence-based way. As you know, plenty of evidence supporting a lot of this higher fat, lower carb approach and no grains and you know, all of the nutrient density of a lot of the food included in the real food based diet or paleo diet so of course I was afraid to kind of you know, come out of the closet at first when I started building my website back in 2011 I think.

But yes, I think that what helped me feel stronger with that is that I started building right away a community of other like-minded dieticians who have a Facebook group. We started, we were only three, I looked out for all of the other dieticians I could find at the time that were practicing differently too. I could only find two, so we were three to start with but now we're over 600 or 700, I think close to 800 actually. It's changing with time.

**[0:14:58.0] AVH:** Yeah, it's crazy, what growth, that's pretty impressive.

**[0:15:01.5] AJ:** Yes. I think that you know, being united, we can just be stronger, if something happens to one of us, we get criticized or someone filed a complaint or something, we can just stand together, stand strong together.

**[0:15:15.0] AVH:** Right. I mean, the whole evidence-based thing, as soon as you said that, I just like, immediately felt calmer inside because I'm like "Yes, it seems like common sense" but yes, evidence-based, it makes so much sense, this is the way we should be doing everything.

So getting into the book, *Digestive Health With Real Food* which is awesome by the way, I read the whole thing.

**[0:15:36.7] AJ:** Thank you.

**[0:15:37.3] AVH:** It's quite a book too. You know, I am one of those people who likes to – I conjured out on this stuff and I like to learn, and I like to at least pretend that I know what I'm talking about when I'm talking to smart people on the podcast. I have, maybe rather than initially talking in general terms about what ideal digestive health is and you know, what foods you should or shouldn't eat.

That is a big topic and something we do talk about a lot and that information's out there and it's certainly covered in this book. I do have some more sort of specific drilled down questions because you have so much great information in here and things that I maybe hadn't heard before or didn't know. I know that if I have a question that other listeners probably have this question too.

I'd love to ask you some of these kind of more specific questions, and then we'll see how it goes and kind of like circle back at the end with some maybe some higher-level stuff. But one question, the first question I have, I'd love for you to talk about the importance of stomach acid because it's obviously something that's a crucial part of our biology and I think that a lot of people, there's some misinformation about what exactly it does, how to strike the right balance of you know, acidity and alkalinity in our bodies and you know, the idea that if we have acid reflux or heartburn that that's because we have too much acid or I don't know.

I think we're maybe I'm speaking for myself here, but I think that maybe a lot of people don't exactly know what it does or how we get this sort of correct balance of stomach acid and why it's important. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**[0:17:10.1] AJ:** For sure, this is such a good question and this is something that a lot of people are scared of like acidity, that sounds very scary having that in our stomach. But when we do eat food, it is so important, especially for digestion of protein to have enough acidity in our stomach and you know, if our digestion system is working optimally, we eat food, there's going to be hydrochloric acid which is the type of acid secreted in our stomach that will be produced and released and that will help the breakdown of food.

Then, there's the whole cascade of things that happen further down into the digestive system that requires to have sufficient levels of acidity in the stomach. When the balls of food that has been churned into the stomach for a few hours, when it starts going into the small intestines, it needs to have the right PH or the right acidity level to tell the pancreas that it's time to release pancreatic enzymes, so those enzymes will further digest the protein and fats and carbohydrates.

Also tell the gallbladder to release the bowel that is so important to emulsify the fats and make them more easily digested and absorbed. There's this whole – that's one part of it, like how stomach acid helps us better digest our food and there's also the fact that stomach acidity is one of the first barriers that protects us against parasites and food poisoning and any – it's kind of the – If we have enough acidity in our stomach, we'll be a lot less likely to have those parasites and all of those kinds of gastrointestinal infection like the one I got down in South America, maybe I wouldn't have at it if I had enough stomach acid.

I mean, there's not a ton of studies but what we know is that it seems like people who have been on a vegetarian diet tend to not have as much acidity in their stomach and probably because this acidity is required to break down protein and if we don't eat as much protein or as much animal product then the stomach is not required to produce as much acidity and people just end up having less and less, that was myself in the vegetarian diet.

Prior to my trip to South America. Maybe it affected my acidity level and made me more prone to having a parasite infection. What else is there to say about it? I feel I could do a whole podcast on stomach acidity. There's that.

**[0:19:43.2] AVH:** There was a diet or something that I heard, it was like the alkaline diet and you eat for alkalinity or like to balance the acid in your body. I don't even know what that means but is that something that you want? Like I mean, you did just elude to if you're eating not too much animal protein then you may have less acid because that's what's necessary in your stomach to break down proteins, but would people argue that that's not a bad thing if you're eating mostly vegetables?

