



DR. SUNG WON INTERVIEW Stem Cell Therapy Expert

By Chris Wark

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Publisher: Chris Beat Cancer Publishing

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DR. SUNG WON INTERVIEW

Stem Cell Therapy Expert

Hey everybody. It's Chris. Welcome to another Chris Beat Cancer interview. Today I am talking to Dr. Sung Won. Doctor Won is a medical doctor. He's also an orthopedic surgeon. He's also an advocate for plant-based nutrition and an expert in stem cell therapy. And I'm really excited to dig in with Dr. Won to share his story; for him to share his expertise with you on plant-based nutrition and how he came to become an advocate for plant-based eating. And also, there's a lot to learn about stem cell therapy. I'm personally fascinated by stem cell therapy. And so, I have no idea what he's going to say about it and I can't wait to hear.

Chris: So, Dr. Won, thanks for taking the time to do this.

Dr. Won: Well, thank you so much for having me. It's truly an honor.

Chris: Well, that's great. I think a lot of people... I'm routinely accused of being anti-doctor or anti-medicine. And it could not be further from the truth. And my favorite doctors are doctors who take a holistic approach. Who have had the light bulb or the wake-up call, and realized that conventional medical training has a limited amount of benefits, but there's more. There's more that a patient can do. There's more that a doctor/practitioner can help a patient do to recover from chronic disease or illness or whatever. So, kudos to you because you're one of the heroes on the front lines helping people every day. And I'm really excited about the oncoming wave or movement of holistic medicine, holistic medical approaches to patient care. So, can we start with your story, because I'd love to know how you evolved in your thinking in the way you treat patients.

Dr. Won: Sure. Absolutely. When I went to medical school, one of the things I was very interested in was either cardiovascular surgery or orthopedic and spine surgery. But I really went into medicine because my father had multiple back surgeries, and he had chronic pain for over 30-40 years. And I watched him suffer so much from pain. And the physicians not being able to help him. I said, "Well, I'm going to become a surgeon myself and then help my father." That was my initial motivation. Once I went into medical school, what I realized was that medicine was mostly managing the disease, not really fixing the disease. That's why I was interested in a lot of disease process, but wasn't interested in pursuing internal medicine because I felt like they were just putting a band-aid on and not really finding the cure for the disease.

And that's why I chose to go into orthopedic surgery because if you break a bone, there's really not much holistic thing that you can do. You have

to do the surgery. What I liked was that you actually go in, you fix the problem, and you come out. You essentially help patients cure the disease. Right? Which in this sense it's either fracture or dislocations or many of the typical orthopedic problems. That's how I went into the orthopedic surgery and spine surgery. But while practicing medicine, I also wanted to improve the way we were doing the spine surgery. Because traditionally it was a big open back surgery. People bled a lot. There was a lot of scar tissue. So, I worked on a lot of minimally invasive surgical techniques.

However, at the same time, with minimally invasive surgery, you're not really exposing the back. We're using the X-ray machine, in order to see through the skins and muscle, in order to perform the surgery. So, that's great for the patient. But the downside was that as a physician and surgeon, we got exposed to a lot of radiation. And of course, we protected ourselves with the lead jacket and lead skirt. However, when you're exposed to it so much... And then also, especially 15 years ago when we were developing the techniques, we got a tremendous amount of exposure. So, I used to jokingly say, "You know what? In the future, I'll probably get some form of cancer." And I said it jokingly. But one of my closest friend who was an anesthesiologist, who used to cover my cases, he appeared to be very healthy, but at a young age, he died from cancer.

Chris: How old was he?

Dr. Won: He was around mid-forties. And he had lung cancer. He never smoked in his life. And it was so tragic. And it really hit home. So, I dove into researching like, "How do I prevent cancer, and then also reverse cancer?" Because even though jokingly I used to tell people, "I'll probably die from cancer with so much radiation exposure." Who wants to die from cancer? And once I started diving in, I really realized what I learned in medical school was truly just managing the disease, not really fixing or curing the disease. There are so many things that you could do to actually prevent cancer, and then help people reverse cancer without using traditional medicine. But things that we can do every single day holistically to really prevent it.

And cancer doesn't happen overnight. It brews for many, many years. Right? But everything that we do each day really matters. Whether it's from nutrition, exercise, sleep, mostly from the lifestyle. But doctors are not really educated on how to prevent cancer. They know how to give chemotherapy. That's it. And if you ask most of the oncologists – cancer doctors – they don't really know much about nutrition. They don't know how to prevent it. And they don't know how to really optimize a condition, in order for them to fight against cancer. And that was really frustrating. And I kept on reading multiple scientific journals. And the answer was there. It's been there for many, many years. We just haven't taken the time to learn because most doctors or hospitals are not incentivized to really help patients prevent and reverse disease.

Chris: I think a lot of my audience understands what you said, and the reasons why doctors are not incentivized. But would you mind explaining it for someone who maybe has never heard this before, has never really thought about why doctors wouldn't be trained in nutrition, why nutrition wouldn't be a part of medicine?

