FOOD
THE AUTOIMMUNE SOLUTION
By Dr. Mark Hyman
DISCLAIMER: The content of this book is based on research conducted by Hyman Enterprises, LLC, unless otherwise noted. The information is presented for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose or prescribe for any medical or psychological condition, nor to prevent, treat, mitigate or cure such conditions. The information contained herein is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a doctor or qualified healthcare professional. Therefore, this information is not intended as medical advice, but rather a sharing of knowledge and information based on research and experience. Hyman Enterprises, LLC encourages you to make your own health care decisions based on your judgment and research in partnership with a qualified healthcare professional.

Please do not stop, adjust, or modify your dose of any prescribed medications without the direct supervision of your healthcare practitioner.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. The information in this book is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.
THE PROBLEM ......................................................................................................................................................... 3–8

Isabel’s Story .......................................................................................................................................................... 3
The Problem with Our Approach to Autoimmune Disease ................................................................. 4
The Truth About Autoimmunity .......................................................................................................................... 5
Functional Medicine: Treating Causes, Not Symptoms ........................................................................... 6
From Conventional Illness to Functional Health .................................................................................... 6

THE SOLUTION ..................................................................................................................................................... 9–16

The 9 Steps to Reverse Autoimmune Disease ............................................................................................ 9
Eating Fat Reduces Inflammation and Autoimmune Disease ............................................................... 9
The Autoimmune Protocol ............................................................................................................................... 11
The 10-Day Detox Diet .................................................................................................................................. 12
Exercise ............................................................................................................................................................... 13
Stress Reduction ............................................................................................................................................... 13
Sleep .................................................................................................................................................................. 14
Supplements ..................................................................................................................................................... 16

CONCLUSION ...................................................................................................................................................... 17
Autoimmune diseases, when taken all together, become a HUGE health burden. Among these include rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, celiac disease, and thyroid disease. They often include weird, hard-to-classify symptoms like inflammation, pain, swelling, and misery.

But what are autoimmune diseases? Well, our immune system is our defense against invaders. Imagine your immune system as an army that must clearly distinguish friend from foe.

Autoimmunity occurs when our immune system gets confused and our own tissues get caught in friendly crossfire. Our body is fighting something, whether that's infections, toxins, allergens, or a stress response. Somehow, that immune army redirects its hostile attack on us. Our joints, brains, skin, and sometimes our whole body become casualties.

This whole concept is called molecular mimicry. Conventional medicine accepts this problem, but they stop there. They don’t actually look for what might create the problem. They don’t dig to find out which molecules our cells are mimicking.

As my teacher Sid Baker says, if you are standing on a tack, it takes a lot of aspirin to make it feel better.

Using anti-inflammatories like Advil, or steroids, or immune suppressants like methotrexate, or the new TNF-alpha blockers like Enbrel, can lead to intestinal bleeding, kidney failure, depression, psychosis, osteoporosis, muscle loss, and diabetes, not to mention overwhelming infection and even cancer.

Don’t get me wrong. These drugs can be lifesaving and help people get their life back, but they miss the point. There is another way to deal with this.

**ISABEL’S STORY**

Isabel, a cute 10-year-old girl from Texas who loved riding horses, walked into my office a year and a half ago with one of the most severe cases of autoimmune disease I had ever seen. Her face was swollen, her joints were swollen, her immune system was attacking her entire body, including her muscles, her skin, her joints, her blood vessels, her liver, and her white and red blood cells.

Isabel couldn’t squeeze her hand or make a fist. The tips of her fingers and toes were perpetually cold from Raynaud’s disease. She had been suffering from rashes that burned and irritated her skin for years. She was tired and miserable and was losing her hair.

Isabel was on elephant doses of intravenous steroids every three weeks just to keep her alive, and she was taking prednisone, aspirin, acid blockers, and methotrexate, a chemotherapy drug used to shut down the immune system daily.

Despite these medication mega-doses, she still wasn’t getting any better, and her lab tests were still abnormal. Her doctors wanted to add another powerful immune suppressing drug (a TNF-alpha blocker) to the regimen of medication she was already taking. This drug increases the risk of cancer and death from overwhelming
infection, because it prevents the immune system from fighting infections normally. The inflammation slows down, thus the autoimmune symptoms may abate, but you are at risk for cancer and infection.

Disturbed by these possibilities and disgusted with conventional approaches that weren’t working, her parents brought her to see me.

Two months after I first saw Isabel and discovered and treated the underlying causes of her inflammation—after, as she says, she “stopped eating gluten, dairy, and sugar and took some supplements”—she was symptom free. In less than a year, she was completely healthy, her blood tests were normal, and she was off all her medication.

THE PROBLEM WITH OUR APPROACH TO AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

What are the implications for research on autoimmune disease and our approach to treating these disorders, which now affect over 24 million Americans and five percent of the population in Western countries?

These diseases include type 1 diabetes, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, colitis, Crohn’s disease, and dozens of others, but they have one thing in common: the body attacks itself. Is there another way to treat these problems than powerful immune suppressive drugs that put patients at increased risk of infection and death?

Historically, medical discoveries originated from physicians’ keen observation of their patients’ diseases and responses to treatment. Doctors reported their findings to their colleagues or published them as case studies.

Today these “case studies” are often dismissed as “anecdotes” and have become increasingly irrelevant. Instead, we now focus on randomized controlled trials as the only standard of “evidence.” Sadly, this dismisses the experience of thousands of patients and physicians as they apply new scientific findings to treat difficult conditions.

