

Parents Are Hard To Raise® S03 Episode 101 Transcript

[00:00:00] The world's becoming a dangerous place for us women. Lipstick bodyguard looks just like an innocent little lipstick but it will instantly drop any attacker to his knees so you can get away unharmed. Lipstick bodyguard fear no evil. Get yours today. Only at lipstickbodyguard.com.

Announcer: [00:00:37] This week on Parents Are Hard To Raise®, health and wellness expert Dr. Felice Gersh is back with more great advice to keep our aging parents and us living our lives to the fullest. Join 180 million monthly subscribers who can now listen to Parents Are Hard To Raise® on Spotify.

Diane Berardi: [00:01:08] Welcome to Parents Are Hard To Raise®. Helping families grow older together without losing their minds. I'm elder care expert Diane Berardi.

[00:01:17] Longtime listeners will recognize my next guest. Mostly because she's among my favorite guest medical experts. Dr. Felice Gersh is a true pioneer in her field, a rare combination of an award winning physician, double board certified both OB/GYN and integrative medicine, and a tireless champion of women's health. She holds degrees from Princeton University, the University of Southern California School of Medicine and the University of Arizona School of Medicine. Dr. Gersh serves as medical director of the Integrative Medical Group of Irvine California. She also writes and speaks internationally on Integrative Medicine and women's health. You can hear her weekly broadcast, A Healthy Perspective on KRLA Radio, AM 870, in Los Angeles. Felice... Welcome back to Parents Are Hard To Raise®.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:02:08] Well hi Diane. I'm so happy to be back and I hope everybody is well.

Diane Berardi: [00:02:13] Yes everyone's doing well, thank you. And this is an exciting time for you. Your new book just came out. So could you tell us the title of your book and tell us about your book.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:02:26] Well I am very excited. It is my first book and it's a labor of love. It's a topic I'm very passionate about. It's the most common endocrine disorder of women called polycystic ovary syndrome. And the name of my book is PCOS. That's what polycystic ovary syndrome is referred to as PCOS S.O.S, A gynecologist lifeline to naturally restore your rhythms, hormones and happiness.

[00:02:55] So it's really about dealing with every kind of medical issue. It really wrapped up into one body. That's really what polycystic ovary syndrome is. It's it's a body wide condition which has been under diagnosed, under treated, under acknowledged and it's just time for it to come out from the shadows and be talked about and properly treated.

Diane Berardi: [00:03:27] That's wonderful. So... How many women around the world does this affect?

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:03:36] Well I'm so glad you mentioned around the world, because it is actually a worldwide problem. And because nobody keeps exactly data, it's anywhere from a low of 10 percent to, in the US, as high as 25 percent. I think it might be even higher in the 30 to 40 percent range.

[00:03:57] And it's one of those conditions that really is just not talked about enough because it's not a pretty condition in a way. You know it's not glamorous. Not that any disease is glamorous. It's a condition where 80 percent of the women who suffer from polycystic ovary syndrome are

overweight or obese. They often have hair loss. So we call that alopecia. And they have cystic acne and facial hair and other body hair that women don't want. And that's called Hirsutism. So that is you know obviously cosmetically a problem. But it goes so far deeper than just cosmetic, which of course is big in itself. It involves every organ system, really. It's often recognized as a problem in menstrual cycles and as they often are very irregular or even absent. And of course that is accompanied by fertility problems. And also high complications in pregnancy, of everything the preterm, delivery and gestational diabetes and hypertension and pre-eclampsia. So all the different complications of pregnancy and higher rates, as I said, of miscarriage.

[00:05:09] So from the reproductive standpoint, it's really devastating for women. But it goes so far beyond that. And this is what is often not recognized either, is that it's a condition involving the whole metabolic system of a woman.

Diane Berardi: [00:05:22] Right.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:05:22] And she's often suffering from insulin resistance, and has a much higher rate of developing diabetes and hypertension and high lipid, cholesterol and triglycerides. So it's just a total metabolic issue.

