



Brenda Chats to Dr. Leila Masson

B: Dr. Leila, would you mind introducing yourself and telling us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

L: Sure, I'm a pediatrician, and I have 2 teenage boys, 13 and 18 and I have had an integrative clinic in Auckland, New Zealand for the last 14 years and I'm actually taking a sabbatical this year to write books. I've written one called *An Excerpt of Children's Health* and I'm about to start on the second one and my approach to children's health is really about a lot of prevention. I did not just study medicine but I also studied public health and then of course there's a lot to do with disease prevention, keeping people healthy and I think that's really the way to go. And we know that if children eat a healthy diet, have a good lifestyle, and avoid environmental toxins, they'll actually grow up into much much healthier people and happier people as well. And that we can avoid a lot of problems for having this approach. It's a lot of work in our world nowadays because we live in a world that is toxic, we're easily exposed to lots of environmental contaminants, and our diets. It's easy to go on by processed food that doesn't give us any nutritious value so it is extra work to do those right steps but I think it's very very much worth it and I will say to people when they say oh it takes so much time and I have to prepare food and I say, well if you go and buy your pre-packaged meal and you save some time you can just take that time and spend it at the doctors later on.

B: I know. You can't put a price on health. I also say you pay now or you pay later with your health. You're right in the midst of all of this and what sorts of childhood epidemics are facing children today.

What are the main conditions you see coming through your clinic?

L: We have a lot more of everything, really. More allergies, more food sensitivities, more ADHD, more anxiety, more autism, it's all on the rise. And people always ask why, why do we always have so much more of everything? And our genes haven't changed in the last 10 or 20 years. So it's not really a change in our genes, it's the change of the environment, and the environment's effect on the genes. So there are people who are born with, let's say a family history of certain sensitivities but the children being exposed to much more toxins in their life now develop more severe problems. Same for ADHD, you may have parents who don't concentrate 100% but they still manage really well, and then the kids, because of their lifestyle, inside most of the time, not spending enough time playing outdoors, not enough time being active, not eating nutritious food, they have much much more severe problems and then get a diagnosis of ADHD for example.

B: So are you saying that sure the genes can exist in the parents and can be passed on but they're being expressed in a much more major way because of our environment.

L: Yeah, and we do know that the gene alone doesn't cause the illness, it's the gene in combination with certain environmental influences. Yes, I mean not every person who has even the breast cancer gene is gonna get breast cancer. And we know that there are certain things for example, nutrition ways to prevent cancer. So people do them, they eat a really healthy diet with lots and lots of phytonutrients, and fiber, and minerals and vitamins, they reduce their risk. So even with something as severe as cancer, we have an influence. So with something less severe, not necessarily fatal, like ADHD or something like that. We have the same thing, we have certain genes that make us maybe more sensitive to environmental toxins but if you don't expose yourself to environmental toxins, then it doesn't really matter that you have that gene.





B: So, just by the way life is right now, it sort of seems impossible to avoid the environmental toxins completely but we can 100% minimize and reduce our exposure to them, would you agree with that?

L: yes, I do with that. I mean we don't have control over for example the air we breathe outdoors right, but most of the environmental contamination actually happens in your home and there we have a lot of control. And I always say to people the first two things to do cost you actually nothing. The number 1 is to actually take off your shoes when you come into your home because when you walk outdoors, you pick up dirt, you pick up pesticides, you pick up little particles of dog poo, you pick up heavy metals and you bring them into your home and if you walk around the floor and you have little children crawling around the floor, they pick up the dirt with their hands and then put it in their mouth. So a free intervention I say just take off your shoes when you come into the home and put on slippers, now I'd be barefoot if it's warm enough and the other one is to ventilate your house well, so open your windows whenever you can and if you're not too hot or too cold because you don't want mold, that's one thing in your home. Mold is incredibly toxic and bad for your health and your brain. For example if you have furniture that is made from MDF, from pressed wood, you will have certain toxins leaching out of that into the air, so if you ventilate your house well, you get rid of that. And then the next few things would be to exchange your chemical cleaners in the house for natural ones, you can make them yourself if you want, you can just use baking soda and lemon juice or something like that, or vinegar but you can also buy environmentally friendly, non-toxic cleaners nowadays in every supermarket, and that's a big improvement over using the chemicals. And if you just do that for now, you're already making quite a big impact. There's a lot further you can go, and you can do a whole household, you can go from room to room and explain what steps you can take like organic sheets and organic mattress, you know, makes a difference. Because kids spend of course half of their life sleeping on that mattress and if that leaches chemicals they'll have their nose right next to it and breathe that in.