Dr. Won: Yeah. I think the most of it is medical schools being really funded by a lot of the pharmaceutical companies. And then also, all the medical school curriculums are about managing disease. And also, doctors really don't have time to spend the time with patients to teach them about nutrition. Primary care doctors have a very difficult job. They have to, in an hour, see about 30 patients. They can only spend about five minutes with the patient. So, what they do is when the patients come in, they already have the biometrics, they see the high blood pressure. They may have certain conditions. And then they just write a prescription. It's almost the patients expect the prescription. And then, that's how doctors can basically treat the patients really quickly and then have them leave. You really don't have time to focus on how to cure the disease, because that takes a lot of time.

And then also, most of the oncologists' revenue really comes from also providing the chemotherapy. They're able to provide that in the office. And then, that becomes a huge revenue source. In Texas, the largest oncology group is Texas Oncology. Well, guess who owns Texas Oncology? It's actually owned by McKesson, a medical device and medicine distribution company. It's not owned by physicians. And so, what incentive do they have? Medicine has, a lot of times, become just a moneymaking machine, whether it is from the pharmaceutical company, whether it is from the hospital. And so, anyone who tries to make a wave basically puts a big target on your back. And they'll come after you for just about anything.

If a hospital is serving cancer-causing processed meat in their cafeteria, what is their mission? And I've gotten in a lot of trouble from the hospitals because I used to post things like, "Bacon and egg at the hospital cafeteria," and put it into social media. And I used to get called into the principal's office, CEO of hospitals in the Dallas-Fort worth area, because they said it makes them look bad. Well then, why are you serving disease-causing food in your own hospital where people should be coming there to be healed? Rather you are actually creating additional disease. So, you could say that I wasn't very well liked by some of the hospital administrators.

Chris: It makes me love you even more. You're definitely speaking my language. I don't know how familiar you are with my story, but the very first meal they served me after cutting out a third of my colon was a sloppy joe, which is like the lowest quality ground beef. Maybe. It could have been cat meat for all I know. But the lowest quality ground beef you can get, in this sloppy sauce on a burger bun. And I didn't know anything about

nutrition at the time, but even then, I was shocked. Like, "Really? This is what you're feeding me right now?" So, yeah, it is true. And cancer is a trillion dollar industry. And they're making a lot of money, trillions, treating a disease. And it really doesn't matter if anyone's cured, because they're making tons of money anyway. Right?

And so, unfortunately, that's just the sad reality of the business. I think there's a lot of good people in there that really... This is the way I describe oncologists. I feel like most oncologists are good people that are trapped in a system that pays them really well, despite the results. And they're hoping that the next cancer cure drug will be the one. Sometime in their lifetime a drug will come along that actually cures the disease for everybody. Or whatever. And in the meantime, they're just doing the best they can with the limited amount of tools that they've been given and the training they've been given.

And so, what I encourage patients to do is, "Hey, work with the doctor. If you want to do treatment, do treatment. But there's so much more you can do at home to help yourself survive. There's so much more that you can do to increase your odds of survival. Or decrease your odds of ever getting cancer." And so, I love to talk to you about... I know you work this way with your patients, even though you're not a cancer doctor. But you've incorporated plant-based nutrition into your practice. But actually before you talk about your patient relationship and how you navigate that, how did you discover plant-based nutrition?

Dr. Won: Yeah. So, when I was researching how to prevent cancer for myself... Well, we all have cancer cells in our body, right? Whether you're clinically diagnosed or not, everyone has cancer cells. Our immune system is fighting it every day. And as I was doing research, I came across Dr. Campbell's book, *The China Study*. And then, I started delving into all the research papers on the how to really prevent and reverse disease, as well as a cancer. And I read like thousands of papers because I really thought... It was a big scare. It was a significant loss to me and my friends and family members. But then, also at the same time, if a healthy individual like that overnight could develop cancer and then be gone within a year, what was going to happen to me? You know?

And doctors have the worst lifestyle. They're overworked, they're overstressed, they don't sleep, their diets are really poor. And on top of that, they're getting significant amounts of radiation exposure. And I've also heard about some of the other spine surgeons, especially the older generations because they didn't quite understand the radiation, and many of them have passed away from thyroid cancer, Ewing sarcoma, and many different kinds of cancers. So, once I started diving into it, I realized that whole food plant-based nutrition is one of the best ways to prevent and even help reverse and treat cancer.

But it's not just nutrition that plays a huge part, but also lifestyle matters significantly. So, I started living by endorsed principles to do help me prevent clinically significant cancer. Because I like to tell everybody that everyone has cancer. So, don't think that one day all of a sudden magically you're going to get cancer. Cancer cells are brewing inside you. That is a normal physiology. However, you've got to make sure that you optimize your body, boost your immune system, so that you can fight off the cancer cells every single day. So, that's how I came about my approach to the whole food plant-based. And once I realized it, I couldn't keep it to myself.

So, we started having free seminars at our clinic for patients, for the past three years. And we cover topics from cancer to heart disease, diabetes, auto immune disease. Because I really believe that most of the chronic diseases are completely preventable, but people just don't know. And they have no knowledge and they're bombarded with such misinformation from the Internet. And I call those "bro science." And even from their own doctors. One of my assistants' mother, unfortunately, had breast cancer. And her oncologist told her to make sure before the chemotherapy that she eat plenty of protein to get plenty of energy. That's the worst thing that one could do. And that made me realize that even doctors really don't know much about nutrition and how to prevent and reverse disease, because we never got educated. I had less than an hour of training in nutrition in medical school, and that's putting normal all across the country.

