



ALEXX CHATS WITH GEORGIA HARDING

Alexx: Hey Georgia. How are you?

Georgia: Hey Alexx. Great to see you.

Alexx: Oh, it's so great to see you and it's so wonderful to have you as a part of the Thrive program because we have been online with friends and you know every time someone says "I am really screwed for lunch boxes, it is just torturing me!" And I say, "Georgia and her group, they talk about it all of the time." And Well Nourished is just such a beautiful... I love your website and I just love the energy that you put out. There is a real 'can do' spirit to the education you share with your community and it is exactly why I wanted to bring you on to talk about deficiencies because we can get quite granular on deficiencies, and we were actually just talking about this before, we can record in the sense that we just go down these rabbit holes and everything is focused on zinc. We're just like, sometimes let's just pull that back let's look at the overall diet make sure we are getting a good mix of everything. Because often nutrients work in co-factorial ways, where you need some of this for some of that to be absorbed and all that good stuff. So, I am really looking forward to this chat but so... I mean, we could start diving straight in but for the people who don't know you, yet I'd love to just hear a little bit about how you came to be doing what you do today.

Georgia: Okay. So, I have been a naturopath for over 20 years now. I am feeling ancient when I say that. I became a naturopath and I had been in clinical practice, lectured students and mentored a lot of students – that was always really important to me. I love the education side of what I do. I did a bit of writing while I was practicing, and I really enjoyed that as well. Then we had bit of an upheaval. The first baby came along, had a pretty ordinary lifestyle to be honest. Was working crazy hours. You know I was back at work when my baby was 5-weeks-old.

Alexx: Oh, goodness. Yeah.

Georgia: Which is mental, but you know, I had a practice and finding a locum was really tough.

Alexx: Yes.

Georgia: Patients are lost if you don't kind of step up and get back so yeah, I am headed back to work and had a pretty shoddy lifestyle as a result. Basically, everything comes grinding halt when I got really sick myself with





an autoimmune disease and we had a bit of a lifestyle check, moved to Queensland. My husband had opportunity with work coming here that involved him being away for massive amount of time and I agreed we come here for a year, maybe two years... and it has been like 12 years.

Alexx: Yeah, you got stuck!

Georgia: Yeah, we did get stuck. We have great lifestyle here now with a lot of balance, which is great, and you know I regain my health quite quickly as a result of taking that step back. And you know, it meant leaving my practice which was really difficult but definitely in hindsight, it was the best thing I could have done. I did a postgrad because I was a bit bored between the two kids. I upgraded my degree basically just to keep my brain kind of active.

Alexx: What was your postgrad in.

Georgia: In naturopathy as well. When I first studied it was only a diploma that was offered. It wasn't offered as a degree.

Alexx: Ah, gotcha.

Georgia: So, I just decided to upgrade that. And then yeah, I was facing my youngest starting school and just wanted to do something. My husband works away a lot but not regularly, so he might be away all week one week and two days the next, not at all the next. So, it was very difficult for me to think about establishing a new clinic because we don't have any family here rather so you know no family support whatsoever, so I knew that will be a big ask. If I do something, I like to do it properly. I don't do anything in half measures.

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: And then I just literally had some friends over from Perth, other naturopaths, and we were just talking about pressures of running a clinical practice. And one of the things I always find really difficult was not having enough time with my patients, particularly when it comes to talking about food and educating them around food. So, I thought and look, it just came up in conversation like why don't you start a website? I mean I didn't use Facebook and didn't even know what Instagram was. I had really spent so little time online am just not kind of a sit-at-your-desk kind of girl, although that has become my world. So basically, just got a basic website started and just started blogging on... I suppose just trying to make health... I just really felt that everything had become so complex.





Alexx: Yes.

Georgia: And there was so much information online and I really just wanted to bring it back. I also used to get comments a lot: “I can’t believe your kids ate the way that they do.”

Alexx: Oh yeah. Hello? I mean that’s why we started Thrive.

Georgia: Yeah.

Alexx: Because how many people said that about like, “Your child would just like happily snack on an XYZ?” And I’m like, “Yeah!” And it wasn’t a judgmental thing about why their child wouldn’t or anything like that. That’s what we are trying to figure out here but at the same time there is a big disconnect if we get a whole of people out there who have children find real food weird, or who find it weird to find real kids eating food.

Georgia: I did have a little bit. I mean obviously I am educated in matters of nutrition, but I also had treated a lot, worked with a lot of families with a lot of unwell children.

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: And you know the one thing they have in common is that the children had horrendous diets. So, I would mentor them around getting their kids to eat well even though I didn’t even have children of my own at that point. Well early days of practice I did but yeah, I felt I saw the changes that could be made with that kind of mentoring. So, I suppose I wanted to develop a bit of resource for naturopaths to be able to direct their clients to this is the person that has great recipes because food is just such a huge part of my life as well and I’ve always kind of explained since I was a child. So, you know connecting that place to go where they could if they did recommend that the client become gluten-free because I do offer options with my recipes. I found that it was developed for other naturopaths as well to help them to get a bit of support when it comes to recipes and nutrition, basic nutritional advice. But also, really, I’m very passionate as you are about raising healthy kids and it broke my heart every time I saw a child that is just so unwell.

