

The Paleo Solution

Episode 70

Robb Wolf: Hey, folks. Robb Wolf here with episode 70 of The Paleo Solution. Obviously, a different intro than what you guys are used to. The big man, Andy Deas, is moving on doing some other projects. We're going to miss his enormous self and his enormous beard. He's been a huge help developing the podcast, a huge help getting the book launched and going. So I'm going to miss Andy around here. Check him out at ChasingCapacity.com. That's his blog, and you can follow his future exploits.

We have an even bigger hooligan to contend with now though. We've got Greg Everett who is famous around the world for his Olympic weightlifting book.

Greg, how are you doing?

Greg Everett: I'm doing well although honestly I'm a little disheartened now because I just shaved my beard off. So I feel like I might not be able to pull the job off.

Robb Wolf: You know you're big and you had a beard once. And so you could have a beard again.

Greg Everett: It's true.

Robb Wolf: I think it's probably okay.

Greg Everett: I have what would be called a transient beard. It kind of comes in during the winter and then disappears during the summer.

Robb Wolf: Oh, I thought you meant like you were out scalping people or something like that.

Greg Everett: No, I have not taken a transient's beard. That's a whole different facial hair situation.

Robb Wolf: We definitely didn't check references on you, but I guess the only reference that you would have would be us since like you --

Greg Everett: Exactly.

Robb Wolf: -- started at NorCal Strength and Conditioning.

Greg Everett: It's an infinite feedback loop. It won't get you anywhere.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Cool. That works. That works. So what's new? You just got back from the Arnold's.

Greg Everett: Yeah. Ohio is lovely this time of year. When you get a chance, go check it out. It's definitely not gray and raining and snowy and freezing and depressing.

Robb Wolf: Don't they have a beach there somewhere?

Greg Everett: They probably have an indoor beach volleyball place somewhere, I'm sure. They do have a convention center that's got to be like 60 acres. It's ridiculous.

Robb Wolf: I guess you could kind of need that in Ohio because you don't really want to go outside either in the summer or the winter.

Greg Everett: That's correct.

Robb Wolf: So what was going down there? What were you doing?

Greg Everett: It's the Arnold Sports Festival, as I believe the official name for it. But basically it's a big yearly thing they put on, and they bring in all kinds of sports and weightlifting is one of them. So it's quite a circus. There's -- you kind of have these huge crowds of people milling through this convention center, and there's a weightlifting competition going on in one side. There's powerlifting in another room. There's a bunch of fencing stuff. There's MMA and BJJ, and I think there's usually some gymnastics and all kinds of fun stuff. I think the -- well, there's -- I do know there's actually CrossFit there as of last year; although, I unfortunately did not get a chance to check out the CrossFit room this time. I heard it was pretty phenomenal.

Robb Wolf: Huh. I'm sure that they had a name tag waiting for you at the door.

Greg Everett: I suspect they did. It was probably laced with some kind of transdermal poison.

Robb Wolf: They would hit -- they would have the access for that so I can see it. Didn't you have a couple of lifters there? Did you have a couple of people you were coaching at that gig?

Greg Everett: We did. We actually -- we had Aimee, we had Kara Yessie/Doherty, Jocelyn Forest and Diane Fu.

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Greg Everett: So it turned out pretty well. All of them got at least one PR. Kara got three. Well, she got -- a meet snatch PR, meet clean and jerk PR, and meet total PR. So that's what I mean by three. And Jocelyn just annihilated an 82-kilo snatch, looking really good, 96-kilo clean and jerk, which was actually --

Robb Wolf: Nice.

Greg Everett: -- considerably less than we expected going into it, but she definitely -- she had a little bit of a caffeine fiasco between the snatch and clean and jerk so that did not work out well.

Robb Wolf: Oh, wow! Yeah.

Greg Everett: She basically had her little Yerba maté thing in her carry-on bag and forgot about it. And so TSA and their infinite wisdom and not understanding that Jocelyn Forest needed to get super jacked before her clean and jerks took it away. Very disappointing.

Robb Wolf: Uppers, downers, you know.

Greg Everett: It's cool. So fortunately, there was a huge bodybuilding convention right across the way, and a couple of folks went and got her some kind of small bottled energy product which would probably show up positive on a drug test for some kind of banned substance. So hopefully, that doesn't work out.

Robb Wolf: Well, you can always -- isn't it always the deal though that somebody gave it to me?

Greg Everett: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Isn't that usually the deal. So you could document it on film like, "No, dude, really they ran across the way and got it from, well, the guys bigger than the house. But I don't know what was in it," and yeah.

Greg Everett: Well, that was one of the Ben Johnson stories, right? That someone spiked his drink while he was waiting on drug testing.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I wish somebody would spike my drink with some anabolic substances. I could probably handle that, but it's probably not going to happen anytime soon. I guess you have to actually be a competitive athlete for that to happen.

Greg Everett: You just got to eat more sweet potatoes, Robb.

Robb Wolf: Oh, yeah, that's true.

Greg Everett: I feel you right now.

Robb Wolf: Cool, man. So you're ready to carve into this stuff? We've got some goodies here.