[00:05:37] Then on top of that, they have higher rates of arthritis and irritable bowel syndrome like Hashimoto's thyroiditis and lupus and Crohn's disease. And higher rates of several kinds of cancers. And a lot more problems with emotions, depression, anxiety, weight problems.

Diane Berardi: [00:05:59] Oh my gosh.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:05:59] Yes. So you can see how this is an overwhelming problem. And in the conventional medical world, Doctors are divided into organ systems which is really a problem.

[00:06:09] When you have a medical condition that spans many organ systems, you have a patient who goes from doctor to doctor, and depending what she sort of feels is her worst symptom, that's who the doctor she ends up with.

[00:06:21] And so you can end up on many different medications, typically metformin and spironolactone and birth control pills, and that. Which is a real big problem, because women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome have higher rates of developing blood clots and all these other manifestations which are also increased by the birth control pills.

[00:06:43] And the reason I really wanted to talk about this is because you can look at it of so many different syndromes. So virtually every one of your listeners knows somebody whether they know it or not they know some woman who either has PCOS and has since been diagnosed or hasn't been diagnosed, 'cause many women walk around undiagnosed, or they have relatives or friends that of their own friends. Because it's such a common problem. It's the most common problem.

[00:07:14] And any of your listeners may have daughters who have this problem and they themselves have had this problem maybe wasn't even diagnosed that they think back when we were having the reproductive years if you're already in menopause... Did you have irregular cycles? Did you have these problems with facial hair and fertility and so forth?

[00:07:35] So there's many women that were not diagnosed. And the problem is it's increasing in incidence. And the reason is because we live in a world filled with a lot of chemicals and the chemicals interfere with the way our normal hormones work.

[00:07:51] So this is a lesson for every generation and every gender. Because it really is sort of like the poster child for how exposures to endocrine disruptors these chemicals that are really ubiquitous in our environment now are impacting our hormonal system which are basically the control systems for all the metabolic functions of the body. And that's really the underlying reason for the increase, and really almost explosion of polycystic ovary syndrome worldwide, is the exposures to plastics like bisphenol A - BPA, in plastic bottles and receipts and dental sealants. And also phthalates, which are desensitizers. They make the plastic very soft and they also are scents. So they are in a lot of fragrances that are in hair conditioners and shampoos and such lotions. The things that they say fragrances are actually phthalates. And that's also in vinyl and other plastics. And people are exposed to these at every stage of life.

Diane Berardi: [00:08:59] Right.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:08:59] And when children are exposed in utero, when they're just being developed, a critical time when they're developing hormone receptors that can interfere with the way the baby normally develops the receptors for hormones. And then later even the production of hormones.

[00:09:17] So, endocrine disruptors which is what they're called they disrupt every single potential aspect of hormones from the production, to the distribution, to the breakdown, to the degradation and the elimination. So really every step of the way. And so everyone should be thinking about the impact of these endocrine disruptors that are everywhere.

[00:09:41] Every single person, if we test their blood or their urine they will have these plastics and these endocrine disruptors in them, because they also include things like herbicides and pesticides and stain resistant and stick resistant, and all these are things that are just everywhere, insulation and so forth, that get into dust.

[00:10:04] So we're living in a world of these chemicals and they're of course impacting on everyone but particularly it's focused on certain genetically predisposed women during their reproductive years. But it doesn't end then. Because women who have polycystic ovary syndrome, remember, they end up with higher rates of diabetes and high blood pressure and cholesterol problems, all the cardiovascular risks. So when they hit menopause, those are not going to go away. So they continue to do so. Women can have much higher rates of having heart attacks and strokes and such when they get older, when they've had PCOS during their reproductive years. So it's a huge problem that just hasn't gotten any better.

[00:10:49] If you do a random inquiry of people on the street, many of them will never have heard of PCOS.

Diane Berardi: [00:10:55] Right.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:10:56] So it's not on a lot of people's radar. And yet it's most common endocrine disorder of woman. But it's really representative. Like I said of this problem of endocrine disruptors that are so pervasive in our environment that we really need to take stock of this and then look at what we can do to alter what we're doing.

