



Reverse Autoimmune Disease Summit

Dr. Keesha Ewers Interviews Jennifer Fugo

- Dr. Keesha: Welcome back to the Reverse Autoimmune Disease Summit. I'm Dr. Keesha Ewers and I'm delighted to bring my friend, Jennifer Fugo, in who is a clinical nutritionist who's empowering women who have been failed by conventional medicine to beat chronic skin and unending gut challenges; because she's overcome a long history of gut issues and eczema. Jennifer has empathy and insight to help her clients discover missing pieces and create doable integrative plans. Simply put, Jennifer believes that you deserve better, and that's why she launched centerrupt.com to interrupt, the failed conversation about chronic skin problems with helpful alternatives that you aren't being told about. Welcome to the Summit.
- Jennifer Fugo: Thank you for having me.
- Dr. Keesha: We've talked a bit on podcasts and other interview forums around this whole issue of some of the root causes of autoimmune disease and in your introduction that I just gave, I said that you've had this; your own story. I would love for you to tell that a little bit before we dive into the science stuff that we like to geek out about.
- Jennifer Fugo: Yeah, absolutely. So, I ended up with eczema back in grad school and I had no idea. I have no history of skin issues. I had some acne as a teenager, but nothing like this. And it was 2014 at the time. And I felt like as my hands, it actually affected my hands, dyshidrotic eczema, which usually affects the hands and the feet; mine only affected my hands, thank goodness. But it was on the palms of my hands. And so, what happened was I developed these little tiny clear, almost like it looked like little beads underneath the skin, which I noticed, and it wasn't itchy or anything. And then as the summer progressed, the area started to get increasingly itchy and then those beads kind of burst and I would get this oozing effect that created so much itching and it started to spread.
- Jennifer Fugo: So, I get these flares, the flares would then calm down, it would burst again. And so every single time I would go through this flare cycle, the rash would spread and get worse and went up the sides of my fingers onto my palms, which, you know, for anybody like we take for granted, being able to use our hands on a regular basis, to turn doorknobs, to touch things, to wash things, to wash your hair and not being able to use your hands is really, really inconvenient, number one. Number two is very painful. I couldn't even wash my hands because water alone burned so badly. And then I started to have this experience where I wasn't

able to really interact with people partially from my own sense of shame and feeling like I was dirty because that's how people kind of look at you funny and they're like looking at your hands and didn't want to shake my hands,

Jennifer Fugo: Didn't want to touch me because they thought I was contagious. And I got to the point I didn't really know anybody else with eczema nor this specific type that I began to pull away from life. I used to teach cooking classes and I had to wear these blue gloves from Home Depot and people would be like, why are you wearing those gloves all the time; and didn't want to eat the food that I had prepared even though I'd used gloves. It's just there's something funny that happens when you have something on the surface that people don't understand. And our immediate assumption unfortunately is, is that contagious? Are you dirty? Do you not know how to wash yourself? And it really kills your confidence and you don't want people to stare at you. You don't want people to feel different.

Jennifer Fugo: So long story short, I was pretty close to throwing in the towel with dermatologist appointments and everything because all they had for me was Vaseline, literally Vaseline, and steroid creams. And my husband had suggested that I think about this since I'm in the middle of grad school learning about how to put these integrative tools and approaches into place for our clients. What if I looked at myself from that perspective and I began to do a lot of research? I definitely tried a lot of natural products. They kind of sort of helped, not always, unfortunately. And I came to realize that the way we have to approach chronic skin rash issues is a bit more complicated and complex than we'd like to believe. A lot of people want to just heal the gut. Well it's actually not that simple unfortunately. As I finished school, my clinical practice began working with these individuals who also have the same issues, like not necessarily just eczema, but psoriasis like in sclerosis.

Jennifer Fugo: Tinea versicolor, hives rosacea, they, it's interesting. Every person is a very unique puzzle except there are some similarities that I hope we get to talk about today that will help change for anybody watching this, the way that you're necessarily approaching things and you're thinking about not just symptom management but also what's really the root of some of these symptoms that drive you nuts, that make you feel so depressed and whatnot. I'm excited to talk about some of the research that I pulled up for this talk too on stress and trauma.