Chris: What were some of the studies that stood out for you, when you were initially researching? What were the things that you were discovering that were making you think, "Whoa, wait a minute"?

Dr. Won: Yeah. I read Dr. Campbell's book. I mean, that was the initial lightening moment. And his studies. And not only in China, but his initial studies in the Philippines. And then, how it had so much to do with the nutrition. And the difference between people from the rural city and then from the city. And poor to rich. And then their diet. That was something that was definitely there. My parents and my mother-in-law tell me the way I eat is the way they used to eat when they were really poor back in Korea. But if you study the blue zones, it's all the common people or lower socioeconomic class of people who are living longer because they can't afford to eat processed food, or they can't afford to eat meat. And they're eating the food the way it was naturally grown. They're the ones living longer than everybody else and disease free. And so, for me, the initial lightning moment was reading Dr. Campbell's book, *The China Study*. That got me started reading the papers that he was citing. And that really got me motivated.

Chris: That's incredible. I love it because. I say this all the time: "Eat like a poor person." The pauper's diet, right? I should write a book called *The Pauper's Diet*. But yeah, it's true. The simple, humble foods from the

earth that millions and millions of people around the world are eating – whole grains, vegetables, fruit when it's in season, of course beans, rice, potatoes, all the legumes – are just wonderful, nourishing, health promoting foods. And the rich people – Americans, Europeans, many wealthy people in other countries – are not eating those kinds of foods. You've probably seen this study (I mean, there's more than one study). But as a country increases economically (like China), the more industry that comes into a country (factories and businesses), the more jobs are created, the more income rises, the more money is spent on animal food. It's one of the first things that people spend money on when they start to make money. It's like, "Let's have some steak, instead of rice every day."

Dr. Won: You know, even in my culture... I immigrated from Korea back in early 80s. However, one thing I noticed in Korea is a lot of people are getting types of cancers that they never used to have. A lot of Koreans and Japanese never really used to have prostate cancer. They used to have a lot of soy in their diet. They used to eat a lot of beans, a lot of vegetables. But as the country became wealthier and evolved, they were eating significant amounts of meat, animal-based food, and processed food. And these days, when I actually go to Korean restaurants, it is very difficult for me because everything has oil, everything is meat-based. Even the soup and stew that used to be based with water or vegetable broth now is meat-based. So, it is very, very difficult.

And you can see that in not only Korean Americans, but in Koreans. The number of cancer is rising rapidly, including prostate cancer. And then, more commonly, they used to have stomach cancer rather than colon cancer, like in the United States. But then now, not only the stomach cancer is continuing to rise. Even colon cancer, which was relatively rare in Korea, is rising rapidly because their diet has completely changed.

And also, every Saturday I actually teach the residents and some of the physicians in Africa... Just like Dr. Campbell wrote *The China Study*, I think his next book should be *The Africa Study*. And I used to lecture a long time ago about how healthy African's were, because they ate the food that grew from the ground. And then, their [inaudible] are completely different. They ate tremendous amounts of fiber. However, in the city it's changing. Even 10 years ago, heart disease wasn't even the top 10 cause of death. It was mostly infection-related disease. And now, the heart disease is number four. The obesity, diabetes, and cancer incidents are rising rapidly, even in Africa. And so, we're trying to educate the physicians and residents there that they need to go back to the way it was before. And eat like they did 20, 30, 40 years ago.

Because our body human body has evolved for millions of years eating the food that grew from the ground naturally. It's only been over the past 50 years that we're eating so much more processed food. And that's why our body wasn't naturally designed to be eating like what we are doing right now. That's why autoimmune disease that never used to really exist

50 years ago is so common. Cancer rate is rising so rapidly. By 2030, it's going to become the number one killer of Americans in this country, outdoing the heart disease. That is really, truly sad and tragic.

Chris: It is tragic. And I'm glad you brought up Africa because I'm a big fan of Dr. Denis Burkitt, who is one of the pioneers of epidemiological research among the rural Africans. I talk about him in my book. And the things that he discovered are so important even now. That the Africans had virtually no heart disease, virtually very little rates of cancer, no colon cancer, no digestive diseases. And they were eating tons of fiber, tons of starchy vegetables, very little to no processed food, and very, very little animal food. And this is not complicated. It's not rocket science. It's actually very, very simple. And the truth is simple. Lies are complicated.

Okay. So, you're having these light bulbs. You're having these epiphanies. You're probably having some challenges to your convictions and your conscience about being in the medical industry. And so, I'm assuming, obviously, that you started to transition and teach your patients how to take care of themselves. And by the way, I should mention, you're in Irving, Texas. So, if anybody watching is near Irving, Texas, you can go to one of Dr. Won's Saturday classes, right?

Dr. Won: Yes, absolutely.

Chris: Oh, by the way, what's your website?

Dr. Won: It is neogennutrition.com. But our stem cell therapy clinic is neogenstemcell.com. That is the website where we announce the seminars. And you can find me on Facebook as well as Instagram. And we do monthly seminars locally and give a presentation. Also, people can join through the webinar on Saturday. We typically do three different seminars on Saturdays, one to Africa and then the rest to America.

Chris: That's amazing. Before we started the interview, we were chatting about the improvements you saw with patients, being a spine surgeon. And the plant-based diet helping them recover faster. And you're explaining the mechanism by which this happens. So, I'd love for you to talk about spinal surgery and nutrition and how it all kind of fits together.