Greg Everett: I'm ready. You're the one who's got to get your propeller hat spinning and actually answer the questions.

Robb Wolf: We'll see what we can do. I'm sure we can make a train wreck of this thing in no time flat.

Greg Everett: Yes.

Robb Wolf: So let's give it a crack.

Greg Everett: All right. We got some pretty good ones here today. So this first one, we got a question from a no-name follower of the podcast who asked, "Robb, could you comment on the following new UK guidelines concerning red meat?" And just to really quickly summarize this whole study since he quoted the whole thing, and I don't want to read it, "In the first new guidelines since 1998, Britain advised people to help prevent cancer by cutting down on steaks, hamburgers, sausages and other red meat. Government experts say people should eat no more than 500 grams (1 pound) of red meat a week, or 70 grams (2.5 ounces) every day, significantly less than it previously recommended. That works out to about one small lamb chop a day." Hold on, it gets funnier.

Robb Wolf: Is that like the puppet or...?

Greg Everett: I don't know. Where does it -- where does lamb chop end? Does it include the person operating because that's a whole lot of meat?

Robb Wolf: That's what I want to know. If I get to eat lamb chop and the person operating it, then I'm probably cool with that, right? Yeah.

Greg Everett: Yeah, yeah. That's no problem. So "Scientists think people who eat a lot of meat like lamb, roast beef and ham have a higher risk of bowel cancer. In 2005, a large European study found people who ate about 160 grams (5.6 ounces) of red meat a day bumped up their bowel cancer risk by one third compared to people who ate the least meat. On average, people have about a one in 19 chance of developing bowel cancer in their lifetime.

High levels of meat consumption have also been linked to cancers of the breast, bladder, stomach and the pancreas." Well, I don't have breasts so I'm going to go ahead and continue.

Robb Wolf: You're feeling confident there.

Greg Everett: Well, that's 25% less risk.

Robb Wolf: That's true, yeah, with each one I think. So it should be 50% less risk.

Greg Everett: Yes.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Greg Everett: "Experts suspect that haem, the pigment which gives red meat its color, damages cells in the digestive system, which may lead to cancer. Cooking meat at high temperatures, like on a barbecue, may also produce cancer-causing chemicals."

Finally, "Britain's new guidelines match advice issued by the World Cancer Research Fund several years ago. In 2007, the agency advised against eating too much processed meat like sausages or bacon and said children should never eat such products. It's estimated that cutting down on red meat could save 3,800 Britons from dying of bowel cancer every year."

Robb Wolf: Oh, man.

Greg Everett: Your thoughts, Robb?

Robb Wolf: Lots of thoughts. These studies are great, and it's definitely a good, I guess, learning opportunity, but they're really buggerish because they --

what these things always are is an epidemiological study. So some statistics typically taken from food journals are analyzed and then get kind of crunched, and inevitably you just kind of find what you want to go looking for. And so if you're looking for particular items to be problematic, then you definitely find them to be problematic. That last study that was mentioned, the 2000 study where they -- 2007 study where they were talking about processed meats is, I believe, the same one or a related study that popped up where they were counting meat that was on pizza. They would count the total caloric content of that whole item as pizza.

Greg Everett: It makes sense.

Robb Wolf: Or as meat. So if you had a couple of pieces and pepperoni, then like the whole MaryAnn; the protein, the carbs, the fat, the whole thing, was counted as "meat." And this is inevitably what you see with these things.

Greg Everett: Sure.

Robb Wolf: So they actually do at least put forward an idea here that perhaps haem, which is iron rich element of most proteins, particularly red meats and any type of highly vascularized type of meat, then we get more kind of iron rich haem proteins in there, and iron is definitely a pro-oxidant. It definitely could be pro-inflammatory, pro-oxidative. But this is going -- it sniffs really -- similarly they used to think that bile salts were in some way a gut irritant; and they worked and worked and worked to prove that thing. But at least what they've got here, they've got a proposed mechanism that we think that this is the problem.

But then what you need to do is actually go and look at the literature and see what the heck is going on with that. And what you find is even ingesting like reduced forms of iron directly -- in animal models we're not finding increased rates of cancers. And so we're even removing the iron from being associated with the proteins in the haem complex, and we're not finding cancer in these situations.

And so these are some very mechanistic direct things which I think like we've talked about when we had Mat Lalonde on here and everything. We really need to hang our hats on the mechanism. But if we want to pull this back to a 30,000-foot level, and we start looking at some epidemiology turning into anthropology like the Inuit, the Ache Indians of Peru, the Maasai; these folks are consuming a ton of haem-bearing proteins, and they're not suffering any of these cancers.

And so there's -- that's not proof that some interesting stuff, but this particular item when it's -- what are my thoughts on it, I think it's really weak from an epidemiological standpoint. We have exceptions to this supposed rule, and then even on the mechanistic side, it's pretty weak as to their proposed mechanism of causation here. Whereas, again, if we start looking at insulin spiking foods, we've got a much higher -- we have some mechanism there that's pretty tight. Insulin like growth factor, insulin epithelial growth factors, changes in the liver pathology that starts basically a feed forward mechanism with more growth factors in pathology.

