

VIDEO_ Georgia Ede - Interview (FL JAN 2017)

Ivor Cummins: We're here in West Palm Beach at the Keto Getaway with Low Carb USA and I've just caught up with Georgia Ede who is a psychiatrist, who has an interest in the practice of ketogenic diets and also has some interesting thoughts around the benefits of a meat diet and maybe the lack of benefits of vegetables, so that should be quite interesting. So, delighted to meet you again, Georgia.

Dr. Ede: Thank you, Ivor, for wanting to talk to me.

Not at all, this is great and yeah, just as I said there... Maybe we talk about the benefits of ketogenic diets first and then we get on to the other controversy.

Dr. Ede: Sure. So for myself personally I found that the ketogenic diet is the only diet that works to help me control my appetite, my weight, my mood is better, my concentration is better, my energy is better. So it really is, and I've tried many diets over the years personally... Low carbohydrate diets, low glycemic index diets, low calorie diets, low-fat diets.

So as a woman going through various stages of life, one by one each of those diets stopped the older I got. So even low-carb high-fat stopped working for me when I was in my early 40s. So it seems that my metabolism was changing, slowing down and I had to become more and more strict as time went on, so just lowering carbohydrate at a certain point was no longer good enough.

So I discovered ketogenic diets are specifically limiting protein, not just carbohydrate through a lecture I heard by Dr. Rosedale at the Ancestral Health Symposium in 2012 and that was when I first thought, "I wonder if protein is part of the problem here." So for me it was the key to me, that made the difference for me.

But as a psychiatrist I became very interested in all of the therapeutic benefits of the ketogenic diet, how healthy it is for the brain and even in cases of... for example a ketogenic diet seems to stabilize brain cell chemistry and in particular lowers intracellular sodium and that is also the way that a lot of the mood stabilizing medications that we prescribe work for a bipolar disorder.

So there's a lot of similarity between bipolar disorder and seizure disorders in terms of the underlying mechanism and the medications that are prescribed for bipolar disorder as well as seizure disorders, many of those are the very same medications. And so if the ketogenic diet can get at that same underlying pathology, and that's why ketogenic diets seem to work for seizure disorders, why wouldn't they also work for bipolar disorder and mood stabilization?

So that became very interesting to me. So what I'm here at Low Carb USA to talk about tomorrow morning is the role of insulin resistance in Alzheimer's disease and how people can prevent many cases of Alzheimer's disease by protecting their insulin signaling system early on and treat cases of early Alzheimer's disease or pre-Alzheimer's disease by adopting a ketogenic diet. So it's very healthy diet for the brain, to switch most of the brain from burning glucose to burning ketones seems to be very beneficial for accessing brain energy. So that, I think, is a fascinating topic in general.

Ivor Cummins: Yeah, and I guess a growing area of interest in the coming years... Well, relatively recent the Alzheimer's is being called by some people as kind of "diabetes type 3".

Dr. Ede: Exactly.

Ivor Cummins: And it's kind of poor glucose utilization and it relates back to insulin and it's got to be a fascinating area, because diabetes is an enormous scourge in the world, it's a disaster. Alzheimer's is another enormous one and to think there are similar pathologies with similar solutions is huge.

Dr. Ede: I think it's really exciting and it's really hopeful, because most people think of Alzheimer's disease as something they can't do anything about, because it's about age, or your family history, or your genetic status. You can't do anything about any of those things. So the only thing you can really do anything about is diet and lifestyle. And I think the information is very solid scientifically for a diet in Alzheimer's disease, much more powerful than the science behind any other mental health condition.

Ivor Cummins: Yeah because a lot of mental health conditions, there are loads of science but there are very few clear solutions and the drugs have kind of semi-effects in many cases and this one is the big one. So it's going to be really exciting.

Dr. Ede: It's going to be really exciting, yes.

Ivor Cummins: So ketogenic diets tend to be a high meat diet, and high-fat, though vegetarians could do them also, but then your recent blog poster ad was fascinating and it was looking at, "How healthy really are vegetables?" We all hear it, everyone assumes it, but what's really the science? Does it bear out always that loads of vegetables are healthy?

Dr. Ede: Well, not in my opinion though. I came across this because I had my own health problems in my early 40s. Mysterious, but yet quite common conditions, like IBS, and fibromyalgia, and chronic fatigue and so forth and through trial and error by changing my diet I was able to correct all of those issues, but the diet that I ended up with was very strange. And it really was a low plant high animal food diet.

