



Get to Know Your New Host Ginger Hultin MS, RDN, CSO (Ep – 34)

[00:00:00] **Ginger Hultin:** Welcome to the Good Clean Nutrition podcast. I'm your new host, Ginger Hultin, a registered dietitian nutritionist. Today, I wanted to introduce you to our show's producer, Katy Klein. She's here to ask me some questions about my background and my life so that you can get to know me better. Okay, Katy, fire away.

[00:00:15] **Katy Klein:** Hi, Ginger. Thanks for having me. I'm really excited to ask you some questions and get to know you a little bit. Let's start with how you got into this work and became a registered dietitian. I understand it all ties into your childhood and picking blackberries with your grandmother.

[00:00:29] **Ginger Hultin:** Food and cooking is really, really important in my family. When I was a child, we would grab these big ladders and go into the tall sticker bushes and get all prickled up in your arms while you're trying to pick, like, all these berries. Big Buckets. And then we'd make blackberry and raspberry jam. And that was just always really important. Huge family dinners.

[00:00:47] **Ginger Hultin:** All these specialty foods. And so as a child, the joy was getting together with family and cooking and eating and creating food together, really. And my mom also was a really amazing cook. And I always was in the kitchen with her growing up and we'd always do Christmas cookies and cinnamon rolls and make dinners and breakfasts and it was just a huge part of my life growing up and I really believe as a registered dietitian in the joy of food and the connection between food and family and it's a very important part of nutrition for me.

[00:01:16] **Katy Klein:** It seems like food has always been a big part of your life, even though you didn't get your undergrad degree in nutrition.

[00:01:22] **Ginger Hultin:** I was an English major at University of Washington, but I didn't know what I wanted to do with it. And so I sort of bopped around for a little while, and I'm so happy that I worked in restaurants, because restaurants and working there made me understand people's passion and relationship to food, and the importance that it plays in our culture.

[00:01:38] **Ginger Hultin:** And so eventually I did find my way into nutrition. I ended up getting my master's degree in nutrition. I brought with that a lot of unique background that really has to do with the passion of food and nutrition.

[00:01:49] **Katy Klein:** The restaurant scene in Seattle is pretty incredible. What kind of restaurants did you work in?

[00:01:54] **Ginger Hultin:** Gosh, I've worked in a lot of different places. I've worked in a few big like Pacific Northwest places that served a lot of seafood and salads things like that. For the longest I was actually working in like a Mexican fusion restaurant. And that was really, really fun, really joyful and vibrant. I actually also helped open a sushi restaurant here in Seattle. And so I got to learn about sushi, which I didn't know much about before that experience.

[00:02:16] **Katy Klein:** It seems like being a dietitian would be pretty different from your work in the restaurant industry.

[00:02:21] **Ginger Hultin:** Being a dietitian is so fun because it can be a lot of different things. So a lot of people think that we are the quote unquote food police and that we put people on diets and that we take things away from people. So much so that some people I think have a really negative connotation with registered dietitians, but in fact, really, a lot of us got into the industry because we love food, and that's certainly true for me. I wanted to learn more about it. I saw people's relationship to it. But what I love about my job is now I get to get into the nitty gritty details of like, hey, maybe you do have a symptom or something that's bothering you, and I know how to fix it.

[00:02:54] **Katy Klein:** Even though you developed this passion for food working in restaurants, I understand it was actually your background as a personal trainer that pushed you to get your master's degree.

[00:03:02] **Ginger Hultin:** I was a personal trainer for a really long time, in my 20s I would say, pretty much just because I love fitness and I love helping people like learn more about fitness and to do it right and to have good form.

[00:03:13] **Ginger Hultin:** That's a huge passion of mine. We were at a big staff meeting once when I was a personal trainer and our manager told us that we should put nutritionist on our business cards. And I just remember thinking to myself, that doesn't sound quite right. Like, nutrition is very interesting to me and I like talking about it, but I didn't have any training at all.

[00:03:33] **Ginger Hultin:** I had a lot of fitness training that was great, but they just said in Washington state there's no laws that regulate the word nutritionist. I knew that I didn't want to do that. I know that it wasn't right and I didn't want to put nutritionist on my business card because that didn't seem honest. I actually ended up getting out of the fitness industry and I went back to school after that.

[00:03:49] **Katy Klein:** So on that note, there are a lot of titles in the world of health and wellness. What is the difference between a nutritionist and a registered dietitian?