So yeah, I'm just not a huge fan. You have anything else that you could hike your leg on this one with or is that --

Greg Everett:

I like meat.

Robb Wolf:

There you go.

Greg Everett:

Done.

Robb Wolf:

Done.

Greg Everett:

Well, like you said, the big thing is that these studies that go searching for this single super-detailed mechanism being the root of some huge problem just seem fundamentally silly to me.

Robb Wolf:

It is if the mechanism they throw it out there, but they obviously didn't look in the research to even see if exposures to high iron-containing compounds was pathogenic in the gut. Just not really finding that.

Greg Everett:

It seems like a good starting point.

Robb Wolf:

It seems like a great starting point, but instead they're just kind of drawing at straws really trying very, very hard to hang this stuff on meat consumption.

Greg Everett:

Yeah.

Robb Wolf:

Yeah, yeah.

Greg Everett:

Well, we actually have another question that's going to be a perfect follow-up to this, and I'm super excited about this one. I'm not going to lie.

Robb Wolf: They're going to be shock of my response. It's actually going to be more --

Greg Everett: Yeah. I just don't know what to expect.

Robb Wolf: There may just be a small mushroom cloud over Chico pretty soon.

Greg Everett: Yeah. Take a few breaths and settle yourself for a moment. Are you ready?

Robb Wolf: I'm ready to go, yeah.

Greg Everett: So Shawn asks, "I was wondering your take on the raw vegan diet. I fully agree on the vegan diet you were on being bad, but on the raw vegan side of things I do not see people getting sick on a raw vegan diet that is mostly grain/dairy free."

Robb Wolf: Well, this is one of those interesting things. The folks who recommend -- and I would say the really loud vocal people who recommend the vegan approach, say like John McDougall, he actually bans people from talking about the grain and legume free raw vegan approach. They are not allowed to comment on his website.

So there's actually this kind of funny schism among the vegan crowd. And I would say the more mainstream guys, the more medicalized guys who are recommending soy and grains and legumes the way that McDougall is, they don't like talking about this stuff at all because these raw food vegans are actually saying pretty much the same things with regard to the gut irritation. They're saying all the same things regarding grains and legumes that you would typically get out of the Paleo camp.

And so it's kind of interesting from that regard. I obviously don't think that the vegan approach is optimum for health, optimum for performance. I would love everybody to give it a shot for a month. Give the raw food vegan shot a month and --

Greg Everett: No, thanks.

Robb Wolf: Greg will pass but --

Greg Everett: You can't eat raw nachos, Robb.

Robb Wolf: Well, you could try. It would be a fun attempt to give it a shot. But it's like give that thing a shot. Try it out. Try that pony for a month, and see what happens, and then try a standard kind of Paleo gig for a month, and then

try the Wendler gram of test and nachos for a month, and just see what you like. See which one works best for you. With this thing, I would say that if somebody is morally set on being vegan, you would be smart to steer away from grains and legumes and eat tubers, eat a lot of nuts and seeds, sprout them. I don't think it's going to be optimum other than maybe a few people who have really good genetics and go and do endurance athletics; they might be able to pull this thing off in endurance athletics.

I know there's kind of a rash of this stuff going around the MMA scene. It will be kind of funny to see where all that stuff goes, but it's just not really optimum. But maybe I'm wrong. Get in. Try it on. Check it out. It is interesting that there is a rather large vocal group of vegans who say pretty much the same things about grains and legumes that I'm saying, but then they're also dead set against protein intake. And like Greg said in the previous deal, meat rocks. So I can't really go down that road.

Greg Everett: So now let's say for a moment you do have a client who is vegan or vegetarian, and their reasonings are moral or ethical in nature rather than based on health. What's your recommendation to them to optimize that suboptimal approach? How are they getting -- what are their protein source options?

Robb Wolf: You know you're relying on some hemp. You might end up doing some concentrated soy protein like concentrated pea proteins. You're really limited. You know, I mean, the concentrated protein sources are very, very limited at that point. I think probably one of the smartest things to do is make sure you're covering your B12 side. All the B vitamin issues can be pretty traumatic or dramatic for a vegan or pretty hardcore vegetarian.

I was talking with Loren Cordain on the phone the other day, and he's really tackling the vegan and vegetarian question heavy-duty in his next book. And it's probably going to get him some hate mail because he is really taking this stuff to task; whereas, in the first book he really kind of skirted the whole topic. But you're going to have to do some supplementation to shore up some gaps in the game. And I think doing some algae derived DHA is a must-do proposition especially for women and especially for women of childbearing age if they want to have kids and have adequate levels of EPA and DHA in their body to feed that growing fetus. Those are some things that they absolutely have to do.

But even from that moralistic level, I would recommend that people read the Vegetarian Myth, and a lot of the arguments that are thrown out

there on the sustainability side, on the least harm side, it's not the definitive answer coming out of the vegan vegetarian camp. There are other voices out there that have commentary on this stuff, and I would just recommend that people do a little bit of reading, do a little bit of homework on it, and then draw whatever conclusions they want to. But that's not the definitive story on the economics of the whole thing and certainly not the best place to go for performance, health and longevity for sure.

