



Steph: Hello again, Kirsty. Thanks for joining us again today.

Kirsty: Hey, Steph. Thanks for having me.

Steph: Let's dive straight in today. I want you to teach us how to combat candida. But before we learn all your tricks of the trade, I want to set the foundations in regards to what exactly candida is, and maybe when it becomes a concern.

Kirsty: Yeah, beautiful. So candida is actually a normal part of our gut microbiome. So I think a lot of people think we have to eradicate candida, we have to get rid of it, we don't want any in our body, and that's not really the case. It's something that we do have inside as a symbiote in our gut, but what can go wrong is when there is an overgrowth, so when there is too much candida compared to the other bacteria within our gut microbiome. So it's a commensal relationship with the rest of our gut microbiome. So I think that's really important to know that, because I just see people all the time on these real kind of eradicate candida.

Candida absorbs and digests heavy metals. It really does support nutrient absorption. There is actually wonderful things that candida does. So now we've got that in our minds, sort of the next thing to think about is ... it is a yeast, and so it's a type of yeast that is in our gut and interestingly, this what I find interesting about candida is that it uses sugar or converts a sugar into an alcohol, so it's ... an ethanol alcohol called acetaldehyde in our bodies.

And so when we see excess candida happening, so when there's too much in the body, some people literally feel drunk, or they feel hung over, which is ... our bodies are basically like little breweries that if the candida is too prevalent in the body and then you go and have some sugar, which then converts with this yeast inside our bodies ... so with this crazy little factory going on in our body, you have your yeast in there which is the candida, you feed it the sugar, it metabolizes and is broken down into an alcohol. And that's pumping around in your veins in your body, you're going to feel drunk and then you're going to feel hung over and then your poor liver has to mop up the mess. And requires huge amounts of nutrients, extra nutrients to clean up that mess. So things like

glutathione and amino acids like all of those beautiful amino acids like glycine and cysteine. So it can get really out of control quite easily and it can cause some real sort of system break down within the body.

Steph: Yeah fascinating. I'm really glad you mentioned that it does have some important roles but it's that sort of bell curve analogy that we talk about or the goldilocks scenario so not too little and not too much. But yeah fascinating symptoms that might lead to in an over growth and I do want to explore symptoms a little bit more in terms of ... I think candida's probably more well known for that symptom of vaginal thrush but I want to get your thoughts on how else it might manifest in the body. And then some of the symptoms that we might be experiencing as a result.

Kirsty: Yeah so I think candida's quite sneaky in the fact that a lot of people probably don't even know that they have it. So it can be really overt, like you can have major, major bloating, you can have diarrhea, you can be covered in rashes, you can have allergies, there's those sorts of things that can happen. But some people just have random sort of brain fog, they're really tired in the mornings, they can have insane cravings. I can't explain to you ... well lots of you probably have experienced this if you've ever had candida, the cravings are out of control, you can't almost contain yourself. It's like an out-of-body experience when you know that you've had enough or that you shouldn't eat that food but you just crave it and want to just keep eating and eating and eating.

What upsets me is that some people don't realize the real impact that candida can have on ... it leads into auto-immune conditions, it can lead into ... right down to cycle issues and irregularities, PCOS, it can lead to muscle and joint pain and has a lot to do with diabetes. So it's actually quite debilitating for someone when they've got ... like a very much a systemic candida overgrowth with in the body which means that it can be happening anywhere from your mouth biome, which is that horrible white, filmy, furry mouth right down to athletes foot and a fungus in your foot. And then obviously everywhere in between from top to toe. So it can really take over your whole body. And you need to really watch that because it still surprises me the amount of people that I see who've got significant candida over growths. And when you kind of go through the different parts of the body, it's that real light bulb moment of holy smokes my body is mostly made up of a candida over growth instead of this beneficial bacteria that it should up of.

Steph: Yeah well that's what I find really interesting in the western model ... I've seen plenty of tests that have come back for positive candida that no discussion or no treatment and part of me thinks that it's because there might not have been like a thrush or really sort of what would be a more obvious symptom but when it's systemic and we're talking about symptoms like sugar cravings or it's the brain fog or it's the digestive issues or the joint pain that you mentioned. They're obviously not the ones that we've always linked directly back to the gut until more recent years but it absolutely needs to be treated and I think that the testing is what's going to help you start developing that treatment protocol.