[00:03:56] **Ginger Hultin:** So I am a registered dietitian nutritionist. There is a really easy way to remember the difference between a registered dietitian and a nutritionist, and it's that all registered dietitians are nutritionists, but not all nutritionists are registered dietitians.

[00:04:13] **Ginger Hultin:** So what you really want is a registered dietitian nutritionist because they're the ones that have to have a degree in nutrition, they have to do supervised practice, they have nutrition knowledge, they have oversight and credentials. Nutritionist on its own doesn't tell you what you need to know. Any person can say they're a nutritionist.

[00:04:34] **Ginger Hultin:** There's no requirements. There's no organization that's looking up over it. So really, this is about consumer protection. If you need somebody that is qualified and credentialed to do nutrition and has a degree in nutrition, then you need a registered dietitian nutritionist like me.

[00:04:51] **Katy Klein:** It's so good to get some clarity on that because as a consumer, it can be really confusing.

[00:04:56] **Katy Klein:** So now you're in a doctorate program for clinical nutrition. What interested you in pursuing that advanced degree?

[00:05:02] **Ginger Hultin:** The reality is, nutrition research changes. And so I started to realize, even though I've been practicing for over a decade, there's so much that I, that I never learned. Uh, nutrigenomics, genetics in general, microbiome.

[00:05:16] **Ginger Hultin:** Even anti-inflammatory diet, those aren't things that we were deeply discussing when I was in school, not super long ago, and so I just know that I want to keep up with the current research. I want to contribute to research, and so I saw a doctorate as a way to get there. Some of the things that I'm most excited to learn about in my doctoral program are just the intricacies and complexities of clinical nutrition.

[00:05:40] **Ginger Hultin:** So We get a lot of flexibility in my program. I get to choose things that I'm interested in, and things that I know about, and dive deeper. And that's really why I'm there. And I also want to be called Dr. Ginger.

[00:05:52] **Katy Klein:** Dr. Ginger. That does have a nice ring to it. There is a lot of contradictory nutrition information on social media right now. And given your background and the fact that you are in the doctorate program, immersed in all the research, how do you approach that?

[00:06:07] **Ginger Hultin:** Nutrition is science and I think that's an unsexy thing, right? Because it's not glamorous and it's not that there's one thing that's going to fix it and there's not one superfood that's going to make it better.

[00:06:19] **Ginger Hultin:** It's really this long term, big picture approach and there's so much amazing research on nutrition but you have to be able to interpret it correctly. And a lot of people push me to oversimplify my advice or nutrition in general, and you really can't do that. There's so much quick fix and like, do this or that online.

[00:06:40] **Ginger Hultin:** Carbs are great, carbs are bad, eggs are good, eggs are bad. I could give a hundred examples, but it's not that simple.

[00:06:48] **Katy Klein:** That's something I really appreciated about your conversation with Mary and about the podcast in general. We aren't here to oversimplify. We're here to talk through the science. You're also a board certified specialist in oncology nutrition. What was it like working in that field?

[00:07:02] **Ginger Hultin:** I'm so excited about working with oncology because people come my way and they're so lost and confused and they're actually suffering greatly and I know that I can make it better. There's so much clear evidence that nutrition helps reduce side effects, helps keep people out of the hospital, keeps people in treatment and just improves their quality of life and over and over and over my clients tell me that's so and I just see them say all the time, you know, I have my life back, I can do things with my family again, and to me, that's what it's all about. I can't just talk about food, actually, as a dietitian. Of course, it's my background, it's a staple of what we do, but I have to ask you about your stress management, sleep, what your relationships are like, what your treatment schedule is, how we're going to control side effects, what the side effects are. What kind of supplements you're taking, what kind of activity you're doing. There's just so many different aspects and so I think nutrition ends up becoming this web that interconnects so many things.

[00:08:03] **Katy Klein:** I know your background in oncology also relates to how you found Orgain.

[00:08:10] **Ginger Hultin:** When I was in the Integrative Cancer Center, I first discovered Orgain. It wasn't very long after it was created actually. My story is so similar to Dr. Abraham's. Because he was on the patient side, he wasn't feeling well, and he was getting these regular ready made shakes and he was looking at the ingredients and saying, this isn't what I want to put in my body. And I was on the practitioner side and my patients were coming to me and saying, look at this.

[00:08:33] **Ginger Hultin:** This can't be good for me. I don't want to drink this. And so that's when as a pretty early on practitioner, I started looking around and I started recommending Orgain a long time ago. Uh, I love the ingredients and I love the product and I recommend it all the time. When the opportunity came up to partner with them and do this project together, I was really excited.