Greg Everett: You don't say.

Robb Wolf: You don't see a lot of Bulgarian, vegan Olympic weightlifting gold medalists out there, and you would think that if that was really the cat's meow that these folks would have tinkered with it and done it. And instead, you see something that looks like a cyclic ketogenic diet that's real heavy in protein and fat and carbohydrate as per recovery needs.

Greg Everett: Yeah. That sounds good. That sounds fancy.

Robb Wolf: I'm hungry right now actually.

Greg Everett: It sounds a lot fancier than it looks.

Robb Wolf: Totally.

Greg Everett: You have such a great way of putting things in really complicated terms.

Robb Wolf: I do what I can. Thank you.

Greg Everett: Yes. All right. So this is actually another good one that kind of connects to the previous question speaking of veganism and such. AJ asks, "I was reading in 'On Food and Cooking' by Harold McGee that prolonged boiling of legumes deactivates lectins and protease inhibitors. It does not go into specifics and wondered if you could shed any light on it. How much to boil? Do certain legumes respond better? What other things should one consider if boiling them stops two of the major reasons we're to avoid legumes?"

Robb Wolf: Both sprouting and boiling decrease the activity of protease inhibitors, phytates, lectins, even to some degree saponins get denatured or broken down in the boiling or the sprouting process. The problem is that it doesn't remove all of them. And so what you're then dealing with is still, in my opinion, a suboptimal food.

Now, if you just really, really love kidney beans or something like that, then I would recommend soaking them, sprouting them, pressure cooking them, which is going to cook them at a high temperature. When you pressure cook them, I would put a couple of tablespoons of vinegar in with the mix because that acidic medium is going to hydrolyze a lot of those proteins and further help to break down the lectins. But still what you're dealing with is a suboptimal food from a nutrient standpoint, from a gut irritation standpoint.

But say, like you're super broke and you're trying to get by on just literally nickels and dimes, that's a good way to go. You put some money into a pressure cooker, you buy a big bottle of white vinegar, and you put a couple of tablespoons into each batch that you're pressure cooking. Sprout them first, and that's going to help. As to like there being differences with all this stuff, there's definitely differences but the lectins are fairly similar.

This is just kind of an argument. If you're going to eat this stuff, probably rotate through them because you're going to get a different variety of lectins and different kinds of toxin-load based on the type of foods that you're taking in. So I would rotate between black beans and kidney beans and all that. But still again at the end of the day, I would just steer people towards the yams and sweet potatoes and all that sort of stuff, and then get a largely protein source from animal products.

Greg Everett: Yeah. It seems like an inordinate amount of time and effort just to eat beans.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah.

Greg Everett: To go through all that.

Robb Wolf: I mean it's that third world solution where like if this is what you've got, then by all means you do it, but you process it in a way that stacks the deck more in your favor. But if that's not your situation, I'm -- and this is again being iconoclastic about it. I'm just trying to steer people towards the best options that I can, but when we know that this stuff causes a lot of gut irritation, and granted like, oh, I have some beans and rice once, maybe twice a week going out doing some Mexican food. But if I do it consistently, I start getting some acid reflux and some other GI problems.

And so I know for myself it's a problem, and so just as a baseline, this is what I'm recommending, in general, steer away from that stuff and make it kind of a -- when you're going out, kick your heels up kind of a meal,

again nachos, a perfect time to fit that in. so that's where I would roll that stuff in unless your situation is very, very specific and we're trying to deal with really, really tough economic situation or something like that. But even then there have been some really good articles. Diane Sanfilippo did a Paleo on a shoestring kind of gig on balanced bites and all that. You can eat on the cheap and still eat Paleo.

Greg Everett: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: You can do it smart.

Greg Everett: Sweet.

Robb Wolf: And still have nachos on Fridays. So yeah.

Greg Everett: You could also just get super skinny, and you just have to eat less.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, you can do that. You can do that. I think that's like --

Greg Everett: That's all kinds of solutions.

Robb Wolf: That's like CrossFitting in the zone.

Greg Everett: Yeah. Should I be concerned that I've had 13 almonds today?

Robb Wolf: No, no, no.

Greg Everett: Am I going to get fat?

Robb Wolf: Yes, you will.

Greg Everett: Sweet. All right. That's enough on beans.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. I'm feeling flatulent just talking about it.

Greg Everett: So I like this question because it's a super, epic, complicated question on one very simple topic.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Greg Everett: And it just kind of makes me laugh. Nothing personal, James. But James asks -- well, first he says, "Thanks for teaching me about the many benefits of coconut. That said, I have a few questions: (1) I've read that coconut contains phytic acid. Should I be concerned about this? Does

coconut meat perhaps contain more phytic acid than coconut milk and coconut oil? If so, would you recommend that we soak or ferment coconut meat... or perhaps avoid it altogether?"

James separated this into three questions by this first one had multiple questions so he's trying to fool you.

Robb Wolf: People always do that. There's something like 15 questions in there.

Greg Everett: I have a quick question that I'm going to compose in this 18-page email.

Robb Wolf: Of 38 sub-questions.

