



Where Nutrition links to Sobriety, Balancing Brain Chemistry

Transcript of an interview with **Dale Pinnock**, who is a nutritionist and an author of many books, TV presenter, founder of the culinary medicine college which offers diplomas in culinary medicine.

My recommendations for the best quality supplements especially the Magnesium Blend (game changer!) Vitamin C powder, Vitamin D, K2, Amino Acids, and Immune Support multi vits is from Clive.

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INTERVIEW (AUDIO TRANSCRIPT)

Janey:

Dale, you're just the perfect person to help us with this topic of where nutrition meets sobriety.

Dale:

On a multitude of levels, there's so many layers to this, one of the first things, the first negative effect that it can have is that it can cause a low grade inflammation of many areas of the digestive tract and the stomach is usually the hardest hit, but certainly lower down, particularly the small intestine can take a bit of a beating. These are key absorption sites for nutrients especially when we get into the small intestine, we've got these finger like projections,

the Villini that have got very specialised structures on a surface that are actually geared up to identify specific nutrients and pull them into general circulation.

If there's any inflammation going on, whether it's a GI infection, or food poisoning, or indeed through an environmental pollutant, such as alcohol, then that inflammatory change can actually make that absorption site much less effective.

So the first thing that can happen is our absorption of key nutrients such as minerals, for example, can be quite dramatically affected.

Second thing, obviously, we've got the increased burden on liver function, particularly the phase two detoxification pathways. So those pathways are very, very important for breaking down excess hormones, environmental pollutants, and so many aspects of just maintaining our general health. If that pathway is being burdened by trying to break down alcohol, then it's not able to do its day to day job as effectively.

The big one, as you alluded to is that it can actually leach certain nutrients from the body as well, particularly the water soluble nutrients. So the B vitamins and vitamin C, these are the first to go because one of the first things that alcohol does when you get past a certain level of intake is it switches off a hormone called vasopressin, otherwise known as antidiuretic hormone. Once that hormone is switched off, your urinary output goes up drastically. You know, that's that whole kind of mystery where one pint turns into five when it hits the bladder, you know that hormone has been suppressed so there's no control and regulation over urinary output. And because of that, the water soluble nutrients like vitamin B and C are purged quite drastically.

In the short term, this can just make you feel a little bit lethargic as B vitamins are vital for energy production, but in the long term, it puts you at severe risk of deficiency. I mean, you can end up with pernicious anaemia and some very, severe fatigue issues. There's lots of potential side effects of that.

Janey:

It's interesting because we would never normally link any of those things to alcohol use, would we, if you rock up to a GP and you say, you know what, I really I think I'm anaemic... they would never ask if we are drinking!

Dale:

So with a pernicious anaemia, that's a lack of B12. But then obviously, if you've got this kind of chronic low grade inflammation it could potentially affect iron absorption. So you can end up with classic anaemia as well.

Janey:

So what happens when we first stop drinking when people say, I'm going to stop now? What happens then? Because it takes a while for everything to recalibrate, doesn't it?

Dale:

One of the first things that happens, particularly if someone is actually going through withdrawal phase, we're not talking about medical detox, here, we're talking about a mid level, obviously not inpatient treatment, we're talking that mid level where there is that kind of withdrawal process. And a lot of people that go through that find their appetite almost switches off. There's like a low grade nausea, no interest in food, even the palate feels a little bit strange as all of these changes are starting to take place.

So one of the first things I found is people's appetite really goes down. That is a time when you really need to support yourself nutritionally. **So you have to put a little bit of focus on key supplements or preparing types of foods that aren't going to make you feel overly full, or heavier stuff, but it's still going to give you a good nutritional density.**

The beauty is most of the organs that are affected in drinking bounce back very, very quickly. So the liver, for example, is a very forgiving organ, providing you give it the opportunity to actually sort itself out, it can regenerate itself, even with two thirds of it damaged. You can actually remove two thirds of someone's liver and it will grow back. Wow, it's incredible. So give it the opportunity and it can regenerate itself very quickly, as can the digestive tract,

you just need to have specific nutritional protocols in place to really support that.

