

Autism, A Mums Approach - Cara Comini

A Mums Perspective

Autism affects 1 in 68 children in the United States and 1 in 100 children in Australia. Unfortunately, the numbers are growing not decreasing.

With up to 1.5 million people affected in the United States and 230,000 affected in Australia the need for information, that families can use about how to manage the life-long condition is extreme.

Today's guest is Cara Comini, a mum who lives in Montana USA with her three children. They enjoy the sunshine, swimming, fun day trips, with food packed to bring along, and hanging out with family.

Can Autism be supported by a change in diet?

Cara has a background in the medical field when she worked as a nurse's aide and studied to achieve a degree as an associate of science so she could better decipher what are statistically significant studies and what is nutritional propaganda in order to support her son who was born with Autism.

Cara believes that natural sustainably produced and traditionally prepared food is designed by God to be best for earth and people alike.

Cara's passion is to encourage the average family that eating real wholesome foods is something that is a priority in our lives and can realistically be done in any family.

As a result, Cara has researched and published a number of books that contain healthy recipes to support health and well-being, and are easy to use and follow.

You can check out Cara's website at <https://www.healthhomeandhappiness.com> where you will find tips, recipes, and, a whole lot more information on how she made the small changes to support her son and the rest of the family to be healthier and manage Autism.

Learn how others are using food to help manage and recover from other medical conditions by listening to episode 15.

Transcription:

Intro 0:03

Recovery After Stroke podcast, helps you go from where you are to where you'd rather be.

Bill 0:12

Hello everybody and welcome to another episode of the Recovery After Stroke podcast. I'm really excited today I've got a very special guest. And today my guest is Cara Comini, Cara lives in Montana, USA. With three young children. They enjoy the sunshine, swimming, fun day trips with food packs to bring along, and hanging out with family.

Bill 0:36

Cara has a background in the medical field, where she worked as a nurse's aide and studied to achieve a degree as an associate of science so that she could better decipher what are statistically significant studies and what is nutritional propaganda.

Bill 0:54

Cara believes that natural sustainably produced and traditionally produced Food is designed by God to be best for Earth and people alike. Cara's passion is to encourage the average family that eating real wholesome foods is something that is a priority in our lives and can realistically be done in any family. Welcome, Cara.

Cara Comini 1:21

Thank you so much. I'm happy to be here.

Bill 1:24

Well, you live way over the other side of the world in Montana, in the USA, how's the weather out there today?

Cara Comini 1:31

It's gorgeous. It's like 75 and sunny and I want to be outside.

Bill 1:35

I spend my time, you know, trawling the internet for articles on health. And I came across one of your articles, which really prompted me to contact you. And that was the one that you did about depression. And I know that you specifically don't have a massive background in depression. But the way that you write that article really spoke to me, and basically, the article was about depression.

Cara Comini 2:00

The article is actually going nuts on social media like everybody's sharing it because it speaks to what they're not getting at one in 10 people who are diagnosed with depression. And they go to the doctor and they go on med Aftermath after med and they get lots of side effects from all their meds and the meds don't always work.

Cara Comini 2:18

And then there's even I think it's like 95% or something that doesn't even get treatment for depression. Like it's a really serious symptom right now, among a lot of people and a lot of people aren't getting treatment just because the treatments are so hard.

Cara Comini 2:32

So when we attack it from the gut, Hippocrates said that all diseases are rooted in the gut, and that includes mental diseases. And that's kind of my specialty in talking about how mental diseases are rooted in the gut. So depression is no exemption from that, when our gut is working, right, we're able to get the nutrients from our food and we're able to process our food and our flora.

Cara Comini 2:56

Our microbiome in our gut is healthy then Our brain is working well. And we don't have the symptoms of depression, which sounds overly simple, but it really is simple. I like

Bill 3:07

What you said about depression as a symptom. That's different from what other people say. People call depression, a disease and illness. They call they they label somebody as depressed. But you actually use the word that it's a symptom. How is depression a symptom rather than a disease?