Greg Everett: "(2) Do you recommend refined or unrefined coconut oil? It sounds like unrefined has more nutrients, but it also has a lower smoke point. (Would you dare cook in unrefined coconut oil?)" I double-dog-dare you, Robb.

Robb Wolf: I would like the sound from Psycho when they open the curtain and "Wah! Wah! Wah! Wah!"

Greg Everett: Well, hang on. We're not done. (3), the third and final question, "I noticed that So Delicious sells a 'Cultured Coconut Milk' product. Would you recommend this cultured version over regular coconut milk?" And then finally, wait, wait, "I'd love to hear some of your God-like insights."

So I want you to take a moment and muster your God-like insight creating process before you answer.

Robb Wolf: I feel omnipotent, arrr!

Greg Everett: Most of you won't get that joke, but you should laugh anyway.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. There's a whole massive back story with that which someday we may be able to divulge, but right now we can't. But just remember, "I feel omnipotent, arrr!"

Greg Everett: There's at least four people in the world who know what we're talking about including us.

Robb Wolf: They're either choking on their latte or they're loading a gun right now, one or the other.

Greg Everett: All right. So coconuts.

Robb Wolf: Okay. Back to the question. So coconut has a sparing, like tiny amount of phytic acid. I would not worry about it. The coconut meat is totally good to go. The coconut milk is good to go. I wouldn't really worry about that. As to the smoke point, like, I just wouldn't cook the daylights out of most things unless it really kind of calls for it. And even then the refined versus unrefined coconut oils, you can cook at a pretty high temperature with it. So I tend to like the flavor of the unrefined coconut better, and even if it has a slightly lower smoke point because it has some other organic constituents in there that start burning at a lower smoke point, I just don't know how often you need to cook that hot. So I wouldn't really worry about it. And then the cultured coconut milk is pretty bad-ass like that stuff is super cool, but it's an apples and oranges thing. I would use that in a totally different format that I would coconut milk, like using it for -- I wouldn't use cultured coconut milk to make a curry because I'm cooking it, and I'm going to kill all the cultures.

Greg Everett: The cultured coconut milk is the one you want to bring home to meet your parents because that will impress them.

Robb Wolf: Yes, yes.

Greg Everett: And talk about art, music.

Robb Wolf: Hi, I'm cultured coconut milk. How are you?

Greg Everett: All right. Let's --

Robb Wolf: That would make a great family guy.

Greg Everett: Let's move on before I bury that one any further.

Robb Wolf: We're definitely down to four listeners.

Greg Everett: All right.

Robb Wolf: Heading towards three.

Greg Everett: Yeah. I'm definitely not going to listen to this one.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Greg Everett: All right. So this next one was actually a two-part one, but the two parts are --

Robb Wolf: Massive.

Greg Everett: -- wholly unrelated.

Robb Wolf: Right.

Greg Everett: So I'm going to skip or stick to the first part which I think is actually much more interesting for everybody.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Greg Everett: So again, this is nameless so I apologize for your lack of recognition on the internet, but as a standard, "Thanks for the Podcast, has made a huge difference in my life. I have two questions for you but I will try to make them as brief as possible while providing enough background to make it answerable." Let's just do the first question.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Greg Everett: "My mother cannot sleep without antidepressants. I convinced her to do a no grains/legumes/dairy/nightshade Paleo trial for her health problems after the success I have had so far. However, when she went off of antidepressants, she did not sleep for a week, and reverted back to having panic attacks, resulting in going right back to antidepressants. I have been catching up on the podcasts and am currently reading Lights Out. I've convinced her of how important getting enough sleep is, but without antidepressants she literally cannot sleep a blink. I definitely need some help, as I am very concerned. She tried melatonin, and some magnesium, but no success. Please pull out all the stops on this one, or at least try to point me to the right resources. I've exhausted the power of the standard Google search."

See, sounds like it's time for more God-like insights, Robb.

Robb Wolf: Well, I'm maybe coming up a little short on this one. I mean there's a -- definitely eating better is going to make people healthier. Healthier typically means that people should be sleeping better, but I mean the -- this sounds like a really serious medical condition, and there -- it's very, very true. The sleep is critical for health and to say nothing of survival. So I mean this -- looking around for somebody like a functional medicine doctor who can do some detailed endocrinology, like, look at whether

thyroid is doing -- try to get some sense of where serotonin, melatonin, dopamine, acetylcholine, where all that stuff is going on.

Some sort of a full inventory, looking at gut health and all that obviously is important, but at this point, if you need some sort of antidepressant, it's interesting. One of the main features of most antidepressants is that they normalize sleep function. And the interplay of sleep and depression and feeling good and mood is just massively woven together, I would say inseparable. And so at this point it's like do what you need to do to -- eat as healthy as you can, but then it seems obvious to stick with what's been working for her for potentiating the sleep. But you certainly can keep looking. I would try to track down a functional medicine doctor or possibly doing some work with a naturopath who is pretty savvy with this stuff and see what else you can dig up. There might be some thyroid issues or some other under the hood issues that are causing more of a problem here. But not sleeping for a week is not a tenable situation. That just doesn't work.

