



Drunk Without Drinking

Introduction

Auto-brewery syndrome may sound like science fiction, but for patients struggling with chronic *Candida* overgrowth, the fermentation of sugar into alcohol in the gut can have very real, life-altering consequences. In this excerpt from *Conquering Candida*, Dean Mitchell, M.D., shares the true story of a woman whose unexplained “intoxication” was traced back to a common yet often-overlooked condition—and what it could mean for anyone battling persistent fatigue, brain fog and gut issues.

Conquering Candida Book Excerpt

by Dean Mitchell, M.D.

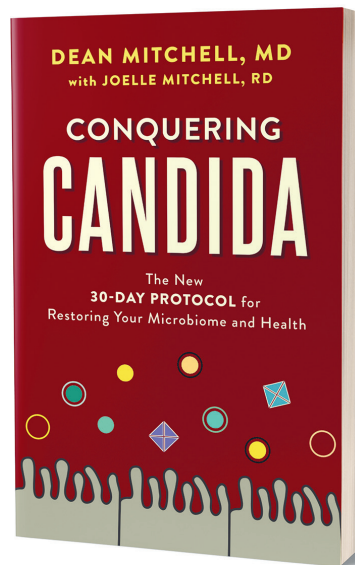
Jane was a busy mom to two young boys, 8 and 12 years old, a wife and an elementary school teacher. Her hectic life, however, seemed to be getting even harder to manage. She would find herself taking a mid-afternoon nap because she felt exhausted and needed it to get ready for the family dinner and children’s homework. She tried to fight the lethargy with a late afternoon snack of a candy bar and coffee, but it just seemed to make things worse.

Another strange thing was that when she went out to dinner on the weekend with her husband, she would have a glass of wine to unwind from the week. However, her husband noticed that she had barely drunk half her glass and was slurring her words and not following the conversation. He mentioned this to her on several occasions and she stopped drinking alcohol completely.

A few weeks before all this became obvious, Jane had a urinary tract infection that stubbornly persisted, requiring two rounds of a strong antibiotic, ciprofloxacin. The antibiotic set off her gastric reflux, and she self-medicated with over-the-counter Nexium for a month.

Things came to a head the following week: Jane was in a hurry to get home after teaching her class, but they held a small party for one of the children’s birthdays and there were delicious cupcakes, so she grabbed a few to eat in her car. While driving, she ate the cupcakes and started to notice her stomach bloating uncomfortably and her concentration becoming cloudy. Before she knew it, she had gone through a red light.

Out of nowhere, a police siren went off, and an officer pulled her



over asking for her license and registration. She apologized to the officer, but when she spoke, he had a frown on his face and asked, “Ma’am, have you been drinking?” Jane looked startled and said, “Of course not.” The officer then asked her to take an alcohol breath test, which she complied with—but failed miserably. She was given a ticket and a court date.

Jane was mortified: This was not only personally embarrassing, but what would her husband think? What about her principal at the school? When this happened a second time under similar circumstances, she knew she had to see her doctor.

Jane was fortunate her doctor knew her for years and believed her. In fact, he had read about a case like hers—but never seen one in all his years of practice—so he referred her to a gastroenterologist in town who he thought could prove she had a condition that was simulating her inebriation.

Jane went to see the gastroenterologist, who took her history and then set up a breath test while she ate a high-carbohydrate meal over several hours. The testing showed her breath alcohol levels skyrocketing after each subsequent meal—clearly without a drop of alcohol. How could this be? He explained she had a condition called auto-brewery syndrome.

Auto-brewery syndrome has been described as a gut-fermenting syndrome. In this condition, fermentation of ingested carbohydrates results in the production of alcohol in the body—without drinking any alcohol. It was first described in 1946 in a 5-year-old boy from South Africa. There were multiple cases described in Japan in the 1970s. In all these cases, the yeast *Candida* species was found to be the causative agent, where *Candida* overgrowing in the small intestine fermented the carbohydrates into alcohol.

In one cohort of patients with auto-brewery syndrome, all had recently been on antibiotics, and as I explained, these alter the gut microbiome. In addition, Jane’s use of the proton pump inhibitor Nexium was literally the “icing on the cupcake” to even further allow the

Candida to flourish.

Unfortunately, auto-brewery syndrome continues to be regarded as a myth or freak of nature and extremely rare. I say maybe not. Yes, auto-brewery may be an extreme on a spectrum of what *Candida* overgrowth can cause in a patient, but it is very real. Jane's case reminds us of the importance of keeping our gut microbiome balanced.

Dr. Dean Mitchell is a board-certified allergist and a pioneer in holistic immunology. As the founder of Mitchell Medical Group, he specializes in food allergies and sublingual immunotherapy. A podcast host and published author, he blends conventional and integrative care to treat root causes and educate patients on lasting wellness solutions.

Conquering Candida is available Oct. 28 from Healthwise Books ISBN: 979-8-218-74758-9. For more information and to order, visit MitchellMedicalGroup.com.

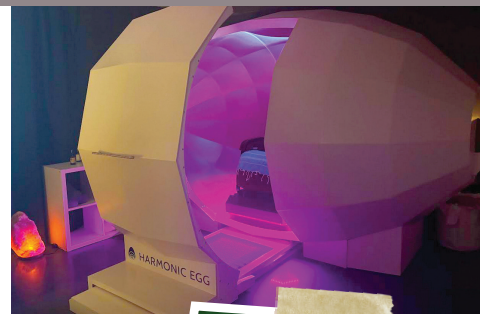
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