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: And you know there were so many common trends as to why they got to that place of not having a great varied diet. So yeah, Well Nourished was born...





Alexx: And here we are! Yeah. And I think for me one of the major issues is these days we actually have to distinguish between food and non-food. Like food education just wasn't a thing. Our grandparents didn't have to give our parents a food education because food was food. You didn't have to worry about whether they were genetically modified, grains being fed to the cattle. You didn't have to worry about sulphates in crumpet. You didn't have to worry about any of these stuff that our generation has to worry about and we are a bit hard on ourselves for our kids just eating all the stuffs that is around and available because we just go through life buying what is available. "Oh, that looks fun. Oh, that looks nice." You know it's no one's fault, it's just a cultural shift.

Georgia: Absolutely.

Alexx: And so, it's really about going, 'Okay the cultural shift has happened and it isn't working. Let's get some food education in place because now our generation and beyond are actually going to have to educate our kids.'

Georgia: Yeah absolutely. It has to happen and it's not difficult in that like you said we tend to kind of over complicating and there is so much information out there. I think that like you said, we need to be kind to ourselves for sure, but we do need to be educated and obviously that's what people are listening in at the moment

Alexx: Yeah exactly.

Georgia: To have that extra support.

Alexx: Exactly. So, let's hook in. I would love to ask you in your work what you've seen become some of the biggest gaps in kid's nutrition? Now that we are like full into like a couple of generations into being this process/packet food – not completely you know a few people still eat a few vegetables and a bit of meat and that kind of stuff – but there is lot of it in our overall diets these days.

Georgia: Yeah, yeah. I mean, for me poor variety diet has got to be the biggest kind of precursor to, I feel, the development of food intolerance for one, which I will go back to in a moment. Definitely nutritional deficiencies without a diet and poor varieties also kind of perpetuates food fussiness as well to a degree because where there are poor variety often nutritional deficiencies develop and you know families get in a rush





and then those nutritional deficiencies also kind of underpin that lack of interest in trying new food. So, it really is a vicious circle.

Alexx: Yes, it is a bit of Catch 22 isn't it?

Georgia: It is. And I also feel – and this is perhaps a little bit unorthodox – I also feel that we are now seeing a generation of people who have eaten, like you said, processed foods you know right through the childhood like we were exposed to processed food right through our childhood or I think it is even worse. As time goes on, definitely it's gotten worse I think perhaps with the sheer volume of ingredients...

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: ...in processed food. But we also have to understand that processed food in order for something to be on the shelf and have a shelf life, it is sterile. So, we are also seeing a full generation of people with that are eating sterile foods.

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: And you know these sterile foods neither feed the natural gut flora that we have like our microbiome. They don't feed that, but they also don't contribute to that. You know whole foods both feed and contribute to the health and the growth of healthy gut flora. So, I always, when I look at food on the shelf, no matter what the health claims are it is still a sterile food.

Alexx: Yeah. If it is still in a package and it has got a Best By: 1 year from now.

Georgia: Absolutely.

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: As I said, it could in theory... like if you analyse each ingredient and that's why I kind of always said they food can't be assessed as a sum of its parts. In theory, it could look, you know, not too bad, but I suppose we just have to understand that these foods are sterile and they don't contribute. In many ways actually, they are detracting. So, in most cases where people are eating maybe 50% processed food, 50% whole foods, the processed food not only doesn't contribute anything nutritionally but it also increases our requirements for certain nutrients. That is something that we need to bear in mind as well.





Alexx: Definitely. It is like my favourite example is “Oh, you know but it is just brown rice in this.” for brown rice cakes for example. And it’s like highly extruded, like big heat temperatures to puff up that rice, press that into that shape.

Georgia: That’s something actually on my mind.

Alexx: Yeah, it’s definitely not just brown rice. It’s what has been done to the brown rice.

Georgia: Absolutely and there was a time, I suppose, in early days in my years of practicing where brown rice crackers were definitely something that I would be recommending as snacks. And look, you know, as far as food snacks go you can do whole lot worse. That’s the thing

Alexx: Yeah, you could. There is a scale, right? And if they are eating like barbecue chips then the brown rice crackers with something on it is going to be a great step in the right direction. And I think it is always important that while we learn what perfect scenario is we also recognize that there is going to be a little journey to get there.

Georgia: And I have to admit that brown rice crackers are something that I have in my cupboard as kind of an absolute back stock for you know if I am desperate and I need something quickly. It is actually something as well and my kids crave after because is not something that they have a lot of. They see it kind of as one of those, “Oh, there is brown rice crackers in this cupboard!”