Dr. Keesha: Jen knows that that's the missing piece of the puzzle in the world that I live in and you know, with some of these other autoimmune issues and we had a podcast interview where you're like, I was so ready to just throw that out. And then I pulled up the research, the ones here that you've been pulling up.

Jennifer Fugo: So what's really interesting, and I think the first thing to point out is that stress in general is something that we'd like to think it has to do with just relationships

or money or home problems or all of these external things; and yes, those all certainly play a role as well as our ability to be resilient. However, a lot of times we also forget that stress can result from internal factors as well. And so, we have to kind of do the stance to manage both because chronic skin issues are complicated. Stress is reported for most chronic skin issues as one of the biggest triggers. But in general, stress is vague. It's a really vague concept. And I had to think about it too. How many times have women gone to the doctors? Not to say it doesn't happen to men either, but so often with women you'll go, you'll have these symptoms and the doctor will go, you're just stressed.

Dr. Keesha: You're actually hitting a soap box of mine right now. I was just done with the institute for Functional Medicine. I speak for them sometimes and I'm giving a talk in September for IFM, the all these functional medicine doctors. And I was saying, I want to change the PowerPoint you guys built because of this thing. When you say you have to reduce your stress to a patient or client, that's like saying you have to throw away your special needs child or the elderly parent you're caregiving or you know, quit the job that you love. I mean you just throw those things away. No, you can't just reduce your stress, it's actually how you perceive your stress. So, this is really important what you're saying because stress is a very vague word. I think what's overused people are hearing it and letting it just sort of slide off them because like, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yet it's so important. It's your relationship to the stressors in your life that has to shift.

Jennifer Fugo: I also would argue too, the way that people in general, because this is the thing, we can have scholarly conversations about it, but in practice, how willing are individuals who we see as clients or patients, how willing are they to even step up to the plate and do this work? Because I will tell you this much. I can get clients to follow a supplement regimen to a T, but when I asked them to do breathing exercises for two days, two minutes a day. Yeah. That is the one that I'm like, so how are the breathing exercises going? And they're like, oh

Dr. Keesha: That's why I say willingness and integration are the two most important words in the English language for true reversal of autoimmune disease. You have to be a willing and you have to integrate. Yup.

Jennifer Fugo: Absolutely. And you know, it's one of those pieces to the puzzle like with skin issues, for example, and I'm just actually kind of shocked, psoriasis, a lot of people don't realize psoriasis is considered an autoimmune disease. We've got vitiligo, scleroderma, lichen planus, dermatitis herpetiformis which has that connection to celiac disease is sort of the skin manifestation of it. Lupus, for example, though that doesn't necessarily have to be contained to the skin. There are a lot of autoimmune skin issues that for some reason I get a lot of, I always get questions like, well I have this, but I heard it's an autoimmune disease but I'm not really sure. And so there certainly is this component of having to face some of what's going on in a different way. Like you can't keep

applying creams and hoping; and steroids, hoping that it's just going to fix everything.

Jennifer Fugo: There's some sort of inflammation underneath, and stress and trauma are a huge piece to this. I just wanted to give you some stats. For example, and this is important, 1.5 million people in the United States have lupus, 90% of those cases are women. That is really surprising. Then we have psoriasis, 3% of the world we find those in 2% are in the United States and there's over 3 million cases a year that are being diagnosed and it's like this big deal. There are some people that would even argue that eczema is potentially an autoimmune disease. I mean there's definitely different ways to approach eczema versus psoriasis. It's a little bit different because of the way that it manifests and some of the things that have happened in say eczema that don't happen in psoriasis and vice versa.

Jennifer Fugo: But there is a huge body of research. It's also showing us that, for example, like with scleroderma, okay, there was a study of women who had Sjogren's syndrome, which they tend to go hand in hand. And in this particular study, authors reported that a majority of participants consider their experience of a stressful life event six months to two years before the onset of their symptoms to be highly significant. So, a lot of times I'll ask clients, well, what was going on around that time? I don't know, everything was fine, and they don't think to look further back. And I think that that's a pretty significant statement. I'm happy to share some of these links too, if there's a way to get them to your audience. If people are like, hey, I want to dig into this a little bit more. But in the case of lupus this data was actually pulled from the nurses' health study. I think it's two. In 1989 it demonstrated the quote physical and emotional abuse was associated with 2.57 times greater risk of lupus.