Dr. Won: Yeah. So, one of the very important things with overall health is our vascular system. But in order to heal, we need to be able to deliver the nutrients and oxygen. So, our vascular system is critical. One thing that's great about plant-based nutrition is that it is able to provide us with a really optimal vascular system. Because within our blood vessel, the inner layer is called endothelium and that's where the nitric oxide gets produced, which I believe is one of the most important molecules in our body. By the time we're age 40, we lose about 50%. By the time we're 60, we lose about 85% of our ability to produce nitric oxide, because the endothelium is so damaged due to atherosclerosis.

And so, with plant-based nutrition, you can elevate... There's a two different pathways. One is through the artery, the other way is through nutrition. And so, if it's damaged through nutrition, you can elevate the nitric oxide. So, then that can stimulate the stem cells. In order for our body to continue to heal ourselves, we have to reactivate our own stem cells. And if you don't have enough nitric oxide... Nitric oxide is what activates the stem cells. Without it, you're not able to activate them. That's part of the reason why we continue to age and we can't repair the damaged cells – whether it is a ligament, whether it is a bone, whether it's a hard tissue, any other parts of our body.

And so, when patients are getting in a lot more plant-based food, that tends to heal. The food you can look at it as: Is that going to help me heal or is that going to damage my body? And so, most of the plant-based food is obviously going to help us heal because it's filled with phytonutrient polyphenols and antioxidants. And so, when you are providing your body to naturally heal, many of my patients who needed spine surgery were starting to heal themselves. They were losing the weight that they had a difficult time losing. At the same time, their cardiovascular system was being optimized. And then, they suffer from severe pain, but then those pains were going away. And they would come back to the clinic saying, "Hey, I lost about 50 pounds following your nutrition plan. And then, my pain is gone. So, I no longer need your spine service anymore." So, in a way, I'm putting myself out of the job as a spine surgeon. And I was so excited for them.

And this one particular lady had a severe herniated disc in her thoracic spine. So, the only way we could get to her spine was basically doing a thoracotomy – cutting her chest open, deflating her lung, in order to gain access to the spine. So, I told her, "Give me three months. Just follow my protocol. All it is a whole food, plant-based nutrition. Walk an hour a day. And then, come back and see me in three months. If you still are a lot of pain at that time we can undergo surgery." That's when she came back and said, "I lost about 50 pounds. My husband lost about 70 pounds. And I no longer have pain. I don't need your service anymore."

Chris: That's amazing. I mean, it's so fantastic. And it just gets me excited because the body has a remarkable, miraculous ability to heal itself, if given the proper nutrients and care. And this is exactly what you're guiding your patients to do. And there are many physicians and surgeons who are very knife happy, very quick to put people under the knife. And spine surgery, that's a major surgery, right?

Dr. Won: It's big time. And because the majority of the spine surgeries in this country are still done as open back surgery. These days, only if you need the surgery and you failed all the treatments – and there are certain conditions where you do need the surgery – every patient should definitely look for a surgeon who can do it minimally invasively, so that you're not flayed open, creating a lot of bleeding and scar tissue and a

long-term healing process. But if you feed your body with the right nutrients, the majority of the patients will not need surgery. And even if you need surgery, you can recover so much faster with proper nutrition.

And I see most people take better care of their car than their own body. Right? If you drive an unleaded car, you're not going to put in diesel gas. And everyone knows why. Because it's going to break the car. But then, most people do know that the food that they eat is bad for them, but they continue to consume it. And then, when they get a heart attack or cancer or diabetes, "Oh my God, I'm so surprised. Why did I have to have a heart attack?" Well, it's because what you've been doing to yourself for 20, 30, 40, 50 years. Kids between age 12 to 14 years old, 65% of them already have early signs of atherosclerosis. So, what is your vascular system going to look like when you're in your 40s, 50s, and 60s.

Chris: It is amazing that atherosclerosis is starting so young – starting basically in children – just from our diet. The typical patient that comes to you with back problems that thinks they may need back surgery or needs surgery... Are they typically overweight?

Dr. Won: Well, many of them. And they perfectly fit the statistics of typical Americans. Because 80% of Americans are either overweight, obese, or severely obese. Right? Which leads to not only back problems and knee problems, but basically an extra pound in your gut/belly area is equivalent to seven pounds in your knee. So, it puts so much more pressure. So, those individuals with, let's say, knee pain and hip pain and back pain, if they were to lose a good amount of weight, all that pain would be gone. And many of them probably could avoid any kind of surgery or any other invasive procedures.

Chris: Well, that's really encouraging news, I think, for a lot of people watching or listening who have thought their back problems, their knee problems, their hip problems were irreversible. Right? And the truth is, your body can heal. But you have to make major changes. Right? The pain pills aren't going to heal it. And sometimes the surgery doesn't fix it either. Right?

Dr. Won: No. Not at all. They've done the study where they tore their meniscus and they had a meniscectomy, and when they compare that to physical therapy versus surgery, it didn't make any difference. Just like the recent paper even for the heart, where whether somebody has a cardiac cath or open heart surgery, it was no better than being treated with medicine. And lifestyle was the only thing that actually was able to reverse the disease, not just manage the disease. And so, same with the orthopedics. The majority of them, even you have the surgery, if you don't provide your body with the right nutrients to do heal it, how's that supposed to heal? And so, their recovery is going to be so much more difficult and longer. And a surgery that could have been successful, may not be. But

most importantly, many of them probably could have avoided surgery in first place.