Cara Comini 3:26

Well, personally, I believe that it's a symptom of some imbalance in the body. So if

the body is healthy and running as it should be, then we should be like we all get blue sometimes, and sometimes things are bad, but we should be able to pull out of it after a few days. So if we're unable to pull out of it, or if we're just sad, over and over again and lethargic and we don't have a zeal for life, then that's really a symptom that something in our body is out of whack.

Bill 3:52

I like the way you think about that. And I've heard a number of people talking about it as a symptom. It gives often the person Who's going through a depressed state at one point in time, the opportunity to work towards a solution rather than it being fixed? It's just a symptom. And therefore, it's caused by something which we could look into and potentially resolve. And often, like you say, not with medication.

Cara Comini 4:17

That's Yeah, I'm someone who has severe depression. I do think there is a place for medication that SSRIs can kind of be a stopgap. And so I don't ever tell people to go off if their doctors prescribe them. But if they're just feeling a little bit blue and feeling like maybe they want to look into something that I do, encourage them to look into the diet, specifically, the gaps diet is what we've used.

Cara Comini 4:41

We used it for autism, originally. And then I've just because I talk about it so often, because it's such a big part of our life, that a lot of people are using it for depression or even eczema, like bipolar disorder. They're using it for all sorts of things. It's really when you clean up the gut and you get the guy functioning right? So you're able to judge your food and get the nutrients you need.

Cara Comini 5:07

All sorts of things clear up. For people that have chronic health problems and multiple health problems, it's not just a bunch of pills, they have to take like a big, big pill box every day. It's just you do one diet, you clean up the gut and suddenly all your symptoms, which is what really all health problems are as symptoms resolve.

Bill 5:23

Right, fantastic. Now, your main focus is on working with people with autism. How did you become involved in working in autism?

Cara Comini 5:37

I, my daughter 12 months, knew she had autism. And I tried putting her in conventional therapies and it just wasn't working. She wasn't sleeping like the doctor was offering two years old to prescribe her sleeping pills. And that just wasn't going to work for me.

Cara Comini 5:52

So I was done. Yeah, that's right. See your eyes all wide? Well, yes, I was desperate to do something to help her And the doctors didn't have any answers. So I just started Googling. Like, I'm so thankful that the internet was here when I needed it. And I googled, and I found people that were curing autism with diet. And so once I did that, I learned about how they got connected to everything. I put our whole family on this gut-healing diet.

Cara Comini 6:19

And we've, like, we've helped anxiety, we've helped eczema, we've helped digestive problems, we've helped all sorts of stuff. And then we did have autism. She doesn't have an autism diagnosis anymore. So that's really encouraging that you can like, people say, oh, autism or depression, it's, uh, your brains wired differently. But it's like saying that if you do drugs, that's not because your brain is wired differently like you're not acting differently and acting crazy.

Cara Comini 6:43

Because your brain is wired differently. You're acting differently and you're acting crazy because you're on drugs. Yeah. And it's just like that when your guts are messed up, then the food is acting like drugs in your system. So we just stop that and suddenly you're better.

Bill 6:57

Wow, that's amazing. So how so your daughter Was 12 months old when you realized there was something not going right? And she was diagnosed with autism. And how much longer did it take before she no longer had the diagnosis of autism?

Cara Comini 7:13

She was diagnosed at four and she lost her diagnosis at five and a half. We started the gaps diet psychology syndrome diet at age three. And then it took a good solid two years to see that much progress.

Bill 7:26

Wow. Okay, so within two years of her short life, she went from having a diagnosis of autism to losing her diagnosis as you put it of autism. So the doctors wouldn't tell you that she was autistic anymore.

Cara Comini 7:40

Yeah, no, she still has learning disabilities. And so we still do get tested every year for two years. And But no, she's not at all on the autistic spectrum. And she wasn't like Asperger's or high-functioning autism. She was like, opening and closing doors all the time and not sleeping and screaming all the time. Like we couldn't go to the store.