[00:11:19] We can start buying a lot of plastic water bottles.

Diane Berardi: [00:11:22] Right.

[00:11:24] Only buy, I recommend for example, don't use chemicals scents. For example, that take

fragrance you're much better off getting organic products. I you know can be a little more expensive, but actually it's becoming more common because there's a growing demand for these things. So you can get organic shampoos made with aloe vera or natural flower scent. Right. So like remember in the olden days they didn't have chemicals to create smells.

[00:11:54] Right.

[00:11:55] They had to use flowers and leaves the things of nature, which are so much safer. It's not that everything in nature is safe. But when you compare it to these plastic things that are now changing they're changing the way the human body is evolving and functioning and it's going to impact every single family. There's no question about it.

Diane Berardi: [00:12:17] We're going to continue talking with Dr. Felice Gersh. But if you're a woman or there's a woman in your life there's something you absolutely need to know.

[00:12:27] I want to tell you about my friend Katie. Katie is a nurse and she was attacked on her way home from work. She was totally taken by surprise. And although Katie is only 5 feet tall and 106 pounds she was easily able to drop her 6 foot 4, 250-pound attacker to his knees and get away unharmed.

Katie wasn't just lucky that day. She was prepared.

In her pocketbook, a harmless looking lipstick, which really contained a powerful man stopping aerosol propellant.

It's not like it was in our grandmother's day. Today just going to and from work or to the mall can have tragic consequences. The FBI says a violent crime is committed every 15 seconds in the United States. And a forcible rape happens every five minutes. And chances are when something happens, no one will be around to help.

It looks just like a lipstick. So no one will suspect a thing. Which is important since experts say, getting the jump on your attacker is all about the element of surprise.

Inside this innocent looking lipstick is the same powerful stuff used by police and the military to disarm even the most powerful, armed aggressor. In fact, National Park rangers used the very same formula that's inside this little lipstick to stop two-thousand pound vicious grizzly bears dead in their tracks. It's like carrying a personal bodyguard with you in your purse or your pocket.

Darkness brings danger. Murderers and rapists use darkness to their advantage. We all know what it's like to be walking at night and hear footsteps coming at us from behind. Who's there? If it's somebody bad, will you be protected? Your life may depend on it.

My friend Katie's close call needs to be a wake up call for all of us. Myself included. Pick up a Lipstick Bodyguard and keep it with you always.

Announcer: [00:14:26] You're listening to Parents Are Hard To Raise®. Now... Thanks to you, the number one eldercare talk show on planet Earth. Listen to this and other episodes on demand using the iHeart radio app. iPhone users can listen on Apple podcasts and Android users on Google podcasts.

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Alexa play Parents Are Hard To Raise® podcast.

Alexa: [00:14:55] Getting the latest episode of Parents Are Hard To Raise®. Here it is from my iHeart radio.

Announcer: [00:15:01] It's as simple as that.

Diane Berardi: [00:15:03] You're right Dolly. There are so many really cool new ways to listen to our show. It's hard to keep track. You can join the 180 million listeners on Spotify. You can listen in your car, at the gym or pretty much anywhere on your smartphone with Apple podcasts and Google podcasts. You can get us on Apple TV, Direct TV, Roku and like Dolly said, you can even ask Alexa to play the show for you. It's great because you don't have to be tied to a radio anymore. You can listen when you want, where you want, for as long as you want. And if you're listening to the show on one of these new ways please do me a big favor.

[00:15:40] Share this new technology. Help someone else learn about the show. And show them a new way to listen.

[00:15:48] So Dr. Gersh. PCOS... How can a person live with that? It sounds like it's another chronic condition that you have to try to manage throughout life. So what do people who were diagnosed do?

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:16:02] Well the thing is, there's so many interesting things that we can do to help women with PCOS. So it really isn't as doom and gloom as the first sounded in the first half, because we really do ways to help. .