Chris: It is amazing that just a plant-based diet and some exercise could turn something around so quickly. And you typically tell your patients to do that for three months?

Dr. Won: Yeah. And everyone, when they come in, that's one of the first things I talk about. Because in order to reduce the pain, you have to decrease the inflammation in your system. Patients have to fill out... They think it's weird. You're coming to an orthopedic surgeon or spine surgeon's office, and then there's a questionnaire asking: "What do you have for breakfast? What do you have for lunch? What do you have for dinner?" And most people are eating inflammatory food every single day. And a significant amount of saturated fat easy.

Chris: Three times a day. Right?

Dr. Won: Yeah. Three times a day, four times a day. And so, it's no wonder they're having so much pain. And I say, There's a way you can help... And only you can actually heal the body. I can only provide the information to you. And you have complete control." And so, then I provide them with the nutrition plan. And some of them think that I'm cuckoo and say, "How's eating better supposed to help with my back?" "Well, you are significantly overweight. But we can work on that. And then, you are eating food that causes a lot of inflammation. By decreasing the inflammation with nutrition and proper therapy and exercise, we should be able to really ease the pain and get you better." And some people buy into it. And several patients have basically walked out saying that I'm a crazy surgeon for recommending nutrition for their back problems or their knee problems. We have all different kinds. But the majority of the ones who really comply with our nutrition plan have been able to avoid big surgeries.

Chris: That's fantastic. I love that. So, I'd love to ask you also about stem cells and stem cell therapy. Because I know you're an expert in this. And would love for you to educate me and my audience on the role of stem cells in healing. The value of this therapy. What you've seen it help. What it doesn't make a difference for...

Dr. Won: Yeah, absolutely. And one thing I like to tell patients, and everyone in general, when it comes to stem cells, is to be cautious. Be skeptical. Because there's a tremendous amount of advertising and marketing that's done out in the community. Stem cell therapies are being done by chiropractors, nurse practitioners, people who are not scientists. Because it became a buzzword. Right now, the only clinical evidenced stem cell therapy is really orthopedic related. It can't cure autism. It can't cure Alzheimer's. It can't cure cancers. What is available within the

clinical setting. So, I want everyone to know to be cautious. If somebody is making over claims beyond orthopedics, it's basically a fraud.

So, in the orthopedic sense, when somebody has arthritis, when somebody has torn their ligaments or their tendons, what we're doing is harvesting their own stem cells from their bone marrow. Let's say somebody has leukemia. And then, they basically kill up all their stem cells and then they get the stem cell transplant from a donor. It's a similar concept. And we typically harvest the bone marrow from their ilium. And it's a minor procedure, but it's definitely a procedure where they get pretty sore. It can be done under local or a little light sedation, but it's a relatively short procedure. Once that's done, then we concentrate the specific type of cells, what we call mesenchymal cells – cells that have potential to turn into other cells.

But mostly what we're understanding is that they actually have something called the paracrine effect. They're sending out the message within that environment. They recognize, "Hey, this area is inflamed. This area is damaged." So, then it sends out the signal so other stem cells in that region can come and redevelop into specific types of cells so that it assists healing the tendons, ligaments, or cartilages. It doesn't completely replace it. And I'm sure in the future – maybe 10, 20 years from now – the technology will evolve even further. But right now, the extent of the stem cells is to assist your body to heal faster.

And in order to do so, also, it's not just a stem cells. And what we specifically counsel our patients is that you also have to provide your stem cells the right types of nutrients, so that it can develop into different types of cells. It can do its job by sending out the proper signals. And in order to, again as I mentioned before, activate the stem cells, you really need to boost the nitric oxide in your system, which is one of the key molecules that have shown to be critical, in order to activate them. And then only way most people are going to be able to elevate and boost their nitric oxide is through the nutrition. And that means you've got to eat the food that contains a lot of nitrates, which is in dark green leafy vegetables – like kale, spinach, arugula, bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, those types of food – six times a day, to really boost it.

And then, also, they have to have a proper microbiome in their mouth. And so, we definitely advise people not to utilize antiseptic mouthwash. Most people don't realize mouthwash has an association with cardiovascular disease. It's because you're not only killing bad bacteria, but you're also killing good bacteria that helps you reduce the nitrates into nitric oxide. The same goes with somebody... A lot of people these days, especially among a lot of meat eaters, they get acid reflux. And I used to have bad acid reflux. And within a month of going whole food plant-based, my acid reflux was gone. I was on two different kinds of medications. I had a difficult time sleeping at night because of the acid

reflux. Sometimes I would have to stop doing surgery because I thought I was having a chest pain, but it was really the acid reflux.

And then, most people are taking proton pump inhibitors like Nexium and Prilosec. Reducing the acid limits your ability to produce nitric oxide in your system. That's why the acid reducers also have associations with cardiovascular disease because it limits your ability to produce nitric oxide. So, for cardiovascular patients, I definitely ask them to stop using antiseptic mouthwash. Stop using acid reducers. And they say, "Well, what do I do?" "Well stop eating the things that are actually causing the acid reflux to begin with." And so, nitric oxide becomes one of the most important molecules for stem cell therapy.