Alexx: What a treat!

Georgia: Yeah, but they are pretty good. They will know to put some avocado, maybe cheese or something like that.

Alexx: Definitely.

Georgia: My 10-year-old had unusual taste. The last time he made himself a brown rice cracker, he put jalapeno, horseradish, mustard, capers and anchovies, stuffed olives all those on rice cracker.

Alexx: Wow.





Georgia: It's crazy but...

Alexx: Wow. You go little man.

Georgia: Yeah, he has quite unusual taste.

Alexx: Yeah and the crackers, the flat ones, I mean they are okay. It is the puffed or those ones are the not so great ones.

Georgia: Yeah.

Alexx: Yeah. Cool. Okay. Oh gosh, we could talk about packaged food for ages. So, we've got a lot of factors here. I really love that you brought up the dead food factor because there is a lot of dead food out there, sterile food, great way to put it. Then we've got the soil depletion. We don't have the minerals that we use to have in the soils at the levels that we use to have. Then the fast leaving factor you know just like it's all being about trying to start marketing grab-and-go kind of products.

Georgia: Yes!

Alexx: And a lot of this is obviously making this contribution to lot of nutrients starting to disappear from the diet and you mentioned variety which at least fantastic as well. Like so often it is just same thing over and over again. Or it is toast for breakfast, pasta for lunch, something with rice for dinner and it's like that's quite high on the macro scale of carbs and it's not like carbs are evil but variety isn't happening to let everything to get in there. Am I right in kind of summing that up?

Georgia: Yeah, absolutely. And even taking it to processed foods. it's interesting if you look at the ingredients in processed foods, there is a stock standard in kind of combination of ingredients like vegetable oils, sugars, some soy sometimes you know. Wheat is another classic that tends to feature quite highly in a lot of processed foods. Yeah but absolutely. We are stuck in that mind set of if you ask someone, "What did you have for breakfast?", it will be either cereal or toast. "What did you have for lunch?" (because you know I obviously ask people these kinds of questions in consult.) "What did you have for lunch?" "Sandwich or pasta." "And what are you having for dinner?" "Yeah probably, pasta or you know making veggies." As in not all bad by any means, but not a whole lot of variety.





Alexx: Yeah, yeah. That's a great point because it's not like that person is eating fast food so they might not even register that there is an issue there. That they are cooking it all at home and they know what has gone into it but there's not that variety.

Georgia: Yeah, I think the processed food market has really underpinned this analogy that we need to eat certain foods at certain times of the day. That is bogus. Cereals for breakfast.

Alexx: Before World War II, cereals just weren't even a thing, maybe some porridge and that was about as much cereal as anyone had in their lives

Georgia: Yes absolutely. So, we have been sold. Quite often when we suggest to people, I heard a mum once, a friend of a friend, contacted me panicking because her son didn't like toast, didn't like eggs, he didn't like cereal for breakfast. "What do I feed him?!" I was like, "Okay. What does he like eating? What does he really enjoy eating?" He loved soup, easiest breakfast in the world. Batches of soup, putting it in jars, putting it in fridge or freezers. Get it out the night before, get it heated up in the morning. You have got breakfast.

Alexx: Yeah, amazing and that's it.

Georgia: It was really interesting because this one very particular child was getting sick all the time and the mum was supplementing with things that the paediatrician told her to go and get. You know some iron for him, this and that, which I was just...

Alexx: Oh gosh.

Georgia: And that one change in his diet, he no longer got sick with the same frequency or severity as he was before. Just that one change in his diet.

Alexx: Wow, a good start to the day.

Georgia: Sometimes it could be that simple.

Alexx: Now something that comes up a lot, there is obviously a few key deficiencies and I would love to go through them and how they might present in someone, and one that comes up a lot is zinc. I know you know the fussiness that can sometimes make someone particular about textures and tags on the back and that can sometimes be a huge "A-ha!" for the parent.





Georgia: Absolutely

Alexx: Talk to us about zinc. What is it in and what could we be adding more into the diet and what could it fix potentially?

Georgia: I think zinc deficiency is huge purely because of the sheer volume of grains that creeps into a lot of people's diet. Even though well prepared whole grains are a source of zinc, they are not the best zinc. I find zinc deficiency are common in kids that who averse to eating animal-based protein, to be honest. That's quite common. The thing with animal-based protein, I would say this is a bit of a disclaimer because I would be referencing that a little bit. When I talk about animal-based protein it needs to be grass feed, not grain feed.

Alexx: Yes, of course.

