How Probiotics May Impact Your Sleep
Guest: Dr. Michael Ruscio

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Misty Williams: Hey, everybody, Misty Williams here, your host for Your Best Sleep Ever, and founder of Healing Rosie. And I am so excited about this conversation we’re about to have with Dr. Michael Ruscio. If you guys have been part of the Healing Rosie community over the last year, you know that I love Dr. Ruscio’s book *Healthy Gut, Healthy You*.

I refer to it at least once a week in our community. I have encouraged everyone who’s come in looking to heal from any flabby, foggy, and fatigue symptom to get his book because it’s probably the most comprehensive resource I’ve found on aggregating all of the research that we have on gut health together and distilling it in a way that’s super easy to digest. I think it’s just masterful.

And if you’ve been in this space for a while listening to lots of summits, you probably know that there’s a correlation between our gut health and sleep. And that’s not something that people typically think about if they’re having sleep trouble, that, “I need to look at my gut health and see what’s going on in my gut.” But there is a correlation and we’re going to talk about that a little bit more today.

So, Dr. Michael Ruscio is a doctor, clinical researcher, and best-selling author whose practical ideas on healing chronic illness have made him an influential voice in functional and alternative medicine. His work has been published in peer-reviewed medical journals and he speaks at integrative medical conferences across the globe.
Dr. Ruscio also runs an influential website and podcast at drruscio.com. In addition to his clinical practice located in Northern California. Welcome, welcome.

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** Hi, thank you for having me.

**Misty Williams:** Well, I’m so excited to have you, and one of the things that I always say every time I have you either on a summit or coming and speaking to our group is just how wonderful your work and resources are.

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** Thank you.

**Misty Williams:** And so, I’m thrilled that we’re going to dive into this, because you have such a great way of connecting the dots between the research and the actual process of healing.

The one of things that really struck me about the Great-in-8 Protocol that you’ve put together is how important the sequencing of healing is, and really healing and restoring the gut. And I’ve seen a lot of women come through our community who’ve feel like in healing their gut they’re playing Whack-A-Mole, right? And I know that a lot of it comes from not properly sequencing this whole healing process.

So, this is going to be a powerful conversation today, and I want to just open this up with maybe a little teaser question here, because one of things that your team sent over to me was some research about probiotics, gut health, and sleep. And in talking about gut health I wouldn’t, as a lay person, I would not have extracted like, “Let’s do the probiotic angle to really frame out this conversation.” So, I’d love for you to just kind of give us an overview of how gut health and sleep are tied together, and how do probiotics kind of affect the whole equation?

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** Sure, it’s a great question. And I should start by saying that my initial foray into my own health issues did involve insomnia. That was my first most debilitating symptom. I was in college and for the life of me I could not sleep, and I could not figure out why. And this wasn’t just a bad night’s sleep. This was a hellacious night’s sleep. Almost every night.

And for anyone who has had this it can be quite crippling. And it turned out in my case I had an intestinal parasite that was not manifesting as diarrhea, as it typically does. Or abdominal pain of any sort. It solely manifesting as insomnia, fatigue, and brain fog. Which taught me a lesson that the research is now catching up to, which is it is possible to have a problem in the gut...
that's solely manifesting what's known as extra intestinally. Or outside of the intestines.

And so, the way that I resolved my sleep issues was by improving the health of my gut. Not melatonin, not relaxing before bed, not blue light blocking glasses, which are all fine and good. But what I’m hoping in part to help people with today is not overlook what could be one of the most fundamental causes of their poor sleep. A problem in the gut.

And we do see in the research literature that those who have – that’s just one example, IBS, are more likely to have insomnia. And as IBS improves, we also see the insomnia improve. And I’ll just do a quick screen share here to show you a few of the studies.

Okay, so what you’re seeing here, a placebo-controlled trial. Essentially, looking at fourth year medical students and finding that those who are receiving the probiotics seem to have less stress-induced perturbations or interruptions of their sleep.

And another study here, essentially a review looking at probiotics effect a number of things, including sleep quality, also showing improvement in sleep quality.

Another study, looking at as we alluded to a moment ago, those with IBS and finding as IBS improved their digestive symptoms improved, so did sleep quality.

And another randomized placebo-controlled trial, this time in depression, and there’s a nice actually, preliminary cropping of studies showing that probiotics can improve depression, and at the same time led to an improvement in sleep quality.