Then you naturally have lower acid levels, that's okay. Can you eat for different acidity levels and should you want to or does it just kind of sort itself out naturally if you're eating a whole foods diet?

**[0:20:22.9] AJ:** Good question, yes. It's a bit different, the levels of acidity that you had in your stomach are different than what people are usually talking about with the alkaline diet is the PH balance that we have in our whole body, like our blood and all of that which is different than what can be found in the compartment of our stomachs.

Yes, I'm not a fan of the alkaline and acidic kind of base theory of choosing specific foods. I feel like, if we have variety and balanced and base our diet on real foods that as little process as possible, things balance themselves out naturally.

I think that's something really important to know. Then, when it comes to the levels of acidity in our stomach. Sometimes are things that we need to do because as we age, if we've been on a vegetarian diet for a long time, our stomach can just lose the ability to secrete enough stomach acid and then as I said, it can cause a lot of problems further down into the digestive system by not digesting food properly which can lead to bloating, which can lead to constipation or diarrhea or abdominal discomfort and all of that.

Also, to malnutrition and deficiencies because we won't be able to absorb a lot of our nutrients as well if that whole cascade doesn't go properly. Sometimes, you know, it can be as simple as taking our time to eat because when we're eating in a stressed state in that fight or flight mode with our sympathetic nervous system activated then our body, the whole digestion system won't work as well.

That includes our stomach not being able to secrete as much hydrochloric acid. Slowing down and taking it easy and a stress coping mechanism can be really helpful and sometimes there can be also supplements and herbs that can help enhance the level of acidity in our stomach. Again, there's also a big myth that acid reflux is caused by too much acidity in the stomach but again, it's usually the opposite, it's usually people that have too little acidity in their stomach that have acid reflux.

The reason why is because even though it may seem counterintuitive, it's because the sphincter where it's kind of the little door between the esophagus and the stomach, it needs to stay shut you know, we don't want the content of the stomach to back up into the esophagus because of course it will burn, it's not meant to be there. But we need to have enough acidity in the stomach to help that sphincter which is called the lower esophageal sphincter, that little door to stay shut and keep the content of the stomach inside the stomach and prevent it from backing up into the esophagus. Does that make sense so far?

**[0:23:06.2] AVH:** It does make sense and basically, one of the key takeaways here is stomach acid is good, don't be afraid, word acid sounds scary but it's good and it's necessary. Is there a way to test if you have low stomach acid? If you were saying some of the symptoms could be that you aren't digesting your food great or that you're having some bloating but those can be caused by so many things, right?

Is there a way to tell if your stomach acid levels are okay?

**[0:23:33.8] AJ:** You can but it's almost never done because there's a Heidelberg – I talk about it in the book, something like Heidelberg, something like that, the name of the test that it can have done but it's usually very expensive and most doctors are not even familiar with it. I found out what's the best way for people to test is by supplementing with it. If they see improvement, that is probably because they were low in the first place. That's usually what seems to be the most – what the best cost to benefit ratio is.

**[0:24:01.9] AVH:** Got it, okay. I guess the other takeaway is you know, if you're doing what you can to eat a whole foods diet that is like nutrient dense diet that is like nutrient dense and all of

these great things that your stomach acid kind of just takes care of itself, it's not something you really need to be overly concerned with, right? Your body kind of knows what to do.

**[0:24:20.0] AJ:** Exactly. If you have those digestive issues and suffer from malnutrition then you may feel like stomach acidity may be more of a problem and for certain people, they just need to supplement and do certain things to optimize their acidity level, their stomach acidity level for a little while, for a few months and then the body just learns how to do it on its own again and there's no need to supplement for the rest of their life. It can be a temporary adjustment.

**[0:24:48.5] AVH:** Okay, got it. Okay, another term that you mentioned in the book that I had never heard of before that I'm really interested in you expanding on for me, is the concept of cleansing waves. This is what happens in your intestines or something that helps you.

I don't know, I guess you can explain exactly what it does but why it's important and ways to promote these cleansing waves and how we can make sure that they're working properly in our body.

**[0:25:14.5] AJ:** Yeah, this is not something I learned in school either. I learned it through my own research and this is so cool. It's called, the real scientific name is MMC or Migrating Motor Complex. More commonly, we can call them the cleansing wave or like the house keeper of the gut.

It's really cool because you can see on some videos, you can look that up online of the intestine doing this kind of movement which is really different than the usual movement like when we're digesting, the intestine's move to you know, to help food and the leftover and whatever move throughout the intestines. That's one type of movement that are gut can have. The second type of movement is when we have a bowel movement to take things out of our body and the third type is this, the cleansing wave which happens usually only when we are in a fasted state.

