



Optimal Beauty & Health with the Spa Dr.

Guest: Dr. Trevor Cates

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Dr. Mark Menolascino: Welcome to the Women's Heart Health Summit. I'm your host, Dr. Mark Menolascino, medical director of the Meno Clinic in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. This is your chance to hear from international experts on how to achieve optimal health, optimal wellness, and prevent heart disease. We are joined today by Dr. Trevor Cates, one of my good friends, one of the experts in the field, and someone who I look up to and ask when I have questions. Dr. Trevor, thank you so much for joining us today.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Thanks for having me. It's great to be here.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well let me tell our viewers a little bit about you. Dr. Trevor Cates is the founder/owner of The Spa Dr. and author of the bestselling book, *Clean Skin From Within*. She was the first woman licensed as a naturopathic doctor in California and currently lives in Park City, Utah, where she helps patients from around the world achieve graceful aging and glowing skin.

Dr. Cates is the host of *The Spa Dr.* weekly podcast and has her own PBS special, *Younger Skin from Within*. She believes the key to healthy skin is inner and outer nourishment with nontoxic ingredients. Dr. Cates' The Spa Dr. skin care and supplement lines are formulated with natural and organic ingredients designed to help you achieve the clean and natural path to

confidence and beautiful skin. Again, Dr. Trevor, thank you so much for joining us.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Thank you. I'm so happy to be here. I'm so glad you're putting this summit together. This is a really important topic.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Oh, thank you. And I know as we've always talked together, you think of people in such a whole person approach and the inside out and the outside in. There's so much of what you do addressing the skin that really does affect the heart as well.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Right, absolutely. And I really consider skin to be what I call our magic mirror because it gives us great clues about our overall health. And our skin is our largest organ. It's right on the surface of our body, so we don't need special imaging equipment to see it. We can just look in the mirror. So it's a great tool to use for feedback.

And what I keep encouraging people to do and why I wrote my book *Clean Skin From Within* and did my PBS show and all of those things is to really look at your skin as a tool, and what can you learn from your skin because when you look at your skin as giving information, and you're looking for the root causes behind what's going on with your skin, a lot of those root causes that are connected to skin issues are also the similar root causes to other health problems, like heart disease.

So I think, really, the approach is looking from helping address the root causes, helping support the body by addressing those. So the result is, you're going to have healthier looking skin, more glowing skin, but you're also going to help prevent other diseases, cardiovascular disease being one of those.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well, I love that approach, Dr. Trevor. You really think about women and men as this whole person approach, but you get some clues, right, when they walk into your office, don't you?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, it's true. Now I think as doctors, it is one of the big things that we look at, right, when we see our patients, they first walk in, how does their skin look. You could just tell. Everybody can tell. When you see somebody with more of that radiant skin, with that healthier look, it is a great indication.

But when the skin is dull, dry, somebody has dark circles under their eyes, puffiness, redness, irritation, eruptions, a lot of acne, as doctors we're not

going to just judge that person for appearing that way, which I think a lot of times is the gut reaction for people, but it is okay, so why is this person having these skin issues, what's behind that. Rather than just trying to figure out okay, what can we do to suppress that symptom, or how can women wear more makeup to get creative to cover this stuff up, or what kind of plastic surgery does someone need, it is more about okay, what is this indicating, and what are the root causes behind it, because there are things like inflammation is one of the big root causes behind skin issues.

And as you know, with heart health, inflammation is really a key driving force for cardiovascular disease. And so if we can address the underlying issues of inflammation by making lifestyle choices that help reduce the inflammation, so eating anti-inflammatory foods and avoiding the more proinflammatory foods, as an example, then that can help both things, right. It can help both the skin and can help protect the heart.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Dr. Trevor, when you talk about the proinflammatory foods, who do you see as the big culprits? I know I've heard you talk about nightshade vegetables, but what are some of the big culprits that our viewers can watch out for as these proinflammatory foods?

Dr. Trevor Cates: I would say the number one proinflammatory food that I see, especially when it comes to skin, is sugar. And that probably doesn't surprise you because it's probably a big one that you see too. And I think that a lot of times, though, people think of sugar as just being an issue if you're trying to lose weight. People know if I eat too much sugar, I could put on too much weight.

Or a lot of times people link it to diabetes, right, so type 2 diabetes. But it is a big contributor to skin issues. And that partly has to do with when you eat a lot of sugar, or foods that turn to sugar, it creates glycation issues in the body. And glycation can really speed up the aging process in a number of different areas of the body.