B: We also wanna talk about the food component. What easy changes we can make at home, pantry in order to enable positive nutrition and health for our children at home.

What would your little tips be there?

L: I think, that again you can start really simply by making your children drink water, that's the healthiest drink they can get. Many many children are used to drinking juices, even soft drinks, or rehydration sports drinks then really to be avoided, they're full of sugar, they're often full of additives and I don't recommend those. I recommend that you give your child water. When a child is used to the sweeter drinks, it's hard to change their taste buds, it takes time and there are a few little tricks. So one thing I recommend is to add lemon juice, you just squeeze some lemon into the water, makes it more interesting and I myself have a sort of stream, so just squeeze out the water a little bit and that makes it more fun for the kids as well. If you feel that in the beginning you need to give them the occasional treat you can also add a little bit of stevia, so that's a natural sweetener that is hundreds times more sweeter than sugar so you just need a tiny sprinkle and that can just give it that little lemonade feel. But over time you don't wanna get your kids used to that, so just drinking water with lemon or plain water. Very very hydrating, and hydration is very important for their brain and for their health. Also we know that if kids are well hydrated they concentrate better in school for example. And then the next thing about food is to increase the vegetables, people are always worried about all the things they have to leave out in their diet and I think that is important but sometimes it's better to start with a positive and just add more vegetables. Hardly anybody I meet in my clinic eats the five class servings of vegetables. So serving's the size of your child's fist so then you need to eat five times that amount in vegetables a day and there's lots and lots of research that that is very important for a child's health.

B: Can you explain in what ways it's really important?

L: So, vegetables are packed with phytonutrients, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and those are very very important for our body to work, so for example zinc is a mineral we need for 200 different enzymes in our body, it's incredibly important for our processing in the brain, for our immune system to fight infection. It's important for your taste buds so if you're low on zinc you actually don't taste food the same way and kids who are low on zinc, which is quite common in Australia and New Zealand because the soils are low on zinc. They don't taste food very well and they don't want to eat





much variety so just giving them some extra zinc, either foods high in zinc which are difficult to find in our countries, or a supplement for a little while can really help them to eat more variety and be more open to eating different kinds of food. Vegetables of course have a lot fiber, fiber is very very important for your gut flora. If you eat vegetables you have a different gut flora from a child who doesn't eat vegetables. And our gut flora is very important for our immune system, it's also important for our mood, it's important for our digestion. Constipation for example is a very common problem in children, and if you have enough vegetables, the constipation will resolve. Vegetables and water will do that. And the other thing is of course we have an obesity epidemic in Australia and New Zealand and if you fill yourself up with vegetables, you're not going to eat a lot of other sugary and fatty foods because you just don't have the space.

B: But the trick Leila is to get children and I guess this is what Thrive is all about, to raise kids who love real food. I mean you have 2 teenage boys, are they good at eating their vegetables?