Georgia: I am sure that you talked about or we would talk about. When I'm talking about meat, eggs and dairy it needs to be from the best source as humanly possible available to you. Also, pumpkin seeds are an amazing source of zinc, really, really great source of zinc. I find in zinc deficient kids they are a great way for those that are not so keen on eating meat. Because let's face it, if you don't enjoy eating meat – I have been a vegetarian for many years, I am not anymore, but when I first started transitioning back, it was a bit of a push for me to get used to that kind of texture – so for some kids, meat is off the radar altogether and pumpkins seeds are a great inclusion in the diet. You know they can be ground and subbed out for flours in a lot of recipes or almond meal in some recipes. My kids actually... Sometimes it's a matter of if kids don't like something one way, try another way. So, for my kids they love them toasted, with a little bit of tamari or coconut aminos over the top and I'll toast them. They love salt and vinegar pepitas

Alexx: Yum!

Georgia: Which is just sea salt and apple cider vinegar, and again, toasted.

Alexx: And when you say toasted, you mean 180°C in the oven say for 15 mins, that kind of a thing?

Georgia: Ideally. I have a dehydrator, so I would dehydrate them but often that doesn't happen as well. I would get them all through and I've got pepitas that haven't been soaked or activated. So yes, I would toast them under the grill slowly or in a slow oven, it is the simplest way to do that. Just watch them because just like almonds and nuts and seeds they burn really quickly. Many people relate to that, burning those precious nuts





and seeds. Sunflower seeds are another one. So again, I would often grind out batches of sunflower seeds and pepitas, as I said, to mix into baked goods. As I said, whole grains, if they are well prepared. Another thing for meat-adverse kids that is a great source of zinc is bone broth. So, chicken bone broth is another option and that also covers other minerals, important minerals like iron, magnesium, calcium. Bone broth is obviously one of those great foods.

Alexx: Oh yes, it's fabulous. That's something that even if they don't want to drink the broth on its own, you just steam some veggies and then blend them up all together and make a yummy soup,

Georgia: Absolutely. There are so many ways that you could add it into the favourite meals. If they like a spaghetti bolognese, you can add a quarter of a cup into a batch of the spaghetti and cook it down. There are so many ways, also casseroles, curries, those kinds of things. With nutritional deficiency always and I know you will have someone again talking about digestion, but you always need to look at why they have the deficiencies. It is often not as simple as they not eating enough. So, I always feel like you need to be a little bit of a detective. You need to look for and treat the underlying cause of deficiencies and sometimes it is an outright dietary issue at the time. Other times, it is a combination of dietary as well as they don't have great absorption and assimilation of nutrients in which case you have to work on the digestive system and gut health.

Alexx: Yes absolutely. How about iron? This is something that you mentioned that teacher said, "Go and get some iron." It is like one of those first supplement that became cool to get.

Georgia: I think it's because it could be tested for, so it's a little less mysterious. It's something you can see numerically, you know when somebody's iron stores are deficient. Interestingly enough in my clinical experience with zinc and iron, I find when a child is iron deficient, they are very often zinc deficient as well. That's just something I have observed over the years and I mean there are similar overlaps again with children who are not eating a lot of meat-based or animal-based protein in their diets. Often, they'll develop iron deficiencies. Sometimes they could be borderline as well and I suppose we really test for frank deficiencies, often children are borderline. So, even if someone doesn't have a frank deficiency, it's definitely a consideration. So again, meat, turkey, pork, any animal-based protein, is generally a fairly decent source of iron. Bone broth once again. We have Heme sources of iron and non-Heme sources of iron. So, Heme are more easily absorbed and assimilated by the body and they are all of your animal-based irons. Non-Heme are plant-based basically. So, beetroot, parsley is a fantastic source of iron. I find people just overlook it as just something that just grows in the garden and it's something that can be really incorporated easily into fussy kids' diets. I find if they do have a favourite food, say if they do like bolognese, it seems to be something that most kids like, I know it's mine, if I've got kids coming over.





Alexx: Yeah, yeah. It is such a good staple.

Georgia: I know you are going to like it, and I can put a lot of veggies and stuff. With parsley, really to get the most out of the parsley, you want to add it at the last minute so once you cooked it, so you are not going to put it at the beginning of the cooking process and so I'll often stir in some kind of leafy green into pretty much everything I cook, whether bolognese or casseroles or curry, anything that has got that kind of soupy consistency. You can definitely mix that in. With beetroot, I suppose it's a little bit more difficult to be disguised. I would often throw it into smoothies which compliments chocolate, that is why people like chocolate beetroot cakes, but also in the smoothie I find like some cacao powder with beetroot and raspberries. It's really delicious. You know to a less degree are nuts, seeds, legumes. These need to be properly prepared.

Alexx: And by that you mean the soaking.

Georgia: Yeah, soaking for a decent amount of time. I used to personally have a bit of stumbling block on "Oh my God, you have got to soak these?" I suppose it's about changing your mindset. In the morning typically I would think what am I cooking for dinner tonight? Does it involve a legume or nuts and seeds? And I would literally grab just a breakfast bowl and chunk in a hand full or a cup of whatever I need, throw some water and a little bit of sea salt and maybe a bit of vinegar to help speed that process up and just leave it on that kitchen bench all day. It's not usually time consuming, but I will also say if you don't get around to doing that, I find people getting a lot of pressure on themselves and go, "Oh we can't eat lentils for dinner tonight, we are going have pasta because I didn't soak the legumes."