For people that are constantly grazing and eating all day long, this doesn't happen as much. But for most of us, it will happen overnight and overnight it usually happens every 90 minutes or so and it's more like a shaking motion where it really kind of, a sweeping motion to move anything that may be stuck there to remove any debris.

To remove any overgrowth of bacteria or any kind of microbes that may be there, so this is something that is really important for the health of the digestive system but we don't talk about it enough. I just mentioned that eating very often and grazing through the day is one thing that can inhibit the cleansing wave. Another thing that can inhibit them is stress so that's really important to know. On the flip side, what are ways that we can promote those cleansing wave? I don't – you know, I'm not committing fasting but if we can have a good 12 h ours of not eating between our last meal of the day or dinner and our next breakfast.

That's a really good way to promote our cleansing wave and let them do the work that they need to do overnight. Then if we can have you know, our three meals, no snack in between, again, not everybody has to do that but if you know, some people feel like that their digestive system is not working as well as it should, that's maybe one strategy that can help optimize their cleansing waves.

Things like probiotics or just taking fats or vinegar on an empty stomach can also stimulate the cleansing waves.

**[0:27:42.3] AVH:** Okay. This, I got to say this may be a little bit sad because I am somebody who likes to graze like all day long, but I shouldn't be, so I appreciate what you're saying. I guess what you're saying too is that a lot of this work, this great work to kind of cleanse and clean out our gut in our intestines is happening at night while we're resting and while we're not eating, right?

I guess then, there's also a little bit of truth to the idea that never giving your digestive system a break. If you're just kind of constantly eating, that is sort of a stresser and you don't get that kind of down time for your systems to do the sort of background cleanup work that it needs to do, right?

**[0:28:23.5] AJ:** Exactly, you got it. I think you know, for those of you who like grazing, I think you know, the first strategy, I think what is the most important is really to try to have that window of you know, where you're getting your digestive system a break and overnight is the perfect time to do it. You know, people that feel like really, their digestion is not working as well then maybe

they can look into the grazing part but for some people, grazing works well too. It's really individual but I think an overnight break is much needed for many of us. A good 12-hour window works well.

**[0:28:52.8] AVH:** Got it. What about if we are, and we don't have to get down the whole road of fasting because goodness knows, we talk about fasting on this podcast but the stuff like drinking coffee or tea or sparkling water or things like that, like drinking, is that going to affect it? If you're like, maybe having some coffee with collagen in it like between meals, is that stuff going to inhibit or not so?

**[0:29:18.1] AJ:** Anything that provides some sort of nutrition would definitely inhibit, just water, not really because it's absorbed quite high up in the digestive system. Yeah, things with collagen for sure, like that kind of you know, that kind of breakfast coffee with a lot of stuff in it would definitely be something that would inhibit that cleansing ways as well.

**[0:29:39.5] AVH:** Got it, okay.

**[0:29:40.3] AJ:** Kombucha too for sure.

**[0:29:41.7] AVH:** All right. We talk about stomach acid, now I want to talk about poop because that's very important and it's something that we all have in common and it's a very good indicator in many cases of how your digestion's doing and one of the things that you talk about in the book, you did sort of your own version of the Bristol stool chart which I first saw, I think it was in Paul Chek's book but it's basically sort of a chart, like outlining the different kind of ways your stool, your poop can look and what those things are indicating and there's like sort of an ideal bowel movement, right?

I'd love for you to kind of, as fun as that is, I guess this isn't exactly a visual conversation but if you could kind of just talk us through that a little bit and how we can use this information that we're getting every day to help identify maybe what our issues are and also talk a little bit about like what's normal in terms of frequency. Because I always thought that it was sort of whether it's once a day or three times a day or every other day as long as it's sort of regular for you, that's okay.

Yeah, just talk to us a little bit about poop, please?

**[0:30:50.8] AJ:** Yeah, for sure. I'm known to talk about poop, my mom gave me a book stocked with poop emojis on it. Yeah. I have a three-year-old and that page in my book, it's his favorite page for sure. I talk about it all the time. Anybody who is listening, you know, you can Google Bristol stool chart and you'll find many different variations of that but it usually, it always ranges from type one to type seven.

There are seven different types of poop that we can have. Type 1 is kind of the rabbit pellets like very dry, small type of poop and as we go to where it's number three and four, it's like form, more like a sausage, that kind of poop then if we go you know, to five, six, seven that it become looser and looser until it reaches number seven when it's completely kind of liquid.

