



# THE SLIM GUT SUMMIT



## **Interconnected: Heal From Within**

Guest: Dr. Pedram Shojai

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**Dr. Nandi:** Hi, everybody. Welcome to The Slim Gut Summit. And I'm Dr. Partha Nandi. I'm super excited today that we have a lot of great speakers. But today I'm especially excited, why? Because I want to introduce you to Dr. Pedram Shojai. Dr. Shojai, thank you so much for joining us. I appreciate it.

**Dr. Shojai:** Hey, great to be here. Thank you.

**Dr. Nandi:** So many of you have already know Dr. Shoja, but for those of you guys who don't know, let me tell you a little bit about him. So he is a man with enormous amount of title. So Dr. Pedram Shojai is the founder of *well.org* and also the New York Times bestselling author of; *The Urban Monk*, *Rise and Shine* and *The Art of Stopping Time*. He is also the producer and director of the movies "Vitality," "Origins and prosperity." And also in his spare time, he's a Taoist Abbot, a doctor of Oriental medicine, a kung fu world traveler, a fierce global green warrior, avid backpacker, a devout Alchemist, a Qi Gong Master and an old school Jedi bio-hacker working to preserve our natural world and wake us up to our full potential.

So he's got his hands full and really changes the planet. So we're super excited that he's here. The Slim Gut Summit is talking about gut health and so I'll just get right into it. Dr. Shojai, one of the key components that we talked about is microbiome. When I mentioned that, people don't know what I'm talking about. Can you tell us what exactly the microbiome is?

**Dr. Shojai:** Yeah, let's call it the community of life that is being harbored in your body, right? There's protozoa, nematodes, bacteria, virus, even parasites. And you know, we used to think that all bugs were bad, and just got a Newcomb to stay healthy. And now we're realizing that they are orchestrating the show and doing way more than we thought. Even the parasite, there's things that we're finding now that show that there are parasites that help us control our blood sugar. So the microbiome is kind of the generic term used for all of this life, the microbiology inside. And it's like the biome. The word biome is almost like a sphere of life that's living inside of you.

**Dr. Nandi:** That's absolutely correct. And the thing is that people would never even think about assuming that, perhaps that we are the carriers of these trillions of bugs that may be actually controlling so much of what we're doing. And in my practice, when I first talked about this, Dr. Shojai, was in nature when they talked about how obesity could be controlled with the bugs that we had. And I believe that there are two twins that were identical, however, they are different microbiome. One was obese and one was not, and all of a sudden the paradigm shifted and Western medicine is now starting to embrace it.

We have data from all over the planet, diabetes, heart disease, brain health and all from gut health. So absolutely all these little critters are super, super important, but except for the fact that they're hanging out with us. Why does anybody care? So the average person is like, "What do I care about their trillions, these bugs?" How is it important to me?

**Dr. Shojai:** So the writing on the wall is already there. And it's way, way deeper than we ever thought. Autoimmunity, pretty much every chronic disease, you could throw a stick at. Your weight, like as you'd mentioned obesity is very much implicated in this. And your psychological state, your mood, your anxiety. There are certain things that we can predict by looking at your gut and predicting that you're going to have Alzheimer's or Parkinson's, dementia, because the vagus nerve travels straight down and basically interface the entire gut lining. And when you have average bacteria, you have growth, you start to see the nerves working their way up. You start to see changes in the nerves all the way up to the brain to the point where you are now in trouble. We can now predict that 15-20 years ahead of time by looking at the microbiome.

So it is the absolute like there are -- I traveled the country for over a year filming a story on this and really looking at this research. And there are entire departments at these medical schools that were -- immunology departments that have basically recalibrated to be studying the microbiome. That's how integrated it is with our immune system.

**Dr. Nandi:** Yeah, and you said it well. Now, we have Western medicine. You know, for a very long time functional medicine has been telling us right that, that you have to replenish all the stuff that's been in your gut. So we're talking about fermented foods, we're talking about stuff that we knew about. But now Western medicine, as Dr. Shojai pointed out, you go to these schools and-- Western medicine and Immunology department studying, all these amazing labs that are talking about what's going on. I mean, for example -- simple things. If you have more bifidobacteria, or lactobacilli found in stuff as complicated as Greek yogurt, for example. Just having that can help you to solve some problems that you can have with leaky gut. And remember, we talked about that you got one cell layer between poop on one side and bleeding on the other. As a gastroenterologist, I deal with people all the time that have inflammation, bloating, the stench, all kinds of stuff going on their gut, and the leaky gut.