And I thought, "This diet is going to kill me. It's going to get me heart disease and high cholesterol and everything." So I became very interested in the science of, you know, understanding the difference between the nutritional effects of animal food, specifically meat and by meat I don't just mean red meat, I mean fish and poultry and any kind of animal flesh as opposed to plant foods.

And everything I thought I understood about that was wrong. There's no evidence that I could find proving that plant foods are good for us. You see many, many studies showing that plant extracts can be used as medications when someone has a disease, then they are using their naturally toxic properties to your advantage. But if you are a healthy person, do you need to eat plants?

And as far as I can tell, you don't. And I also think that... So here's the thing... So plants defend themselves with chemical weapons. They don't have fangs, they don't have claws, they can't growl, they can't chase you. The only way they can protect themselves in most cases is through very sophisticated chemicals which have evolved over hundreds of millions of years. They've been around a lot longer than we have and they know what they're doing. So animals protect themselves in other ways.

So they don't need to invest any evolutionary energy in infusing their tissues with chemical defense mechanisms. So the actual meat of a bird, or a fish, or a cow is not protected. It's safe to eat. It doesn't have any "anti-nutrients" in it and when it comes to anti-nutrients, these natural chemicals within plants, they not only can irritate our systems, but they can interfere with our ability to digest and absorb nutrients, key nutrients.

So there are protease inhibitors in plant foods, there is phytic acid which is a mineral magnet, designed to help the seed of the plant hold onto minerals, whilst waiting around to germinate in the ground. There are many examples of these things, but basically plants, their chemicals are there for their own purposes, they're not there for our benefit. So the only part of a plant that's really designed for us to eat is the fruit of the plant and that's only if the plant happens to need us to help it--

Ivor Cummins: To spread the seeds.

Dr. Ede: --propagate. So not all plants need humans. But that's where you find the lowest amount of potentially toxic compounds. So the part of the plant which is most risky for us, the riskiest part of it is the seed. Because that's the most heavily protected, that's the future of the plant. So grains, beans, nuts and seeds are all seeds and they are very heavily protected. And I think that that is why a more "paleo" type diet, I think many people feel better on that diet, because they've removed legumes, they've removed grains... They have not removed nuts and seeds, although I think some people who don't feel better enough on a paleo diet might want to consider that.

Ivor Cummins: Back off from nuts and seeds and stick to natural animal foods.

Dr. Ede: So those are some of the reasons why I'm suspicious, but in the scientific literature you don't find proof that vegetables are healthy. You find assumptions that plants are healthy and lots of studies trying to figure out how we can get people to eat more of them.

Ivor Cummins: True, and that's the dominant thing in the literature. Is trying to put together evidence that are really good for you. And one thing I am interested in about this applies to, "Whole grains are good for you." And many other things that they say are good for you, as they do associational epidemiological studies.

But the problem is now, if you tell everyone, "Plants are good for you", then the people who eat plants will be people who are health-conscious, who will obey authority and want to do the right thing. Those people will be healthier anyway for many reasons. And at the end of the study, they will give a free ride to the plants that they ate, because they are healthier type people. It's called the healthy user bias. So this science of epidemiology is kind of largely junk science to an engineer.

Dr. Ede: Yes, absolutely.

Ivor Cummins: But in terms of real science where you're doing experiments on "give people plants and not give people plants" and prove... I'm not sure I've ever really found many of those at all.

Dr. Ede: I completely agree with you, completely agree with you. And furthermore so many of the plant studies are done in vitro, so outside the body, like in a test tube situation for example. The antioxidants are a perfect example of this. So the antioxidant theory in my opinion is largely a myth born in test tubes.

So if you take a plant antioxidant, it may behave as an antioxidant in a test tube but very different than saying it's going to work that way in your own body. So for example have you...? I don't know if you've heard of this product in the United States called Pom Wonderful .

So it's a bottle of pomegranate juice and it's got this cute shape and it says it's loaded with powerful antioxidants and it's going to save you from cancer and aging and all kinds of other things. Two things about products like that, I'm sure you have products like this in Ireland as well.

Ivor Cummins: Probably, but I don't buy them.

Dr. Ede: Super foods and special juices and all those kinds of things. So that is when you look at the actual plant antioxidants in the pomegranate juice they are almost entirely incapable of being absorbed by the human body. Like less than 0.1% of them or something like that. And then what does it make into your body, is usually transform into something else inside the body.

So what you're really getting is 32 g of sugar in the bottle of healthy juice and sugar is a very powerful pro-oxidant. So what you have bought is exactly the opposite of what you were hoping to get.

Ivor Cummins: Ironically. And it's an anti-nutrient. Taking sugar in is only going to strip you of real nutrients in general.