Janey:

So what would be the basic nutritional stuff we should recommend that people add in?

Dale:

My number one tip is an amino acid called L Glutamine, you can find this in any health food store, very easy to get hold of. It's a really common supplement among bodybuilders and athletes because it helps to stop muscle breakdown during exercise. It also has two very important effects in terms of repairing the damage from prolonged drinking. The first is that it's used as a fuel source by the end parasites. These are the cells that make up the lining of the gut. So as I alluded to before, this can take a real pasting when you're drinking a lot. L Glutamine can stimulate the repair and the rejuvenation of the gut, the inner lining of the digestive tract and it can do so very rapidly.

Also, L Glutamine can drastically ramp up your production of Glutathione which is a key enzyme in phase two detoxification in the liver. So it can really help you to clear any kind of residual by-products of alcohol metabolism much faster

Janey:

And how long would it take those to 'work'?

Dale:

About three months **after the first month of taking the Glutamine, I'd probably start introducing some probiotics because the gut microbiome,** which is the bacterial colony that lives within the digestive tract that orchestrates so many different aspects of our physiology, that can take a real pasting, **so a good broad spectrum probiotic - when I say broad spectrum, I mean more than just one type of bacteria in it. Don't just take Acidophilus, there's at least 3000 different strains of bacteria that live in our gut so the more diverse a supplement you can find the better.**

So after your first month of taking Glutamine that will help stimulate some of the repair mechanisms in the gut and create a more favourable environment for the probiotics, it's an interim month to actually adhere to the gut wall and start to flourish in that environment.

Also, I would start on your B vitamins straight away because you will have purged those really quite drastically, something like a B100 which is a very high strength B complex. Never take individual B vitamins in isolation because they all rely on each other. If you take high doses of one you can actually create artificial deficiency signs. Brands like Solgar and Viridian do a complex. This will help to get your B vitamin levels up very, very quickly because they are such a high dose.

Then also additional vitamin C. I would probably advise people to move to a low glycemic diet as well, for the simple reason that when we consume the types of foods that have got fast release sugars, things like white bread, white rice, white pasta, of course, sugary snacks, and sweets, and that kind of stuff, these might give you a little bit of a feel good factor for a few hours, they might take the edge off, if you're feeling really grotty, and you know what, if it's the first day or so of stopping and you're feeling really bad, then no rules apply, just do whatever makes you feel good to get you through those first few hours. But once you've got past that stage, try to keep away from those foods, because your blood sugar goes up very quickly when you eat those types of foods and you feel great for a few hours, but then the body's response is to release the hormone insulin which will bind to an insulin receptor and open up glucose transporters on the cell surface, and basically tell cells that there is an abundance of glucose present. If there is a 'crash', several things start to happen. Firstly, you want to reach for the most convenient food item that will make a little kind of recalibrate, to make you feel better, that tends to be another sugary snack, or if you happen to be craving alcohol or whatever it is that you're trying to give up, then this will be like throwing petrol on a bonfire for that craving. It will drive it hard when you actually hit that crash point. But also it has an effect on your brain chemistry.

When your blood sugar dips that low, the whole Dopamine craving will start to kick in. Because there is a Dopamine response associated with high sugar foods, you get that reward response very quickly, and that is the same

pathway that drives habitual alcohol use... so it will just exacerbate that whole pathway that you're really trying to attain.

A low glycemic diet is basically building your diet around good quality proteins, healthy fats and non-starchy vegetables. We're not talking keto because keto, if you don't do it absolutely perfectly, can be one of the worst diets you could ever consume - when you do it right, it's wonderful, but it's so hard to get it absolutely spot on...and if you don't, it can be dangerous.

So ideally you need just a good low carbohydrate diet with loads and loads of greens, loads of good quality proteins, loads of healthy fats, and make those the foundation of your diet. You're not going to get the blood sugar peaks and troughs, you're going to stabilise Dopamine and all these kinds of things. You're going to elevate Serotonin as well, because of the protein content, and the omega three fatty acids will really help to stabilise mood. So you're more able to focus on cleaning up your act and moving into a healthier lifestyle. Without all this chaotic brain chemistry, you're really going to make yourself feel much more stable.

