



**The Good Clean Nutrition Podcast
Episode 20 Show Notes**

Episode 20: The Environment and Human Health Connection with Rupa Marya, MD

Welcome to today's episode of *The Good Clean Nutrition Podcast*, hosted by integrative dietitian and nutrition educator Mary Purdy. Each episode provides healthcare practitioners and health-minded consumers expert information on current and trending topics. In this episode we are joined by Dr. Rupa Marya to explore the connection between environmental toxins, food systems, and human health.

Dr. Rupa Marya is a physician and Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. She earned her medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine and completed her residency in internal medicine at UCSF. She is the founder and executive director of the Deep Medicine Circle, a worker-directed nonprofit whose mission is healing the wounds of colonialism through food, medicine, restoration, story and learning. She is the cofounder of the Do No Harm Coalition and co-author with Raj Patel of *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice*.

The episode begins with Dr. Marya sharing what initially sparked her interest in the impact of environmental toxins on human health. She goes on to talk about environmental toxicants, which can include anything in the environment from air pollution to pesticide residues in fields to dietary chemicals and more. In her book *Inflamed*, she explains how inflammation is related to these stressors. Simply maintaining a good diet and exercising is not always enough to prevent chronic inflammation if the issue is in the environment.

Dr. Marya explains that damage caused by multiple repeated exposures to various toxicants can lead to early aging of cells. Chronic inflammation, she explains, is the immune system's response to repeated exposures. Once a wound is healed, the inflammation goes away. However, we may pick up toxins through the air, water, debt or lack of healthy food access, giving damage signals to our immune system and prolonging inflammation. Thus, the body's healing response actually becomes the cause for damage. We now know that cancer is an inflammatory disease. Deep medicine is understanding the historical and political structures which have allowed classist poisoning to continue.

The conversation shifts as Dr. Marya offers advice for listeners on how we can reverse this reality. She believes results are achieved when we let go of individualistic mindset and help the farm workers in our communities to get them access to clean water and living, get involved in policy, get engaged and get organized. She says that ultimately, the work is at the level of policy, so that everyone can have the opportunity to be healthy. Physicians can play an important role because they have the privilege to be at the bedside and are able to witness how these social phenomena are manifesting in peoples' bodies in real time. She suggests the need to hear the real stories and ask questions behind what's happening before more research and policy can take place.

As the episode wraps up, she briefly touches on agroecology as a step past regenerative agriculture, and her latest initiative she calls farming as medicine. Finally, she offers valuable advice on taking the first step towards making a difference in the areas touched on today.



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Connect with Dr. Rupa Marya on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#), and visit her [website](#).

Check out [Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice](#).

Learn more about the [Deep Medicine Circle](#) and [Do No Harm Coalition](#).

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