L: Yeah they're very good at eating their vegetables because we're vegetarian so they have no choice. But I really think that starts before birth. During pregnancy it actually gives a different kind of taste to the water that babies drink in utero. So if they're exposed to lots of different taste and different vegetables, they come out already primed for that. Then the mother hopefully breastfeeds and whatever the mother eats that day, the breastmilk will have that taste so we now that babies whose mothers eat a lot vegetables are more likely to eat vegetables later on as well. And then once you introduce solids to your baby, I recommend highly to start with vegetables. Not with a sweet stewed apple or something and also not with a sweet cereal but vegetables because that's what you want those taste buds to be trained to enjoy. And setting a good example, I think it's so incredibly important that we as parents eat the foods that we want our children to eat. If we eat junk and then give them the broccoli and we don't eat ourselves, they're not gonna eat that. So you have to set a good example, you have to eat meals as a family and involve your children in preparing meals, I think that that's really, especially with teenagers, that's a big one. If my boys help in the kitchen, they're much more likely to eat the food themselves because they feel that they contributed, it's their creation. And maybe cooking courses for teenagers, I think that's a great idea, my 18 year old has actually gone off to university at University of Melbourne, and just before he went he spent a few weeks in Thailand and took a cooking course there on his own accord and he has been cooking for himself every single day, I'm very proud of him. It is hard work especially since teenagers, their peers eat junk a lot, and you can't change their peers, you, you can invite them over to your house, eat meals as a family and show them what kind of food you eat and often they'll be impressed but your children have to be strong enough to withstand the peer pressure of eating just junk food. I think if they're used to it from early on, they just enjoy it.

B: Were you a vegetarian when you conceived your boys?

L: Yes, I've been a vegetarian for 25 years and I've actually been vegan for 8 years and so the boys were conceived and grew up when I was vegetarian and they're very healthy, they're happy, and they eat vegetables and they eat salads so I'm proud of them because you meet a lot kids their age who will only eat white food, or fried food, you know very restrictive. But I also do think that the zinc, getting back to that, is really important because as I said, Australia and New Zealand, our soils don't contain a lot of zinc. And if you don't have enough zinc in your body, it will affect your taste buds. One thing you can look for is white spots on the fingernails. If you have white spots on your fingernails, you're most likely either deficient in zinc or selenium and it may help to take a supplement. And you can do blood test to see how much you actually need or you can do a taste test, which is not a hundred percent reliable but helps. Teenagers, especially if they have acne will be quite open to that, taking zinc supplement because acne responds really well to zinc. And I think teenagers like to explore, they like to try different kinds of things so don't make the same food, or go to an Indian restaurant, something different, try out different kinds of cuisines. Sometimes they find something, like my oldest son loves Thai food, and he's loved Thai food probably the last 3-4 years. So whenever we had a choice of where should we go out, it was Thai food. If you give them a little bit of a choice and then encourage them to learn to make those meals so that they can maybe cook once a week from a certain age. There's no reason why a 15 year old can't prepare a meal for the family with a little of background help from mom or dad but I think that that really trains them for life as well. Our job really in children is to at the end have nice and healthy adults so they kind and function in life. And cooking and eating good food is part of that.





B: Why do you think we have seen an increase in allergies, illness and disease? For example you focused specifically on zinc there, is that a deficiency that you really see a lot of in your patients? So what other specific issues are you seeing and why do you think that is happening?

L: Well you asked about the increase in allergies and sensitivities. So we do know that if a child grows up on farm as opposed to the city, they have less allergies and that's probably because they're exposed to more dirt early on. And the same goes for children who grew up with a dog as opposed to a cat. Cats are clean. Need some dirt when they're young, we need to play in the sand. We don't wanna expose our children to pesticides and dog poop, what we don't just want to expose them to bacteria, not too many obviously. Their immune system needs to be trained, and it trains itself by being in contact with bugs. So one thing is to go out into the countryside, you know play in the forest, play in healthy dirt but also don't over disinfect your home. People are going a little overboard and using disinfectants in their kitchen and their bathroom, everywhere and we don't need to do that. We don't need to kill all of those bugs, of course you don't some highly toxic E. coli so if you for example cut raw meat, you definitely want that area to be very well washed and disinfected because it can make you very sick. But general dirt, we can just use vinegar and baking soda to clean it and there will be a certain amount of bacteria will still be there and that's fine, and it will train our kids' immune system.

B: So you're saying that we need to boost our children's immune system in order for them to experience less allergies.