Janey:

Whether you eat meat or whether you're vegetarian, or vegan, the same rules apply that you still need good quality proteins, right? What we're really talking about is real food... because obviously, we haven't even got to the big sugar question yet...but we'll get onto that in a minute. Of course, that's what happens to a lot of people and you've described it brilliantly, that kind of desperate need for yet another reward food, because we think our reward has been taken away from us. But just before I get onto that, I want to pick up on what you were saying about vitamins and minerals that we need. You mentioned Omega 3's...**do most of us need to supplement with Omega 3's?**

Dale:

Yes 100%. Even if you were to have oily fish every single day, we're not looking at normal day to day situations here. We're trying to improve our brain chemistry, and get out of that craving cycle. We're trying to reduce inflammation, and improve our cardiovascular health. We're trying to repair

some of the damage, so we are in a very different situation to just maintaining everyday health.

Twelve to twenty four months down the line, eating oily fish three or four times a week will probably be enough for most people just to maintain good cardiovascular health, but when it comes to actually the types of goals that we've got here, **in terms of really trying to repair damage to the nervous system, and to reduce some of this inflammatory load that's present, then a good intake of the long chain omega three fatty acids which are EPA and DHA is absolutely vital.**

Supplementation really is the only way to get anywhere near that kind of dosage unless you suddenly adopt the diet of a Dolphin. I mean, if you want to eat Sushi for breakfast, lunch and dinner, then you might be getting close to it. This is a real key thing (before we go on to the reasons)...one of the things that I'm always on my soapbox about.

Second is, **if you are vegan, you have one option and one option only and that is a supplement to get your Omega 3 fatty acids.** People will talk about Flax seeds, Chia seeds and walnuts etc. and they're a great source of Omega 3, but in a form that we can't really effectively use. Omega 3 isn't one single substance, it's an entire family of fatty acids. There's four of them... the two that human beings actually utilise in a multitude of different physiological scenarios are the EPA and the DHA, and the form that exists in plants that you find in Flax seeds and Chia seeds and all the rest of it. ALA has to go through significant enzymatic conversion, about six or seven different stages to turn into EPA and about nine different stages to turn into DHA. Human beings are very poor at doing that conversion, the only time that changes is in pregnant women that ramp up their conversion to about 25%... usually you're looking at about a 4% conversion of ALA into EPA, and about a 0.6% conversion into DHA. So you could be eating nuts and seeds all day long and you wouldn't be anywhere near covering the basics, let alone therapeutic doses.

Now thankfully the technology exists where people are able to extract EPA from algae, so for Vegans that don't want to have any kind of animal intake that is the only option. Flax and Chia are wonderful ingredients and healthy for

you for many different reasons...but it's got nothing to do with fatty acids, so there we go...that's the soapbox!

Janey:

So if you were going to take something from algae, what form would that be?

Dale:

You would just look for an algae derived Omega 3. DHA from algae has been on the market for about 20 years, **but you want to make sure that there's EPA as well as DHA, and that's been on the market for just two or three years.** Biocare and Viridian do one...there's a few on the market you can get now.

Janey:

So when we talk about brain chemistry then, we know we're in agreement that there's some recalibration to be done, and that Serotonin and Dopamine, GABA are really important drivers. So you've mentioned the L Glutamine which leads to Glutathione effectively, and the probiotics, Vitamin C, Omega 3's we know about, and the B vits, ...and it's a slightly different thing but what about Magnesium?

Dale:

Magnesium is a vital one, particularly in the early days because of something that you just mentioned there, GABA...it's primary inhibitory neurotransmitter. GABA is like the antidote to anxiety and the busy mind. GABA is the thing that can really calm the mind down and help you feel focused again. All of that excitable chatter going backwards and forwards, it reigns it in and makes you feel much more centred, calm, and relaxed. It basically reduces the sympathetic response in the nervous system.