Cara Comini 7:59

Like that's it. Something that I get into a lot with when I talk about autism is people think that it's just like, oh, social anxiety or some social work. But for her, it really wasn't it really impacted her entire life and her ability to learn.

Bill 8:11

Yeah. And then that would have impacted yourself and the family and everyone around you. Right?

Cara Comini 8:17

Right. It was Yeah, it was incredibly socially isolating. She just couldn't handle anything except for a very strict routine. So we're really thankful for dietary intervention.

Bill 8:28

Right? Okay. So how did you start Googling, but how did you specifically decide that I'm going to make a decision to look at the food that we eat and change something because there's a good chance that you might be helping you know, your family by changing some food? What was it that made you think, to go down that path specifically?

Cara Comini 8:47

It was honestly To be honest, it was desperation. She wasn't sleeping. She would be from one in the morning till four in the morning and I had another infant to take care of and I couldn't do it anymore. So I decided I just give it 30 days like I can control which too, we couldn't leave the house much anyway because she screamed all the time anyway, so I just control what she ate for 30 days. And

really after three days, we saw a huge difference. And it was worth continuing. So we continued on that for years.

Bill 9:15

Now, what kind of food Did you take out on the family's diet? What did you replace it with?

Cara Comini 9:24

First, I took out gluten and casein, which is wheat, protein, and milk protein. Those are the big things that they asked a lot of the times like opiates like opium and these children's brains and they give them that fog so they can't learn and they can't like to relate to people and understand that like, no, mommy's really upset that you're awake at one in the morning.

Cara Comini 9:44

So I took out those first and then we ended up taking out all grains and all complex carbohydrates to allow the gut to heal. This is part of the Gut and Psychology by Dr. Natasha Campbell McBride. It's protocol.

Bill 9:58

That's the wall protocol, right?

Cara Comini 10:00

It's similar, but it's not quite the same. No, I'm not familiar with the ins and outs of the wall. I just know the gaps in the diet. So it's meat, vegetables, and coconut products, so no grains at all. No sugars, no starches. No, definitely no additives or anything.

Cara Comini 10:18

So we like scrambled eggs and hamburgers and like fresh pesto from fresh basil and vegetables and like lots of squash. You can have butter, you can have cultured dairy. So there's like, when you look at it, there's actually quite a bit of stuff you can have. But it seems restrictive at first.

Bill 10:37

Yeah. So you talk about that change seems your changes and it seems pretty dramatic to go from, you know, somebody who is a majority of your life, adult life as well would have been consuming cereals and bread and grains and all that kind of stuff to somebody that went down the path of not doing that wasn't typical.

Because some people would imagine that that is seriously difficult.

Cara Comini 11:04

It was difficult, but there are a lot more resources. Now when we started, there was very little as I started. I have a whole website going that helps families to do this. There's like free mailman email series, and there are meal plans. And there are ebooks that I put out now, and there are lots of other people who have them too.

Cara Comini 11:19

When we started, it was overwhelming. There was Conrad calm, and lots of resources and recipes. And so I just like every day, I just think of what we could eat for that meal. So we ate a lot of scrambled eggs and a lot of hamburgers and a lot of meatballs and a lot of squash. But it worked. It's not like we were starving.

Cara Comini 11:39

And we definitely like we're fortunate that we have access to whatever food you want, you can go to the grocery store and buy it. There are some that I'd order like coconut oil I had to order online at that time, but now it's at Costco. So there are a lot of things.

Cara Comini 11:52

There are lots of great it takes some diligence you can't let your kids have any Cheerios or anything like Goldfish, a playgroup, or anything like that, but a lot of these families that have kids with autism, or if you have severe depression, you're so socially isolated anyway, that it's, it's not that big of a deal.

Cara Comini 12:11

When you see the improvement that you make on it. You see, within three to five days, most people see a huge improvement. And so it's, it's pretty easy to stay on once you see that.