When it comes to skin, what happens is that excess glucose will bind to proteins in the body. In the case of skin, that's collagen. And so it'll make collagen more rigid, less elastic. And so it's more prone to wrinkles and sagging skin. So it definitely is one of the big things that speeds up the aging process. But also, as far as inflammatory skin issues, I call it skinflammation.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: I love that.

Dr. Trevor Cates: So anything on the skin that is inflammatory, whether that's acne or eczema or a number of different skin issues, we see sugar as being one of the big contributing factors, especially with something like acne, where sugar is not only triggering inflammation, but it's also leading to other issues. So when we eat a lot of sugar, or foods that turn to sugar, then it triggers insulin. And an increase in insulin can trigger excess sebum production, the oils in the skin, as well as androgen activity, so big things that then can contribute to acne breakouts.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: So one little sticky bun can have all of those downstream side effects.

Dr. Trevor Cates: It's amazing. And again, I want people to get away from this belief that if they're not trying to lose weight they can still eat sugar. There are other reasons why sugar, or really foods that turn to sugar, high glycemic index foods... the biggest problem is with the spike and increase in blood sugar, especially if your body isn't able to regulate that very well. And some people, they're just more susceptible to that because of genetic predispositions or because of lifestyle choices that they've been making for a long period of time.

So then their body's not able to adjust as well and restore their blood sugar. So looking at fasting blood sugar and hemoglobin A1C, which is more of an indicator of what blood sugar might be doing over a period of time rather than just when the blood is drawn, is a good indicator this is a big root cause that somebody needs to look at, is really looking at the blood sugar issues.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well you mentioned glycemic index and these high glycemic foods. And everybody can recognize a Krispy Kreme doughnut as a high sugar, high glycemic food. What are some that people don't recognize? Are there are some common saboteurs for people in this glycemic index idea? And how do you share that concept with your clients so they can get it easy?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, well I think in the United States we're typically a grain heavy culture. We eat a lot of grains because a lot of people eat cereal for breakfast or pastries for breakfast. Then they'll have a sandwich for lunch and then pasta for dinner or bread with whatever else they're eating. And so this is the kind of thing that really can cause... I mean it can be just as bad as eating dessert because it does cause your blood sugar to spike.

Also, sugar is not just the word, of course, cane sugar or sugar that's on ingredient labels. But another thing that people do is... of course sodas are a

big thing but also things like orange juice or these smoothies that people think are really healthy. Oh, I'm getting a bunch of fruit; this is really good. But if you're getting it, especially in a condensed form, like in a drink or a smoothie that's not fresh, it's been sitting around for a while, the nutrients have pretty much depleted from it.

So what's left, unfortunately, is the fructose, the sugar from the fruit. And so then you're going to get a surge in your blood sugar as a result of that because you're not getting the balance of the fiber and other things that you might get if you're eating a meal or having a little bit of fruit, but you're having some other things with it.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well I think that's such a great point. And you talked about this advanced concept of glycation. And we heard Dr. Pearlmuter talk about that as well just the other day. And it's really this sugar coating or caramelizing of yourselves by this high level of the sugar and the high level of insulin. And it's something I don't think a lot of people see tied to things like acne and other skin conditions.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Right. Think of a caramel apple or caramelized desserts and how that sugar turns into this hard kind of shell. That's basically what's happening to your skin.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Scary.

Dr. Trevor Cates: So that's kind of a visual for people. Do you want your skin to be like a candy coated apple? No, most people would say no.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: And your heart cells and your brain cells. And I love how you see on the skin, really the deeper layer processes. You see what's going on in the brain and the heart and all of the cells based on what you see on the skin.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Absolutely.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: What type of nutrition advice do you feel like people have the hardest time with? Everyone comes in and says, "Dr. Trevor, what diet should I do? Should I be on the ketogenic? Should I be on the paleo? Should I do intermittent fasting?" How do you personalize nutrition for your clients?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Well I think it's important to look at what we're trying to do.

And then everybody is unique. And that was a struggle for me because for many years... so I've been practicing as a naturopathic doctor for almost 20 years. And so working one on one with people, it's really easy to individualize it because you can talk to them about their history, their family history, their unique root causes, their blood work, their test results. But then when I went to go write my book, I was thinking okay, so how do I open this up when I can't work one on one with people?

So that's why I think if we really can get back to identifying the root causes, that can be very helpful. So what I found is that there were six root causes behind the majority of skin conditions. And to help people identify which of those were the issue, I created a skin quiz. And people can actually take this by going to theskinquiz.com. It's a free online quiz. And so people then find which of the five skin types they are. And they're Amber, Olivia, Sage, Emmet, and Heath. And I gave them all human names.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: I love that.