Rapid heart rate, shallow breathing, all that stuff is brought right down when you elevate GABA, and Magnesium helps you elevate GABA...as does a low carbohydrate diet. **If you bring these two things together like a very low GI diet and a good intake of Magnesium, you can really really increase your GABA.** I found when I was drinking, anxiety or stress could be a huge trigger for a bender. If things were going really badly it would be my way of switching off, and I mentally removed myself from the situation... this will save your life in

that scenario, keeping GABA high when you start to feel even the slightest inclination of things getting a bit too much... **take some Magnesium, anywhere between 400 and 1000 milligrams and it will really bring you back around.**

Janey:

But isn't there the thinking that Magnesium has to be balanced with Calcium? Is that not right? Not in this scenario?

Dale:

All of those things, there's grains of truth in them, but it depends on the scenario...if we were talking about cardiovascular health I'd say that's important, but we're talking about very specific neurological effects that we want to get in a short period of time. So that kind of goes out the window, so just get the Magnesium and in a good enough dose that you're going to elevate the GABA and get yourself in a calmer place.

Janey:

Yeah. Are you a fan of Magnesium bath salts or oil, or spray?

Dale:

They're great for muscular problems. They're great for cramping and things like that, I would use oral preparation for this. Magnesium salts in the bath at night helps to get a good night's sleep, fantastic, but in order to have that kind of neurological effect, you want to be taking it orally, anywhere between 400 milligrams up to 1000...all that in one dose can give you the 's**ts...that's a technical term by the way... but in staggered doses you can get away with taking a fairly high amount.

(Janey Just a reminder, the recommendation is for Clives magnesium, most other stuff just doesn't cut it

Use this link for the Magnesium blend and share with clients)

<https://clivedecarle.ositracker.com/315625/11489>

Janey:

Anything else we've forgotten on the vitamins and minerals piece - **Vitamin D** - everyone should be taking it right unless they get in masses of sunshine?

Dale:

Even if you get masses of sunshine I would still take it, I mean it's vital to so many things. I'm not sure how specific it would be to transitioning off any kind of substance, but it does certainly play a role in mood elevation. One of the big links with seasonal affective disorder for example is a dip in vitamin D because as most people know, the primary source of vitamin D for humans in the conversion of cholesterol, is vitamin D precursors upon exposure to ultraviolet radiation, so you've only got a very narrow spectrum of time where you can get even small amounts. There's not that many good food sources either, so supplementation is absolutely vital and it will have an impact on mood. It's nowhere near as specific and targeted as some of the other things that we've mentioned but it's going to make you feel pretty good and it's going to support your immunity... which will have suffered as a consequence, so supporting that is going to be of benefit.

Janey:

Let's talk about sugar then, you mentioned that quite rightly we really need real food and all the rest of it, but the reality is that many people when they ditch the booze, they do get the munchies, and it's not even just for a few days it can go on... I've had clients who will say to me, "I'm a year into this, still eating family bags of chocs."

Dale:

Yes, seeking the Dopamine, exactly. Stabilising blood sugar is one of the easiest ways to reduce cravings so always make sure that every time you eat you've got a good source of protein and some healthy fats, and if you get a snack try and make it a protein based snack like nuts or some cold cuts of meat or a little bit of cheese or whatever...just to stabilise blood sugar. If you try, you avoid the peaks of the troughs, then you can take the edge off of it, but unfortunately it is that kind of Dopamine seeking behaviour... Now there's something that I have to admit...**I'm new to this and I'm still doing the research myself but I find it fascinating, and that is a Dopamine diet. And**

that's not a diet in relation to food, it's cutting out as many sources of Dopamine stimulators as you possibly can. Ok, so say for example, you know,keeping your mobile phone out of the way.

Janey:

Another one of my guests was talking about addiction and referred to the mobile phone as 'the gateway drug', yes, oh my god, and it's so true you know, I'm absolutely guilty Your Honour, I do find myself you know, doom scrolling it...