Bill 12:22

And the rest of the family also as a, as by default, went down the same path of the diet. So the other children as well. How did they improve? What did they notice? What did you notice about them?

Cara Comini 12:34

Well, we don't know when my son my second Orn was 11 months old, and I was

breastfeeding him. So I just did it for all of us. She was three he was 11 months and I was 26 and he had had eczema every time I ate dairy when he was nursing.

Cara Comini 12:51

And so we did gap diet and then six weeks later, I could eat dairy he could eat dairy and he's now he's six and he can eat dairy and he's never had eczema ever since. Wow, it actually, uh kills food allergies, you'd like the sounds like the miracle diet, but it really is like once you clear up the gut like there are so many things that go away, but I was allergic to dairy as well.

Cara Comini 13:11

And I get chronic sinus infections and I haven't had a sinus infection. And for years since we started the gaps diet, it just and I eat like I eat ice cream Today, I'd like our diet isn't even perfect anymore. Just to be honest, that's how powerful it is we try to go back on it and be strict for a couple of weeks every year just to kind of clean up the gut and do a cleanse.

Cara Comini 13:35

But other than that, it's not like you have to commit to the rest of your life. You just need to commit to 60 days and see how that does. And even in six weeks, you might see enough improvement that you can go back to eating carefully but eating Okay, like eating

Bill 13:49

Right, so it's kind of a reset sounds like it's a bit of a reset on the body.

Cara Comini 13:53

Exactly. That's what I tell people. It's like pushing the reset button. It's not anything crazy. Are our immune systems and our gods so overloaded with too many generations of antibiotics and too many generations of toxins that if you can get that cleaned up,

Cara Comini 14:10

Then you can start handling stuff again like the body should be able to handle some toxins every once in a while, we should be able to like, if our body's functioning well go and eat a hotdog at Costco or go and eat, you know, at a friend's house that doesn't eat ideally, and it should send us into a tailspin. But our gut flora is so damaged now that a lot of times it does.

Bill 14:29

Yeah. How long is health home happiness.com been going

Cara Comini 14:36

I started it actually before we started the gaps diet. I started it right around when she was a year old. And just I just followed nourishing traditions and like the western price foundations, style of eating. And at that time this was I mean, now there's a ton of blogs but there were only like about, I think three or four listeners kitchen and cheese slave are the only ones that I saw that were cooking these recipes and taking pictures So like, I'd make beet kvass.

Cara Comini 15:02

And I wanted to show pictures because energy and traditions, they didn't have pictures. So that's why I started. And so I kind of Chronicle like a journal, what we ate and people were really fascinated. So now I switch to more articles and like informational stuff. But if you look way back in the back of my blog, you see a lot of journal-type entries. This is what we ate today.

Bill 15:22

Right, Okay. What supposedly seems like the boring stuff, but really the actually really key and more important stuff. Because if I've spoken to a couple of people now in the last few months about journaling, and how they're now able to go back and look at their food, one, in particular, was another person who I interviewed Dr. Jonathan Carter from the US, who told me that he has a journal I think goes back 15 or 20 years,

Bill 15:49

So that anytime he has a significant illness or a change or something goes wrong in his body, you can look back and say, Okay, well, in this particular part of my life, I made a change in my diet, I wonder if that's got anything to do with it. And then you can, you know, look into that and see whether or not he, you know, has had an adverse reaction to something that he ate whenever.

Cara Comini 16:12

Yeah, that's we don't do that detailed. I did do that when we were starting the gaps diet, and I kept a big wall calendar and like everything we introduced and I made sure that I was turning all that but now it's like it's kind of intuitive. I know what she can eat and I know what she can't. And I know what's going to cause

problems.

Cara Comini 16:31

And so if there is a problem, I know what to take back out. I'm not I'm a busy mom, I've got three kids now. So I'm not turning everything we eat for sure. But I just try to be mindful. Like if you chart what you eat pretty extensively for a month or two, then you start to pick up patterns and it just becomes more intuitive than it does. Some people like to chart but I'm guessing that that doctor doesn't have three kids.