If you got that one cell layer thick, all of a sudden you have little tiny holes. That's the beginning of inflammation as Dr. Shojai talked about. And the gut is an incredibly sophisticated immune organ, as well as the second brain. And you talked about this, you touched on this, Dr. Shojai. What about products that these bugs produce that affect the brain? I mean, they actually are producing things like serotonin, aren't they?

**Dr. Shojai:** So the funny thing is we used to think that the probiotics were the Hail Mary, the answer to everything. And so go just take these probiotics and you're going to be fine. And it turns out, man, these things don't last very long. It's just kind of a marching parade that, you know, they'll drop genetic information and post biotic secretions. And by that, I mean there's a layer of biofilm that is secreted. And so you'll have these kind of warring clans or neighborhoods of the bad guys versus the good guys. And now we're finding that there are B vitamins, there are micronutrients, there are changes to our bile acids.

There are obviously you know, kind of neurotransmitter production and things that you just alluded to. It's been called the missing organ. And so we really thought that we understood the function of the body. And we didn't realize how much of this was outsourced, if you will, to the microbes that were working with us as part of this kind of functional symbiotic ecosystem. It's just fascinating what this journey has brought us and it's just the beginning.

There are -- I'll give you the example. So I was talking to a researcher in this. I was looking at gynecological principles. So if you're a female and you have an infection in the vaginal canal, right now, it's like okay. So take this pill. Whatever the antibiotic it is and you take it systemically, you kill all the bugs in your gut, and hopefully you wipe out the bugs in the vaginal canal. We're

now finding that there are healthy bacteria in the female vaginal canal that secrete something that kills off and crowds off other bad bacteria. So now what's happening is, the labs are isolating these bacteria and getting the product which is a human derived product or a biofilm that can be applied locally to take care of vaginal infections so that you're not taking these pills and antibiotics that are compromising everything all at once. I mean, it's blowing the doors open on all of this medicine. It's really interesting.

**Dr. Nandi:** Yeah, and we used to -- traditional medicine just talked about antibiotics because we didn't know any better, right? So we would just say if you have an infection of some kind, we just blast the entire body as Dr. Shojai talking about. It can really -- the problem is that you may be able to solve the local problem, the GYN infection. Then you wipe out so many good bugs in your intestinal tract, which is in this delicate balance. Like you put down it's a worldwide rest over there. If you all of a sudden take out an entire population of bacterial organisms, you may actually have heart disease. Imagine that.

People say what does the gut have to do with a heart? Well, just so happens that you have certain unhealthy species in the gut that can contribute to heart disease by producing something called TMAO; Trimethylamine N-Oxide. And so if you do that, then all of a sudden that can contribute to blocked arteries. And that's why we brought Dr. Shojai because it's so important to understand about this, and we're just touching the surface. What do you think the future will bring us? Nobody has got a little crystal ball, but what do you think is going to happen with all this microbiome and the information we're getting and touching on now?

**Dr. Shojai:** It's a great question and I wish I had the crystal ball, right. I go and patent something and it start working. But I got to say that the information we're getting from understanding the genome. The information we're getting by understanding the activity of the microbiome is really allowing us to personalized medicine in a way we have a much better understanding of what I should eat. I personally was eating kale salads all the time until I realized I didn't harbor the bacteria that broke down the oxalate and I was always like mad at myself for not feeling well after having kale because it's supposed to be good for me. It wasn't good for me. And so there is a lot of personalization coming -- and there's a lot of things being blown up. I mean, you obviously alluded to leaky gut which is huge in functional medicine, is huge in everything that you're talking about in the summit.

The next round on this is a leaky gums, leaky teeth. And so we're now finding there's a direct correlation between gingivitis bacteria in the mouth and Alzheimer's disease, heart disease. And so you know, you got to look at this from reader to tutor, we call it, right? From the mouth all the way down to the

anus. It is a tube that is very -- like you said, one sides poop one side is food. And on the other side is your immune system waiting to say "Is this friend or foe?" And so we're finding that the immune system has been fighting way too hard, we are having all kinds of autoimmune issues.

We're having all kinds of energy expenditure because of this compromised boundary, this really thin boundary between the inside world and the outside world. And we're finding that the microbiome has been there to help us modulate, protect, inform and relax our response to that, so that we're not hyper vigilant and attacking ourselves over everything. So I think there's going to be a lot -- you know, if I'm still looking at my crystal ball in the realm of autoimmunity, in the realm of chronic disease, a predictive medicine. You know, we're looking now at this kind of pro drama period, where I -- there's plenty of tests out there right now that can tell you that you're making antibodies to your own myelin sheath or to your own muscle tissue or whatever it is. And if you can predict that and eliminate the foods that would be causing some of this molecular mimicry, you could avoid having maybe Parkinson's or Alzheimer's or some other degenerative disease. We have that information now. It's just not mainstream. It's super exciting. It's a great time to be alive.