[00:08:51] **Katy Klein:** Beyond oncology, what does your registered dietitian practice look like?

[00:08:54] **Ginger Hultin:** Yeah, my specialty outside of oncology is still complexity. That's just, I think, where I shine, and people that come to me and say, I don't know what's wrong with me, but I don't feel well, and it's been going on for a long time. Uh, some of my passion is autoimmune disease, GI issues, lowering inflammation through nutrition, and that really touches a lot of different conditions and disease states.

[00:09:17] **Katy Klein:** That's fascinating. I can't wait to dig into that more in upcoming episodes. Are there any tips you find yourself telling every client?

[00:09:24] **Ginger Hultin:** It's hard because all my clients are very different and they're coming to me working on very different things like one person might be in cancer treatment while another person's trying to get ready to run a marathon, but there are a few themes in general I am trying to get people to drink more water on my intake form I always say how much water do you drink and I mean a lot of people write like two cups three cups. Like people are really not meeting their needs and of course that comes with a caveat. A lot of people are drinking enough water.

[00:09:51] **Ginger Hultin:** Some people are drinking too much water and that's definitely possible. So I'll always ask you about your water intake, but most people are really not doing themselves any favor in the water department. Another thing that I think people might be surprised because I don't talk pure nutrition and food all the time.

[00:10:05] **Ginger Hultin:** I'm forever trying to get people to focus more on their sleep. Sleep affects your hormones, your energy, your detoxification, your cellular health in such powerful ways. So I actually work a lot on people's sleep schedules, sleep supplements, their eating behavior in the evening and afternoon, their family structure, uh, their bedroom environments.

[00:10:26] **Ginger Hultin:** Like as a dietitian, I talk about all that stuff a lot. And the final thing is I talk to people a lot about being more active. And of course, some people I'm trying to get to be less active, so there's a big spectrum. But generally, I set a lot of goals around being more physically active in ways that people really enjoy that they can stick with long term.

[00:10:43] **Katy Klein:** Those are really great benchmarks to keep in mind. When it comes to sleep, do you have any routines that have been helpful?

[00:10:49] **Ginger Hultin:** One thing that is important to me for sleep is to try and be consistent with it. And that has been really hard in my life over time, just traveling a lot and being in school so much.

[00:10:58] **Ginger Hultin:** But honestly, if I can be consistent about when I sleep and wake up, that's very, very powerful. And there's a lot of research to support that too. I also cannot drink caffeine after like 9 a.m. That's not a good fit for me and it'll keep me up. So I just know that about myself. And I also don't, um, I don't like to eat late at night.

[00:11:14] **Ginger Hultin:** I find that can be kind of disruptive. So I'm a person that will do better with not doing like late night snacking. And I find that to be a pretty strong trend with most people that I work with.

[00:11:23] **Katy Klein:** I wonder if you have any tips on how to make lasting sustainable change, whether that be in your diet or lifestyle.

[00:11:31] **Ginger Hultin:** At the beginning of the year, people are really excited to reflect on what happened in the last year and to look ahead. And there's a lot of chatter about what, what are my goals? What am I going to change this year? And what kind of health? do I want to implement into my life? But the biggest thing I would say so that it can actually stick and you can actually change your life is to just stop diet tips and tricks.

[00:11:52] **Ginger Hultin:** And that can be related to weight loss or just what I would call broad picture fads. I call it the easy way out. You have to put in the work is how I see it. And so I help my clients move away from all or nothing to more flexible thinking. And to me as a dietitian, that's one of the most important ways to actually create lasting change.

[00:12:13] **Ginger Hultin:** For example, I have a client that just said, I really should be working out five days a week. Like that's, what's going to be best for me, but right now I'm at two. And so I'm going to jump to four. And I said, can we please start with three? So I just really like to talk to people about what is realistic for your life.

[00:12:28] **Ginger Hultin:** How does this fit in? Where is the value? What does it look like? And we actually work on a schedule together. So taking it in incremental steps and looking at your year as a whole, where you can start now and work your way up, is gonna be so much better for your mental health and make it more realistic to actually be in a different place at the end of the year.

[00:12:47] **Katy Klein:** I also know you have a passion for inclusive eating. How does that play into sustainable change?

[00:12:52] **Ginger Hultin:** When I get interviewed about nutrition, nine times out of ten, maybe ten times out of ten, the first question is, what do I not do? What's pro inflammatory? What should I not eat? That's really, really where I think we're focused as a society.