Dr. Keesha: We had a whole talk on this summit where Michelle [inaudible] about how to know if you're in an abusive relationship. Why is that on a reverse autoimmune disease summit? Because these stats are compelling. This is really, really important for everyone to hear because yes, they are linked, right? Absolutely linked and that you have in your mind when you don't feel safe, your immune system becomes hyper vigilant as a result. They're always like the entire system.

Jennifer Fugo: And there was another study that was actually published in Arthritis and Rheumatology in 2017 and they found that "trauma" exposure regardless of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms was strongly associated with the incidents of lupus. You have to look back in time. You can't just go, oh man, I'm very blessed. My life is wonderful. That's all well and good. But you know, one thing you shared on the Healthy Skin Show podcast that we did together was that you can have traumatic events that happened a long time ago in your childhood. Maybe there was an incident in grade school that really shifted the way that you approach things moving forward. Or you had something really traumatic happen. I lived in New York City during 9/11, that was my worst

nightmare. And so, to say it doesn't matter because it happened in 2001 and my skin rashes didn't happen until 2014.

Jennifer Fugo: You know, I asked, I have to look at how I'm approaching everything. How do I view myself in terms of everything that happens to me? Do I see myself as a victim? And initially I really did. It wasn't until I said, you know what? I'm not going to be a victim of this; I'm not going to be eczema. I am Jen. I happen to have this, and my skin is saying I need to look within to start unraveling this; and take almost a step back from the diagnosis and just say, what are the symptoms trying to tell me? What are they trying to point me toward? And that's a big piece to this because you can have upwards of, at least at this moment, this is my account of like around 16 different root causes. I'm not by any means suggesting that somebody has all 16, but you can certainly have a combination of a bunch of different root causes.

Jennifer Fugo: It could be three to five to six different root causes, which means that A- they all cause stress, right? It may be external, maybe internal, a combination of both. It's why when we just apply creams. They don't deal with some of the underlying issues that also creates the stress or caused inflammation. And it's another reason why you can't necessarily assume that the one thing that somebody did that helped them is going to fix you. Because if your issues, for example, are due to a combination of phase two detoxification overload due to ongoing gut problems that you had for a long time, maybe because of candida and you've had this past trauma, like serious past trauma, and maybe you've also got some thyroid dysfunction, right? What might work for you probably is not going to work if it's somebody who's had had skin rashes as a result of drug reactions and mitochondrial dysfunction.

Dr. Keesha: I do these deep immersion trauma healing retreats and I'll get women and men in them. And you know, we've been working for quite a while there, to reverse autoimmune disease and it's not happening for the outlier group. And when I get them into a retreat setting, I find out what is the big trauma. And often it's not recognized as a trauma. Right. My daughter committed suicide back in 1974 and, and it's like, okay, what kind of work have you done to grieve that and what is it that's come out of that? Oh, I never did properly grieve it because I'm like, okay, right, alright, I'm in this marriage that I don't feel seen or heard or emotionally connected and I'm not being abused. But then there's this, oh, but that's something that's really important to me to feel emotional connection to my partner.

Dr. Keesha: And I am constantly frustrated and upset by it. And then I'm going, okay, well, or the drug abuse of my child, who is a heroin addict? I didn't think that of that a past trauma. And I'm saying, well, it is though. So, we tend to get very narrow in our focus about, well, my mom and dad didn't beat me then I don't recognize it. So, it really is something. I remember doing therapy on a woman who turned out that her big thing was her father yelling at her when she would do the

dishes because she didn't take the sponge out of the sink, wring it out and put it where it belonged. And that became such a thing. And it was all it was the beginning of her perfectionism.