Bill 16:55

No, you're right. It doesn't. I'm curious to know how many people are visiting your site and where they're coming from. They're coming from all over the world, or is it mainly from the US?

Cara Comini 17:06

Oh, it's mostly from the US. It's probably 80% from the US and then 20% from the rest of the world. But I have some loyal fans in the UK and Australia, lots of different places. And my meal plans go all over because they're digital.

Bill 17:21

Right, Okay. So tell me a little bit about that process. How would somebody come across your meal plans? How long? How long do they get them for? What's the goal with that?

Cara Comini 17:29

In their monthly meal plans their breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They come out every month. And you can just sign up. It's \$10 a month right now, this is going up soon. But if you email me, I'll give you a discount and I'll give it to you for \$10 a month.

Cara Comini 17:45

I really want everybody to be able to be attainable, but I still have to it's a lot of work to put those together. But I put recipes together for three meals a day because that's really what you need. If you're trying to follow a specific diet. It's really hard if people are like, Oh, well you just need to figure out Breakfast and lunch. And here's your dinner recipe. So I give you three recipes a day and you can ignore two if you don't want to do that.

Bill 18:10

I'll be very curious to know what some of the feedback is that you get from people from all over the world. You know, what kind of response Have you been getting over the last few years, from people?

Cara Comini 18:18

I have an amazing response like I have the most kind, appreciative, loyal readers that they're like, they're curing autism, they're carrying asthma, they're curing, like all these crazy health conditions, like they have kids that were failure to thrive because of digestive conditions.

Cara Comini 18:35

And then they're gaining weight, just by switching what they eat like the meal plans. I put them together based on the specific eating protocol. I didn't invent the eating protocol. So I don't want to take credit for that. But it's food like you can make pancakes out of coconut flour and eggs and coconut milk. So it's like it's food that people will eat. And it's doable.

Cara Comini 18:56

And that's, that's my goal. It's really exciting to hear that people eat Normally at least once a week thank you for this you have no idea how much you've helped all these health conditions in my family is gone.

Bill 19:07

Yeah.

Cara Comini 19:09

Attainable.

Bill 19:10

A diet with pancakes in it would have to be a great diet regardless.

Cara Comini 19:15

Yeah, Of course.

Bill 19:17

I couldn't imagine being on any kind of diet or regime that doesn't include pancakes at some point.

Bill 19:29

That's awesome. So tell me a little bit about your background and the field that you worked in, you're a nurse's aide.

Cara Comini 19:38

I was just a nurse's aide, honestly like I worked in a group home with severely disabled children and I got them ready for school in the morning, put them on the bus, took them off help the PT to get them on the different things like it's I worked closely in the medical profession because we had a nurse on site.

Cara Comini 19:55

But I really, don't have professional qualifications which I think helps me relate better to two families that are doing this without a lot of medical guidance because there are a lot of doctors that don't know what's going on.

Cara Comini 20:06

And there are a lot of families that can't afford to go to a naturopath for \$200 an hour. So I, like really I just present myself as a mom, like, this is what I've researched and my family you need to research on your own. And this works really well for me, though, and it works really well for us. And it works really well for a lot of families.

Bill 20:23

And did you? Did you come across something in your time as a nurse's aide that you sort of felt was not right about the way that people were being cared for? Was it something else that made you then study and get your degree?

Cara Comini 20:41

I have an associate's degree, which is a two-year degree from a junior college. I took statistics during that. And in microbiology and statistics, I learned that a lot of the stuff that they were telling me we needed to do as nurse's aides were wrong, there wasn't evidence-based.

Cara Comini 20:58

And so the way we treated diabetics was not necessarily the best thing like we give them all the carbohydrates they want and then give them as much insulin as they needed to bring it back down. And really evidence doesn't say that that's the best way to care for diabetics.