And here’s kind of the summary of those studies if people want them, we’ll send over this text to you, and if we can get that wherever this going to live will have the text along with it.

But that’s kind of the short synopsis on yes, there is some evidence that suggests that gut health and sleep go together. It’s not the only cause of problems with sleep, but it’s certainly a foundational one. And that simple interventions, like, but not limited to probiotics can actually have, and have been documented to improve sleep as well as other symptoms that may go along with this underlying problem in the gut.
Misty Williams: Yeah. So, I did a GI map test earlier this year and I’ve been playing my own version of Whack-A-Mole. Since 2011, if anybody has been following us in the Healing Rosie group, you guys know a lot of my story.

But I’ve tried a lot of different healing protocols for the gut over the years. And I was really inspired, Dr. Ruscio by Healthy Gut, Healthy You to take a closer look at my gut. And I actually did a GI map, and one of things that I found on my GI map was that I’m really low good bacteria in the gut. I did show some parasites, and a few other things. And I was a little surprised that I had Whack-A-Mole’d my way not really improving gut health like I thought I was.

And I’m sure there’s a lot of other people who are in the same boat. So, why don’t kind of start helping us understand a little bit about the importance of probiotics and the good bacteria in our gut in helping to stabilize or improve our overall gut health.

Dr. Michael Ruscio: Sure. And it’s a great lead in question to tie these to results from the lab test, in this case a GI map, which is a test that I like. The reason why this is important is because patients often times think they need lab testing in order to use a given treatment to improve their gut health.

And for the majority of natural treatments out there you really don’t need a lab test to guide you. And one of the most powerful examples there is probiotics. Probiotics have been shown in five clinical trials now to be able to decontaminate SIBO, or small intestinal bacterial overgrowth out of the small intestine.

They’ve been shown to be antiparasitic. And in fact, in one head to head trial they actually were more effective, a probiotic than a prescription antiparasitic agent. They’ve been shown to be antifungal.

So, probiotics are actually fairly powerful antimicrobials. And they can help to clean out bacteria overgrowths, fungal overgrowths, parasites. Now we also want to be careful that if you have this really acute severe symptoms it doesn’t mean...If you’re in the emergency room they tell you to do the stool test – you shouldn’t do it and just say, “Oh, well, I’ll just take my probiotics.” No. Not going to be the other end of the spectrum here.

But with a well-executed probiotic protocol you can really improve many of the findings on a test. And this is something that I’ve been seeing in the clinic for a while. And now it’s so clear that we’ve draw up now I think three, maybe even four case studies in which we had a pre/posttest. In this case it could be a GI map. And we didn’t do anything differently in light of the results, we just executed a good probiotic protocol, and either the patient got healthier or the
labs improved. One of them – without getting too into the weeds here. The functional lab tests are so sensitive, sometimes they suffer from false positives.

So, what you see sometimes is a patient from month one to month three is vastly healthier, yet their labs actually look worse. And I think this is because some of the labs, and this has been shown in the research do suffer from false positives. Meaning they’re so sensitive they pick up things that aren’t really there.

And so, for a number of reasons I would say don’t do your own testing and rather find a good protocol to help guide you through how to improve your gut health. And one of the things that will happen when you do that is you will improve the bacteria in your gut, which is one of the things probiotics have been shown to do.

And tying back to the fact that probiotics are antimicrobial. Part of how I think this works is probiotics help to push out unsavory players, and they’re also anti-inflammatory. Pushing out the unsavory players and creating an anti-inflammatory environment allows the good players to grow.

So, it’s not so much about here’s the one bad guy and if we just get rid of that one bad guy everything’s going to be fine. But rather it’s cultivating a healthy ecosystem, and that ecosystem will then in the long term either encourage healthy things to grow if it’s a healthy ecosystem, or allow unhealthy things to grow if it’s an unhealthy ecosystem.

And one of the main ways we can put to that healthy direction, probiotics because they are anti-inflammatory, anti-leaky gut, and also help, again, push out some of those unsavory players.

**Misty Williams:** I actually did a candida antibodies test. I think it was at the end of last year I started working on all of this gut health. I never addressed the candida, and my recent test came back zero antibodies, and that was just from doing the probiotic stuff.

So, I really love that you have such a balanced approach to healing the gut. There’s a lot of talk in our space, especially with parasites. Seem to get really excited about the parasite conversation and want to go after them like napalm, blow up everything up in gut related to parasites.