Dr. Keesha: Right? That was of course informing everything going forward. But this one moment with this sponge thing, we started laughing about, we called it SpongeBob, you know, and naming the little monster that was behind her, that was constantly, if somebody would say, this isn't right; It was like SpongeBob's back. Right? So, it's being able to be light with it, laugh about it a little bit, and then be able to say, you know, no, okay, I get it. This is informing me. This actually is driving this. Perfectionism is not my dad's fault in the scene with the sponge, it's actually the meaning I made about it at that time in my life when my brain wasn't fully developed. And then from there, how can I reframe that now that I do have a fully developed adult brain, right?

Dr. Keesha: Your point is so good that people will say, well I had a great childhood and I always say, well I did too. That's not the point. You know? So, the point is what are the things that you took out of that childhood from certain experiences and the events that are actually creating meanings of relief that are still driving you from your subconscious space. And that will, we can now go, and we can reframe them though. It's not easy actually to see it from the inside because it's just normal for you. That's your baseline. That's your bar. So, it's a lot easier if there's somebody that can look at patterns and I call it borrowing a brain and say, Oh, have you noticed this? Like your husband kind of saying, have you thought about this? Right.

Jennifer Fugo: So, it's like any other piece. The other piece to this too is some of the environmental, I would even argue that environmental exposures in the past could certainly create a stressful burden on the body from that physical, more internal space. An example of this would be a client that I worked with. She was in her sixties and had eczema almost all over her body. And as we're digging through, she mentioned she grew up on a farm and like Kansas or Nebraska or something like that. And I said, were you exposed to pesticides as a child? And she goes, she stopped for a second. And then as she thought about it, she said, okay, you know, we used to run outside when the crop-dusting plane would run over and we would play like, you know, dancing in the rain. But it was dancing in the dust and it was all over their bikes, all over their toys.

Jennifer Fugo: It was everywhere. And this went on for years and years. She had completely forgotten that she had been exposed for a very long period of time to all of these chemicals. And so that's why I say a lot of times and I think to your point, I think to some degree, like we don't want that to be even be a part of who we are and what makes us who we are today and how we show up in our health and especially with our skin. But the truth is if you start to disown; and you don't want to dig through where you've come through as far as the journey experiences that we have through our lives; through the relationships that

we've had, like think about all the relationships; your boyfriend, your girlfriend, whoever with your kids, you start to dig through these relationships and you do start to see patterns of like, Ooh, actually no, that was, it's very stressful to your relationship that I had that I've kind of forgot about.

Jennifer Fugo: And we start to see all of these different pieces that can fit together. And you know, yes, obviously we don't need to go into the whole gut piece. I'm sure you've had plenty of people talk about that. But there is a tremendous burden and I think it's important for people with skin specific issues to hear this. There is a tremendous connection between what happens inside of your gut and what happens with your skin regardless of whether you have issues going to the bathroom. It is surprising actually, about 95% of clients who have no bathroom issues like they poop like a champ. No Gas, no bloating, no nothing, have infections that they didn't know that they had. It just so happens that the infections and the dysbiosis show up in some other way. It doesn't result surprisingly in gut symptoms.

Jennifer Fugo: So, you have to look at that. But one of the biggest missing pieces with chronic skin issues aside from the gut, and this is why I say you can't actually resolve these skin issues alone from just looking at the gut is you have to make sure that your liver, and this isn't from like that, like oh detox your liver. I like how everybody is like I'm going to detox my liver because they don't actually know that the liver has these phase two detoxification pathways that actually does some tremendous things. But those pathways require very specific nutrients. And so, if--

Dr. Keesha: Milk thistle and dandelion root, and green tea extract. I know all of my patients and I always point this out, look that up regulates phase one and yours already are doing great, phase two is the one having the problem and every single person, genuine first person that's brought this up, every a hundred percent of my patients with autoimmune disease have had a phase two phase one liver detoxification pathway mismatch. And it's always phase two that's needing to be upregulated. It can't all be done in the same way. So, there are ways of looking at this whole spectrum and how to work with it. But I'm so glad you talked about this because it's not about taking more milk thistle.