L: Well yeah, it's really getting them used to bacteria early on to train the immune system. The immune system's incredibly complicated. In a simplified way, there's 2 arms, there's T1 and T2 and as a baby, the baby is born with not just very good at fighting infection and you need to increase that, by exposing the child to, I mean you don't want to expose your child to someone with influenza for example, definitely not. But you need to train that and that decreases the over-reactivities to allergens, so that's really important. And you do that by breastfeeding, healthy foods, not keeping them completely in a disinfected environment and by having the right minerals, right vitamins, all of that is important. And in Australia and New Zealand, the soils are so low now of zinc, of selenium in particular, a lot children are really missing out. And they will get more infections because they can't fight the infection so well and they also get more allergies. So we really need to look pre-natally at moms, how much reserves do they have, what do they eat, do they need any supplements, that kind of thing.

B: So with some zinc and selenium, like we had oysters last night, my kids love oysters thankfully, and my daughter who's been a little bit snuffly knew that I'm getting some zinc when I eat this.

What other foods can we eat to get our zinc and selenium, nuts and fish and stuff like that?

L: For selenium you can eat Brazil nuts. 3 Brazil nuts a day gives you enough selenium. For zinc it is really hard, apart from oysters there isn't that much and I have to say I haven't met any kids until now who like oysters. The oysters unfortunately also have E.coli, they can be contaminated so because you eat them raw you have to be careful there. With zinc there are also genetic differences, some people do quite fine with not too much zinc, they're getting enough though what they're eating but others go through zinc really really fast and they need a supplement often. And the other thing is if you're exposed to more toxins for example, you use up your zinc very fast and toxins includes additives in foods. So if you eat foods that a lot of additives like artificial coloring, artificial flavors, those kinds of things, your body actually sees that as a toxin and tries to excrete it and need zinc to do that. And that's one of the explanations why some kids when they eat, say an orange lollie, become very frustrated and angry, it's because their zinc level drops quite abruptly and when you don't have enough zinc you just can't keep your frustration to your own so you become angry. So it is hard with zinc, I would say that it's probably the most common supplement I recommend because it's hard to get it from your diet. And you have to remember that every farmer gives that to the animals because otherwise they would get sick. So any animal raised in Australia and New Zealand gets supplements. They get zinc, they get selenium, they get iodine, all the minerals we are lacking in our soils.





B: There's nothing much we can do about that, it's a tragedy. I talk about adding good quality salt into our diets. Can you talk a little bit about salt as well because I think there's a bit of confusion good quality salt and the minerals and why it's important, I mean what are your thoughts on that?

L: If you use table salt it's really highly processed, the more processed a food is, the less nutrients it has. Table salt is really just sodium and it's not that healthy. If you get a sea salt or something like a Himalayan salt, they have many many other minerals in them, they have magnesium, they have iodine, they have lots and lots of other trace minerals, small small amounts because we're not using a lot of salt so that adds something to your food. You don't wanna over-salt because you don't want your kids get used to really really salty food, first of all it's not that healthy but also then they start craving more the foods are processed because all processed food is actually over-salted. They add a lot of salt and they add a lot of fat, they add a lot of sugar to make it more palatable and to get the what they call the craving index, when people can't stop eating it, the bliss point. I think salt in small amounts is okay but stay away from the pre-packaged, processed or canned food because they have a lot of salt and they don't use healthy salt.

B: In terms of food and nutrition, what would Dr. Leila Masson's top tips be for everybody?