[00:16:15] It turns out that when you had endocrine disruptors it's the estrogen, it involves more than one hormone, estrogen primarily is very key to metabolic health, in males and female. Of course, males have plenty of estrogen. They make it onsite in different organs, that's called paracrine., whereas women also do that but they make , when they are in their reproductive years, much more of their estrogen of course from their ovary.

[00:16:42] Well, women with PCOC do not make estrogen properly or receive it in the receptors properly. And what that does is it changes our circadian rhythm. The master clock in the brain has estrogen receptors and is very heavily controlled by estrogen. It's like you're kind of drifting. So basically women with PCOS are living a life of jetlag which is the same as women in menopause.

[00:17:11] So when I talk about the treatments that we can do in terms of lifestyle they're going to apply equally well to women in menopause because they have a problem with circadian rhythm. They are sort of living a jetlag life because they don't make estrogen from their ovaries. And women with PCOS with a jet lag life because their estrogen is in functioning properly as well as they're not making enough. So there's this amazing parallel between women with PCOS and women in menopause. The difference is also very apparent of course in that you've got you're dealing with reproductive issues and women with PCOS have higher levels of male hormone, testosterone, because testosterone is the precursor to estrogen. And the body's trying to make more estrogen, but instead it just makes more testosterone. It doesn't convert it properly. And that whole issue with the ovaries and testosterone doesn't exist in menopause.

[00:18:06] But if you take that part out the metabolic dysfunctions are very similar. Think about what happens to women in menopause. They tend to get more high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, sleep problems, mood problems and so on. So this was an amazing similarity.

[00:18:21] So here is the secret it's helping both women in menopause and women with PCOS.

[00:18:28] It turns out that even though the master clock is drifting it's not right on the beat. We had these, I call it the backdoor ways to get people back in rhythm. It's called Time restrictive feeding or eating.

[00:18:43] So it turns out that every cell in our body has its own clock as well as the master clock. But the clocks for example in the G.I. tract and in the liver, they don't know if it's light or dark. But what they can tell is when you're eating. So if you eat most of your calories, I know most people don't want to do this, but I'll give you optimal. Eat most of the calories for breakfast. And a small dinner. I mean you've heard this speech before. You know, this is not new but it's new science, because somebody figured you know a lot of people figure things out just intuitively and now we have the data to back it up.

[00:19:20] So if you eat a big breakfast... Don't snack. Someone came up with a terrible idea, you should eat like every two hours. and "graze." Actually the worst thing you can do. So, do not do that.

[00:19:33] So you want to get rhythm. You want to have the beat. So you want to feed at the same time seven days a week. And you want eat a good size breakfast of healthy, whole foods... Actually vegetables.

[00:19:47] Think of breakfast as dinner dinner foods. Forget breakfast foods. You know the conventional American breakfast foods you don't eat those. Just eat real food from the earth, we call farm to table. Skip the factory. There's no middle man needed.

[00:20:00] So you eat a good sized breakfast within two hours of awakening. Then have a medium lunch and a small dinner and try to stop eating by 7p.m. And no snacks. Then hydrate with teas, herbal teas and such. Anytime you want.

[00:20:16] And it's amazing. They did a study in Israel with women with PCOS. And in just one month where they eat two thirds of their calories for breakfast, one third for lunch, which leaves nothing-- they actually eat a tiny little early dinner. In one month their insulin levels went down by 50 percent. Which is amazing because when high insulin drives so many of the problems that we have that we face are metabolic situation in terms of diabetes and inflammation and gut problems and mood problems. So insulin is essential for life, but when it's perpetually high we can't burn fat.

[00:20:58] We can't create proper energy, because insulin is all about making and storing fat. So if you have perpetually high insulin levels you can't burn fat. You become a fat storage factory. All you can do is store fat, but can't use it.

[00:21:17] But you actually have an energy deficiency. While you were swimming in an energy surplus, you know. And that's what happens in women with PCOS. They have lots of body fat and of course it gets into their muscles and liver and they can even get you can even get fatty Heart. And this happens to women in menopause as well.