Jennifer Fugo: Right. And so, the interesting thing, because I did some research on this, I've done some podcasts about like what does liver detox mean? Should you do with liver detox? And I've looked into things because I wanted to better understand like could milk thistle be important? And milk thistle can be helpful in increasing glutathione levels, but the glutathione pathway is just one pathway. So, there's other pathways that require things like glycine, so you can't get, you can't put blinders on thinking that I'm going to do this liver detox kit that you bought at Whole Foods and I'm going to fix things. The other problem too, and the reason that I find with skin issues, you have to start at the liver, because if you try and do like a candida cleanse or some sort of gut detox, there is a high likelihood

that your symptoms will flare and they may not get any better afterwards and will get worse and then you feel awful because a: you feel awful, you look awful and then you're also have that blame of like, I did this to myself.

Jennifer Fugo: I feel like I broke myself somehow and I just was trying to help things--

Dr. Keesha: Or this whole liver detox thing doesn't work, that that makes me worse. That's what people will come up with instead of, oh, there's a specific and proper way and you have to start low, go slow when you have skin issues.

Jennifer Fugo: Yes. So, the liver is super important. But taking milk thistle, I like those things they can be great, but they're not going to help that phase one, phase two because the problem is that essentially you get all of this toxic material that when it goes through phase one becomes more toxic and then it just kind of sits there because the body doesn't have the nutrients to push it through phase two. So, it builds up and it builds up and you already got a problem with your gut.

Jennifer Fugo: Maybe you're exposed to chemicals in your home or at work. You know, we forget a lot of times, like what's in the filtration systems? What's being blown through? Is there mold in the building at work? Any number of things. Maybe you have a commute on a highway where you just sit like around LA, they just sit for hours on exposed to all these car fumes and your liver gets to a point where it's like, I can't, I can't deal with this anymore. I'm done. And we start to see it come out in other ways. So, you have to start with the liver when it comes to skin issues. You can't just heal your leaky gut. I don't know how else to say that. And the other big piece of this I really, I don't mean to harp on it, but this is a big piece to me is that the elimination diet thing, and you and I have talked about this, of how you had even said this.

Jennifer Fugo: You're like, you end up on this shrinking iceberg diet analogy and you're the one that told me that. And it was such a good way to describe it because while yes, there is the autoimmune protocol and that can be helpful for some people. If you do not see drastic improvements in three, maybe six months, you have other underlying issues that no amount of food and screwing around with your diet and taking things out and all this stuff is going to fix. And this is where, you know, I just had someone in my community end up hospitalized because she had tried so many different diets trying to deal with her psoriasis. She'd ended up like she's raw, vegan, low salicylates, no night shades, no gluten, no dairy, no sugar. And she ended up in the hospital because she passed out; her blood sugar and her blood pressure were super low and now she's incredibly malnourished and she had constant diarrhea and they're trying to figure out what the heck's wrong with her. And one of her things that she said was like actually avoiding all these foods. Has that made me worse?