L: The number one thing I would say, and it may be too late for some of the parents but breastfeed your child for as long as possible because that really trains their taste buds. Then when you choose foods, choose foods that you recognize as foods, and that your grandparents would recognize as foods. Don't go to the supermarket and pick up a package that's convenient but doesn't really have real vegetables in it anymore, so it's all freeze-dried and processed and have additives in them. Stay away from those kinds of foods. Just buy vegetables, buy a healthy protein, buy some whole grains. And if you're not a great cook, some people feel really worried and say oh my god I don't know how to make this amazing looking meals, just make brown rice and lots vegetables and a healthy protein and you just wanna keep the ratios right so when you look at your plate, you want half of the plate filled with vegetables, and that can be a beautiful salad, very easy to make. You just take green salad and an avocado and some tomato and cucumber and maybe sprinkle a few nuts over. A quarter of the plate should be the whole grains, so that could be quinoa, brown rice or sweet potato and one quarter should be the protein. Now, we often worry that our kids aren't getting enough protein but that's actually not true in our societies. Your child only needs 1 gram per kilogram of protein a day to thrive optimally and that's very easy to get. It depends on what you use, you can look up charts but you know, a fist size again at the most, you can make falafel, you can make chicks with lentils, beans. If you choose to have meats, small amounts of meat or fish and in that case I would probably go for organic because meat of course accumulates all the toxins in our environment, all the pesticides and so on, the content is higher than in the vegetables. Really, that would be my basic advice, keep it simple, if you're a great cook of course you can start making much more complicated beautiful meals and your kids can help you but it doesn't have to be complicated, it can be simple, nutritious meals, and make it fun. Sit down with your family, talk about the day, don't talk about stressful things, just make it relaxed, turn off the TV, turn off all the screens, concentrate on being together and I think that makes a big difference because if the kids see you eat the salad with excitement, they will take that on and they'll start eating them.

B: I love salads, I find them incredibly exciting and all the combinations that can be made. I was vegetarian for 16 years myself, and I have to say I had a much more creative way of cooking when I was vegetarian, it was a little bit more exciting back then.

Well, we didn't mention healthy fats in that plate, can you talk a little bit about the importance of those.

L: I've basically only worked with 2 fats, coconut oil for cooking because it doesn't denature when you heat it so it's always healthy, it has good antibacterial and antiviral activities as well. And then I use organic virgin olive oil for salads, or anything that I don't heat up. I love olive oil, I think it's just so delicious and you can get that in different kinds. I think you can get plenty of oils with that, and we do need oils. I'm not a promoter, being a vegan of eating a lot of cholesterol because we can make our own cholesterol, we have all the healthy ingredients in our diet, humans make cholesterol, it's not like the vitamins which we don't make ourselves, so if you don't eat vitamin B, you're actually not getting it, you can't make it.





But with cholesterol it's different, we produce it ourselves. That's the fats I recommend, nuts of course, nuts and seeds, they're high in fat and very healthy and that's my favorite snack for children unless of course they have an allergy to nuts, that's different. But in general, nuts and seeds are high in fiber, they're high in vitamins, they have good fats, they make you satiated. Kid who eat nuts and seeds are often in general leaner, thinner than kids who eat other snacks because what else do you eat that's not considered sweet or snacky, you have to eat something sweet so it's a good replacement. And also if you eat nuts and seeds, your blood sugar stays more even, so you don't get that up and down when you eat sweets, where your blood sugar rises really fast but then drops very fast as well.

B: What about the ratio of omega 3 to omega 6 in the nuts and seeds. I know that there's a little bit of question mark over eating too many for that reason. Have you got any thoughts on that?

L: Well, I mean I don't want you to eat a kilogram of nuts a day, but a handful or 2 a day I think is very healthy and seeds as well. If you make a mix, you can add chia seeds, you can add seeds that have a higher omega 3 content, that's always a good idea. For breakfast for example, I make a mix of linseed and chia seed and then some pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and then some nuts thrown in them, walnuts whatever I have. I just have that with a little bit of soy yoghurt or coconut yoghurt, I love coconut yoghurt, and some fresh fruit. And that makes a very healthy, very filling breakfast. My children prefer to add some oats to that and I think that's okay, I mean I don't expect them to be grain free. They need carbohydrates for their brains to work, so it makes a good breakfast, much much better than any processed cereal out of the box.

B: when you say you don't want them grain free, it sounds like you don't want them overloading on them at the same time.

L: My rule is nothing white in the house, apart from coconut yoghurt, unless it's naturally white. So we don't have white rice, we don't have white bread, we don't have white flour, none of those things. Those we know are not healthy, they are so processed, they are stripped of the flavor, of the vitamins, of the minerals, the good fats, there's nothing left in there except the calories.

B: What would that do to our children eating too much of that stuff?