Hopefully you people are not listening while they're eating or something but –

**[0:31:53.7] AVH:** Well, you know, it's something we're all familiar with whether we like to talk about it or not.

**[0:31:59.9] AJ:** Just the consistency and appearance of our stools is a great indicator of how things are going, usually if we have type one, type two, those drier can be harder to pass, it's usually more on the constipation side and looser can be more diarrhea but a lot of people can fluctuate anywhere between that.

As you may have guessed, somewhere in the middle is optimal. A type three or four where it is formed, doesn't break apart, it's kind of a sausage, it's easy to pass and eliminate, that's kind of the ideal. Another thing to look at when we are looking at our stool is the color, it's usually you know, brown color but sometimes it can be, if it's a lighter in color, kind of chalky color, it can indicate fat malabsorption.

Especially if the stools are floating and if you notice kind of an oily appearance and sometimes the smell can be quite unpleasant if there is fat malabsorption and this is something I mentioned because a lot of people who go on a paleo diet, or on a higher fat diet may have that at the

beginning just because they increase their fat intake so quickly and their body doesn't have a chance to adjust and their bowel and the gallbladder, there is not enough bile released to adjust for that. Sometimes just increasing your fat intake more slowly can help prevent that.

It is also important to look for any undigested pieces of food in our stools because that clearly indicates that your digestive system is not breaking down food as well as we should and just one thing that I want to mention, not necessarily related to poop, but a lot of people don't chew very well and they eat very quickly and they eat while they're being distracted and we don't have any tooth in our stomach or in our intestines. So, it is very important to make sure that we chew properly in our mouth.

But then even people that are chewing properly and there are undigested food particles in their stools that's a clear indicator that you're actually throwing the money you're investing in your organic quality food. It's actually going into the toilet actually part of it, so that's why it matters so much to pay attention to your poop because it is not only in your health, it is not only about the food we eat. It is about the food that we're able to absorb and that has a lot to do with the health of our digestive system.

**[0:34:26.0] AVH:** Absolutely.

**[0:34:27.3] AJ:** And then in terms of frequency, yeah, some people think, "Okay, I'm regular. I go every two days or every three days but I am regular." But it's still not enough. Ideally, we would like to have between one and three bowel movements every day. So that we make sure that we are not keeping in any toxins and waste in our body for too long and that we move things through our body on a regular basis. That's the optimal, yeah.

**[0:34:56.4] AVH:** Yeah and I think something that folks should remember too because you talk about this in the book is the idea of sort of like transit time and things taking time whether it's reactions that you have to food or what you are seeing when you go to the bathroom because what you're seeing isn't necessarily or usually isn't a result of what you just ate or what you recently ate. So if you are having great bowel movements but you are eating garbage for the last couple of days that could have been a result of the better food you were eating before.

Or if you are having these dehydrated kind of bowel movements maybe it is because – and you have been drinking a lot today but maybe yesterday you didn't, right? So is that something that you need to consider too is the timing and how long this stuff takes to get through?

**[0:35:41.3] AJ:** Such a good point, yeah. Usually the transit time which is the amount of time it takes for food to move through your entire digestive system from the mouth to the toilet would be between 12 and 24 hours. So yes, it is absolutely right that if we notice something in our stools it is not necessarily the result from our last meal. It would actually be the result of something that happened 12 to 24 hours earlier and it is the same with food reaction.

A lot of people if they start feeling bloated and unwell and they feel like some food did it, they tend to look at their last meal but sometimes it could be something they ate 48 hours ago. It is not always that simple unfortunately.

**[0:36:21.9] AVH:** Right, no none of this is simple. That is one thing I learned. The more I read, the more I talk to people like you, the more I realize it is not simple. But I am glad that there are folks like you out there that can help us get through this stuff and speaking of complications, here is another question that I wanted to talk to you about the delayed response and the cumulative effect, like personal tolerance thresholds for certain foods.

So if we are talking about foods that we are not tolerant to or intolerant to, most of us think of it like, "I can't eat peanuts, I am allergic" or "I can't eat eggs, they make me sick" or "I'm fine with gluten because it doesn't make me sick", etcetera. But one of the things that you talk about pretty in depth in the book is the idea that you could have a range of tolerances to different foods and that also combining different foods, you've got this sort of different effect happening.

Where maybe you ate a bunch of gluten, it makes you less tolerant to things like eggs or onions whereas if you were having like a grain-free healthy diet maybe you could tolerate eggs better. So there's this whole – it is so layered and it's so complicated. It's not just you specifically can eat this and can't eat that, black and white, case closed. There is a lot more complication to it so can you talk a little bit about that personal tolerance threshold and that kind of thing?

**[0:37:41.2] AJ:** Yes. So again, that makes things even more complicated like the more we go into it and learn about those different layers and it is not as simple as black and white or yes and no but as you said just from a leaky gut point of view, someone is prone to leaky gut and gluten is one of the foods that contributes to leaky gut and just causes inflammation in their gut even though they may not have symptoms right away, it may cause some degree of leaky gut which then make them more likely to react to another food.