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: I mean there are certain things that you don't have to soak. You need to soak your bigger ones like chickpeas and even beans, but the small lentils or red lentils don't really need to.

Alexx: Red lentils, frankly I don't usually bother, because they just fall apart in 2 seconds.

Georgia: Quinoa is another one I use to think, "Oh my God, I forgot to soak the Quinoa!" But now I just rinse it very well and cook it anyway.





Alexx: I think if you want to passionately explore perfection of something, often you find yourself coming back off the edge of that and into the middle anyway after a while. You go, “Okay my body feels nobody feels fine if I don’t soak that one.” But if you don’t soak chickpeas it would be an absolute disaster.

Georgia: Absolutely, you wouldn’t get away with that.

Alexx: No, you wouldn’t. So, let’s talk magnesium, because this is one we really need for our super-fast growing little people.

Georgia: Absolutely and also with our super-fast paced life .

Alexx: Yes.

Georgia: And these kids that are always on the go. I know my kids are very passionate sporty kids, so magnesium is something that I am really conscious of. Leafy greens are one of your best sources of magnesium. Also, things like almonds, cashews, whole grains as well, if they are properly prepared. Very often, kids that are suffering with really severe growing pains, is a really classic sign of magnesium deficiency and I actually find that tissue salts are fabulous.

Alexx: Yeah.

Georgia: They are low dose. they are extremely effective. It is something I don’t mind recommending because they are so safe.

Alexx: Beautiful, and how do we know, when it comes to things like zinc, iron and magnesium when we do really need to discuss with a practitioner and talk about supplementation?

Georgia: Look, I would think that, if your child is in health pattern or behaviour pattern that you just can’t shift. So, when I say behaviour pattern, perhaps they are not concentrating as well could be or perhaps they are particularly fussy, and you just can’t break that fussy pattern with boundaries and getting them involved in the kitchen and the other things that I know that you would probably talk about. Also, if they are actually getting sick frequently and if their illness is becoming serious. It’s not uncommon for children to get cold, flus and bugs but they should be able to bounce back within a day or two. If they are not and it’s kind of ongoing. With zinc, you know if they are getting a scrape or cut and it’s not healing that’s a classic sign. With iron, one of the really classic signs I found with kids and iron is that I tend to want to eat things that they shouldn’t be





wanting to eat. So, they often really drawn to loads of ice. Kids that are scraping about at the bottom of the glass trying to chew on the ice. They'd want to eat like chalk from the chalkboard, really non-digestible.

Alexx: I remember I use to suck my hair. Is that possible?

Georgia: Not possibly, generally.

Alexx: Because, I remember I ended up getting supplemented with iron, by my doctor who was obviously quite forward thinking at that time.

Georgia: Yeah, absolutely. But the ice one, even with pregnant women I always find it is like, just want to stop and get a slushy every day or eat an ice block every day. Straightaway I will think it is a guaranteed failsafe if someone is exhibiting those kinds of symptoms. Generally, if a child is just failing to thrive in some way or shape, then you need to perhaps enlist in the support of someone who is qualified to kind of guide you. Even for me, if I suspect there something going on with one of my kids. Just recently, I was concerned about my daughter, a swimmer. So, she is in a heavily chlorinated pool, sometimes twice a day for many hours and she has always been extremely robust, but she was starting to get some ulcers in her mouth. And I just suspected there were a few little things going on and I contacted a friend of mine who is a fabulous naturopath. So even for me, minor things like a cold or a flu, I know what to throw their way. Or if they have got sore muscles I'll give them magnesium. But if it is an ongoing chronic thing it is kind of nice to have someone to really filter out exactly what is going on. As it happened, my good friend discovered a few little things that perhaps was not a red flag for me. So, I think it is important. These days with health funds and stuff it is a little bit more affordable to see a naturopath. Worst case scenario, there are naturopaths working out of health food shops and pharmacies.

Alexx: Absolutely.

Georgia: So, if you need to get that kind of advice it is definitely worthwhile.

Alexx: 100%. When I was going through trying to figure what my issue was after a big operation sent me on an inflammation cascade that in the end wasn't the surgery, it was more of the anaesthetic tipped with my inflammation over the edge with a mould issue. I remember spending so many thousands of dollars on tests and all of these sorts of things and it got to the point where I just had to experiment and try a few things out. And the in-house naturopath at our local health shop was brilliant because it meant I didn't need to spend 100 bucks a pop to just ask a couple of questions and try a new supplement and see what was going to work. So, I





absolutely advocate for that as well for the people who are on a smaller budget, but you still think I'm quite like to run this past a professional.