Greg Everett: Yeah. It's kind of one of those things where you like the antidepressants to be a temporary solution, but at some point you have to accept the fact that no matter how nasty the drug is, it's got to be better for you than never sleeping.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, because I mean you will get sick and die without the sleep. That's just all there is to it.

Greg Everett: It's true. I've seen *The Machinist*.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. I mean tough situation. Play with this stuff. Please do keep us posted on what you're doing. But for right now it's -- being overly idealistic about this thing isn't going to solve the problem for sure.

Greg Everett: Yeah. Well, sorry, we couldn't get a complete god-like insight on that one, but it's a good start.

Robb Wolf: We'll just make something up next time and then see what happens.

Greg Everett: You really are omnipotent.

Robb Wolf: Yes. That seems to be the way that works. Just make it up when you're in a corner, and you're afraid of saying, "I don't know."

Greg Everett: Yeah. All right. Well, this next one should probably be a little easier for you. We're just -- I'm going to give it to you full throttle today, Robb. We're not going to hold back. I expect big things.

Robb Wolf: Do it, man. Do it.

Greg Everett: Okay. I like -- it's interesting too. I feel a little bit goofy reading some of these because they've come in email form so they're missing a lot of words some of the times. So just please understand that this isn't me speaking. It's me reading. For example, "have read your book and been following the diet pretty well for the last 6 weeks. I have had relatively good success thus far. I am pretty sure I have a gluten intolerance as I seem to have skin or allergy issues every time it sneaks back into my diet.

It also seems like I may have some issues with nuts and soy, possibly dairy. My problem is I go 3-4 weeks clean Paleo, but if I break, there are always multiple items leak back in so it's hard to narrow down what is problematic. Also, it's hard to decide if there really is a relationship between skin issues and food intolerance.

What is your opinion on food sensitivity testing? I have been considering doing the blood test by ALCAT worldwide. This would give me a way to highlight multiple possible food allergies at once and I guess give some credibility to my thoughts on my food sensitivities. Is there any value to this type of blood test, or should I just refocus and try an elimination diet for another 6 weeks? Thanks for your time and all the great information."

Robb Wolf: The ALCAT stuff is cool but not all of the response, like in dermatitis and eczema, it's not an allergy response. It's actually like autoimmune/psoriasis is actually a low-grade form of skin cancer. It's abnormal cell growth but just happening at a very, very low level. None of that stuff is going to pop up on an allergy test, in the ALCAT test, but all of it responds to grain, legume, dairy free eating. I would stick it more heavily towards the gluten and dairy side of things and with legumes specifically.

Phytohemagglutinin can also be problematic in this, which we find that in a number of different beans. And so this is that deal where it's like if the problem is really a big enough issue for you, then you just stick to the program. If it's not that big a deal, then you deal with the skin issues, and that's really all it boils down to.

At the talk that we had this weekend, there were some really cool dudes that came, some functional medicine docs, and they're really cool, really

knowledgeable. I'm hoping to do some work with them in the future. But it's interesting because they are in a medical practice. They lead with lab work. Since I work in a gym, I lead with trying to get people results, and they pay me for essentially coaching and part of that coaching involves some nutrition.

And so what I actually try to get people to do, is do what's going to work and work now. And so you can fart around with this thing all you want. Spend a bunch of money on food testing. And if that's what you need to do to convince yourself that it's going to fly, then that's great. But the problem with the food testing frequently is that it's not comprehensive enough to actually tell you the full picture. So you go spend a couple of thousand dollars on tests, and it doesn't give you the full picture, and then you're still kind of wringing your hands wondering whether or not this is really the problem versus just simply really keeping it out of your diet.

I don't know. I mean it makes me -- I know I sound kind of a dick with it, but it's just -- if it's a big enough deal for you, you'll fix it. And if you won't, then you don't. And that's --

Greg Everett: We're all used to you sounding like a dick. Don't worry about it.

Robb Wolf: Perfect. So that's the way I would tackle it. And maybe someday I'll start selling a bunch of diagnostic medical stuff off of the website, and you'll suddenly hear me change my tune. I'm like, "Oh, yeah, man, we need to do some very extensive testing," and you know, honestly, some of the Cyrex Labs testing stuff actually looks pretty legit and might actually provide some insight in this because it's looking at a number of the different isoforms of transglutaminase antibodies like forms 3 and 5 which specifically affect dermatological issues.

So maybe we will get enough insight into that where we could recommend without a lot of reservation. Yeah, dude go check out the Cyrex Labs stuff, and then when you're got your validation, then go do the elimination diet, and then figure out whether or not it's worthwhile for you. But it still to me is kind of a rope-a-dope. It's like you know that this is a thing -- the deal with the Cyrex Labs stuff I guess that's cool is that we may find out if some other things like coffee and some other kind of stuff that you wouldn't think would be problematic, this stuff may be ferreting out that they are in fact a problem. And that's where I would be like, "Okay. There's maybe some weight to that."

Greg Everett: I agree. That's all I -- that's the entirety of my thoughts on that subject.

Robb Wolf: It's very comprehensive though. It's very comprehensive.