Dr. Trevor Cates: [Inaudible] people not just dry skin or mature skin. We're all people, right.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: What a great visual.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Right. And so each of these I created with a unique set of root causes. So then when people take the quiz, then they know which one they really need to focus on. And so when it comes to diet, or really our lifestyle choices in general, we want to be thinking about how are we going to address these root causes.

So I mentioned inflammation as one of those and eating anti-inflammatory foods. If that's one of your big root causes, you really want to focus on that. So things like omega-3 fatty acids are going to be particularly important, so trying to get maybe some wild Alaskan salmon in your diet and trying to avoid things like sugar that's a more proinflammatory food.

Now if nutritional deficiencies are your big root causes, then you're going to want to be eating the foods that are rich in those nutrients, whether that's an iron deficiency, or it could be zinc. Zinc is really important for skin. Magnesium is another really common nutritional deficiency, also connected to cardiovascular health. So if those are things, then you're going to want to focus on eating those nutrient dense foods that have those nutrients in there.

Another big thing we see in skin issues is essential fatty acid deficiencies that show up as dry skin or keratosis pilaris, these little bumps that people oftentimes have on the backs of their arms, could be an indicator that they have a deficiency in that. And again, with cardiovascular health, essential fatty acids and getting the right balance of omegas is really important for that. So when we know the root causes, that helps us really focus on the most important things with our diet.

In general, I think it's important to go back to eating whole foods. And I know that we make things really complicated with diets. Like you said, there are all these different diets out there, and people are so confused about what to eat. And can I combine these foods? Should I eat these apart? When should I be eating? And should I be fasting? Should I be eating? Should I eat small meals? Should I eat large meals? Should I eat early in the day? Should I eat late in the day?

And I know it can be really confusing. I think it's important to start with the foundation, to start with the basics. And once you have that down, then you can start to get more individualized and more detailed for you. So the foundation is getting back to a whole foods diet, eating whole foods, getting away from the processed foods, the packaged foods, the fast foods, high sugar foods, the trans fats, those kinds of things. And once you have that under control, and you're learning how to make foods yourself and to shop at the farmer's market and shop in the perimeter of the store and those sorts of things - you've got that under control - then you can start to customize a little bit more.

So what's missing? How can I take the next step? And that, I think, is when you start looking at okay, what are your unique needs. What are your genetic predispositions? What are your root causes? And then it helps you figure out the foods that you need to be eating, the timing of eating them, what supplements do you need to be maybe including to help with your assimilation of the nutrients.

Because here's the other thing with diet, is that if your digestion is not good, you could be eating the best diet on the planet, and you could be spending tons of money on getting the purest, cleanest foods and hiring a chef and doing all this stuff, but if your digestion is not good, you're not going to be getting those nutrients. So you really want to focus on your digestion and gut health.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Dr. Trevor, as a naturopathic physician, you focus so

much of your training on digestive health, on nutrition, on nutrients. How do you see the optimal digestion, the microbiome, the absorption of nutrients being so key to optimal skin health?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, I think it is really important because we want to focus on the digestion so that we can optimally absorb what we're putting a lot of time and effort into having the right diet for ourself. When we're making those efforts into getting the right foods, we want to make sure that we're actually digesting, breaking it down, and absorbing the nutrients.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: What are some signs that someone might not be absorbing ideally? Can you see a lot of bloating? Is it the cramping, loose stools? What are some cues for you that are obvious that their digestion's not optimal?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Well certainly people can have digestive symptoms. And those can show up certainly as gas, bloating, changes in the stool, constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, any number of those things. But honestly, not everybody has that. And they can still have digestive issues. And sometimes it's what shows up on the skin.

So having dry skin or having keratosis pilaris or skin conditions that show nutritional deficiencies can be a sign. Especially if someone's eating a healthy diet, and they're still having these kinds of symptoms, they're still having skin issues that indicate a nutritional deficiency, then we want to not only add those nutrients into their diet, but we want to make sure that we're optimizing their digestion.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: And how do you see food sensitivities manifest on the skin? You mentioned the dermatitis, pilaris, the keratosis, the dry skin. How do you see these food sensitivities that may show up in your clinic on people's skin?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, definitely food sensitivities can be a big one. And it is one of the ways to help people customize their diet. And in my book, *Clean Skin From Within*, I talk about ten different foods to avoid during the two week plan that I put together to help people identify which, if any of these, are big trigger foods for them.