But in truth it is an ecosystem in there and it’s really important healing the gut holistically. And there’s others in the Healing Rosie community who’ve had a similar experience where they’ve just by focusing on growing and cultivating
more good bacteria in the gut they too have eliminated other serious they’ve had without having to necessary do a protocol for those issues. Which is really fascinating.

So, why don’t you talk to us a little bit about how do we choose a probiotic? And I know in your book you talk about probiotics and prebiotics. And you definitely have a philosophy on how you approach integrating those into a protocol. I’d love to just hear a little bit more about that.

Dr. Michael Ruscio: Yeah. Well, thank you. And it’s another really important question because one of the things I see patients flounder with is how do I use probiotics effectively? And it’s not really the patient’s fault, because even gastroenterologists are confused on this and scratching their heads.

So, it’s not like in the doctor community there’s a bunch of clinician educators teaching the doctors and the doctors sending that down the line. Confusion here permeates, and I would argue that dogma also permeates, because unfortunately there are some fairly well-credentialed gastroenterologists and despite the fact that we have a very impressive amount of data showing most specifically probiotics can improve digestive health, these conventional gastroenterologists have this opinion that we’re not quite ready yet to be recommending probiotics or there’s confusion in the research studies.

And to be honest with you those are kind of dodges, because we can also find something to nitpick. But if there’s a totality of evidence clearly suggesting benefit, if you’re going to nitpick the little things that are wrong there and withhold that therapy that could help a patient – I would argue you’re actually doing more of a disservice than you are doing a service. And I think that’s the state of affairs with probiotics.

Now, at the same time I always try to be careful not to over reach or over represent the case. And probiotics are not a cure-all. But they certainly can help a number of things.

Now one of the reasons people are confused, in my opinion is because most of the education about probiotics seems to be vectored by those who are trying to market you a probiotic. And that’s not necessarily a bad thing. You can have a good company with good people trying to help you and sell you a good product.

But you don’t get this kind of clinical perspective. You get here’s our probiotic, it has a couple of studies showing this, so we’re really going to proclaim this as the best probiotic for whatever the X symptom or condition is. And not give you kind of this broader context of if we looked at all of the research and we
weren’t really trying to favor one probiotic then what would be the narrative be? What would the clinical recommendations be?

And it’s exactly quite simple. When we look at almost any probiotic on the market it can be organized into one of three categories. And let me, I guess, use another visual aid here. Pardon my nerdiness.

**Misty Williams:** It’s great. I love it.

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** Okay, so what you’re seeing here is a schematic of the three different categories of probiotics. And any probiotic on the market can be organized into one of these categories.

Category one, the most well-researched. Over 500 clinical trials studying category one probiotics. Which will have a predominance of various Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium species. So, it’s a blend. There might be seven strains, there might be 15 strains, most of them will be some type of Lactobacillus or some type of Bifidobacterium. How do you know? Take the label look on the back, look at the strains, if you see mostly Lactobacillus X, Bifidobacterium Y, then that is a category one.

Now category two, slightly different. This is actually healthy fungus. This Saccharomyces Boulardii. And almost everyone of these will have just Saccharomyces Boulardii in it. Some also include this other strain Saccharomyces cerevisiae, but for all intents and purposes you’re looking at the back of the label and seeing Saccharomyces Boulardii.

And then category three are soil-based or spore forming, I’m sorry, with the category two there are just over 100 clinical trials looking at this category. And then in category three your soil-based or spore forming, and there are about 20 to 40 studies depending on the exact strain. So, I guess we could say about 40 total clinical studies looking at the soil-based probiotics. And these contain various bacillus types of probiotics, with bacillus subtilis, bacillus coagulans, bacillus licheniformis. And those are the three categories.

And what’s helpful to understand is that some patients will use one category one formula, and maybe see not see significant improvement. And then, they say, “Well, that probiotic didn’t fully do it, so let me try this different probiotic.” They don’t realize they’re taking the same exact category, different label, slightly different marketing, maybe one or two strains are different. For all intents and purposes, it’s Coke and it’s Pepsi where they’re almost the same exact thing.
And they go, “Oh, well, I felt a little flicker, but nothing there.” And then, eventually maybe the go onto a Paleo community blog and soil-based probiotics are really popular there. So, they go on a soil-based formula. And similar kind of thing, they see some benefit, but they may not see the full benefit that they’re looking for.