**Dr. Nandi:** It really is. And I'll go as far as to say, in the future, Dr. Shojai, I think chronic disease is coming to an end. That's a pretty big statement to say. But I think once we realize -- Okay, first of all, your genetic predisposition, right. So you and I are different genetically and so we are already predisposed in some way to certain diseases. Now you bring in the factor of these trillions of bugs and how they're contributing. You can then modulate what my genetic predisposition is. So for example, if my grandpa had a heart attack at age 47. So let's say I'm prone as a lot of Indian males to these fatal heart attacks. And then we can then find out -- okay. By the way, these populations of folks who have heart attacks have these types of microbiome.

So these types of microbiota or these types of bacteria to be simplistic and then you change it. Dr. Shojai, maybe it's not always kale, maybe you got to eat something else. You got to eat some cauliflower, broccoli then you can make it personal. Right now we say well, you know, it's still good advice. I still think it's good advice. You know, diverse variety of foods, fermented foods, try to avoid processed food. But I think in the future as Dr. Shojai is talking about, you can say -- and you know what, you may be able to prevent getting a disease like Alzheimer's. Are we going to live forever, I don't know. We 3d print our heart like some people do, we 3d printer our muscles because we're wearing out. But this is a key part of it. And you said it really well. It's the missing organ that's there in people. And what would you suggest? There's so

much we're giving people if you've never heard of this really. This is unbelievable.

To me, when I first started learning about this, it was mind blowing. And for people it's like Everest, Dr. Shojai. It's like you know, people who don't know how to approach this because it's so overwhelming. What would you say, what will be the first step for them? How could they start? What could they do in their daily lives to really start addressing this and to get great gut health and great overall?

**Dr. Shojai:** Yeah, let's go a quick lesson in history. For hundreds of thousands of years, our ancestors were having a lot more fiber, 10 times more fiber than we were. And look, we didn't have refrigerators. So the way we preserve food was through fermentation. So if you can up your fiber, your indigestible fiber, your insoluble fiber have some sort of prebiotic fiber with every meal. And have some sort of fermented food with every meal, even if it's a spoon of sauerkraut or yogurt or kimchi or whatever. It starts to make a difference. You know, everyone's looking for the Hail Mary miracle, silver bullet, like what's going to fix my microbiome overnight. That solution does not exist.

You know, there are all sorts of crazy stuff like fecal grafting. You know taking the poop from somebody and putting in the poop of the other. I could go find a rain forest with the purest, cleanest natural diet that these people have eaten with the most variety, which is the work Marty Blaser did in NYU, and replenish my microbiome with that. But if I don't eat what they eat, within a week or two, those bacteria die, right? So there is no, "Oh, I'm going to fix my bacterial colonies and walk away and go back to my root beer." Start feeding my friend and create an ecology that supports them. And then we're getting ATP, we're getting energy, we're getting you know our nutrients. We're getting so much, so much that's coming out of these bacteria that the orientation needs to be let me think about feeding my bacteria before feeding myself because then they will feed me.

**Dr. Nandi:** That's awesome. And so you know Dr. Shojai is saying listen, first step, eat some fiber, right. Some prebiotic fiber and what that means is prebiotic, right. If you have a bunch of good organisms like bacteria and protozoa and all this, you need to feed them in order to make them flourish. So that's the prebiotic fiber. And then an awesome piece of advice, you'd have to go out there and buy a \$500 or whatever. Just get some fermented foods, and you're right.

Every single culture I visited, from India to Europe to US, wherever you are, they have fermented foods. If you do that that is incredible start to be able to change your microbiome again. And I love the facts, there's no quick fix. But

the paradigm is shifting. So the stuff that's in your gut can actually affect your brain, your heart, your diabetes, your autoimmune disease. So when people say, I can't believe -- You know, I diagnosed someone, Dr. Shojai, with cancer at age 38, just yesterday and it was, "How has that happened?" I offered to you that it's a combination of a lot of things, but some of it has to do with what we just talked about.

It's our friendly trillion member army or multi-trillion member army that is either helping you or hurting you. And so I really appreciate you taking the time out of your schedule and he is a busy man. The advice you gave is awesome. Again, if you want to know more about this, it's *well.org* and his name is Dr. Pedram Shoja, amazing individual. And thank you again for taking the time out of your busy schedule. Really important the information you gave to us today.

**Dr. Shojai:** Thank you. Thanks for doing this. This is important work. So thank you.