Janey:

Yes we seek Dopamine unconsciously by picking up our phone

Dale:

The whole thing of 'Dopamine detox' is there are many of these different kinds of stimuli, phones, TV... any kind of quick rewards that you often use, try and really minimise your exposure to them. So you'll get in less of a Dopamine seeking state. But then also you know what, there is an amino acid called **L Carnitine** which can actually elevate our Dopamine so we can get the Dopamine fix, just with a nutrient. And that reduces our need to externally seek a Dopamine fueling behaviour. There's been some wonderful work done with L Carnitine supplementation and recovery.

Janey:

And I suppose when it comes to the sugar, it does come back to this thing of actually we shouldn't need to ask ourselves, are we actually just seeking sweetness in our life? we just want that reward!

And what's your view on recommending alternative sugars? There are many now obviously, I'm not talking about artificial sweeteners, I think most of us know they're an absolute no in any circumstance, but what's your view on the various others on offer, Inulin for example?

Dale:

Inulin is a completely different scenario, a long chain polysaccharide that doesn't actually raise blood sugar. Yeah, and it's a food source for the gut flora and is one of the key prebiotics, but with most of these other sugars my analogy that I use is, Opium is natural heroin but that doesn't make it a good idea! You know a sugar is a sugar by another name, it's the same difference and you know that I feel about the alternative sugars in the same way I feel for someone like me knowing my own brain and my own kind of struggles and scenarios... things like alcohol free booze would just be a no no

For me because it would just be reinforcing the behaviour...as it is with certain people, the artificial sweeteners and the alternative sugars are just reinforcing that behaviour and you're just swapping one situation for another. You're not actually dealing with that kind of brain chemistry and that kind of pattern that is seeking you to do that kind of thing.

But for other people it can be a perfect gateway into better habits. I think it's a very individual thing. So personally I'm not a fan of alternative sugars and most of them have just as much of a glycemic impact as good old table sugar.

Janey:

That's interesting. So if you're working with someone who you know is on the family pack of chocolates or whatever, it may not happen overnight right? So what would be your recommendation...would it be to reduce it down and introduce more protein and more real food, as you say the healthy fats...any other tips for that person?

Dale:

I guess really we will start moving into more coaching territory, I would be asking them to really determine their 'Why' in all this, it's like okay, well, why did you choose to quit? It was probably to get healthier, right? It was to avoid a certain negative health consequence. So why are you now swapping out for something that is still leading you towards negative consequences.... but start working on that pain point....not to be antagonistic or to be an ass, it's just to twist the knife a little bit... because that is where their strength lies. That is where their power really is. That thing that gives that strong emotional

response that has made them want to quit and made them want to actually seek a healthier life.

Guaranteed there was going to be an element of pain in there, that pain is the thing that can move mountains when they're really struggling, if they could remember what that felt like, if they could remember the thoughts that were going through their mind at that time when they were like "right that's it enough you know".

Just think about the work of Tony Robbins, the thing he's always said in *Awaken the Power Within*... it's like a giant within, when there's enough pain, you can change things in an instant. But the thing is, we forget that feeling after a while. Yeah, and in that instant. When you make that decision, the pain is really, really strong, but in six weeks' time, a lot of us can forget what that felt like, and it's trying to remember that feeling in that moment because that is going to be the thing that drives you through when you're actually struggling.

I mean of course you're going to be trying to cut down on these things and increasing your protein, and doing the supplements, you're going to be doing all of this, but that emotional stimulus, there's very few things that can beat that in terms of the capacity to create change.

Janey:

Anything else you'd like to add for us in terms of nutrition and recovery?

Dale:

Nutritional density has always got to be your number one priority because you've got a lot of damage to repair to be honest. I mean, all of us are different on this journey; all of us have had struggles and had to wrestle with this beast. All have different wounds, different stories. I mean, it's the same thing that we wrestle with, but our story is different, and it's going to be a very unique thing. The one thing that you can pretty much guarantee is you've got a lot of damage to repair physiologically as well as psychologically, but certainly physiologically, so nutritional density needs to be a real focal point, every time you eat is an opportunity to repair some of that damage.