Kirsty: Absolutely. And it's even tricky to test because it is systemic, you kind of have to take swabs from every part of your body so when it comes to candida, sometimes just treating it from the get go is just as important as going through those tests because it is more obvious. For some people you can actually see it, like the oral thrush you can see. You can see what's going on on your toenails and you can see even candida on the skin, on our skin biome so testing you can see it in your small intestine when you do something like a Bioscreen test. You can do vaginal swabs, you can do mouth swabs and you can really see the levels of this significant over growth in your body.

Steph: Yeah, so we've definitely set the scene with that. So what could possibly be causing the over growth? I can definitely think of some of the reasons, obviously sugar is going to be a really big one, I want to get your thoughts on what else could contribute to the over growth. And we'll go from there.

Kirsty: Yeah, well the first one I'm going to start with is stress. I can not stress enough how much stress can play a huge part in candida over growth. So when we are stressed, the amount of sugars in our blood stream so I won't sort of break it down too in depth but when we're stressed we have a change in our metabolic state, which basically means that we have more cortisol in our body which increases our blood sugar level.

Kirsty: Now when that increases, there is more sugar available in the body for the candida to feed on. And so we don't even ... because we know that too much alcohol and too much excess sugary foods can lead to candida. But some people can have a candida over growth and they eat the perfect anti-candida diet. And I know you would have seen this too Steph so you'd see your perfect client that eats all the right foods, they have their fermented food, they do everything that they're supposed to do but they time and time and time again, every month they get vaginal thrush or they constantly have a rash or athlete's foot or they're mouth biome is compromised. But they're doing everything right with regards to their diet and environment and lifestyle but the thing that they've missed out on is that stress response. Because that cortisol level rises, insulin level rises and there's more blood glucose floating around and the candida feeds off it.

So I can't highlight that enough. You've got to manage your stress levels if you are dealing with a systemic candida issue. Antibiotics is a massive one that cause candida. It's an unfortunately ... we do have a lot of antibiotics in our environment whether we're taking them or whether they're coming through in our food source or however we're getting our antibiotics, it can completely cause a candida excess. And also a lot of medications such as the pill or a pharmaceutical medications can cause that too. And then just not having a diet that's really diverse that feeds your gut microbiome, so lots of fiber, lots of resistant starch, lots of fermented foods, bone broths, all those sorts of things that's going to really create an awesome diversity in your gut. If that's not there, that's how the candida over ... basically outgrows, they crowd out all of the beneficial microbes and they just take up the space and the environment. So yeah there's lots and lots of reasons why we can see ... and unfortunately these

guys grow really quickly, like it's a yeast, it grows quickly and in huge amounts. So if you have a big weekend, where you go out in Friday night and you go out on Saturday night and you have afternoon drinks in Sunday, if you have drinks that whole time and then you're having maybe a dessert or foods that you don't normally eat. A weekend of that is enough for that candida to multiply and grow and if you don't have the beneficial microbes in place to protect you, suddenly you've got a candida over growth.

Steph : Yeah it sounds like my twenties, it also sounds like my European trip a few years ago when unfortunately I decided to do my Bioscreen not long after getting back from a month of drinking rose and eating french fries with nearly every meal. So that was a little bit of a shock to me. Quite interesting to learn first hand, I can say that.

Kirsty: I know and it happens so quickly, I mean too, literally ... all of my twenties and most of my thirties so yeah it happens really quickly and I don't think ... I think people think I've got to be really sick for ages or I've got to have these symptoms for ages but even now for you and I Steph, we've worked really hard on creating a really diverse microbial community in our gut. But if you and I went away, you went away again to Europe and thank you I'll come with you and we did spend a month drinking and not nourishing our bodies, we would both come back with candida. It's something that's just set in stone once you sort your gut microbiome out, suddenly you're fine. It changes like that so it's how you put it back into place is the key.

Steph: Yeah so fascinating. I really want to talk about kombucha because it's a yeast right? So how does that come into play with candida being a yeast itself?