And so what oftentimes happens is that skinflammation, any of the skin issues that show up on the skin as it relates to inflammation, are oftentimes related to food sensitivities. And this can definitely go back to gut health

because if someone's digestion's not good, that's one of the things that leads to more food sensitivities. And so if somebody has leaky gut, it actually can cause leaky skin. And I know a lot of people have heard about leaky gut, but leaky skin might be a new concept to people. But our skin has this incredible natural protective barrier that it naturally has.

And for people that have chronic skin issues, like eczema or atopic dermatitis or psoriasis, things like that, you're noticing that your skin is just more sensitive. It's just not performing the way it's supposed to because you've got leaky skin. Your skin barrier has been compromised. Part of that comes from the inside out. And part of it comes from what's going on externally. But a lot of skin issues come from the gut. And so if we can start by healing the gut and things like leaky gut, then that can be a great place to start addressing these.

So what happens with food sensitivities is that when we have leaky gut - or it's also called hyperpermeability of the digestive tract lining - so what happens is the digestive tract lining becomes more permeable than it should. And so then food particles can actually slip through the digestive tract lining and get into the bloodstream. And then when that happens, we create an immune response.

And so the body creates an immune response attacking these foreign substances. So then that creates that inflammation in the body. And then that's what causes our skin to then erupt and be inflamed. So if we go back to addressing that leaky gut, then that can help reduce that inflammation, that whole cascade.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well, Dr. Trevor, I love the way you explain things. You make it so easy to follow and so easy to understand. And I think that's something that really is a sign of a great clinician, is you want to communicate to your clients so well. I've only heard skinflammation from you. You're the first person I heard that from. And I've never heard the leaky skin comment. So I'm going to chalk that one to you too. I think that's great. These are just great visuals for people to identify it.

You mentioned the ten foods that are the biggest culprits. Can I ask you what those are for your clients?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, so I mentioned one of them, which is sugar. And you actually mentioned one earlier, which is nightshade family. That can be a trigger for certain people, especially what I consider the Emmet skin types and the Heath skin types. Those can be a big trigger for those people. So they're

not necessarily a problem for everybody. Not everybody has to give up tomatoes and peppers. But for some people with really inflamed skin, it can be their big trigger food that maybe they haven't even been aware. And a lot of times, too, we think of these as really healthy foods. And they can be. It's not that we have to all avoid them. It's just for certain people they're big trigger foods, right.

Dairy products are another big trigger food. And so they then will trigger a number of different skin issues. Particularly people with acne prone skin, that tends to be a big trigger food. And it's interesting in the research that there are a couple of food connections with acne because I know acne is the number one skin condition in the United States. It's actually the eighth most prevalent disease worldwide.

So acne definitely affects people worldwide. And the two big food triggers that the research has connected to are, going back to that glycemic index, so high glycemic index foods, so those foods that increase your blood sugar, and then also dairy products but particularly skim milk. And I think that then ties back to blood sugar because I think because you're not having the fat in the dairy products, it is going to be more likely to cause increases in the blood sugar. So it ties back into a similar pathway. So those are some of the big ones that are big trigger foods for skin.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well, Trevor, I've always admired you as a strong clinician and a strong woman. And I love strong women. But you were the first naturopathic physician in California.

Dr. Trevor Cates: First woman licensed as a naturopathic doctor in California, yeah, that's right.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: That's exciting. That's exciting. So you're a real leader in the movement. And here in Jackson Hole, we have a great naturopath, Dr. Monique Lai, who I think is a friend of yours. And I have such respect for the training that naturopaths get. And a lot of our listeners don't really know that the training is very similar to what an MD gets. But it's just focused more on personalized medicine, nutritional medicine. What's helped you take what you learned in your naturopathic training to build on this foundation to become one of the world's experts in skin care? How did you do it?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Well that's a great question. And it's interesting because there aren't, at this time, many naturopathic physicians specializing in dermatology and skin. And I was just recently at the first ever integrative

dermatology symposium. And it was really interesting to see dermatologists and naturopathic physicians, Chinese medicine, ayurvedic medicine, all these practitioners together. And it was interesting what was happening right now. How it is right now in naturopathic medicine is there really aren't many of us. Dr. Michael Traub and I are really the only naturopathic doctors specializing in dermatology, for the most part. I think there are some others. But we were two of the speakers there. But I noticed what was really cool is there were a lot of naturopathic medical students coming up to me saying that they want to do this. So I think there's a shift in change happening in it.