Cara Comini 21:17

And then in microbiology, like they talk about antibiotics and cultures and stuff. And like if you go to the doctor with a sinus infection, they never take your culture. They just prescribe you antibiotics. And they're like, Oh, well, this one will probably work.

Cara Comini 21:30

But then that feeds in with the antibiotic-resistant bacteria. So what they teach or what they were teaching me in school, at least, and what they were doing in the medical profession seemed to be two different things. So it kind of sent me off to question everything.

Cara Comini 21:46

Since I have ended up making different choices for my family than the mainstream medical world

Bill 21:50

Right, okay, so it made you curious about what else is out there. Yeah.

Cara Comini 21:55

Right. And so I just look Yeah, I just look at statistics and it's like, oh, well, if this is commentary, Why is this? Is there a study that backs that up? And there are a lot of times there isn't. It's just like, this is how we treat that. Because it works most of the time. Why does it work? Maybe doing nothing would work? And a lot of times it does.

Bill 22:13

Yeah, what I like about what you're saying is that there's potentially a possibility for people who don't fit into the normal way of things being treated to also have a solution as well, because we're not all the same, right? So not everyone can get the same results, even from the gaps diet or from any other diet. And there needs to be differences and alternatives in all the things that are offered, right?

Cara Comini 22:33

Yeah, that's true. And this way, I try to tell people like do it for like 30 days or six weeks. Don't feel like you need to do it for two years if you're not seeing improvement. So if gaps diet because obviously, it worked really well for our family, but if it doesn't work for you in 30 days, then maybe you do need to try walls protocol or autoimmune paleo or some other kind of antihistamine or low salicylates.

Cara Comini 22:57

I can't remember what that is, but there's like, there are all sorts of different little tweaks that can help different people or different makeups.

Bill 23:05

If you were able to sort of give the listeners one little bit of advice as far as where people might start to try and go from where they currently are with some health issues to where they'd rather be, what would you say? What would you tell them to do?

Cara Comini 23:23

I would say to just make one change a week. And so committed to making one small change. So if you think you need to get rid of gluten, maybe first you should get rid of just the processed gluten, so get rid of all the crackers and the bread and stuff in your house.

Cara Comini 23:36

So if you can commit to one small change a week, then that's so much more doable. Some people want to go all in and do Gab's diet next week. That's great. But if you can just start doing something instead of reading and reading and reading and trying to figure out the perfect diet for you before you even start, just start doing something and something will start sticking.

Bill 23:55

Yeah. Fantastic current where can people go and find you? Is there any way I can go and find you and find a blog?

Cara Comini 24:03

I'm everywhere. And I'm at healthhomeandhappiness.com. You can Google or a community and I come up. It's kind of funny to me. I'm not. I didn't think I would be famous, but I'm famous on the internet. You can Google me and you'll find me on different guest posts on different podcasts, just like yours, and different blogs, and then a lot on my website to share as much as I can.

Bill 24:33

Well, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate the opportunity to chat with you and thanks for your blog site. It really did open my eyes as far as you know, to what people can do and how people can get results. And I really appreciate it. I think it's fantastic what you're doing and you're making. You're

making sort of nutrition achievable. As you like you sort of set out to to everybody, not just The people that can afford a couple hundred bucks an hour from a naturopath.

Cara Comini 25:04

Exactly. Yes, that's our goal. Like when we started, we were on public assistance. So thankfully now we're not but we started using milk from the government to get all this done. So yeah, it's I think it's really achievable for most people and I hope to encourage, encourage others. So thank you so much for having me here.

Bill 25:22

Yeah, my pleasure. Thank you, Kara. All the very best and I'll be sure to keep an eye on your posts from now on.

Cara Comini 25:31

All right, thank you.

Intro 25:36

This has been a production of <https://recoveryafterstroke.com/> check out our page on Facebook and start a conversation by leaving a comment at <https://www.instagram.com/recoveryafterstroke>. Subscribe to the show on iTunes and check us out on Twitter.

Intro 25:54

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