Or maybe the first time they have gluten in a month they feel okay but then as time goes on they start feeling more and more unwell and things start to degrade but they feel like, “Well I am okay with gluten because that first time I had it I was okay”. So there’s that and then if leaky gut is pressed and we can start reacting to other foods too and in the book that graph that you are referring to is specifically to foods that contain FODMAP which stands for Fermentable Oligo-, Di-, Mono-saccharides And Polyols. So that is quite a mouthful but.

**[0:38:46.6] AVH:** We’ll just keep saying FODMAP.

**[0:38:49.4] AJ:** So basically it means short chain fermentable carbohydrates. So those are carbohydrates that are found in many different foods, some healthy, some less healthy. Some examples like apples, honey, high fructose corn syrup, wheat, watermelon, broccoli, cauliflower, all contain different types of FODMAP, as well as lactose is another type of FODMAP. So a lot of people with digestive issues suffering from bloating, constipation, diarrhea those kinds of symptoms and reflux maybe sensitive to FODMAP’s.

Because FODMAP’s are actually not – it’s not that they’re not healthy but if your gut flora is messed up then those fermentable carbohydrates are more likely to be fermented and then that fermentation causes our symptoms when we have digestive issues and an unbalanced gut flora. So with the FODMAP like let’s say you are sensitive to FODMAP and you eat a piece of an apple one day, you may be fine but then if you feel, “Okay I am fine with apples” and then you keep eating them every day.

And every day and every day, that can build up in your digestive system and then you can start reacting three days later and it can be really confusing because you go, “Well I was tolerating apples three days ago and now I am not tolerating them” and then to add to the complexity of

that, apple is one high FODMAP food. That is actually high in fructose, let's say we add honey to the mix. Honey is also another high fructose FODMAP containing foods.

So let's say you one day an apple and the other day you have honey and then you have other foods that are high in fructose or other FODMAP's and it may be fine if you have a little bit every day, every other day, but then as you have all of these foods together, the amount of fructose that you may have at a single day at a single meal can slowly build up and then you can go above your personal tolerance threshold, which leaves you to feel miserable and really unhappy and having those gut issues that no one wants to be dealing with, so yeah it is complicated somehow.

**[0:40:53.6] AVH:** But I suppose, amongst all of these complication it can be overwhelming for a lot of people but I think this is why the recommendation that you give is to of course undertake a pretty strict autoimmune protocol for a certain amount of time to get rid of some of the inflammation and some of the reactions that you are having. But then also, a pretty strict reintroduction program in terms of even like order of things that you would introduce.

And then the way that you would introduce it, I think it was something like you pick whatever the food is and you eat it three times a day for three days. So it is not even just, "Okay I've been super strict for a month, now I'm going to start eating apples again and I will have one apple today and then I'll eat eggs tomorrow," like you have to do it in a very systematic way to be sure what are the things that are problematic and what are the things that you can handle once your gut is healed right?

**[0:41:48.8] AJ:** Exactly. The kind of elimination diet I suggest is a combination of the AIP protocol combined with low FODMAP because I find that that's what gives the best results for people and I see it with other people that I work with, they've been on the AIP or low FODMAP diet or a lot of different types of diet and then they feel better and then they reintroduce a lot of food and they start feeling awful again and you know when we try to go back.

And try, "Okay so what did we learn? What food are you actually sensitive to? Which food have you reintroduced that could be contributing to the return of your symptoms?" and for a lot of people, they have no clue because it is really the reintroduction phase that was overlooked, and

they feel like, “I felt so much better and now I just wanted to reintroduce those foods because I didn’t just know that there might be a better way to do that”.

So that when we do an elimination diet, the goal is to not have to do it again. So if we do it properly and reintroduce food one at a time following a certain protocol, then we make sure that we are able to collect all of the nuggets of wisdom that we can and really learn from our own body about the foods that work for us and don’t work for us because a lot of people would like to have someone tell them exactly what they need to eat and even myself, I wrote a book on digestive health with real food.

But I cannot tell anyone what food they will tolerate and what food they will not tolerate but I help them go through that approach, so they can figure it out by themselves and help them learn from their own body what food they are sensitive to and what food seems to be working better for their bodies. So yeah and a lot of people would like to go the route of taking a food sensitivity test which can eliminate certain problematic food, but again, I still think that the elimination diet is the best way.