But I think for me as a naturopathic physician we're trained as primary care doctors. But the focus is really supporting the root causes I've been talking about, supporting the body's innate ability to heal, using the least invasive medicine possible to help support the body, so starting with lifestyle changes and then nutritional support and herbal medicine and, when necessary, being able to prescribe medications or refer for surgery or whatever. So it is an integrative approach and understanding when different therapeutic mentalities can be helpful in supporting the body.

And so for me, personally, when it came to looking at skin, I was working at the Waldorf Astoria Spa in Park City. And a lot of people were coming just to do my two week weight loss program in the spa. And at the end of the two week weight loss program, they would say, "Oh, Dr. Cates, I've lost all this weight, I feel great, but what really surprises me is my skin. I didn't know my skin could look this good. My skin issues cleared up. My skin's more glowing, more vibrant, more youthful looking."

And to me it made a lot of sense. But I realized that a lot of people weren't looking at skin that way. And so that's what made me want to focus on skin because I see this as an opportunity for people to use their skin as a tool and to look at skin differently. Instead of just suppressing and covering it up, to look to it as a way of helping support the overall body and overall health.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well I know as an MD we don't get it. And one of the hardest things for me is dermatology. My brother - all three boys in our family are internists - he runs the VA back in Omaha, Scott. And I was talking to him. He teaches medical students and residents. And we were talking about skin rashes and how hard they are and how acne's so tricky. And he said, "Well, Mark, it doesn't really matter because we're just going to give them steroid cream anyway." So the toolbox for the allopathic doctors is very narrow in dermatology. But for you as a naturopath, you're able to bring in all of these integrative tools. And I think that's so helpful.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, it really is. And I must say that there are times when the skin is so inflamed that having prescription or over the counter medications can be helpful to just calm the skin down to the point where we can address the root cause. And we can use more natural therapeutics, but it is nice to be able to use all of the tools that we have.

But I would say that we don't want to just use topical steroids. Sometimes they may help, but what else can we be doing while these are being used to help address what originally got the person to that point. What's going on with their digestion, with their gut microbiome? What is going on with that? What's triggering the inflammation? What has led to the nutritional deficiencies? Do they have hormonal imbalances? What's going on with their diet? All of those things to support the body, because again, it's not going to just help with the skin. It's going to help with a lot of other diseases that are common within the US and around the world.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well I know we have a lot of clients that come in for digestive health or skin health or arthritis health. And we help them with that. Then they realize they're sleeping better. They have more energy. Their skin cleared up. So it really is this whole body approach.

I completely respect how you have your respect for allopathic medicine, as I do as well. But when I'm sick, I want acute care medicine to treat me because that model works really well. But for these chronic conditions, like the skin conditions, you really need to do the root cause medicine. So it's great that you respect both, and you have both tools, and you understand and can utilize them. I think that's a sign for our viewers.

Be a little weary of traditional doctors who don't respect the integrative model. But also be a little bit weary of people who are doing just integrative that don't respect the allopathic. You've really got to use both when you need them. And that's a sign to me of how balanced you are, Dr. Trevor. I really appreciate that.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Thank you. Yeah, I think it's important for us to work together. And I think that this is the future of medicine, is how can we all work together to help support patients and have the best patient care.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: So one of the things I think most people struggle with is acne. And whether you're a teenager, in your 20s or 30s, perimenopausal, menopausal, everyone seems to be vulnerable to acne. And it seems to be viewed the same, but I know you look at it differently based on a woman's age.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Absolutely. And certainly there are different times when acne - during puberty, obviously - there are some hormonal changes going on that time. So obviously hormonal issues are a big root cause to this. And again, when those flare ups happen, a lot of times for women, when their hormones are changing around pregnancy or around menopause, throughout their cycle within the month, they might notice certain times their acne is worse, especially if it's along the jawline.

We see more of that with hormonal issues. And so it's good to look for what is the root cause. And a lot of times that can be hormonal because of that. And so that's one of the big things that we want to look at. And there are also a lot of things related, going back to the gut and the gut microbiome and that playing a big role in acne as well as blood sugar issues. So those are some of the big ones to look at.

And then we also want to look at what can we do with nutrition and reducing inflammation. So acne, it can have multiple layers. So if someone says oh, well I've tried a natural approach to acne, and it didn't work, well you probably didn't find that or didn't maybe find that specific root cause. Or maybe there are layers. So you took off one layer of it, maybe you helped address your gut issues, but now you need to get to the next point.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well I love that thinking about health and layers. And one of our other guests talked about there's a therapeutic phase and then a maintenance phase. And sometimes the therapeutic's a little harder to get you to the maintenance. But not that what we're going to do now you have to do the rest of your life. But some of these tenets you really need to.