Chris: Is there an association or accreditation certification of some kind that patients should look for when they're looking for stem cell therapy?

Dr. Won: Yeah. I think they should definitely, number one, be treated by a physician who's definitely trained. Ask for their certificates. Are they an MD or DO? And at least in Dallas, there's a tremendous amount of so-called stem cell therapy, which I do not believe that they get the materials from amniotic tissues. And then, they call it stem cell. FDA States that it is not a stem cell. You don't have to be FDA approved, but FDA recognizes that the bone marrow-derived tissues are considered the stem cell therapy. But these type of treatments are being done at the chiropractor's office. It's being done at med spas. So, people have to just think. Do you really think that something that is as complicated as stem cell therapy can be done at med spa settings or at the chiropractor's office? I'm a believer in chiropractors and the things they do, as long as it's done properly. So, I'm not knocking on chiropractors or any other healthcare providers. I just have a problem with people going beyond their training level and then providing the services to people that that really should not be doing. That's where I have a problem, especially in that type of setting. So, people just need to use their head and think about it. "Should I be getting stem cell therapy at a strip mall? At a med spa?" Right?

Chris: Yeah. I'm so glad you said that because I definitely have seen a fair share of sketchy stem cell therapy type adverts and things like that, which just made me feel a little uneasy. I've never had it done. And I've definitely heard some anecdotal testimonials of people that it helped with their knee or whatever. But yeah, that seems really important. Obviously work with a physician, a medical doctor, who's trained in it. Is there a particular association of stem cell therapy physicians?

Dr. Won: Yeah. So, there's several different types of associations. There's an interventional orthopedic society. So, if you're having orthopedic stem cell therapy, ask if they have any association with them. And there's also a national regenerative medicine society. So, ask those specific physicians what society they belong to. One is not necessarily better than

the other. But make sure that they're continuing to get the education and doing the research to provide the most up-to-date proper stem cell therapy.

Also, if somebody is really pushing you to do amniotic tissue therapy or umbilical cord, and they call that a stem cell... I mean, those do have an effect, but they're more of a growth factor. They're not stem cells. But a majority of them are marketing it as a stem cell therapy. And if they mention something like that and if they cannot harvest the bone marrow... It's ultimately the patient's choice what treatment they select. But if that physician cannot do bone marrow harvesting and then provide that type of mesenchymal stem cell therapy in their office, then you probably shouldn't have the treatment at that office.

Chris: What do you see, in terms of the future of stem cell therapy? I know you said there's a lot of research for orthopedics, but there's also a lot of claims about other types of treatments that are not really substantiated yet in the literature. I'm sure you're hearing things all the time. Like where do you think this is going?

Dr. Won: Yeah. I think more will be coming in the future. I still think we're about 10, 20 years away. I see a lot of people traveling to different parts of the world to get stem cell therapy. And right now the big fad is getting a treatment into their IV. What people don't realize is 98% of them get caught in their lungs, so it never goes to the rest of the body. And that's why you know that most of it is a scam. And it does not pass the blood/brain barrier. So, those cells cannot get to the brain. And how are you supposed to treat the Alzheimer's disease with those types of stem cells? They're selling false promises. However, a lot of research is being done. I think maybe in 10, 20 years, rather than stem cell therapy, I think a lot of it is going to be genetic therapy, which has a lot more promise. But you can put them all in the similar category of a regenerative medicine. So, it's less and less about stem cell therapy. And it's becoming more of different means of providing regenerative therapy.

But also, I want people to realize that nutrition also plays a significant role because we now understand there's something called epigenetics. And so, by having the proper lifestyle and nutrition, we can turn on and off the genes. And we have the ability to control it – not just for ourselves, but also for our offspring and then their offspring. So, I don't want people to forget about it. And if you're getting stem cell therapy, that's only half the game. Just like I tell people: if they have surgery, it is only half the game. It's what you do with it afterwards, through nutrition and rehab, that will definitely make it so much better.

Chris: Yeah. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to fix something or regenerate it if you're going to continue to damage it.

Dr. Won: Yeah, absolutely. That's what people are doing every single day. And even when you don't do it because we breathe oxygen and then we go outside, even when we eat, we are essentially damaging our body. Because we're constantly bombarded with oxidative stress. And that's why we have to make a great deal of effort to fuel our body so that it can heal itself.

Chris: I'm going to ask you just a couple of quick questions. Some fun ones, actually. What's your ideal breakfast, lunch, and dinner? If someone told you that you can only eat the same three meals every day for the rest of your life – breakfast, lunch, and dinner – what would that look like?

Dr. Won: Yeah. So, I have a pretty typical routine. The first thing I do when I wake-up in the morning is get a large glass of water or apple cider vinegar or different forms of vinegar. And then, I have a very large bowl of steel cut oatmeal. That's one of my favorite breakfasts. But it's actually what you add to it. And so, then I actually also add spinach, kale, and Swiss chard to it. Most people think it's weird adding green. I look for every opportunity to add greens to my diet. And then, I put turmeric, ginger, amla (which is an Indian gooseberry powder), hemp seeds, flax seeds, chia seeds. And then, I love spice. So, I add cayenne pepper and chili pepper. That is what my typical oatmeal looks like. Along with bananas and blueberries. And I also consume a lot of blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, or blackberries throughout the day. And so, that is my go to breakfast.