Georgia: Yeah. I would say with a really chronic ongoing issue that is a chronic disease of some sort you need to sit down and have a very lengthy consultation with a practitioner. But yes, if you are talking just little red flags. The bigger the flag, the more time you need to spend with a qualified practitioner, in my opinion.

Alexx: Yes, Great advice. And now something that also comes up, especially when we think about the brain health of a child, whether that child is a baby or whether they are 16 years old, is essential fatty acids. And often people don't like the fatty bits especially kids. So, talk us through creative ways for us to get more essential fatty acids in and what does that look like when a child isn't getting enough?

Georgia: Yeah, look, essential fatty acid is a huge issue really. That would be one of the kind of top supplements that I prescribed when I was practicing particularly with favour of omega-3s. Omega-3s generally from fish oils and you also get it from grass fed animal protein again, butter, eggs grass-fed meats. Look, your seeds, flax and chia particularly, your body needs an enzyme to convert that into an active form. So, they are not as bioavailable.

Alexx: Oh right. Yeah. Good tip.

Georgia: So definitely again back to the oily fish are fabulous. If you could be eating fish a couple of times a week, that would be great. It's funny, it is one food my kids... I actually have great experience with creative ways of incorporating fish-based meals into the diet because it's actually one food that they won't...well, one of them, my son eats anything. My daughter is a little bit more, since she has become a teenager, we are going through another cycle with her. Fish is one of those things she would kick up about. So, it just means getting creative in the kitchen. So, I find if I throw a tiny piece of grilled fish on a plate with a big salad that she is going to look at it and go, "Ugh, gross." She likes salmon. That's about the only kind of fish she eats that way. So, I got really creative with fish. I do like a curry. It is a classic way that we kind of eat fish and a lot of strong flavours of really aromatic curry override the fishiness. A good Thai fish cake is good,

Alexx: Yeah, you got to love a fish cake.

Georgia: Something about processing fish that just change the whole texture. I have actually got quite a few friends who makes fish cakes and tell the kids they are eating chicken.





Alexx: Tastes like chicken.

Georgia: Yeah, if there are enough good flavours around it. You know essential fatty acid, omega-3 fish oils are fairly easy and widely available, and relatively affordable. It is worth investigating a good quality source.

Alexx: Yes, because there is sustainability and contamination issue as well if you just grab any old one.

Georgia: Yeah, that's the hard thing with whole fish debate. I know a lot of people are not eating fish because of that reason. You know, finding good sources of fish is getting harder and harder but, the more processed food or the more food you are eating with vegetable oil is just a huge red flag for throwing the balance between omega 6 and omega 3 out. So, the more processed food a person is eating, the more fish they need to be eating just to bring that balance, that ratio, back in.

Alexx: Oh wow. That is a great tip for people who are starting to make few changes as well.

Georgia: Yes absolutely. Fish oils are something that I always have had in my cupboard for my children and if they have been out at a party and eaten a heap of crap fried food, that is the night I just load them up with fish oils.

Alexx: Oh wow, great tip.

Georgia: Sometimes it could be with supplements. If someone has a frank deficiency, it's all. There is no two ways about it, it's all in to treat that deficiency. But sometimes life is fluid and so are our needs and requirements so often when I do supplement my kids it can be transient. So, it can be as I said, they've gone out and they have eaten a whole heap of crap that I would normally feed them, heavily processed food, lots of deep fried stuff. I would definitely give them fish oils for the next couple of days to try to kind of offset that because omega 6 is very pro inflammatory. Inflammation is good if it is kept in check. We need inflammatory processes in our body but omega-3 is actually anti-inflammatory so that's why you need that balance. Unfortunately like in our days gone by it was probably closer to a kind of a one to one ratio. Now I have read studies where it is like one to twenty-five in favour of Omega-6.

Alexx: Oh, wow.

Georgia: Yeah, so you can see in modern day living, the way we are eating we have really skewed that balance. So, grass feed meat and oily fish are great.





Alexx: Okay. So, another thing that is sort of happening these days is people, due to intolerances and allergies and all sorts of things, they are going nut-free, egg-free, dairy-free. Or some people are just choosing not to eat dairy because they are worried and concerned about that industry. And you know, if you try and tell someone in the older generation who really grew up with that super strong dairy campaign of have a glass of milk, 2 piece of cheese and a tub of yogurt. Like I still remember the ad. People are horrified that you would consider removing dairy from the diet. And it can be a fine food to help people thrive depending on the way you digest certain proteins and, of course, A2 protein is a bit easier on us, and goat cheese and goat's products can be easier. But there is that calcium worry that people have when they find out that family members skipping out on the dairy. So how do we get, or even how do we diversify away from dairy if we do want to have a little bit but we don't want to have heaps of it and we want to bring in a variety of nutrients to give us that calcium?

Georgia: Variety being the key word.

Alexx: Yes, exactly.