Kirsty: Yeah so kombucha, this scoby is a yeast and so there is a lot information going around about is it good for candida? Is it bad for candida? Is it feeding candida?, all those sorts of things. Now, yes absolutely it will feed candida. If you're having a kombucha that is basically glorified soft drink. Most of the kombucha's on the market have just as much sugar in them as a soft drink and so the sugar is going to feed your candida issue, not the yeast that is inside the kombucha.

So if you have a scoby, and you're making kombucha at home, and you're double fermenting it and all the sugar is gone, and you're having a small amount, so like 30 mls in conjunction with sauerkraut's, yogurts, kippers, a variety of other fermented foods, then kombucha would be absolutely fine.

If you're going to the shops and you're getting, what are they? 375 ml bottles of ...

Steph: One liters.

Kirsty: ... yeah and you're downing that on its own in a day, and you're having maybe two of them a day or three of them a day, that will absolutely cause a candida

over growth. So remember diversity, diversity, diversity, and so you can't just put one type of bacteria in your body or yeast in your body and think that that's going to be healthy for you. You'll end up causing more of an over growth and more pain, more cravings and more problems.

Steph: Yeah for sure. Awesome so I want to jump into ... if I could speak the English language, I want to jump into treatment and talk more from a dietary stand point. So clearly real food is an amazing template to start with to treat a candida over growth. But are there any particular food that we need to be really mindful of if we are looking at a dietary intervention to start?

Kirsty: Yeah absolutely, so candida as we talked about before being a yeast it feeds off sugar so it metabolizes and uses the sugar so it can grow. So you really need to cut out sugar. Now that's an obvious thing when you're talking about processed sugar but unfortunately there's also wholefood sugars that in the process of balancing your gut microbiome and bringing that candida back into the right percentage that it should be in your gut, you may have to just cut out even fruits and just keep berries in until you can get that balance in check. But yes absolutely you will need to change your diet and really minimize the sugars. Candida loves carbohydrates because carbohydrates turn into sugars in the body. And so I would highly recommend focusing more on fueling your body with good quality fats and then eating beautiful quality proteins and then heaps of vegetables but keeping the sugars quite low. And then obviously adding in fermented foods and bone broths and those sorts of things. But you don't want to be feeding that candida anymore.

Steph: Yeah I definitely think that's the big one, looking at your alcohol intake as well will be really, really helpful. I'm thinking though ... go on.

Kirsty: I was just going to say ... yeah of course you wouldn't have alcohol and I actually just forgot to mention it that that's a huge one.

Steph: Yes, yes people are still drinking nearly every day. I was also wondering about foods that you might sometimes see online or there's some questions around foods like bacon or certain nuts. Do you have any advice around that or do you think it's largely just essentially like a well designed LCHF template?

Kirsty: Yeah so they're all the tricky ones that is about you working with an awesome practitioner and finding out what's going on for you. So you might be the person that had a rocking gut microbiome and you could digest your food really well and everything was fine. And then you literally did a Steph and just went to Europe for a month and drank yourself silly and had beautiful food, more sugar than you would have ... had heaps of gelato and then you came back and you had a candida over growth.

Now before the over growth, you had a robust gut that could digest food and so yes, you would be able to keep nuts in because you could digest them and you

would be able to keep things like bacon in and certain foods because you were doing pretty well beforehand and so it's going to be how long have you had this condition for? How compromised is your body? How long has it been out of control? Because absolutely there are some people who have had candida for 20 years and their body literally has no ability to digest food. Their liver is very compromised, which is why you would cut out the bacon and they really need to start from sort of ground zero and work their way up.

And so you need to take stock of where you're at and your health journey and then what you specifically need so it's going to be different for everyone. So when I started dealing with my candida issues, I've had gut problems for most of my life so I couldn't have nuts and bacon and all sorts of those things, I just couldn't deal with them so it is very individual.

Steph: Yeah I completely agree. Now moving on, from a treatment point of view. We know there's obviously lots of conventional options and that would depend on the site technically, if it was like obviously as you mentioned, things like athlete's foot would be typically treated differently to vaginal thrush but I'm pretty sure that you're going to have some more natural options for us. And I appreciate this might be quite individual but even if you just wanted to give us some food for thought as to what some natural treatment options might be.