Because some of these food sensitivity test will test for certain ways that we can react to food whether it’s with the IGE or IGG or whether it is from certain other information pathways, but no test will actually test for all the different ways that can react to food except from doing an elimination diet and the reintroduction protocol, which is really the gold standard for identifying food sensitivity. It requires more effort and more time but if you do it properly then yeah, you will get all the information you need to build your own optimal diet for the rest of your life.

**[0:44:28.4] AVH:** Right and that’s what we all want whether we’re struggling with severe gut health issues or not, it’s about finding what works for you. Another topic that is more complicated than it seems on the surface is fiber. So there is always talk about how important fiber is for your digestive health and how switching from a standard diet to one that’s more whole foods and vegetable based is going to give you more of that fiber that you need.

But I guess there is also a downside to fiber if you have a very damaged gut. So, can you talk a little bit about how fiber could actually not be beneficial sometimes and then how you know

maybe when to start incorporating it again and what are some of the safest best ways to get fiber once your digestive system is healed?

**[0:45:18.7] AJ:** Yes for sure. A lot of people with IBS or irritable bowel syndrome, one of the first and pretty much only thing their doctor would recommend is that they go on a high fiber diet because it became mainstream that fiber means better digestion but it is not the case for many people with IBS when they are given that prescription and they go into high fiber diet because you actually start feeling a lot worse and it is because a lot of the fiber especially the insoluble fiber found in whole grains.

And things like that can be really, really harsh and irritating to a digestive system that is already inflamed and already has been suffering for a while. So, I find that people that have chronic gut issues that suffer from bloating and constipation and diarrhea and abdominal discomfort and pain in a regular basis, like more than two to three to four times a week, it is probably a good idea to give their digestive system a break and actually eat less of those plant based foods.

I am not against plant based foods. I think they are super nutritious but sometimes, we need to be healthy in order to really digest and handle those foods well. If our digestive system is not healthy even if we eat the best possible and all of those vegetables and fruits, we were not able to properly digest those foods and get the nutrients found in those foods anyway. So sometimes a reset and giving the digestive system a break from those high fiber foods, like grains is obviously eliminated for those already on a paleo diet.

But even those other foods like vegetables and fruits, taking a break or it doesn't mean necessarily cutting them out completely but decreasing the amount of food that is high in fiber that you eat at a certain amount of time, two or three weeks can be highly beneficial in reducing the inflammation because if you think of it, having those fiber, fiber cannot be digested in the human body, so it just goes through our digestive system and if there's already a lot of inflammation it is like having an open wound pretty much and scrubbing fiber against it.

That doesn't feel really good and a lot of people that want to improve their gut health, they may go paleo and when they go paleo, they start eating those huge salads with a lot of raw vegetables and a lot of that and that can make things worse for that reason because those high

fiber foods can be irritating, if the digestive system is already inflamed and irritated. So it's good to take a break sometimes from those plant foods that are rich in fiber.

And I'd say for most people, taking a break for two or three weeks of just reducing the amount of food especially raw food, raw vegetables and reducing the amount of total vegetable and fruit that we eat for a little while can be really helpful and then reintroducing foods that are highest in soluble fiber that comes – usually it is best to wait as long as we can before reintroducing grains but going for the source of fiber from cooked vegetables at first is easier to handle than raw vegetables for sure.

And then those winter squashes can be a lot more gentle on the digestive system as well instead of not seeing – you know I didn't mention nuts but nuts can also be another source of fiber that can be a bit irritating for those that have an inflamed and irritated digestive system. So yeah, it's all of these things that we need to pay attention to when considering the topic of fiber for gut health.

**[0:49:09.5] AVH:** Right but it is also worth remembering as you said that cooked vegetables are better than raw. So it is not saying don't eat any vegetables ever again and that there is also – if this is a temporary time where you have to eat less vegetables, it doesn't mean that on one hand you eat a healthy vegetable based diet, on the other hand you eat junk food. There is plenty of healthy foods that are not vegetables that you can eat but I think there is a visual in your book that was really helpful.

And something that you just mentioned. It was the idea of if you are having gut health issues and your gut lining is inflamed and sore and fiber especially in soluble fiber is essentially like a brush that goes along and brushes things through. If you have the super sensitive inflamed gut lining you don't want that steel wool kind of effect. You've got to wait until you're healed. So that makes a lot of sense to me and similar in that vein to fiber being generally considered a healthy thing but not always.

You talk also in the book about the idea of probiotics and prebiotics and starting a regimen maybe when you're still in the middle of figuring out your digestive issues. It can make things more complicated or possibly even harmful if you aren't healed, or at least have figured out sort

of what the cause is. I know that a lot of people, your first step when you are having digestive issues, you are feeling bloated or maybe you travelled, and you just don't feel good.