- Dr. Keesha: Of course, in the hospital what they're saying is these health food, crazy health coach nuts out there are making everybody sicker look at this right. Instead of like, Oh okay. You know, I mean it's just, that's exactly because I used to be in a hospital. That's exactly-- this one was taking 800 milligrams of magnesium a day? I remember that being in the cardiac ICU and now I'm like 800, okay. Some people need that much.
- Jennifer Fugo: Yes. Sometimes they do. Exactly. And so that's the point of saying, okay I'm going to do this practically, but I also have to know where's the cutoff here of when I can't do this myself. If you try elimination diets and they make you sicker, if you cut out foods and you cannot reintroduce them, if you are not seeing improvements, that's when you need to have really unfortunately somebody help you lift up the hood and look at other things underneath because there may be things going on you don't even know to ask about ;and you don't even know to research and it becomes very complicated. So, I would, my personal opinion is yes, you should take gluten out. Not because gluten is the devil, but simply because it increases gut permeability. So, whatever's going on in the gut, we don't want to have, especially with an autoimmune disease, you do not want whatever is going on with the gut to have more interaction with the internal body and triggering your immune system.
- Jennifer Fugo: But the rest of it really depends on you. And I unfortunately don't find food sensitivity testing to be very helpful with skin issues. I find that looking at biochemistry, nutrient status and really doing a thorough history and understanding like the trauma piece and picking through the health of your life and all of your exposures and really shining a light to be a lot more helpful. And the other piece of this I do want to share is that you have to set your expectations here to be realistic to like realistic, not too, I saw somebody on Instagram who drank the celery juice and they were better in two weeks.
- Dr. Keesha: Celery juice, oh my gosh, another one of my soap boxes. So, they're helpful for certain people that can't remove ammonia through their bodies that have sulfur SNPs, but not everybody.
- Jennifer Fugo: For many of my clients who've tried it, and I'm not like, I'm like, okay, if it's right for you, if you have heart issues, if you are pregnant, that's probably not the time to be doing that kind of stuff. If it triggers a lot of diarrhea that's not good. You're not detoxing. That's actually very disruptive to the microbiome and causes more inflammation. But here's the thing, you need to look at what's going on with you. Say, okay, I'm going to look both internal and external. I'm going to consider all of the stressors on the table. Everything from my mitochondria to the trauma, to the stress, everything. It doesn't mean you go live in a little hut in Tibet, right? It means you have to accept where we are and do what you can every little day. It's baby steps, but it might take you six months.

Jennifer Fugo: It might take a year; it might take two years. But you have to at a certain point say I'm not just going to focus on like the food piece alone or just taking 50 supplements a day to fix my issue. We've got to figure out exactly what's wrong, what those buckets are and address them in a way that will be more effective in reversing or at least halting the progress of your autoimmune issues and then hopefully peeling back some of those layers so that you can get your life back. That's the ultimate goal. Everybody wants to not worry about their skin anymore.

Dr. Keesha: At the end of the day is also that what you said and knowing that your skin is a friend that will tell you that once you do have all of this reversed, that actually it will come back again. If you go back to those old ways of being with your stress, with your food, all of those things, you can get it back really fast. And so, using it as a friend Ayurvedic medicine actually thinks about disease progression in six different stages and it called that. It's called your tissue layers, your Dhatus where it goes deeper, deeper, deeper, deeper; skin is that outer one. Obviously the first one, and if you've gotten your imbalance all the way down into your reproductive layer, which means menstrual disorders, infertility, endometriosis, fibroids, anything like that, then it's all the way down in your deepest layer.

Dr. Keesha: Then as you are detoxing and doing the changes that you need to do; you're actually going to come up each layer one at a time and skin will be last. And so, you have to understand that it shows up on the skin first and it clears through the skin last, and I love that way of thinking about it because it's based on digestive process and the building of each subsequent layer. If you don't digest your emotions, your feelings, your experiences and your food well in that first layer, which will still show up on your skin, and then from that layer it actually is kind of like xeroxing another copy. It'll go down deeper, deeper, deeper, continuing to get more and more imbalanced. And so, it's important to realize that this idea of digesting emotions, right? Digesting your food well and properly so that where the testing comes in that we're talking about where you're really looking at are you making enough digestive enzymes for yourself? You know, who is living in your gut? Do you have enough stomach acid and are you breaking down your nutrients? You know, what's your fatty acid ratio? Are you absorbing it? You know, so that is so important because that proper digestion is actually what is required for you to have healthy skin.

Jennifer Fugo: The other piece to this, I think that's important. It doesn't necessarily, it can apply to eczema but it's more specific. I found too the autoimmune versions of skin issues. It's also to think back to the drugs that you were taking in the past because there actually are medical, like medicine, where that reactions that can happen that can actually trigger your skin, autoimmune disease. I have a client that I'm working with now with psoriasis and she had IBD was put on Remicade and the Remicade triggered psoriasis. And so, there's a pretty lengthy list. Like for example, Plaquenil can trigger psoriasis, but it's oftentimes used for lupus. Lithium is one of those, I mean lithium can be helpful in some instances, but

lithium can trigger a psoriasis. Fluoroquinolones, so things like Cipro, that whole class of antibiotics can be really problematic.