Greg Everett: Robb, please share my opinion on this. All right.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Greg Everett: So this next one is a pretty epic topic, and it comes up a lot. So this could be a quick answer or it could be four hours. So let's steer more towards the quick side of things.

Robb Wolf: We'll go quick.

Greg Everett: Yeah.

Robb Wolf: Yeah.

Greg Everett: "Hello, Robb!" That's with an exclamation point. "I was wondering if you could recommend some information or resources for Paleo and CrossFit combined with pregnancy." I just thought of a couple answers but I'm not going to share them. "My current CrossFit gym has never had a pregnant member, and I have seen so many mixed opinions all over the web on both subjects. Do you have any suggestions or changes I should be making to both diet and exercise? Also, pre-natal vitamins – yes or no? (I'm guessing no because so many contain soy, eww.) So many more questions, but this should tide me over! Thanks!" JC.

I like JC. She's got a lot of enthusiasm.

Robb Wolf: She's got some charisma. She had her double espresso in the morning.

Greg Everett: Yes.

Robb Wolf: The Paleo shtick with pregnancy is great. We've done a number of blog posts on this with regards to the nutrient density, how good it is for the mom, how good it is for the little ones. Everyday Paleo has done a bunch of stuff on this, Everydaypaleo.com, Growinguppaleo.com. Between the two women, you've got four kids that have been essentially raise, born, bred Paleo. And then with the CrossFit deal, it's just -- don't be an idiot with it, approach things in a reasonable, progressive manner.

Now, the challenge with that is you never really know what the quality of the coaching is. You don't know what the culture is within the particular gyms. Within our gym, very early on we stopped doing .com

programming, and this is back in like 2005. We started doing our own programming because we didn't like what was going on then, and the programming then was way better than it is now.

So if you're going to -- like you start -- when you're pregnant, you start releasing a hormone called relaxin which starts allowing ligaments to lengthen because it allows the birth canal to open up and all that. And so you need to be careful with that stuff. But it's basically, you keep doing the same stuff you've been doing and just be kind of careful and progressive in what you're doing, and as you get heavier and as your, essentially, belly gets bigger there's going to become certain things that become uncomfortable, and when they become uncomfortable then I recommend this wacky thing, which is that you stop doing them.

And we've had a number of people work out in the morning of the day that they gave birth, but they weren't doing -- they came in and did some rowing and did a couple of body rows and kind of stretched and wiggled and moved around and all that stuff is good for you. It's good for the baby too. It reduces stress and it just kind of keeps the blood moving, and you feel good, and you're -- you're actually in shape. It's kind of funny when I see obstetricians recommend that people don't work out during their pregnancy. I mean nobody would think about or typically don't think about running a marathon without doing any training for it. But yet getting pregnant and having a baby, like there's no expectation you should be in shape for that, and it seems damn silly. So I think that CrossFit and Paleo could be great for a pregnant mom. Do the Paleo smart. Do the CrossFit smarter.

As to a prenatal, I don't really see -- I would do it maybe a couple of times a week. I see a lot of people not feel good on a prenatal, so I would just kind of go with how you feel. And if you supplemented anything, I would supplement some DHA heavy fish oil to make sure you've got enough omega-3's for the little one's brain development. And make sure your vitamin D levels are 60 to 80 nanograms per deciliter. Good vitamin D really helps modify your immune response and can prevent some other problems during pregnancy. So that's it.

Greg Everett: Easy.

Robb Wolf: Easy.

Greg Everett: It's the intuitive approach. Don't be stupid.

Robb Wolf: Easy as getting knocked up in Chico.

Greg Everett: Well, that's -- I think that's the most shocking part of this question is that no one in her CrossFit gym has gotten knocked up.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, because all the gyms that I've seen and our gym, you have to try not to get pregnant. I don't know what's going on with that.

Greg Everett: Dude, CrossFit gyms are like baby farms in my experience.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, yeah. So that is odd. I don't know if it's like, 99 dudes and one chick, and the one chick is menopausal age or something, but yeah, that's odd. That's odd.

Greg Everett: Yeah. Well.... All right.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, we could digress all kinds of directions with that.

Greg Everett: I'll save the remainder of my thoughts on that one.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. We'll do a highlight reel show at some point. We'll throw some of that stuff in there.

Greg Everett: Dude, every show is a highlight reel.

Robb Wolf: Yeah, that's true. That's true.

Greg Everett: So our next nameless individual asks or says, "I follow..." I'm sorry I'm going to start this over again.

Robb Wolf: I just have to mention to people that Greg was an English instructor at Chico State University even while he was doing his English undergrad. So he's outstanding just in English diction in general, has written a number of books, was an editor and publisher of books. And so what's hanging him up, is that they're supposed to be in -ing after the word "follow" to make it "following," but in fact, there's not.

Greg Everett: It's just....

Robb Wolf: And it's giving him aneurism right now.

Greg Everett: Well, I just -- I just -- it sounds so awesome to say "I'm follow a pretty strict Paleo diet." And I kind of wanted to go back, and do it the way the person intended because it's a little more artistic.