Kirsty: Yeah so unfortunately so far the treatments been Diflucan or Nystatin or something like that, which it will work for a point in time but then as soon as you stop them, if you haven't grown the beneficial microbes back, the yeast or the candida's just going to grow back again. So you don't get anywhere, and you end up having to be on these sort of anti-candida tablets for a very long period of time. Whereas when you're treating the first thing is just to really make sure that your digestion is absolutely awesome. So candida thrives on undigested food so you need to focus on that and then I would highly suggest that you use things like raw garlic, which is absolutely incredible for treating candida. So you crush a garlic ... you know how you get the knife and you sort of crush it down and you get all the beautiful oils out of the garlic and you can crush it on a spoon and then put some olive oil on it so it doesn't have that horrendous garlic taste when you have it. And that's going to be really, really powerful.

And then for some people if they have vaginal thrush, you can actually dip a tampon in the Cultured Wellness yogurt and you can even is garlic, there are so many ways that you can change the pH of that area and you can start to get rid of that candida over growth and enable those beneficial microbes to grow back and to get that balance back again. And then once again, the fermented foods can be very powerful but you need to make sure that you are going really, really slow with the fermented foods. And working on bringing the candida down and then if you've got ... you can then use certain herbal medications so you can use herbs like Pau d'Arco and you can use like in now, in the culture one is candida herbs. We have a series of different little herbs that work on bringing that candida balance down but supporting the liver and enabling the body to excrete all of the different types of metabolites from the candida.

Steph: Yeah I love it. I think definitely why you'd work with a practitioner because there's a lot to look at and whilst that's a really great way to treat it naturally, I think that some people are definitely guilty of thinking about how to support their body during that time. So unfortunately they get quite sick and some of it could definitely be avoided if they had all the tools of the trade on how to support their body detox and essentially really gently help their body and their microbiome rebalance.

Kirsty: Absolutely, when we do a candida cleanse with our clients, alongside that we always do an antioxidant blend so the candida releases huge amounts of toxic metabolites and so having things like rosemary in there and green tea and turmeric, it just mops up a lot of that toxicity. And supports the body more because a candida cleanse can be quite hard on the body and the herbs that we use, as I said the Pau d'Arco or the thyme or the goldenseal, those sorts of things. Yeah you need them and you have to use them but you want to be really supporting the body in the process and you and I see it all the time, Steph, with people that have been on an anti-candida diet for two years and they've reduced down to barely any foods and they feel terrible all the time. And it's just because they haven't quite got that structure in place of how to bring the balance of the candida down, grow the new microbes and also mop up the mess that comes from that rebalancing.

Steph: Yeah absolutely so please do work with a guide or practitioner and make sure that you are ticking all of those boxes so that's amazing advice. I just wanted to get your thoughts, last question for today's show but what would be your preference from a testing point of view? You mentioned that you would otherwise need to sort of swab every area, I can't see that happening anytime soon but there are some blood and urine tests that we can do and some by products we could look for in say organic acid testing as well.

Kirsty: Yeah absolutely, so you can get organic acid tests which is you're looking at the by product of the candida which is the acetaldehyde or that ethanol that we were talking about. And if that's really high in your tests, it's going to be obviously a big chance of having quite excessive amounts of candida in the body. You can look through blood and obviously look through stools so sometimes it comes down to your practitioner that you're working with and their choice of candida testing that they want to use. But I would first of all go with looking at rebalancing the body, changing your diet and your environment and lifestyle first and if it's still causing you problems, then yes go for some testing to really see how prevalent it is and if you do need to kind of ramp it up a bit more.

Steph: Yeah I love that. So amazing. Obviously guys if you've experienced candida or you need support treating it, please do reach out to Kirsty and the team at Cultured Wellness. I'll put all the show notes on how you can contact them directly online and as always, Kirsty and I love receiving your questions so please do contact either ... or probably myself because I manage those questions. Don't send them to Kirsty.

Kirsty: Thank you Steph.

Steph: I'm sure your DM's are rather full already so I'll manage the questions but we've got another Q and A episode coming up very soon so please send through your questions. We'd love to help you personalize things a little bit more and Kirsty I can't wait to have you on the show again very soon.

Kirsty: Aww thanks so much for having me.