And this is where I found using three probiotics at once to pull out the next visual aid here. In these cases, be the difference between having that one probiotic formula supporting balance, that’s the one-legged stool. And that it does help to support balance, but it’s wobbly. And what I’ve observed is that when we use all three together, we present a much more robust support to the gut, akin to having three legs supporting the stool. And that can be the difference between success and failure for some patients, or a minimal result and a much more remarkable result.

And so, what I recommend people do is find a quality formula from each one of the three categories, and try them all at once. Or if you’re sensitive and you’re really reactive, try them one at a time. And part of the reason why we break them out into three different formulas, rather than all in one is in case you are someone – let’s say just as an arbitrary example, Saccharomyces Boulardii doesn’t sit well with your ecosystem and you have a negative reaction, you leave that one to the side, and use a peg two probiotic approach instead. And that can be quite effective. And that can be the difference between success and failure for some people.

Now you want to look for a GMP or good manufacturing practices manufacturer. This will ensure that they follow high-quality assurance standards. And also, a company that tests for quality. There have been a few analyses done that have essentially found that about half of the probiotics on the market don’t meet their label claim. They tell you it’s 100 billion, and it’s actually only got 20 billion. Or in some cases, even worse, the strain that is listed on the label isn’t actually what’s in the probiotic when independently tested by a third party.

So, it’s not to say the most expensive probiotic is the best, we don’t want to fall into that canard either, but you do want to look for those quality assurance practices being in place. And once you’ve found a good company or companies then use one of each of these three different categories together, and give that a couple of weeks and you should really start noticing some movement of the needle.

**Misty Williams:** So, what’s the difference between a prebiotic and a probiotic?
**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** Great question. A probiotic is actually the bacteria. A prebiotic are substrates that feed the bacteria.

**Misty Williams:** So, how do you typically recommend people incorporate pre and/or probiotics? Are prebiotics a part of the equation, typically?

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** They are. Now, prebiotics can also help, and they can also lead many of the same benefits that that probiotics can. However, it does seem, and there is a fair amount of evidence to support this – that there’s a decent distribution of adverse events in those who are using prebiotics. But it seems to be – this is my interpretation partially guided by what we see in the research literature. The more symptomatic someone is the more inflammation and imbalance they have in their gut, the more likely, not guaranteed, but the more likely they may be to have a negative reaction to a prebiotic.

So, what I recommend in *Healthy Gut, Healthy You* is to – well, there’s kind of two general paths in *Healthy Gut, Healthy You* because the book protocol is personalized. So, if someone’s really healthy they can try prebiotics early and they’ll probably be okay. And that’s a nice little support for them.

But if someone has quite a number of symptoms, we want to build up the health of their system and put off the prebiotic trial until later, because that increases the probability of benefit and decreases the probability of an adverse event.

**Misty Williams:** Right. Okay, makes perfect sense. So, can we get probiotics from food or do we have to supplement?

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** And this is actually a really helpful table that our team and I put together recently to break this down. So, yes. The answer is yes, but the amount you get from foods doesn’t really compare to the amount used in the clinical trials.

So, good practice to eat fermented foods, yes. Are you likely to see the same benefit from a clinical trial using probiotics? Probably not. And if you look here, sauerkraut contains these following species at about three billion CFU per cup. Now, that is how much in one of our probiotics, the Lacto-Bifido blend. That’s one-eighth of a capsule. So, a service a food equals one-eighth of a capsule.

Yogurt, you see about one-tenth of a capsule. Lacto-fermented pickles, .05 of a capsule, kefir one-tenth of a capsule, kimchi a half of a capsule. So, kimchi is probably the most dense.
So, yes you can get these things from food, and I think that’s a good practice to adhere to dietarily. However, you may not be able to get over that initial balancing hump that you need to try to fight leaky gut, push out the unsavory players and get your gut back to balance. So, it’s definitely a foundational piece, but you may need a little more oomph if you have some stubborn imbalances that need to be rectified.

**Misty Williams:** Yeah. So, I’m thinking about the people that are watching who’ve been dealing all sorts of sleep issues. Whether they’re waking up in the night multiple times. Having trouble getting to sleep. Having trouble staying asleep. Some people will just spend the night awake, barely dozing off at all. Some people are waking up feeling like they’d been hit by a Mack truck.