And then, my snack... Each day I make about 60 ounces of a smoothie. I call it Super Smoothie. It has about 18 to 20 different ingredients in it. And then, also there are a couple of ingredients that are going to help me fight the cancer cells, because that's how I really started this journey. And so, it has about 18 different ingredients. And I drink that throughout the day. And so, a lot of my diet is mostly raw. I love cooked foods. So, I do definitely eat them. But I try to consume at least 30 to 40 ounces of my smoothies every single day.

Chris: And what are some of the ingredients in the smoothie?

Dr. Won: Definitely the key ingredients are the greens. So, initially, I have the cruciferous vegetables. I want to take advantage of the sulforaphane. So, I make broccoli sprouts. I teach people how to make broccoli sprouts because it has one of the highest contents of the sulforaphane. It has kale, spinach, Swiss chard, and arugula. And that's the majority of my container. I have about a 60 ounce Vitamix container. I fill it up all the way to the top, and then I squeeze it down. Then I add flaxseeds, chia seeds, and hemp seeds, and walnuts for my healthy omega-3s. And then, I add the spices of turmeric, ginger, black pepper, and cinnamon. And then, of course, I add the berries. Mostly blueberries, but sometimes blackberries and strawberries.

All of these foods that I mentioned have the anti-cancer properties. And then, also, sometimes I use water or sometimes I use soy milk. And the soy milk that I get has only two ingredients, which is soy and water. And so, I don't get the soy milk that is mostly seen at the grocery store that has about 10 different ingredients. And I try with anything that comes in a box, I want to make sure it really minimizes the ingredients. And so, my soy milk has only two ingredients. And then, I also add different vegetables, like tomatoes. It's better cooked because the lycopene is more bioavailable. But for smoothies, it's raw. I add celery and carrot. And then, after that, it's for taste. So, I may add additional mango, banana, apple, pineapple, and cacao powder. So, a lot of ingredients.

Chris: That is a super smoothie. That sounds amazing. I love it.

Dr. Won: And it tastes great. But not only that. I know that it not only has a lot of anti-cancer properties, but it also allows me to heal my gut. Right? Because the gut microbiome is another essential element to achieving the optimal health to help you decrease inflammation, and then to provide your body with a lot of chemicals that are going to help you heal. And so, that's one of the first things that I really recommend to everyone. People say, "I have difficult time eating so much greens. I can't eat salad all day long." And I say, "Well, have it as a snack. But make yourself a large smoothie and then just sip it throughout the day."

Chris: That's great advice. And I'm glad you brought up gut health because probiotics are all the rage. There's thousands of probiotic brands and companies selling probiotics. And one of the best sources of probiotics, in terms of diverse probiotics, is raw fruits and vegetables. Like your smoothie. And I ate giant salads every day when I was trying to heal cancer, and giant smoothies full of fruits and vegetables. You won't get a more diverse array of bacteria from raw produce. And you don't have to buy a supplement.

Dr. Won: Absolutely. Because I think most of the probiotics that are out in the market are significantly under dosed. It doesn't really work. And I think people are wasting their money. Most importantly, you can get the probiotics from, like you said, raw fruits and vegetables. But also, you have to feed the microbiomes. You want to make them happy. Just like if you're hungry, you're not happy. Microbiomes, if they're hungry, they're not going to be happy. So, you have to feed them. Fiber is really not for you. Fiber is really for the microbiomes that are in your gut. And so prebiotics, which are the fibers, are what you need to feed them. And average Americans consume about 10 to 15 grams of fiber per day. And what I typically recommend to my patients is that you need to try to hit at least 70 grams of fiber per day.

And my goal for myself, which is difficult to do with the modern food, even whole food, is getting that 100 grams of fiber per day. That is my goal. And whether I hit it or not, at least I have a goal. And then, as you

mentioned, the African nations, many of them and the ones who consume between 100 to 150 grams of fiber, those are the ones who didn't have heart disease. Those are one who didn't have cancer. They're the one who didn't have obesity or diabetes. So, fiber is one of the key ingredients that we need to be consuming every day that provides all the healthy probiotics, as well as the prebiotics.

Chris: I'm a big fan of fiber, as well. And I typically get around 70 grams a day. Some days less, if I only eat two meals. But yeah, that's the same target for me. Fiber and starch feed the good bacteria. And so, you get two things in one with plant food. You get lots of raw fruits and vegetables. It gives you a diversity of bacteria. And then, the fiber in fruits and vegetables, and cooked vegetables, feeds that good bacteria and helps it to thrive and populate and crowd out the bad bacteria.

And I'll say one other thing. There's been several studies, and I imagine there will be more emerging, where they found that probiotic supplements actually had the opposite effect that they were intended to have. There's one particular study where they put patients on antibiotics, which kind of wipes out your gut bacteria. And then, they took half of them and they gave them a probiotic. And the other half they didn't give anything. And I don't want to misquote the study, but the gist of it was that the patients who didn't eat anything restored their gut bacteria in about a month or two. And the patients who took the probiotics, it took them way longer. I think it was four to six months to restore their gut bacteria.

Dr. Won: Oh wow.