As you were talking about hormones, I was thinking that a lot of people think it's just having more of them is what you need. So it's not just being able to produce them. It's about metabolizing them and then also getting rid of them. Do you see all three of those areas sometimes being dysfunctional for people?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Absolutely. We want our hormones in balance. We don't want just more or less of them. We want them to be in balance. And it's also important to realize that it's not just sex hormones. Sometimes when we say hormones, people think estrogen, progesterone, testosterone; especially those three people talk about. But those also interplay with a lot of different hormones.

And all of them play a role in our health, adrenal hormones, thyroid hormones, the hormones that help with regulating our blood sugar and the

ones that help us sleep at night. There are so many different hormones that play a role in our health and our skin. And so if some of them start to get out of balance, it can trigger other ones to be out of balance. So trying to figure out where it all starts and to create more balance is where it's really key.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well you mentioned, earlier, genetics. And I think some viewers would be surprised to hear an integrative dermatologist or skin expert talking about genetics. How do you use those in your practice? What do you see as the potential? We've talked with other guests about genetics, heart disease, and Alzheimer's risk. What can you look at that helps you get insight into skin health?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, there are definitely certain genetic predispositions that cause skin issues. A lot of them tie back into some of these root causes I've been talking about, whether people have certain genes that make it harder for them to have balanced blood sugar, for example. And so if people have those genetic predispositions, then that can be an issue.

If people have methylation issues, they have genetic predispositions to not being able to have good detoxification, which then also helps with their hormone metabolism, then that can be something that can be addressed. So having genetic testing can be a nice way to help really customize the treatment approach. So I think there's a lot of value in that.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: A lot of our guests have talked about toxicity and the ability to detoxify. And we've heard the comment the average woman puts 120 chemicals on her body before she leaves the house in the morning. And I know one of your passions is clean beauty products in the line you do. What do you see as some of the things women should look for to turn over the label and to really make better decisions for themselves and for their kids?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Right, great question. And I know that we've spent a lot of time today talking about what to do from the inside out. And I think that so much of the foundation of addressing the root causes and healthy skin comes from the inside out. And that's a great place to start, especially with chronic health and skin issues.

But it is important to look at what we put on our skin too because there are toxins in skin care, as you're talking about. There are also things that can disrupt the skin microbiome, that balance of the microorganisms that live on and protect our skin, which is particularly important for people with skin issues, with conditions like acne and eczema, rosacea, psoriasis. We want to

be looking at what we're putting on our skin too. And it's interesting as women - I'm 45 years old, and I know I get this - as we're getting older, we start to use more products to try and make ourselves look more youthful and to keep our skin more hydrated and keep our collagen intact and doing those things topically.

But I think a lot of times people don't realize what's in their skin care products and that there are many hormone disrupting chemicals in personal care products. And you may have talked about the group of chemicals called endocrine disrupting chemicals that are in our environment and how we're exposed to so many of these in our air, in our water, in our food. We're also exposed to those in our personal care products.

And so it's important to figure out all the different ways we can reduce our total exposure to those because there are so many in our environment. And one of the places that we have the most control is through our personal care products.

So even though cosmetic companies will oftentimes say, and regulatory bodies will say, well, there's just not enough of those toxins in skin care products to be of concern. I think that that's wrong. I mean I really think that we need to be looking at how can we reduce our total load. And every little bit counts. And also, the research hasn't been done much on the combination of these ingredients once they get into our bodies.

And so there are things like parabens that are used in personal care products. You'll see methylparaben, propylparaben, those types. So you'll see paraben at the end of the word. They're used in a lot of personal care products as preservatives. And we're seeing parabens showing up in a lot of human samples. They've been detected in breast tumor tissues. And so we know that parabens are getting absorbed through the skin. They're getting taken up into tissues in the body, including breast tissue.

And we also know that parabens have estrogen mimicking effects in the body, which, as you and I have talked about, it's about balancing hormones. Not like oh, yay, I'm going to get more estrogen. No, that's not what we're trying to do here. That's not a good thing. We're talking about balance.