Jennifer Fugo: Tetracycline, which many of us were on as teenagers for acne. Even Beta blockers can be a huge problem. Let's see, what else? Interferons, biologics, like Humira, as I said, Remicade, NSAIDs, and even topical steroids. So just do a list. I didn't dig into the medications that people used to take years ago as much until I started to put together that those can also be a trigger. And while you go, oh, well, whatever it's already happened, it actually helps us to understand. I find, and I don't know how you feel about this, but I find really understanding those triggers and the initial situation to be very hopeful in telling us what has to happen now because there are layers that have to be peeled back.

Dr. Keesha: Very, very important. One other thing is what I have found lately is that cryotherapy is really helpful for psoriasis. Have you seen that?

Jennifer Fugo: Yeah. Yeah. That can definitely be a big piece of the puzzle. Light therapy can also be very helpful as well. A lot of times people are encouraged to not go out in the sun but getting some sunlight in those earlier and later hours directly to the skin. For people who don't seem to have a reaction in the sun, there's a lot of research on light therapy that can be helpful as well.

New Speaker: What I found is that cryotherapy seems to break that cycle. You know how we were saying someone will go on a detox and then get a flare and then the skin doesn't calm down? It's that cycle that's been starting that now the flare is off and running and oftentimes in the past it used to just be steroids that would break it. People would be like oh, if I do a prednisone pack it will break it and that's the only thing I found. So now I'm sending people off to cryotherapy, like just try this. See what you think. And 100% of my patients are getting their psoriasis flares stopped.

Jennifer Fugo: Yeah. And that's a great easy thing for a lot of people to do as more of these cryotherapy shops or boutiques are popping up in different places. So that's a really easy thing to do. I also think getting to root cause, and that's part of it. You know, and I think it's important that I say this as well. I know I've talked about medications and I certainly have a history of using topical steroids and those are oftentimes prescribed when you have a skin issue. I don't necessarily think with skin issues, I think we have a lot of people have had bad experiences and then they'll say, I don't want to do any conventional medicine. Here's the thing, you kind of do have to manage the symptoms when you have a skin issue because it can become unbearable. Some people can't get to work, some people can't sleep.

Jennifer Fugo: And so yes. So, you shouldn't be of this mindset like I am just forgetting all the doctors that I know. I'm not going to see the doctor. I don't want to do it that way. It is better. And I mean I'm saying this from a clinical nutrition standpoint

as well as somebody who's gone through this, not a doctor. But I do think it's important to have at least a family doctor if not also a dermatologist who can be helpful in those moments where something does become infected or maybe you get a staph infection, you got get on antibiotics for that. You're not going to like deal with that with herbs. You know what, if you do need to lean on a topical steroid, initially use it really sparingly. And you know, do your research and ask the doctor, how should I use this so that I don't end up making things worse?

Jennifer Fugo: While in the meantime, doing all the other work and if you so choose to use medications, don't expect your doctor to go through all of the potential side effects. Read up on it, do your research and think about what your values are. Do they align with your values? Because here's the thing, we're all different and you have the right to feel comfortable with your choices no matter what they are. It's not up to me to make you feel bad because you might need a topical steroid to get you through the night so you can just sleep, right? Because that's a huge problem for a lot of people when there's a lot of itch and discomfort you need to sleep. So be practical. Do your homework and don't feel bad about it. Don't let anyone make you feel bad about it. I don't feel bad that I used a topical steroid. I used it very sparingly and it made it so that I was not causing more mechanical inflammation. At the level of the skin because that actually disrupts the skin barrier further. So again, balancing act is important.

Dr. Keesha: Thank you. Really important. I think closure to this interview here, because we can throw the baby out with the bath water and that doesn't work very well. So being able to be open to whatever works for you. Thank you, Jen. And thanks for all the great work you're up to in the world and your contact information, links will be here with this interview and I so appreciate the devotion that you have to helping people with their skin.

Jennifer Fugo: Well, thank you so much for having me and I wish everybody watching the best of luck on your journeys. And if anyone has any questions, feel free to get in touch.

Dr. Keesha: Thank you. Alright, everyone, until next time, be well.