When we talk about probiotics and improving our gut health who specifically could benefit from taking this approach?

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** Yeah. So, this is another great question. And I’ll do another screen share, because there’s a summary from the research literature I want to present. So, this section here we see high level of scientific support for it, so this means there’s a number of clinical trials and often times those clinical trials are summarize in a metanalysis.

So, we have high levels of support for those with IBS, gas, bloating diarrhea, constipation, abdominal pain, IBD, Crohn’s, ulcerative colitis, mood imbalances, depression and anxiety, and gut microbiota imbalances, SIBO, H. pylori, candida, fungus, and pathogens. And also, leaky gut. Now, there’s limited but encouraging evidence for cognition, sleep, we cover those four sleep studies earlier, thyroid health. One exciting study actually found that a probiotic could reduce or stabilize the dose of levothyroxine that was needed. And this likely because most or the entirety of a thyroid medication is absorbed in the small intestine.

So, if we know that – it’s kind of side note – those that have hypothyroid have a higher prevalence of SIBO. So, if know SIBO and hypothyroid kind of go together, and we know that SIBO affects the small intestine. And SIBO can cause metal absorption, and probiotics can combat SIBO, then follow this all of the way back if you combat SIBO, improve absorption, and then you may actually need less of a dose of your thyroid medication and/or have more consistent absorption on more consistent levels.

Female hormones, autoimmunity, metabolism, I should say with metabolism the impact is not statistical chance. So, it is significant, but it doesn’t seem to be clinically meaningful. A couple points up blood pressure, a couple points
low blood sugar, maybe one pound of weight loss. So, there is benefit, but it’s so small that it’s not really clinically meaningful in my opinion.

Brain fog, sleep is listed there twice. So, anyone with these conditions can use a probiotic. They’ve even been shown to be safe for infant, even preterm infants. A few studies have shown a reduction of necrotizing enterocolitis, so essentially bad inflammation that can lead to lack of circulation and death of intestinal tissue in premature infants.

So, there’s definitely a body of evidence showing that almost anyone can benefit from a probiotic. Save one exception and that’s those who are critical ill or severely amino compromised. Most likely, not going to be anyone reading this or hopefully not. And if they are, they’ll be over that hump and at least somewhat amino stable, and then that will be a good point in time to consider using a probiotic.

But really, anyone can use a probiotic. And it’s not to depict this as a panacea, but because probiotics improve one’s gut health, and because that’s such a central component of general health – it seems reasonable to recommend that people use a probiotic almost irrespective of their ailment objectively.

Don’t placebo yourself into thinking it’s going to help and then stay on a probiotic forever needlessly. You should be looking to do this a somewhat scientific way. Here are my symptoms, I’m going to start day one. A week later I’m going to reassess, a week later I’m going to reassess. Am I seeing consistent benefit from the probiotic? If so, keep going. But I would recommend using a probiotic until you kind of see a plateau. And then try to find the minimal effective dose over time.

But they’re not going to help everyone, so also just because there’s also all of this good evidence doesn’t mean that you should just blindly go on a probiotic forever in spite of there being any evidence of support that they’re actually helping.

Misty Williams: So, that was actually going to be my next question is how long should someone be on a probiotic? I was having a conversation with Dr. Michelle Sands privately, not related to this summit, where we were talking about gut health. And she works a lot with gut health in her practice as well. And she told that it’s not uncommon for someone to do a gut healing protocol and over time, once they’ve kind of finished the protocol, over time their gut health tends to revert back to what it was previously.
So, my question as someone coming kind of from the patient perspective is should we completely stop doing probiotics?

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** That’s a great question. That’s a very important question. And this is something that I really try to pay attention to in *Healthy Gut, Healthy You*, because it’s one thing to get someone devoid of symptoms, it’s another thing to keep them there in the long term.

And so, the general approach -- to kind give a 30,000-foot view -- we use whatever supports are needed to get someone to a point where they have no symptoms.

And the first thing we try to do in this kind of weaning off and kind of get back to kind of a more normal life phase is expanding the diet. Because in my opinion I would rather have someone expand their diet first, even if that is fueled by probiotics allowing them to expand their diet. I’d rather get them to that normalcy first. It seems to be more important. Then try to find the minimal affective dose of the things in your plan.