And we don't want to just artificially be giving ourselves these estrogen mimicking chemicals because what happens with these endocrine disrupting chemicals is that they can bind to hormone receptors in the body and either

mimic or interfere with the function of the hormones in our body. And so we definitely want to try and reduce our exposures to things like the parabens.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well, I feel like so many people have no idea. And you've really summed it up in a nutshell like that because it is what you're not only doing from the inside out but what you're putting on the outside in. I know my 17-year-old daughter is looking at the ingredients of everything she's using now and really trying to make good choices. It's hard to find those good choices, isn't it?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Well yeah, it is. I mean that's what led me to create my skin care line, The Spa Dr. skin care line, because it's not really that easy to find... I mean you can find natural products. It's become a huge industry now. And major companies, big pharmaceutical companies and cosmetic manufacturers are getting aboard and making what are so called natural products. But they're not always really clean. And so parabens might still be in there. Synthetic fragrance is another one that oftentimes is still lingering there that also can be containing some of these endocrine disrupting chemicals.

And so I was looking at this, and I really wanted to provide a clean product for my patients and for myself, my kids, my family, friends. So I created the skin care products. And the great thing is that there are natural ingredients that provide a really nice substitute. So instead of using something like synthetic fragrance, we've got essential oils, natural essential oils, organic essential oils that can be used. We can still enjoy smelling good. And there are so many great benefits, health benefits, of essential oils, and the mood enhancing benefits and all kinds of things, without the downsides of some of these synthetic ingredients.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Dr. Trevor, can you expand on that a little bit? What are some of the things that you will see in your ingredient list that are kind of sneaky and kind of hidden that may not be as natural as the label looks like they are?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Right. So I mentioned parabens is one. And I think a lot of companies are now starting to take parabens out of their products. So that's good news. Fragrance is a big one. And fragrance is listed as one ingredient, but it's actually a whole bunch of different ingredients. It only has to be listed as one. And so using something that is fragrance free or contains organic essential oils instead is going to be a much healthier choice. There's actually a whole group of chemicals called formaldehyde releasing chemicals.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Lovely.

Dr. Trevor Cates: I know, right. But you don't see formaldehyde on the label or formaldehyde releasers. You'll see things like DMDM hydantoin, which is formaldehyde. And there are a bunch of other names for this, so people can kind of just do an online search for it. Or I have this information in my book, too, of which ones these are.

But what happens with this group of chemicals is that when you apply product containing formaldehyde releasers onto your skin, it releases formaldehyde into the air. And we know formaldehyde is a carcinogenic ingredient. We know it's toxic when inhaled. It's crazy how much is in so many personal care products and a lot of lotions.

And if you go to pretty much any store that sells skin care products and you start looking at the labels, you'll see these in a lot of products. It's kind of tough because there are so many. My book is a great resource for that, but there's also one website that's particularly helpful for people. It's Environmental Working Group. It's ewg.org. And if you do forward slash skin deep, it'll actually take you right to their skin database. You can put in an ingredient, and it'll give it a rating. Or you can put in a product.

So if there's a particular mascara you use, you could put that in there. Because Mark, I know you wear mascara all the time. I'm talking to the women that are listening. No, but you can find out how it's rated, what those ingredients are, and what they've been linked to. And then they also have products that they've put through their strict verification process. So my products, I've sent them through their EWG verification. So they're EWG verified. And so that's one resource that people can look to to find more information.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well that's a great point, Trevor, that you've done the homework to really set your line up because I know that's so important to you, and you're so passionate about clean products. Really the easy answer for a lot of us is go look in your medicine cabinet.

Go look in your beauty shelf. If there's something in there that you can't pronounce or don't recognize, we recognize eucalyptus and lavender and some of these things. But they disguise these chemicals with different names that you can't pronounce and don't know. Unless you do your homework, like you mentioned, in our resources, you have no idea what you're putting on.

Dr. Trevor Cates: When I start talking about the ingredients in my products and I'm doing training for things and I start talking about it, it's funny because people say oh, these are things that we're already doing internally. So this is a good sign. If you can take it internally, things like aloe and ginkgo and calendula and arnica and sea buckthorn fruit oil and things like that, hey, wait, I'm already taking those as supplements, ashwaganda.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: If you can eat it, you can put it on your skin, is what you're saying.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah because I think there is this big myth out there that what you put on your skin is just going to stay on your skin, or maybe not even really a myth but just an oversight. Sometimes you just don't even think about it. But what you put on your skin can get absorbed. It's not the same as if you eat it. The absorption through the mouth and through the GI tract is definitely greater.