[00:13:06] **Ginger Hultin:** But my big focus is, what can we bring in that's gonna benefit health instead of what can I cut out? Most, if not all, foods can fit. We can't just look at foods as an individual because they work together. We need to look at your whole day, your whole week, and your whole life.

[00:13:23] **Katy Klein:** What are some of the foods we should think about adding in this year?

[00:13:25] **Ginger Hultin:** It's so important to think about the power of adding foods in. It's just, there's so much you can do with it. This is pretty obvious, I would say. But studies clearly show, and probably most of you know, and I'm working out myself, more veggies. We just need to be eating more veggies. Most people vastly under eat veggies, and a lot of people are like, well, I like fruit way more than veggies, um, which is sort of like by design, right?

[00:13:50] **Ginger Hultin:** Fruit's very palatable and sweet, and fruit is great. But I always tell my clients, let's just have more veggies in the diet. That's like my general rule of thumb.

And really you want to look at all the different colors and different varieties and really get creative and mix it up and be eating veggies multiple times every day.

[00:14:05] **Katy Klein:** I'm sensing a color theme here and it seems you can have a lot of fun getting a well balanced meal.

[00:14:10] **Ginger Hultin:** The different colors in veggies and fruits indicate actually different antioxidants in that food. And so, like, when you eat a red tomato, you get lycopene, or when you eat an onion, you get quercetin, for example.

[00:14:24] **Ginger Hultin:** Uh, the other day, I was making a recipe with a turnip, and I was like, I don't cook with turnips very often, so I went in and I tried to find a turnip, and they're so cool looking, and then I was, like, cutting it up, and it's, like, tougher than a carrot, so I was just, like, learning as I was experiencing it, and so I tell people to, like, go in and pick out of something they don't know what it is or bring your kids in and be like, what looks interesting to you?

[00:14:45] **Ginger Hultin:** And it's a really great way to start to experiment and learn. Other thing that I think people really should add into their diets more is whole grains. You know, you hear that, oh, it's good fiber. I don't know if everyone realizes what whole grains are. And then a lot of people don't want to do that because whole grains are quote unquote carbs.

[00:15:03] **Ginger Hultin:** And we still are living in a little bit of a carb phobic society, in my experience. And when I get people to increase whole grains, they often feel better, they have more energy, their gut health is better. Gut health is such a big topic right now. Gut health is really, really hot right now, and I think we're going to see a lot of chatter about this year, and I hope we get some fun guests on the podcast about all things gut health.

[00:15:27] **Ginger Hultin:** You can change your gut microbiome, and so your gut microbiome is this gigantic organism that you have living in your gut that makes all sorts of things for us like vitamins and helps our immune system and even plays a role in our mood. So it's really, really important. And there's a lot of evidence that shows if you eat more plant food, especially fiber foods, that gives the gut bacteria the environment that they need to do well.

[00:15:53] **Ginger Hultin:** So what you want to have is a lot of diversity of gut bacteria and you want to be nurturing them along with lots of plant foods. So it's not like you have to be like a vegan or vegetarian, but eating more plant foods and less meat, typically what is what we see in the research for better gut environment.

[00:16:09] **Katy Klein:** You've also told me that nutrition science is always changing and always evolving. I wonder if there's any new nutrition research that you've incorporated into your life?

[00:16:18] **Ginger Hultin:** I've made a big pivot because I used to go by a different name other than Ginger Holton nutrition. I actually used to be called Champagne Nutrition because I love drinking wine and I love like going out and that culture of it.

[00:16:34] **Ginger Hultin:** And I've done a lot of like wine classes. I thought I wanted to become a sommelier at one point. That was a huge passion of mine. And I think my friends think of me that way. But as the nutrition research has been changing about alcohol, I'm starting to shift that as well. So that's just been this big thing.

[00:16:50] **Ginger Hultin:** I've rebranded from Champagne Nutrition to Ginger Holton Nutrition. So I think that my friends would say, oh, she's really into wine and going out. But that started to shift.

[00:17:02] **Katy Klein:** How does that shift play out in your day to day?

[00:17:02] **Ginger Hultin:** I don't think that there's been as big of a nutrition trend shift as drinking less alcohol.

[00:17:09] **Ginger Hultin:** In my day to day, I'm just thinking about connecting with people in different ways and the role that alcohol plays in my life and how it plays a role in stress management, how it hurts or helps my workout. So I think I'm doing what a lot of people are doing right now, which is assessing what alcohol means to me and that's been a big shift because I think for a lot of people it's an identity.

[00:17:29] **Ginger Hultin:** It's a nutrition research that's shifting it for me but I think it's also just life and culture and getting older.