But part of how you identify the minimal effective dose, is let’s say you’re not taking probiotics for a couple of weeks and whoa, I’m a little bit bloated, I’m a little bit constipated. And it may not go all the back to how bad it was before but you may see a drop. This is why I personally, I use all three of our probiotics every morning along with something called Gut Rebuild Nutrient, which is a glutamine, zinc, aloe, slippery elm kind of cocktail of gut support.

And I played with it and I noticed that I’m more impervious to eating out, bad food, if I didn’t sleep well. So, I can get by just fine without them. But I notice I function better with them.

So, someone who is on the more severe end of the scale may notice they just maintain that normalcy with these things rather than coming off of them. Everyone’s going to be a little bit different in terms of how robust of a plan they need to support them in the long term. So, it’s important that we try to do this objectively, aim for the minimal effective dose, but be okay with whatever your minimal effective dose is.

I don’t beat myself up because I feel better on a probiotic. I feel fine about it. But it’s important to identify that if one or two FODMAPs bother you, or you feel better on a probiotic in longer term, that’s okay. We all have our differences. And usually if the whole approach is executed correctly, the maintenance plan is pretty darn doable. And as long as we’re just objective and conservative, then we can get all of the gains without any of the fear or the dogma.
And I should also mention flare-ups and setbacks happen. And this has a tendency to really freak people out. In fact, we just released case study video with one of our patients in the clinic. Her name is Valarie. And she read Healthy Gut, Healthy You, and really saw some nice healing by going through it.

One of the things she said that was the most helpful for her was a narrative that explained that a) all of this in a non-fear-based way, but also b) that flare-ups and setbacks happen and that’s okay. And in most of those cases we just return to what got us to our peak to begin with. And that usually gets us back to normal. And then, we go again into broadening the diet and reducing the supplements in our plan.

And the analogy I often use is if you either – let’s say your sprained your ankle really bad, or let’s say you sprained your knee really bad in college. You had to do some rest, some stretches, some stability exercises, and now no knee pain, great. But if you slack off for too long, if you’re not moving, if you’re sitting too much, you may get some knee pain back. And you go, “Oh, okay, yeah, I got to do my stretches and exercises again.” But you don’t go, “Oh, my God, SIBO is back. The world’s on fire.”

So, we wouldn’t do with a knee injury, we shouldn’t do it with a gut flare. Because that fear doesn’t help you, and most of the time you don’t have to go back to a doctor, you don’t have to do another test. I mean, again, be careful to follow your doctor’s recommendations.

But you can return to the plan that got your health in the first place. Often times a shorter amount of time. And you’ll get right back to square one and then again broaden your diet, try to find the minimal effective dose. And that’s how you navigate the experience of being human and having some ups and downs. But it’s really important to get that fear out of there, because that will make things far worse than they actually are.

**Misty Williams:** Yeah. That’s really great. So, one of the things that’s coming up for me – this is a little off script of what we talked about covering, but I feel like I have Dr. Michael Ruscio right here. We’ve been having lots of these conversations about parasites, and how to address parasites.

And you know there are people in our space who have beat their head against the door with their healing and when they finally went after parasites it was almost miraculous what happened for them.
I would love to get your take and perspective on how to approach going after parasites. Because in this summit, in particular, there’s a lot of talk about how nocturnal parasites are, and how much they can contribute to keeping people up at night and that sort of thing. So, I’d love for you just to give kind of like the Ruscio perspective on parasites.

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** Sure. All of the same rules apply, really. Parasites and SIBO in my opinion are not vastly different. Or parasites and candida. To see long term resolution, it’s very helpful to start with that foundation of up-building of the healthy gut ecosystem approach. And in *Healthy Gut, Healthy You*, I lay out those foundational aspects. Diet and lifestyle, then probiotics, and by the way the probiotic protocol is sometimes much more robust than what most people have done. So, that second step often times gets people to resolution.

But then we can actually go even further to antimicrobials, which work synergistically with the probiotic. So, if someone does have a parasite we know again, that probiotics are antiparasitic, so are the obviously herbal antiparasitic agents. So, if you’re building on top of that foundation, this can make the execution of antimicrobials more effective.

And that is something legitimate. And there are some people that do have frank parasites and you do eradicate them, but the travesty of a mistake is when people fixate on, “It’s H. pylori,” or, “It’s blasto.” “It’s yersinia.” And they lose site of the more comprehensive approach to improve their gut health.