[00:21:37] It drives the fat viscerally. So you know that belly fat and that's the worst kind of fat that you can have. It's A highly inflammatory.

[00:21:47] So eating in the time restricted way.

[00:21:50] The other thing is trying to feed the gut microbiome. We always come back to the gut,

right? They've found that estrogen is also present in terms of receptor functions throughout the gut. And when you lose estrogen, like women in menopause or women with PCOS, they have a totally different abnormal microbiome. So they have the microbial population is altered in a very negative way, and they tend to get impaired intestinal barrier, it's called, leaky gut. And the toxins produced by the bacteria that are abnormal can actually pass into the body itself and stimulate the immune cells that are lining the gut to secrete their inflammatory products and create this chronic state of inflammation, which even drives insulin resistance even more. And these inflammatory particles, we call them inflammatory cytokines, can get into the brain and alter brain health and brain mood or cognition.

[00:22:53] So what do we can do? We can eat Foods that are phytoestrogens. Soy. I have to defend soy.

[00:22:59] Now processed soy is not good. But Organic, and it has to be organic, whole soy, whole means it hasn't really been turned into like fake meat. Know didn't want to eat Fo... They call it Fo-food. Don't use soy as fo-food. So you want to have like tofu or MISO so that type of thing. You do not Tempe. You do not want it or the whole beat you at money. But don't eat soy pretending to be something else. Soy ice cream or soy cheese. Soy It's just soy. And that is actually a good healthy food.

[00:23:33] And then also flaxseed. And then all the polyphenols. These are like magical ingredients that helps bacteria to thrive and survive. But where do you get them? From fruits and vegetables.

[00:23:46] So you wanna eat a lot of high fiber foods as well, because fiber is the food of the bacteria. They ferment it. So you want to eat lots of root vegetables and green leafy vegetables, like all the colors of the rainbow. So vegetables are your best friend.

[00:24:02] And then whole grains. But not processed so they have to still be whole. So don't eat it if it's turned into flour. It can only be whole. So it's like a cereal like a whole grain cereal like quinoa, or millet or even corn is fine. But it has to be whole and it has to be organic.

[00:24:19] And I hate to have to keep throwing it organic but the last thing you want are these chemical herbicides which is what is in the GMO in the non organic foods. You don't want to eat pesticides in herbicides. They're not good for your gut. They're not good for any part of you.

[00:24:35] So it used to be just a food but now we have to always say organic whole you know not processed foods.

Diane Berardi: [00:24:40] Right.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:24:41] But they just did a study that showed that people who eat lots of what they call ultra processed and that's what you know is most of the food that's processed, it's not like it's in the original form it's turned into something really different. So they call it ultra processed. They have shorter lifespans. They have many higher disease states. We don't want to eat that kind of food. And people who are women in menopause and women with PCOS, they have less reserves. So that's even more critical to not eat those kinds of foods.

Diane Berardi: [00:25:13] So what would be a good big breakfast? I'm trying to think... I'm thinking, of course you can't have bacon and eggs. [laughing]

[00:25:24] Actually I would, in the beginning I would leave... I'm glad you brought that up. You're always thinking of these great ideas.

[00:25:31] So I actually recommend avoiding animal foods altogether, as close to vegan as you can. Not forever, just for like about three months maybe six months.

[00:25:42] The reason is, when you have the abnormal gut microbiome it doesn't process animal properly and it actually can turn it into carcinogens and toxic intermediate. Don't eat animal until you get your gut healthier.

[00:25:56] So it's not intrinsically bad, at all. If you eat healthy pork you know from you know it's not processed. Or you eat free range eggs and so on, from a healthy chicken. Those are good foods. But not in the beginning. Because you can't properly process them go.

[00:26:14] So a healthy breakfast would be a bowl of... a good sized bowl ... I never count calories. Just eat healthy food. You know that's the most important thing. And your appetite will become properly controlled in no time at all. So you could start the day with a big bowl of quinoa with some organic soy or almond milk. You can throw in nuts and you can throw in some dried fruits, not a ton, but some, like dates or prunes and you can throw in some whole fruit. You know like fresh fruit.