[00:17:35] **Katy Klein:** Speaking of getting older, how do you think about aging personally and as it relates to being a dietitian?

[00:17:40] **Ginger Hultin:** When you're a dietitian, you think and talk about aging a lot. And also right now there's a huge interest in longevity and the role of nutrition and genetics and what that looks like.

[00:17:52] **Ginger Hultin:** Um, my grandma lived to be over 100 and being 100 is kind of a goal of mine. And so I have to work, I have to work hard to do the nutrition right and do the fitness right and do the social connection right, all the blue zone stuff to get there. But you don't want to age. In a way that's just simply aging.

[00:18:10] **Ginger Hultin:** It's like, you don't want to live just to live. It's like, you want to do it well. And I think, I think about that a lot when it comes to nutrition.

[00:18:17] **Katy Klein:** Did your grandma have any secrets or wisdom for living to be over 100? I'm taking notes.

[00:18:21] **Ginger Hultin:** You know what's so funny about my grandma being so old? She didn't do anything special.

[00:18:27] **Ginger Hultin:** She just didn't. She didn't particularly exercise. She didn't eat any special diet. Um, when you look at the research on aging and longevity, one thing that shows

up really clearly around the whole world is social connection. And I think that's what she did really well. Like she had a very big purpose in her life and it was family and community.

[00:18:44] **Ginger Hultin:** So I think that's a really great focus.

[00:18:47] **Katy Klein:** I love that we're talking about community as part of the wellness picture, you know, goes beyond just the foods we eat, even though that is a really big piece of the puzzle. On that note, you follow a plant-based diet, right?

[00:19:01] **Ginger Hultin:** I do follow, I would say, a mostly plant-based diet.

[00:19:04] **Ginger Hultin:** I have, for a really long time, I have a background of being the president of the vegetarian dietetic practice group and really being in that world. I will say that I'm very diet open minded and what I do for myself isn't what I recommend for all people, though there's a lot of great evidence for plant based.

[00:19:21] **Ginger Hultin:** Um, people will come to me and say, I want to work with you, but I don't want to be vegan or I don't want to be vegetarian. And I say, great, you don't have to be. Um, but I am, and I've been plant based for pretty much my whole life. Some of my earliest memories are wanting to not eat meat.

[00:19:36] **Katy Klein:** What is the meal you've made for yourself a million times?

[00:19:38] **Ginger Hultin:** One of my most favorite go to meals is I make these lasagna roll ups. So instead of a regular lasagna, you take each individual noodle and you put your mixture on it and then you roll it up and bake it. And that is awesome.

[00:19:52] **Katy Klein:** That sounds delicious. So Ginger, are you one of those people that makes New Year's resolutions? And if so, did you make any for 2024?

[00:20:01] **Ginger Hultin:** For me, it's more about what do I want to see shift in my life, and where do I want to put my focus. I started doing morning workouts at the middle of this past year, and it was really easy when it was super light out in the morning, and now it's super dark and rainy out in the morning. So I think one thing I really want to stick with is morning workouts into the dark wets of Seattle.

[00:20:21] **Katy Klein:** Okay, Ginger, here is my last question. What else are you looking forward to in the coming year?

[00:20:28] **Ginger Hultin:** 2024 for me is really about getting outside my comfort zone and learning and trying new things. So, of course, I'm moving to the research portion of my doctorate degree, and so I'm just gonna get some really fun mentors and push myself outside of clinical nutrition and into a really new realm of learning, nutrition.

[00:20:45] **Ginger Hultin:** And I'm very excited about that because the more you know about research, the better dietician you're going to be for sure. But the other really big

learning and growth and excitement for me really is this show, you know, that's a huge part of my 2024. And I'm really looking forward to hosting this show and talking to all the researchers and doctors and healthcare professionals.

[00:21:04] **Ginger Hultin:** We are going to tackle some really, really exciting topics, cutting edge stuff that you definitely have questions about. And I just want to get some answers and some myths busted and bring you really evidence based, interesting nutrition that is very relevant to your life right now.

[00:21:25] **Ginger Hultin:** Thanks for listening to this episode of the Good Clean Nutrition podcast. To stay up to date on the latest podcast episodes, be sure to subscribe. And if you want to submit a voice message with a question or comment about the show, please visit healthcare.orgain.com/podcast to record your message. And if you like this podcast, I'd love for you to let us know. You can rate and review this show on Spotify and Apple podcasts, or you can give us a thumbs up on YouTube if you're watching right now.

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