But we do absorb things through the skin. That's why people use hormone creams and things like that. So there are certain medications we put on the skin because we know that is a way to get medications into the body. So you're also going to be absorbing some of these toxic ingredients too.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Well I think it's hard to be a woman today, to make all these decisions, hard to be a mom today to make these decisions for your kids because we may try so hard to eat clean, but then we're putting products on our bodies that are sabotaging the process.

So I love your passion. I know you're a super mom. You're a super doctor. But you walk the walk. And you talk the talk. I see your passion for your medicine, for your family, for the outdoors. We were talking about skiing earlier. And I think that's important for all of our viewers to really find in their physician, is someone that lives what they say and is learning on their own. And none of us are perfect, but I know you strive to be the best you can be for yourself, for your family, and for your clients. And that's a real thing to look for for all of our viewers in the person they're working with too.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Thank you. I appreciate that, and same for you. I know that you do the same. So it is something that I think, yeah, I mean if you're going to be telling other people to do something, I know you want to be doing it yourself. Part of it is that then you can share from personal experience. I mean part of why I'm so passionate about this is because I had my own struggles with skin when I was a kid.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Please, would you tell us about that, Trevor?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, so when I was a kid, I had a lot of health challenges. I was sick a lot when I was a kid. I had a lot of allergic types of symptoms. And also it led me to have recurring infections. And I had a lot of skin issues along with this, eczema and hives and little mysterious bumps that would appear. And my parents, they took me to see a lot of different specialists. And I would have allergic reactions to the medications. I would have all the different side effects that they said were very uncommon. But I would have them. And so I just kept feeling worse.

And the thing with skin, too, is that not only do you feel bad physically, but if you have a skin issue, especially on your face, it's very embarrassing. And I remember as a kid being very embarrassed by my skin. And it definitely impacted my self esteem and how I socialized and interacted with the other kids.

So it was a really tough time. But luckily my parents didn't give up on looking for answers. And that's what eventually led them to find a holistic practitioner. And it is what finally turned my health around and what turned my skin around and turned my life around.

And I remember as a kid thinking why did it take this long to find this approach? Why wasn't this an option presented to my parents and I early on so that I could've avoided a lot of the symptoms and struggles that I've had over the years. And so that is what eventually led me to go to naturopathic medical school, because I kept thinking how can I help other people learn more about this path and know that's an option for them too.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: Everyone that we've spoken to in this series has a personal story like that. We've all been touched by different options that have led to our own journey. And those journeys have led to the passion of why we want to be so good at what we do today. I think our clients are the beneficiaries of that.

So, Dr. Trevor, I know many people viewing would love to connect with you. How do they find you? How do they connect with you? How do they learn more about the work that you're doing?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Yeah, so people can go to my website, tehspadr.com. And my skin care products are there. My book *Clean Skin From Within* is there. I have my quiz. The skinquiz.com is a great place to start if you're not sure

where to go, where to start, where to start getting some answers. The recommendation that I provide from the skin quiz can be a great place to start. And I also have a podcast, The Spa Dr. podcast, that's available anywhere you like to listen or watch podcasts. And so those are some of the tools and resources that I have for people.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: So Dr. Trevor, you're a national speaker, international speaker, PBS [inaudible] have a fantastic book, have a great podcast I've been lucky enough to be on myself. You are doing it all. What are you excited about in the future? What's next for Dr. Trevor Cates?

Dr. Trevor Cates: Well I'm really excited about the enthusiasm that's happening. I feel like there's this holistic skin care movement that's really happening. And so I'm starting to now put on my own events to help with training other practitioners and to be able to get this information out to more people.

So I just keep trying to look for opportunities and ways to spread the message and speaking and things like this, being on summits and interviews so that I can help more people. And part of that, too, is helping educate other practitioners and other people that might be interested in helping me spread the word because I feel like it's time. I feel like it's time for dermatology to have a fresh approach and that being at that integrative dermatology conference is a good sign for that too. So that's what I'm excited about.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: That is really exciting, to know that those are happening and people are coming together. Well it would just be a real bummer if people had to come to Park City to see you in person as well.

Dr. Trevor Cates: I know. Park City is a great place, just like Jackson Hole is too.

Dr. Mark Menolascino: I love Park City. It's one of my favorite places to ski. So again, I encourage everybody listening to give Dr. Trevor a call and follow her on her website. I have her book. She was kind enough to give me one. It's fantastic. And the skin quiz really is a great way to get started and understand yourself on how unique you really are. Dr. Trevor Cates, it's always a pleasure. And thank you so very much for your time today.

Dr. Trevor Cates: Thank you so much. And great job with the summit. I'm excited.