L: Well, first of all it doesn't fill them up that easily so they eat more and they gain weight. The other thing is that not having the vitamins and minerals affects your health. If you're low in vitamin B, you're not gonna be as happy, you're not gonna concentrate as well. Another thing, it affects your gut flora, so white flour is almost like eating sugar, it completely changes your gut flora, and your gut flora affects your health, your mood, your digestion, all of those things. And you get constipated from all of those white flours as well. There's lots and lots of different effects of that. I do give my children whole grains, but I mean I have to say teenagers will grow really really fast, they're hungry all the time, I mean they will eat grains but if they eat a whole grain bread, I try to keep the gluten down because I see that gluten can be a big problem but also mainly because most of the foods that we eat that have gluten in them are actually not that healthy, you know bread and pasta, that's all white. And I try to replace it with more quinoa and brown rice and buckwheat. My kids are used to that, I'm sure they would love to have a piece of white bread from time to time and they probably do when they're at their friends' houses and I think it's okay to once in a while do that but it's just not the staple food in our house and so whole grain's really really important to do that.

B: I do as well, I do and try to consciously limit the grains but like you say, it is hard and we just rotate the food in the house. I'm conscious of fiber, we do eat sourdough, a good quality sourdough, not just a straight white one. Everywhere we turn, every article we open seems to be addressing gut and our gut health. Why do you think that there's a rise of awareness around the gut.





What's been going on and maybe could you talk a little bit about the importance of our gut health.

L: Naturopath has been talking about gut health for many many years and doctors used to kind of smile at them. But now there's so much research out on the microbiota. So that's all the bacteria in and on of us and not just bacteria, also viruses and probably parasites that we need as well. We know that if you have a healthy gut flora you digest your food better. Some of the enzymes we need to digest our food are actually made by bacteria and our gut. We also know that the vitamins that we need, like vitamin K which stops you from bleeding if you have a nosebleed or something, or a cut vitamin K helps the clotting and stopping the bleeding, that's made by gut bacteria. We also know that some hormones actually switch on or change in the gut like melatonin. And so now the newest research is about the gut-brain connection and how a healthy gut flora affects our brain. So for example one main bacteria that we all should have lots of is E. coli, the healthy E. coli, now there's also bad E. coli and the one we need to have is the healthy one and it produces a precursor to serotonin which is the neurotransmitter that makes us happy and calm. If people don't have enough E. coli, they often are anxious and they don't sleep well and it's incredibly interesting. And they did a study on women and showed that when they just gave them a yoghurt a day for a few weeks, they changed the activity in different parts of the brain.

B: What sort of foods do you recommend to promote gut health for children?

L: First of all you can add some fermented foods that contain bacteria so sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha or a kefir, you know people make their own coconut kefir or water kefir in small amounts, you don't wanna overdose either but that is very very good and if you look at different cultures it all has some kind of fermented food in their diet. And then the whole foods we talked about, again if you have really good food with lots of fiber, it promotes the growth of the good bacteria, the fiber is actually called a prebiotic, the probiotic is the bacteria but the prebiotic is the food for the bacteria that helps them grow. So having lots of vegetables, and not processed so full of fiber helps you. Eating on the other hand lots of sugar causes an overgrowth of those bacteria that use up a lot of sugar so that would be streptococci for example or candida your yeast. You can get a yeast overgrowth from just eating a junk diet with lots and lots of sugar. So very very important what we put in our gut, the effect of what grows in there.

B: Can you tell us a little bit about your book and also you mentioned you're writing another one so I'd like to hear about that. Have you got your book there for us to look at.