So, both, they are all important, but if you’re just trying to kill stuff without trying to figure out what’s the best diet for me or the best gut supports, then that tends to really lead to lack luster results.

Also, I think it’s very important to mention that some people are chasing parasites because that’s the only thing they find to blame. And my sneaky suspicion growing stronger every day is that in many of these patients, it’s not actually a parasite. It’s an [inaudible] in their immune system where they’re immune system is too overzealous.

And so, they tend to react to everything in their gut, even their healthy commensal normal bacteria. And so, that’s where immune therapies like immunoglobulins can be helpful, because the person may have the microbiota okay, but the immune system that houses it is hyper-responsive and overzealous. And this can then lead this kind of crusade where we’re always trying to kill the parasite. But again, the microbiota may be about as good as it’s going to get.
The immune system is too overzealous and this is where changing our tact from all microbiota directed interventions instead to something that helps to quiet down the immune system can be the difference between success and failure.

So, parasites have a time and place, but also be careful not to make it this crusade against this one pathogen, because that can make one’s vision too narrow and they can actually end up missing other therapies that could really help them.

**Misty Williams:** Yeah. One of the things I really appreciate about what you’re saying here, that I hope resonates with a lot of people too in that they’re also connecting the dots on this – is what you’re saying about diet diversity.

Because what inevitably happens when we find ourselves getting sick is that we start with elimination diets, and we might do food sensitivity testing, and autoimmune testing and find out that we need to take all of these things out of our diet. And for a lot of people it can start to feel really overwhelming. You can almost just shut down just because your diet is so restrictive, like how am I going to live like this for the rest of my life?

And recently in our community Dr. Lauren Lax actually posted about this and she talked about how important it was to get to the point, do what you need to do to heal your gut and increase the good bacteria so that you can actually tolerate more foods.

And I really appreciate that this is something that you’re saying too for those people who are maybe overwhelmed by the restrictiveness of the diet because of the health situation they found themselves in – really taking some time to focus on improving the good bacteria in your gut. And improving your gut health is going to help you that much more quickly get to the point where you can tolerate more foods. Which is actually the best thing that you can do for your gut is to eat a really diverse diet. So, I really appreciate you bringing that point out as well.

**Dr. Michael Ruscio:** It’s an incredibly important point. I just want to echo, that yes, the long-term objective is to broaden your diet. Now, people differ in how broad they can go, and that’s okay. And we also don’t want people to think because they don’t ever tolerate certain carbs that there’s something wrong or broke or they’re doing irrevocable harm. But we do want to have that goal of eventually going as broad as given individual can.

**Misty Williams:** Yeah. That’s awesome. All right, Dr. Ruscio if people want more information about you where can they find you online?
Dr. Michael Ruscio: drruscio.com, you can plug into pretty much everything I do there, including the book, which is called Healthy Gut, Healthy You. It’s available on our website and also through Amazon.

Misty Williams: Yeah. So, I encourage everyone to get the book. It’s a standard, I refer to it all of the time. We talk about it in the community all of the time, because it is you are unbelievably empowered as a patient with that book. I love it.

The gut health conversation especially is one, from a patient perspective, and in this moment speaking as a patient is really overwhelming and intimidating. And lots of people go to practitioners hoping that someone’s going to help with their gut health, and sometimes it’s one step forward, two steps back. Sometimes the practitioner doesn’t move the needle at all. And there’s really no reason for us, as patients, to spin our wheels like that not knowing if the person we’re working with is really going to help. Is this how it should go, when we have such an amazing resource available to us.

So, I encourage all of you guys to get Dr. Ruscio’s book. And if you love this interview and if you have questions for Dr. Ruscio, please on Instagram go find Rosie.Radio and look for his graphic and drop in your questions.

Next week, I’m going to be bringing many of our speakers back to have ask me anything’s with those have participated in the summit. So, if you’ve got a question for him and you’d like to pick his brain a little more, go find his graphic over on my Instagram page. You can also go to the Healing Rosie Facebook group, look for Dr. Ruscio’s graphic there and drop in your question, and I will do my best to get him back next week and answer all you all’s questions.

So, thank you so much, Dr. Ruscio. This was brilliant. I appreciate it.

Dr. Michael Ruscio: Thank you, it’s been a pleasure, thank you.

Misty Williams: All right. We’ll see you guys.