Georgia: Again, in a diet where someone is eating a variety of foods, calcium is rarely a problem in my experience. Definitely children need fairly decent quantity of calcium because they are growing. Children need more of all of these macro nutrients because they are growing. One thing I always say it's like a much smaller capacity to being nourished in that their digestive system is smaller, so they are not absorbing as much nutrition and then perhaps the volume of food that they are eating is smaller, but they need so many more nourishment, so many more macro nutrients in many cases. So, we really need to make every mouthful count as much as possible. So, with calcium back to hand-in-hand with omegas, fish, oily fish, fish with bones.

Alexx: So, like the tinned fish where the bones kind of crumble?

Georgia: Exactly. Yes. And a lot of people kind of get freaked out about that and then their kids get freaked out if they see the bones. I say to you: mash it.

Alexx: Fish cakes!

Georgia: Yes, exactly. Mash it before you present it. And again, don't be afraid to add in flavour and seasoning. I think a little bit of sea salt and for some kids mixing it with a little bit of good quality mayonnaise can go a long way, chopping some chives through it or something as well. My kids love chives and many kinds of





flavours with fish. Almonds are also fabulous source of calcium, but you really need to be conscious. So almond milk is obviously one of the most recent trends, I suppose and there are some really crappy almond milks out there. I think if you are dairy-free you really need to invest in making your own almond milk or finding really good quality source of almond milk. Something that is kept in the fridge at the very least because generally a couple of brand use activated almonds. So, it's just going to make the calcium much more bioavailable if you have soaked those almonds. Again, legumes and whole grains if they are well prepared can be a source of calcium. Broccoli is another good source of calcium. A lot of kids actually... I find broccoli is not one of those things kids kick up about too much.

Alexx: And you can roast them. That for a lot of families end up being an “A-ha” moment... that they love them when they are roasted.

Georgia: Absolutely. I always say if your child doesn't like something in one way, cook it another way. Just keep trying. Some kids love raw vegetables. As long as they are eating veggies I don't care how they are prepared. Like you said, if they are roasted, if they are put in casserole or stew or raw. We are all different. We all have different kind of taste and ways of eating things. Chia seeds as well. Again, I would try and grind chia seeds. I think that... I just read a small study, nothing significant. They just suggested that essential fatty acid and they nutrients are more readily available when it is ground. A lot of people don't do that. I actually prefer the taste when it is not as gritty and ground. Sesame seed something tahini like if you are going to make good hummus and they are really rich source of calcium as well. You do have other options outside. I could list 100s of foods that has calcium in it. The other again I would say is calcium deficiency is often it's not the calcium that is issue, often vitamin D is underpinning because calcium needs vitamin D to be absorbed. So again, with all of these nutrients, a lot of them work both for and against one another.

Alexx: They are all on see saws, aren't they?

Georgia: Yes, and this is where people kind of get confused. I will kind of back track a little bit and say where I find iron deficiency I often also find zinc deficiency. But iron and zinc also compete for binding sites. So, if you were supplementing, you would be supplementing at different times of the day. But you know nature gives us food in this perfectly packaged combination that we can unlock as we need to and I really believe that our body, when we present it with a whole food it knows what to do with the parts .

Alexx: Yes, totally. I absolutely great. There is no better supplement in the world than something from the farm, or the sea.





Georgia: Exactly. You often find people say if you eat loads of leafy greens... yes, it has got calcium in it, but it's got high levels of oxalate and you won't absorb the calcium. But there is more calcium in that it isn't affected by the and maybe the oxalates don't bind a 100% with the calcium. So leafy greens are a great source of Vitamin K which is great for calcium absorption. So, it's an intricate web of interaction between all of these micro nutrients.

Alexx: Absolutely, and often if there is an oxalate issue, there is a digestion issue and an enzyme issue. Quite often it will be someone who have a presenting symptom would happen to find a blog happen to demonise oxalates and every food that they come in and all of a sudden you have changed your whole life off the back of this one blog. We really need to be concerned about that and I love this chat because we have got this big picture. Now, what does a day look like for you supporting your kids?

Georgia: Very different each and every day.

Alexx: Yes. Like it's all about variety.

Georgia: Honestly, it is really about variety. I have fallen into times in my life, where there hasn't been a whole lot of variety and you know, like, when my kids were little and I was really struggling with being a mum with no support around me, I can remember I gave them my own homemade toasted muesli but regularly to the point that they actually don't enjoy eating muesli anymore.

Alexx: That's like me and mandarins every darn day in my lunch box at school, and I can't, I don't eat them.

Georgia: So, you know that, as much as I say variety from getting a little bit of everything. If you've got lots of variety the chances of developing nutritional deficiency from your diet is minimal. I'm not saying it's not going to happen, because there are other factors that apply. There are other health issues, there is digestive issues, that can undermine your ability to absorb nutrients but if you have loads and loads of variety in your diet. When I say variety is the spice of life, I really do believe that. Not only nutritionally but also just keeping my kids interested in eating. I love food prep and I love creating recipes, I love working with food, it's what I do. So, I understand it comes easy for me and I understand that for a lot of people it doesn't but to those people I would just actually say, if you can, chipping away and find someone that presents recipes in a simple way that really resonate with you. If you find your family really enjoys eating certain things, just keep chipping away at cooking, because you are only going to get better at it.