The first step for a lot of people including myself is to take probiotics or to take a prebiotic supplement or stuff like that and that perhaps in some cases could be helpful and some not. Can you get into that a little bit for us?

**[0:50:53.1] AJ:** Yes, probiotics are such a complicated topic and yes, you are right. Also one of the first things that many people do but probiotics are so tricky. I mean the topic, digestive health is a really complex field and then the field, the topic of probiotics is also very complicated like understanding the gut flora is still something that I don't feel like we have a full understanding of and for a lot of people with digestive issues, actually IBS, irritable bowel syndrome, 85% of people with IBS may actually have IBS because the underlying cause is that they have SIBO or small intestinal bacterial overgrowth.

And what that means SIBO is that it's not that there is infection or a bad kind of bacteria or something like that. It just means that there is an overgrowth of bacteria in the small intestine where it shouldn't be in such large number and in that case, taking probiotics I've seen not always, sometimes some people do benefit from taking probiotic in the case of SIBO but for the majority, taking probiotics while they have SIBO is like putting oil on the fire and just makes their symptoms worst.

And that could be because they have SIBO or for many other factors because in probiotics, there can be other ingredients that are added in there. There can be dairy ingredients, there could be some types of FODMAP's, like inulin or chicory roots that make things worse. It could also be that it is not the right combination of strains or the right dose because it can – the dose in those probiotic supplements can go from one billion CFU, CFU is the way we measure probiotics.

It means colony forming units, it could go from one billion to five hundred billion. So there is such a big range and such a different mix of different strains of bacteria in the probiotics. It can also not only be bacteria, it can be yeast, it can be soya based bacteria, it's just so complex and I feel and everybody's got fluoride cells so very unique. So the type of probiotics that I need maybe very different than the type of probiotics that you need Ashleigh. So it's so complex.

So depending on the severity of your gut issues, if it is something that has been pretty – that you suffer from on a regular basis and that is really affecting your health, I would consider not shopping for probiotics too quickly and maybe look at food and really resetting your digestive system with kind of an elimination diet protocol first because you go that route just to be on the safe side.

**[0:53:47.4] AVH:** Okay and would you say maybe in general terms because as you said, everybody is different but general terms, your best bet with probiotics is almost more of the preventative measure, like when your gut is already kind of working okay and you incorporate it in a food type way. So people who can tolerate like kefir maybe or fermented dairy, or if you could have sauerkraut and fermented vegetables or kimchi like incorporating that into your diet.

As just a part of your diet but also has probiotic properties, right? Rather than maybe seeking out probiotic supplements just because you think that they're a good idea?

**[0:54:26.0] AJ:** Yes, exactly. I think that going back to food is always your best bet. That is how we've done it forever and yes, it is just so much more natural for the body to receive probiotics in that way, the mix of different strains will always be different. So yes, I definitely recommend going for food as much as possible especially for maintenance. If you just want to keep your gut healthy and happy. If you suffer from digestive issues, well it is really important to reset the digestive system.

And make sure that there is no overgrowth and then fermented foods can also be used to rebuild the healthy gut flora too by the way, just for general maintenance. Fermented food would always be my number one go-to option.

**[0:55:10.8] AVH:** And what's your favorite fermented foods just to add to your diet, just that taste good and then are also effective?

**[0:55:17.0] AJ:** Yeah, so well sauerkraut is an excellent one. I put a video on my YouTube channel where I made some with my three-year-old which was yes, kind of an extreme sport but he was eating all of the cabbage, so it was pretty funny. So yeah, sauerkraut, kombucha maybe not as much for rebuilding the gut flora but for general maintenance can be good if you tolerate

it. A lot of the fermented dairy product like kefir and yogurt and not any kind of yogurt from the grocery store.

The ones ideally that come from healthy grass-fed cows will be more nutritious and that has been fermented for a significant amount of time. A lot of the yogurts on the shelf will be fermented for only eight to 10 hours but if you can make it yourself and ferment it for at least – not at least but around 24 hours then you get the maximum level of probiotics and the yogurt itself and a lower lactose content which is a lot easier for people with digestive issues to handle. So yes, those are all really good options, really tasty and really healthy too.

**[0:56:21.5] AVH:** Got it, okay. So I anticipated that I would have lots of questions for you and I was right and I appreciate you taking the time to answer these questions and I feel like it is very helpful for me and I hope for our listeners. As we bring this to a close and come full circle, we've talked a lot about your book and how thorough it is, and you do talk a lot about the general protocol if you are having issues, where to start, how to start, how to actually implement an elimination diet.