[00:26:44] And you can have you can have like a tofu vegetable still stir fry. You know you can have a bed of Quinoa or millet it and then put sautéed vegetables on top. If you just feel like I want something more breakfast like, I'm over that, I don't even think of breakfast foods. .

[00:27:03] I think about it, if you go to a buffet on a Sunday, you know... They have everything. They have salad, right. All kinds vegetables and chafing dishes. So think about every breakfast is more like Sunday brunch.

Diane Berardi: [00:27:17] Okay. Yeah.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:27:18] Eat those Brunch foods.

[00:27:20] And so you know try to stick... and you know a lot of culture as they eat stewed tomatoes, sautéed mushrooms for breakfast. So there's is a lot of things. And I'm not against whole grains. You could also do a chili you know a vegetarian chili with different kinds of beans or you could have lentil soup, So, the sky's the limit. You can just have this really stretch your imagination and think of the dinner foods for breakfast and how you can just think in a restaurant they take any food and they throw an egg on it and they call it breakfast.

[00:27:50] Right. That's right. You're Right.

[00:27:52] Chuck breakfast, steak breakfast. Omelet. you know, it doesn't matter. So just take the egg out for this thing, not forever. And then eat the other thing you know and then just call it ... "food." You know just call it ... meal One, two, three. And forget the word.

[00:28:08] And you know what? You'll be feeling so much better. I have enabled people who can't lose weight. There are people that say I can't lose weight, I can't lose weight. And It's getting them this great big breakfast and then a very tiny dinner and no snacks, medium lunch, because their insulin levels fall so rapidly they can suddenly start to lose weight.

[00:28:34] If your insulin level stays high, you can't lose fat. You can't burn fat. So you're going to start losing weight eventually. If you know what you're going to lose muscle who wants to lose lean body mass?

Diane Berardi: [00:28:47] Right.

[00:28:48] So you can't even replace that. Then if you keep your fat. You've seen those people right. They have big fat bellies and skinny arms and legs.

Diane Berardi: [00:28:56] Yeah right.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:28:57] Right. Like that's the exact opposite of what you want. You know a lot of times you see people they lose weight but they lose all the wrong parts of them. You know and they still have a big belly.

Diane Berardi: [00:29:06] Yeah.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:29:06] And you're like, why is that so bad? I Like that if they put their insulin is so high. So women in menopause who inevitably, like they automatically become somewhat insulin resistant. And that is inherent in women with PCOS.

[00:29:23] So by seeing the analogy, you can actually read my book and follow pretty much everything in it. Even if you're a menopausal woman, because there's so much the same between polycystic ovary syndrome and the menopause. And both are really harmful from the metabolic state. I mean menopause is natural. It is what it is. But it's not good for us. Women don't suddenly become blossoming with good health because they hit menopause.

Diane Berardi: [00:29:53] You're right. That's right. How can people purchase your book?

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:29:57] Well it's very easy.

[00:30:00] You just go on Amazon, and it's right there.

Diane Berardi: [00:30:02] And it's called PCOS S.O.S. Perfect.

Dr. Felice Gersh: [00:30:06] That's it. How simple.

Diane Berardi: [00:30:06] How simple. Thank you so much Felice. This was a great show.

[00:30:14] Parents Are Hard To Raise® family I love getting your e-mails and questions so please keep sending them. You can reach me at Diane Parents Are Hard To Raise® dot org or just click the green button on our home page.

[00:30:24] Parents Are Hard To Raise® is a CounterThink Media production. The music used in this broadcast was managed by Cosmo Music, New York, New York.

[00:30:32] Our New York producer is Joshua Green. Our broadcast engineer is Well Gambino.

[00:30:36] And from our London studios, the melodic voice of our announcer Miss Dolly D.

[00:30:41] Thank you so much for listening.

[00:30:42] Till next time... May you forget everything you don't want to remember and remember everything you don't want to forget. [00:30:50] See you again next week.