Alexx: Yes, so true. I couldn't roast a chicken when I was 30, and look at what I do now for a living. So, it is really something that you have your own awakening moments as you get better at stuff and to speak into that overwhelm. I would love to finish here actually on like just a couple of things that the newer parents... Because often we are not just having to educate our kids but because we grew up in the first generation without education ourselves, we need to educate ourselves and that could be an overwhelming double job to do... Like just a couple of things for those people who might be feeling a little bit overwhelmed about this, who might kind of think, 'Yeah, my kids don't eat much stuff and I'm pretty sure there are some deficiencies at play that are related to their diet.' What would your first go to pieces of advice be there?

Georgia: Okay. You kind of covered one of them.

Alexx: Okay. Sorry.

Georgia: So, if you are not educated yourself, definitely you need to step up.

Alexx: And they are here so it's all good.

Georgia: Exactly, absolutely. First to be taken care of. Secondly, you do need to take it upon yourself. It's not just about you learning new stuff and doing it for your kids. You need to get your kids involved. It doesn't need to be that you are cooking messy cakes in the kitchen every weekend. It's not like that. It could be really small little things. I say people spend so much time teaching their kids to toilet train, to read and write, yet we seem to have lost this step. We now do as you said at the start, we need to teach our kids the difference between foods that nourish their body and foods that don't nourish them so well. So, we need to be talking about food and it can be as simple as when you are eating talking about flavour that you could taste. You know when it comes to them getting into the kitchen, truth be told my kids very rarely cook anything from start to finish but they contribute every day in some small way and it could be that they peel one carrot to go into their lunch box. That's it. But they are still involved in producing their lunch box. So, if you are overwhelmed it doesn't need to be big. Try and really scale it back into small things, but yes you do need to teach your kids about food, you need to talk to them about food. It could be when you are at the supermarket. Most parents don't enjoy shopping with their kids. I love it because I get them busy. You know, "Go pick 10 potatoes". When they were little and I didn't want anything damaged, I picked the veggies. Sometimes if they can't yet count, they might come back with 2, they might come back with 20 but getting them involved in any which way you can with food. Another thing that I haven't kind of talked about is the quality of food. You know we have been talking about sourcing food. Sourcing food that you know that is locally produced, and you know it is as nutritious as possible is going to go a long way as well. If you are sourcing food that has been imported from





the USA, chances are that it has been heavily chemically treated and probably doesn't have a whole lot of nutrition. In Australia we are so lucky, I'm sure some international as well, but I can only say in Australia, we have fresh produce available to us. So, if it is available to you, choosing locally grown, locally sourced whole food is also very important. So much more bang for your buck.

Alexx: Absolutely.

Georgia: The nutrients are going to be so much more present because the longer things are stored, exposed to heat and those kinds of things the more these beautiful micro-nutrients tends to fall away. So yes, sourcing fresh produce is also something that I think is really important. So really for me, you are in a good place if you are eating a bit of variety and trying to mix it up a little each day. And it might not come naturally to you to start with but picking a meal and really focusing on deriving a bit of variety and in that one meal. And once you have nailed that then you can perhaps move on to something else.

Alexx: Yes, such great advice. And relax

Georgia: I really don't like reading through tips.

Alexx: I know. It's not the way my brain works either, but I always think of the student who is like, wide eyed and like, "Oh my gosh, there is so much I need to do." Just a couple of things to start please.

Georgia: Absolutely. Scale it back, make up your priorities and don't stress. You can have days - like I said, life is fluid - you are going to have days when it does go pear-shaped. And that happens with me. you know it happens with the best of us. So just start scaling back. If start finding recipes and cooking is scary for you then sticking with meat and 3 veg...

Alexx: Yes, it's literally that simple. So good. That's what our dinners are most nights I have got to say. We are more of a meat and 5 veg kind of family and 2 herbs and a whole bunch of spices. We always like to do tiny things to zhooosh things up but I totally agree, the scale back. This is how simple it is because I think all the recipes that everybody sees, that can make everybody say, "Oh, am I supposed to be doing this every day?" And I always say we are providing meal plan that is just basically treated like a recipe book that you would turn to if you wanted to be in inspiration. Otherwise keep it super simple.

Georgia: Absolutely.





Alexx: Yaaaay! Thank you so much for your time. It's been fantastic having this chat and I know it is going to be super helpful to the Thrive parents. And we've got all of the details on how people can find you, join your fabulous Facebook group. So many great discussions happen there and yeah, we will see you soon.

Georgia: Thank you. Thanks, Alexx.