Robb Wolf: It's performance art just like Kelly Starrett would say it. It's definitely a performance art here. But this is what's going on. Greg would frequently correct both Nicki and I who -- I think we usually do pretty well on our English grammar, and he would bust our ass pretty frequently. So this is just funny.

Greg Everett: Well, all of you who read the Performance Menu in it's early days, I just wish that we could go back for the fun of it and republish those issues with the original Robb Wolf articles because it would just be fantastic. It was amazing.

Robb Wolf: They're in my email. So we could pull a few of them out and just do a compare and contrast. What Robb submitted, what Greg edited would be pretty funny.

Greg Everett: But it's just this like fascinating product of German as a first language translated into English, and then just with a dash of Robb Wolf character in there. It's just phenomenal.

Robb Wolf: It's broken. It's broken.

Greg Everett: And as gnarly as it was to edit those things down, I got to say it was enjoyable on some level.

Robb Wolf: Well, you just knew that you were working with an idiot, so yeah.

Greg Everett: All right. Let's talk about oatmeal.

Robb Wolf: Okay.

Greg Everett: He is following a pretty strict Paleo diet other than eating organic oatmeal with berries and nuts 3-4 times a week for breakfast. "When I started Paleo, I was on a gluten-free diet for a couple months. I then added oat back to my diet and didn't notice any negative effects, so I've kept eating it. Mainly because I really like oatmeal, it's easy and fast to do in the morning, easy to store and cheap as dirt even when organic and uncontaminated by other grains.

Recent European studies suggest that even most people diagnosed with celiac disease can eat pure uncontaminated oat without any trouble. In a Finnish study that lasted five years twelve celiacs ate oat for five years while a control group was on a strict gluten-free diet. The biopsies showed no differences in the densities of CD3, IEL and IEL T cells between two groups. What is your take on oat?"

Robb Wolf:

Well, it's this thing again where if you don't feel like it's causing you a problem, then God loved you. Run with it. I do think that we could check like interleukin 15 which is one of the really important pieces when we're looking at the gut permeability, gut pathology story when gliadin or avenin out of oats typically isn't hydrolyzed or broken down at that enterocyte interphase in the gut. When it makes it into the back side of the enterocyte where it could interact with immune cells, this is where we unusually get an immune response and a release of interleukin 15, and we get to break down in the enterocytes, release of zonulin, tight junctions dissolve, and all that sort of stuff. I'm suspecting that we would probably see that because we see it with corn in some individuals. We see it with rice in some individuals.

I'm still in that, I guess, kind of lunatic-fringe side where I think in general this stuff is still causing some problems in general, relative to doing things like yams sweet potatoes, all that sort of jive. But again, we may have some genetic variations where people are able to much better tolerate this. We may have a situation in which we have certain populations that legitimately don't express any type of inflammatory response to various types of grains. And if that's the case, then by all means, eat them as per your heart's content.

But the thing that's interesting with this though is that we get a lot of studies that look one or two biological, say, like inflammatory pathways, and there are just so many different areas in which these elements -- gliadin is just one -- or avenin are just one of these potentially immunologically active proteins, and there's tons of other constituents in these grains that can be and are biologically active. And so it still begs to question, like, is this really the best thing to be doing?

So my nervousness about some stuff like this is that we've just had so darn much success with the autoimmune scene, that this starts pacifying people into saying, "Oh, we can do some oats, we can do this. We can do that," and that they won't try a full elimination diet first, and then see if it will really help them.

For years, people have been told to do oats when they have celiac, and they still end up developing other collateral problems -- thyroid dysregulation and some other problems. And these studies that are being cited, like the Finnish study, both these studies are observational essentially food log type studies; so we still don't know for sure what's going on.

So theoretically, these groups are eating a gluten-free diet. Theoretically, these groups are only eating oats. We don't really know for sure what the heck they're doing at all because it's not very well-controlled. So I don't know. At the end of the day, if you like your oats, and it's a convenient deal for you, by all means go for it. If you ever want to cycle it out, and just see if you have any type of improvement, obviously I would probably put a stamp of endorsement on that.

Greg Everett: Well, and also keep in mind that Fruity Pebbles are gluten-free and they're also --

Robb Wolf: Are they really?

Greg Everett: Well, and they're clearly from the Stone Age, so it seems to be the perfect Paleo breakfast food.

Robb Wolf: Oh, Cocoa Pebbles should fly in there too.

Greg Everett: Yeah. You got your bases covered for breakfast, you know. I don't know why you get crazy with oatmeal.

Robb Wolf: Yeah. And Fruity Pebbles are good too. I miss that stuff.

Greg Everett: All right. That's enough of this.

Robb Wolf: Cool, G. Is that it for round one? We've got episode 70 on the books.

Greg Everett: Yup.

Robb Wolf: Cool, man. Well, thank you for the help, and we did try some different recording stuff. So for the folks that have been bugged by the sound quality, it will either be better, worse, or the same. Stay tuned.

Greg Everett: Yes. We'll get it fully jiggaified one of these days.

Robb Wolf: Cool. Right on, G. Talk to you soon.

Greg Everett: All right. See you.

Robb Wolf: All right.