Chris: And the reason is that the probiotics they took crowded out and prevented a more diverse population of bacteria to thrive in their gut. So, anyway, I know there's folks listening right now that are like, "Whoa, I've never heard of this. This is kind of crazy." I'll put links below the interview to those studies. So, everyone can click through and learn some things. But that really changed my opinion on probiotics. I went from being neutral on probiotics to being like, "Oh, wait a minute. They could actually cause you some problems."

I mean, just about any kind of supplements can potentially cause problems. And so, I think most people are reductionist and everyone's looking for that magic pill. And people forget that supplements are only supposed to supplement. They're not replacements. And they really need to do the right thing and then feed their body what they really need before trying to look for some magic pill that doesn't really exist.

I think supplements without changing your diet are largely a complete waste of money. The benefit will be minimal to none. But if you radically change your diet and then you add some key supplementation that you're not getting in your diet – like vitamin D for example; that actually

can be helpful for anybody, even with a bad diet – then then you're adding more fuel to the fire. And the likelihood that it'll help you is greater. And so, yeah, I appreciate that. I really appreciate your perspective. I'm just so thankful to connect with you.

I'm thankful for the wonderful work that you're doing. Like I said in the beginning of the interview, it's so great to have holistic minded, nutrition focused, medical doctors working with patients one-on-one. And, look, I get it. You're encouraging patients to do things that make you less money because you have a core conviction that you want to actually see them recover, versus just make as much money as fast as possible. And retire. And that's so wonderful. It's so admirable. And I know you're a shining example to a lot of medical doctors. And I have a fair amount of medical doctors that watch my interviews and listen to my podcasts, and I hope they're inspired by you and reach out and connect with you as well.

Dr. Won: Yeah. I hope it was helpful for many patients or listeners and even some of the other doctors. Because I think most doctors have really good intentions. And they go into medicine to help people and to heal people, because it is a very difficult process. If you just want to make money, there's so many easier ways to make money than being a doctor these days. And many doctors are really dissatisfied and unhappy because they had the right intention when they went in, but they're caught in the system. They work for big hospitals. Most independent physicians these days can't keep the door open because they are run over by the physician's group that's owned by the major hospital systems. Or insurance companies are now owning medical groups. Or medical distribution companies. And so, they're caught up in all the EMRs and bureaucracies.

And so, but most of them have great intentions. And our mission is also to help them. And then to unload some of them. And then we ask them, "Hey, if your patients are interested, have them come attend our free seminars." And then, we also help people find sources, like your organization. Especially people with cancer or somebody with diabetes. Because I'm only an orthopedic surgeon. Right? I know just enough to help guide them to the proper sources. But we love being that resource for the patients. I grew up most of my life, when I was young, with my father being a patient himself. And I know what it's like. And we want to be able to help those people who want to help themselves.

Chris: That's really what it boils down to. Some people don't want to change and can't be helped. But the ones that are willing to change are a tremendous joy and give you so much fulfillment to work with them and to see them transform their life and their health and get their enthusiasm and their joy back and their vigor and all those wonderful things. Get their life back. I know how debilitating chronic disease can be. And yeah, we've both got a big heart to help people. And so, I

appreciate you. Thank you, Dr. Won. This was absolutely fun. Fantastic. And I'm so glad we did it.

Everybody, I'll put links to connect with Dr. Won below this interview. If you're watching on YouTube, you can click the show notes. If you're watching on Chris Beat Cancer, it'll be just below the video. If you're listening to the podcasts, click the show notes. But we'll put links to the resources mentioned, links to Dr. Won, links to some of the studies I talked about, and a few other articles that will be interesting.

One other thing I wanted to mention that you reminded me of was two resources for practitioners and doctors. One is the Plantrition Organization, which is an organization of plant-based medical doctors. And you'd be surprised how many there are. It's growing probably every day. It's pretty fascinating. But I did an interview with the director and founder, Dr. Scott Stoll. And I'll link to that. And then, also I interviewed Dr. Pamela Wible. Do you know Pamela?

Dr. Won: Yes.

Chris: Yeah. She's amazing. Again, another plant-based medical doctor. But her big mission is to help prevent physician suicide, doctor suicide. And she has a doctor suicide hotline. And you alluded to this, but it is very difficult to be a physician. There's so much pressure. It's very hard to make a living. I mean, they're burning the candle at both ends, many, many physicians. And seeing 30 patients an hour. That's crazy. I mean, just from talking to and learning from Pamela and interviewing her, so many physicians are depressed and discouraged and disillusioned. The real life experience of practicing medicine is nothing like what they imagined when they signed up for med school. And a lot of them feel trapped and hopeless and take their lives. And actually the highest rate of suicide is in the medical profession. And so, anyway, those are two resources I'll link to in the show notes for anybody listening. Because all of this is related, obviously. But anyway, thanks again Dr. Won. This is awesome. Thanks for listening everyone. Please share this video with people you care about. Help us spread the message that the body can heal if given the proper nutrients and care. And that plant food is wonderful and amazing and can help you reverse chronic disease and prevent chronic disease. And we'll live to fight another day.

Dr. Won: Well, thank you again for having me on. It was great. It was so much fun, and hopefully it was helpful. And for most people, I'm pretty active on social media if they want to reach out. I answer them all myself. It's not some assistant who answers my social media. And a lot of people do reach out if they have questions. And I'd be happy to help and do anything I can to help people.

Chris: That's fantastic. Thank you, Dr. Won. Okay, everybody. Have a great day. See you on the next one. Bye-bye.

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