Dr. Ede: Exactly.

Ivor Cummins: So marketing wins, but science takes a blow. And that's so common with so many things that are being sold as beneficial, but the science, if you really dig into a little bit of data like you say, a lot of the times it doesn't add up, it's not compelling at all.

Dr. Ede: Exactly, and you know better than most people because you read like hundreds and thousands of papers and you start to notice that there's ... When you just scratch beneath the surface there is nothing there.

Ivor Cummins: That's the biggest shock I got years ago when I started this research. Is the abstract would claim something. When I would go through the data in the supplementary tables and analyze them, I'd say, "The data doesn't actually back up what the abstract says." People don't realize how incredibly common this is, misleading abstracts and whether it's nefarious behavior or whether people fool themselves with confirmation bias. It's bizarre, but sorry, I go out a bit.

Dr. Ede: No, please do.

Ivor Cummins: It's kind of crazy. So vegetables then, there is a confirmation bias, the epidemiological studies, the in vitro testing that suggests something. It doesn't prove something and it may be very different in the body. So it's kind of an open question still. What about the fiber? I know Ron Rosedale you mentioned, he said, "Fiber, maybe slight benefit but grossly overrated as a benefit."

Dr. Ede: Yes, so fiber is actually an anti-nutrient when you think... First of all, we don't digest fiber, so it's not nutritious, you can't get anything out of it really. So it's a substance that passes through your body and in the process it does interfere with the absorption of some things. For example it interferes a little bit with cholesterol absorption, interferes a little bit with... it slows down glucose absorption. So it has small benefits if you're eating a bad diet to begin with, it might... Do you know what I mean?

Ivor Cummins: That's a great point.

Dr. Ede: So that's its only... But the problem with fibers is they can make a lot of problems worse, and people don't realize that. So for example in the IBS literature, I don't know if you've ever looked at that, there have been... you ask most people with IBS you know, what should

they do, and you know most doctors will tell them, "You need to eat more fiber." And the opposite is actually true.

Ivor Cummins: From what I have seen I think it's one of the biggest irony is that IBS or... what's the syndrome that's kind of related? Oh, the name escapes me. These people are told to eat more grains when from my reading of the science, the first thing I do is remove all grains.

Dr. Ede: Absolutely.

Ivor Cummins: It's bizarre.

Dr. Ede: They are incredibly difficult to digest and they contain all kinds of anti-nutrients, including lectins which are... They poke holes in animal cells and they over stimulate the immune system. We're not designed to... I once looked into the-- this is an aside... I once looked into which creatures actually contain the enzyme that breaks down gluten, because we don't have glutenase in our system. So I found like tree creatures and they are all microscopic.

Ivor Cummins: So certain animals with a lot of those bacteria evolutionary in them can deal and manage. But I believe even cattle that are ruminants and eat grass, even they if you feed them a lot of grain, get metabolically deranged. So even a ruminant designed with multiple stomachs who eat kind of grassy things gets deranged if you feed it lots of grain. But somehow humans who are Hunter gatherers, kind of omnivore carnivore, we are meant to eat lots of grains because they are healthy? So there is an inherent absurdity at it, which I just find amusing, it's crazy.

Dr. Ede: Exactly, when you think about food from the food's point of view, it starts to make a lot more sense. So if you think about, we for example, from the point of view of wheat plant. So how does the wheat plant reproduce? It doesn't need you.

Ivor Cummins: No, no.

Dr. Ede: What is it used to spread its seeds? Wind.

Ivor Cummins: Oh, I was going to say that but I thought I could be wrong.

Dr. Ede: But you're right, of course you're right. So it's not designed to see a digestive tract, at least not the digestive tract of a mammal. So you don't see mammals walking around through wild fields of grain and munching on the grain. It just doesn't make any sense, it doesn't taste good. In will make you sick if you eat it uncooked.

Ivor Cummins: Exactly, unless it is ground and processed, it will make you ill and you'll get gripe and whatever. I used to say to people after reading "Wheat Belly"... It was shocking to read that, I just realized how absurd the whole thing is. But I used to say, "So did our ancient ancestors

roam the fields, picking the ovaries of grasses off the heads... And you know they didn't, we know they didn't.

Dr. Ede: Why would they?

Ivor Cummins: They would in a famine.

Dr. Ede: Well, you will eat anything in a famine.

Ivor Cummins: But if they only eat that in an absolute famine, how can we recommend it today? It's crazy.

Dr. Ede: I think it's crazy, too.

Ivor Cummins: Let's go back to the conference.

Dr. Ede: All right, nice talking with you, Ivor. Very interesting. Thank you.