How to start reintroducing foods again, you've got recipes, you've got all kinds of stuff. Is there anything sort of high level for anyone who's listening and thinking maybe not a specific problem but I do have some bloating after certain foods and maybe my Bristol stool scale isn't really on the money right now and I am having some kind of problems and I am trying to think of what first take should I take, what should I start doing, do you have any high level advice for people, for anyone who is trying to improve their digestive health, just how to take their first step and get started?

**[0:57:24.2] AJ:** Yes, I like that question and there are so many different ways I could answer that. I could say, "Okay maybe you need to be more strict with your diet. You need to eliminate all sugar, be 100% gluten free, avoid cross contamination, don't eat out. You could take supplements to support your digestive system". You could do all of these things but really I think that the first step that everybody could take right now to optimize their digestion is to just slow down when you eat.

If we can just all chill a little bit more and make sure that we're not eating in front of our – with so many distractions if we can because most of us are operating in our fight or flight mode, the

nervous system that's secreting cortisol and stress hormones almost 24/7 and that's really counterproductive for the digestive system. The digestive system works best when we are in the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the rest and digest and heal nervous system.

So a good way to activate the parasympathetic nervous system is to slow down and look at our food and smell our food and we can also take four square breaths. These has been proven to activate the parasympathetic nervous system. A square breath is just when you inhale for four, hold for four, breath out for four, hold for four and you repeat that four times just like a square and that activates the parasympathetic nervous system.

When your nervous system is working properly then you will have less cortisol. Your stomach acidity will be improved and optimized, the whole cascade of having the right enzymes and the bile release into your digestive system and having those cleansing waves working, that's the single most effective thing that people should do. You know I shouldn't even have written a whole book about food and all of these things –

**[0:59:15.7] AVH:** One day change.

**[0:59:16.3] AJ:** You know just slow down, yes.

**[0:59:18.5] AVH:** Listen, I love that advice. Slow down, breath, pay attention. I think that that advice that can be used in pretty much any area of life. I think that that's a beautiful place to end and I appreciate you so much taking the time. You mentioned your YouTube channel. Can you just tell listeners where they can find out more about you, connect, learn, where they can get your book, where they can find you online?

**[0:59:44.0] AJ:** Yes, my name is pretty much the only one with that name so I am pretty easy to find, Aglaee Jacob, but if that's hard to find, the name of my business is Radicata Nutrition. Radicata is spelled R-a-d-i-c-a-t-a. So that is the same Radicata Nutrition on Facebook, Instagram, for my YouTube channel and by the way, Radicata means roots in Latin because I'm all about going to the root of our digestive issues and any kind of health issues, so that's where you can find me.

[1:00:11.7] **AVH:** I love it and we'll put all of that in the shownotes so folks can reach out to you and thank you again Aglaee for taking the time and I feel like I've learned a lot and I am going to try really hard to slow down and breath before I eat because I know that is one of my problems too. So that is an ongoing struggle, but you've got to start somewhere right?

[1:00:29.1] **AJ:** Exactly, thank you so much for having me.

[1:00:31.6] **AVH:** Thank you so much. All right, take care.

[1:00:32.6] **AJ:** Take care.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:00:37.0] **AVH:** All right, thanks everybody for listening. If you decide to join my #slowdownandeat challenge, just use that hashtag in your social media and I'll find you. You can also tag me @themusclemaven and I will track you down, but I really hope you try this challenge with me, it may be harder than we think but I think it will also be rewarding. So don't forget to follow us on Instagram as well @paleomagazine so you can get in on the book giveaway.

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Okay, so next week I talk to one of the greatest mix martial artists on the planet, T.J. Dillashaw. If you know about MMA, you know that these athletes are some of the fittest, best conditioned human beings on the planet. Their training is extremely intense so how they eat and how they recover is extremely crucial. So whether you're into fighting or MMA or martial arts or not, I think that it's a really interesting chat with a human being who does some physical training that is pretty much incomprehensible to the rest of us and how he maintains his health and sanity really.

T.J. is gearing up for a big title fight in August and he recently switched his diet from I guess something a bit more traditional to something that's more paleo, more low carb, almost kind of Keto but not quite. We get into it and he's also switched into more natural product so whether it's skin care, health care products. We talk about hunting for your own food, he's a hunter so we get into that and a lot more and you guys probably know about me already that I totally nerd out on fighting and MMA.

This was an interview that was really personally very exciting for me, so you will probably be able to tell that in the interview but it's a good one. So don't miss it, join me next week and thanks again as always for being here.

[OUTRO]

**[1:03:22.8] AV:** Paleo Magazine Radio is brought to you by the Paleo Media Group and is produced by We Edit Podcasts. Our show music features the song *Light It Up*, by Morgan Heritage and Jo Mersa Marley, and on behalf of everyone at *Paleo Magazine*, thank you for listening.

[END]