L: Yes, I have a copy here. So it's called Children's Health A-Z and this one is for New Zealand parents but actually there will be an Australian version out next year and it's really just the same version just with a different cover because kids are not that different in New Zealand and Australia. So what I've done is the first 4 chapters of the book are really the basis of good health so it's nutrition, sleep, lifestyle, plenty of outdoor exercise and limiting screens and then avoiding environmental toxins. And then the second part of the book is a very easy to use A-Z of house problems, any problem your child may have, common childhood illnesses like say tummy aches, allergies, acne. I explained what could be the cause, how to figure out what the cause may be and then I give you advice on natural ways of supporting the child to get better and I also tell you when it is important to take your child to a doctor and it's urgent. You once asked me what is the biomedical approach and I think the approach really is that rather than just saying oh this is a headache, let's take a pill for that is oh someone has a headache let's think about why that person has a headache. Let's check, are they dehydrated, are they stressed, have they spent too much time on screens, did they get knocked on the head, do they have an infection, think of all the different possibilities and then actually treating that cause rather than just the symptom and that's what I have done in this book, you know, really going to try to find the cause and then treating that.

B: So you're saying we need to invest a little bit more of ourselves in discovering the ways that we can help our children more naturally.

L: Yeah, and also to accept that sometimes there isn't a super quick fix but that you might actually have to change something in your child's nutrition for example or in your lifestyle. So if a child doesn't sleep well maybe the child needs more exercise rather a pill to go to sleep. I mean I think very few doctors will prescribe a pill for a child. But there are certainly things you can do for a child who doesn't sleep well, you can make sure they run around more outdoors, that they





have natural daylight outdoors during the day and that it's nice and dark in the evening in their bedroom so that their brain can start producing melatonin and that they have a good gut flora and that they have enough magnesium, that they didn't have a lot of sugar for dinner which would make them kind of wired again. Stay off the screens for at least 2 hours before you go to bed but for children really they should be on screens for a short time everyday anyway and I give the exact hours that is recommended for each age group in my book and I think that's really important. That's hard, having 2 teenagers I know how hard it is to restrict that but it is vital. I really think this generation that's growing up now is at risk of spending the whole days on screens and that's not healthy, we're not evolved to do that and they will have all kinds of health problems because of that so we need to limit it.

B: And I think for the parents of the younger kids on this course because I have limited my kids screen time from when they were really little, it just becomes the norm so all of these things that you implement if you are able start when they are little do it because it just makes life a lot easier. Not to say that it's not challenging coz now my kids are getting older and they want more freedom and they wanna fit in and they're more exposed to outside influences are now having to maneuver that terrain but truly it does really go well for how they're going to develop and handle things and understand things in the future and we don't have domestic fights or arguments over things like screen time or junk food.

L: I agree. And I also think it's very very important to set a good example. If you check your iPhone every 5 minutes and then tell your child put your phone away that just doesn't work. But you know one thing I always recommend is that after dinner, just don't go back on to your computer or your phone, just say after dinner is family time, we'll play a board game or we'll sit on the couch and each read a book you know if the kids are old enough you don't have to read to them anymore, sit down read your own book but just make that a time when you don't coz it's so easy for everybody to drift off after dinner and go to their various screens and then not talk to each other and then not be able to sleep because they had all that blue light from the screen which then diffuses melatonin production so that's a good start.

B: It sounds like your book is such an amazing resource but what's the next book?

L: So I'm starting to write the next book and it will be on the emotional health of children. The first one I wrote is really the physical health so the next one will be more on anxiety, hyperactivity, OCD, the kinds that we see a lot of in our children, trouble sleeping, worried children, those kinds of thing and again looking at the underlying problems that we can fix and giving you advice on a healthy lifestyle what are the things you can do to prevent these problems and also what can you do when you have the problem.

B: And you're not practicing but are you going back to clinic next year?

L: Yes. So I'm going to move to Sydney in January and we'll be opening a clinic there.

B: Can people follow you on social media?

L: Yes. So I have a Facebook page called Dr. Leila Masson and it's a public page and I post new articles of interest several times a week I'll also be posting updates on my book so that's the easiest. I also have a webpage called dr.leilamaisson.com and that has a lot of information on healthy meals, easy to prepare meals, things like that, autism, lots of different things, ADHD, kind of research on how to treat it in a more natural way, so you;; finds a lot of information there. And I do have a twitter account dr. Leila Masson, I'm not the most active twitterer but I shall try myself to be better and I have email so if people want to contact me they can do that as well.