Always have that in the front of your mind. Don't put ridiculous pressure on yourself. Don't try and live up to some kind of unrealistic idealism because none of us do that. You know, newsflash, even us in the wellness industry aren't perfect, and don't get it right, because, you know, perfect doesn't exist, but just do the best that you can in any given scenario. That's all anyone could ever ask of anyone. And that's what you should really expect for yourself, just to be able to do the best that you can in whatever scenario you're in. Just try and make sure that every meal is an opportunity to put the best quality food that you can into your body, and also be gentle with yourself...because yeah, especially if like me, it was a crutch to get you through certain things. You're going to have to stare some really dark stuff in the face when you take away your crutch and your coping mechanism.

Janey:

It's true, and also food is comfort, isn't it? You know, we've seen it for so long.

Dale:

Don't let it be. there is actually much comfort. But do be gentle with yourself. This is the thing, if you're really struggling, and the thing that's gonna stop you struggling is a little bit of comfort food, then just pick up from where you left off the next day. You have to be gentle with yourself at times through this process. Some days, it's a walk in the park, some days it's an absolute nightmare. Always put self care at the front of your mind.

Janey:

Which of your books would you recommend because you've got so many amazing recipes and they are very relatable?

Dale:

My favourite, **the one that I'm most proud of is called the Power of Three**, that's where I was able to condense my entire philosophy of the most broadly applicable ideal eating pattern, into one book...showing the best way to balance blood sugar, fatty acids and nutrient density.

Janey:

Perfect. Brilliant. Thank you, Dale. I really appreciate that. So helpful. Pleasure as always, it's so useful. Tell us about your diploma course.

Dale:

Yes. So I launched it in 2018 and it's a deployment of culinary medicine. One of the things that I realised is if you want to go off and do a full university degree for a clinical nutritionist, there's loads of courses to choose from, if you want to do a real basic introduction to nutrition, this is a carbohydrate, this is a protein kind of thing, loads of courses actually help you out there. But when it came to something that could be completely part time, done online, regardless of your background, and teaches you the subjects in a very, very detailed manner, and also in an applied manner, there wasn't anything that actually took the science of nutrition, and converted that into what happens in the kitchen at breakfast, lunch and dinner, and that actually showed you how to take the science, take the theory and apply it into meal planning and prep, and devising therapeutic diets. So I devised the Diploma in Culinary Medicine and it's gone on to become the most widely accredited non practitioner nutrition course in the world. It's got pioneer training status by several professional bodies, because it's actually been pioneering new territory. We've got 1019 active students on the course at the minute, about 300 graduates, and students on every single continent apart from Antarctica, but I'm working on that one. The whole concept of the course is that each module is done on body systems, like gut, cardiovascular, immune system, etc. We go through the anatomy and physiology and we teach you how all of those systems work, then teach you what goes wrong during the disease process. So how that normal function starts to change during the disease process, we then look at how nutrition can be either a potential causative factor, or where that's not relevant and how nutrition can be used as a therapeutic modality to influence physiology, in a way to return it back to normal functioning again.

Once you've got all of those concepts nailed, you understand all of this....now let's translate that into designing a menu, let's translate that into breakfast, lunch and dinner, or if someone had cardiovascular disease, because you understand the pathophysiology and disease process, and you understand the influence of nutrition on the past pathophysiological process, you put that into a meal plan for that person. So that's the way in which it's taught, each module

has an online exam, a case study, and a menu development assignment as well.

We have a very, very high expectation when it comes to research referencing so with all the assignments there has to be 70% primary resources for research. Students have to go out and find journal articles and do independent research. We teach you how to do all this. So if you've not got a background in that, don't fret, Ben, who is the main student liaison, he's at University at the minute doing a nutritional therapy degree and he is a master of this kind of independent research, he will sit down and just guide you through the process. It really is easy.

The reason there's that strict attitude towards that is that our graduates are exceptional. When you come out the other side of this course, because you've had real evidence based processes drummed into you from day one, it means that you're very competent when it comes to actually working with this important subject matter, and when you're working with clients.

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