Basic scientific discoveries often take decades to be translated into medical practice. Unfortunately, this prevents millions from accessing therapies that could benefit from them now.

The determining factor in deciding whether to try a new approach with a patient is the risk/benefit equation. Is the treatment more likely to help than harm? How risky is the treatment? What are the side effects? How dangerous or risky is the current approach to a problem? How debilitating or life threatening is the disease being treated?

These questions should lead us to reasonable answers about the safest interventions to try. However, there are some fundamental underlying misconceptions about the manifestation of chronic illness and our current approach to treating it that lead us awry when attempting to answer these questions.
THE AUTOIMMUNE SOLUTION: THE PROBLEM

Except for treating infections with antibiotics and treating trauma, medicine today approaches most disease by suppressing, covering over, blocking, or otherwise interfering with the body’s biology. We generally do not attempt to seriously address the underlying problems that lead to the disease in the first place.

Cholesterol medications, to provide one example, block an enzyme that produces cholesterol (among other important molecules like CoQ10), but they don’t address why cholesterol may be high in the first place (factors like diet, exercise, stress, and genetics). Doctors use beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, SSRI's (serotonin reuptake inhibitors), ACE-inhibitors, antibiotics, and anti-inflammatories the same way.

We are inhibiting, blocking, or “anti-ing” everything. But we don’t ask one simple question:

*Why is the body out of balance and how do we help it regain balance?*

There is a new approach to medicine that is beginning to ask these questions.

Conventional medicine often addresses autoimmune disease by powerful immune suppressing medication rather than searching for the cause. That’s like taking a lot of aspirin while you are standing on a tack. The treatment is not more aspirin or a strong immune suppressant, but removing the tack.

If you are one of the millions of Americans who suffers from an autoimmune condition than I’m sure you are eager to find answers that rely less on risky pharmaceuticals and more on lifestyle remedies.

Conventional approaches don’t have a method for finding the insult causing the problem. You may have been prescribed megadoses of intravenous steroids or prednisone, hormones, painkillers, acid blockers, methotrexate, or TNF-alpha blockers (a strong immunosuppressant drug) for your autoimmune condition and are not getting relief. In fact, you might be feeling worse and discovered my work with Functional Medicine hoping to resolve your condition via diet and lifestyle.

THE TRUTH ABOUT AUTOIMMUNITY

Over 80 diseases have been classified as autoimmune and the list is growing. Some of the more common autoimmune diseases include Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, celiac disease, multiple sclerosis, inflammatory bowel disease, and type 1 diabetes.

While all the above are different autoimmune conditions, at their root they are all connected by one central biochemical process: a runaway immune response, also known as *systemic inflammation*, which results in your body attacking its own tissues.

Inflammation isn’t always bad. Acute inflammation is your body’s appropriate response to infection or trauma. You’ve experienced a sore throat, rash, hives, or a sprained ankle.

But inflammation should do its job and then leave. With things like autoimmune disease, an overactive immune response and chronic inflammation can slowly wreak havoc, eventually leading to illness and rapid aging.
Functional Medicine provides a map to find out which molecule the cells are mimicking. It looks at the root cause of the inflammation and asks why that inflammation exists. If we can identify the underlying sources of inflammation, we can heal the body. The underlying causes may include stress, hidden infections, food allergies or sensitivities, toxic exposure, genetic predisposition, nutrient deficiencies, and leaky gut. If you want to cool off inflammation in the body, you must find the source. Physicians are mostly taught to diagnose disease by symptoms, NOT by their underlying cause.

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE: TREATING CAUSES, NOT SYMPTOMS

Functional Medicine is a hidden movement sweeping across the globe, and it is based on a different method of diagnosing and treating disease—one that focuses on causes not symptoms, one that is based on an understanding of the dynamic way our genes interact with environment, one that goes beyond simply treating diseases based on their label.

Functional Medicine teaches practitioners to understand the body as a system; to seek the causes of illness; to understand the body’s basic functional systems, where they go awry, and how to restore balance; to understand the interconnections between symptoms and organs rather segregate diseases into specialties.

This approach is a fundamentally different way of solving medical problems, one that allows us to decipher the origins of illness and identify the disturbances in biology that lead to symptoms. Let’s see how this approach worked for Isabel.

FROM CONVENTIONAL ILLNESS TO FUNCTIONAL HEALTH

For Isabel, the only response physicians had to her life-threatening illness was to shut down her immune system, leaving her at risk for cancer, infection, osteoporosis, muscle wasting, and psychiatric illness. But there was another way.

I simply asked the question WHY. I didn’t focus on WHAT the name of her disease was (mixed connective tissue disease, otherwise known as an autoimmune disease that affects the whole body), but WHY she was inflamed, WHERE this inflammation originated from, and HOW we could locate the causes and restore balance to her overactive immune system that was attacking her own body.

The immune system usually responds to some insult such as an allergen, a microbe, or a toxin, and then runs out of control. Finding and removing that trigger is essential. In a review in the New England Journal of Medicine, it was acknowledged that, “Even in a genetically predisposed person, some trigger, an environmental exposure, or change in the internal environment—is usually required for [autoimmunity].”
When I talked to Isabel the first time, I found many potential triggers for her inflammation. She was being exposed to a toxic mold, Stachybotrys, in her house. Her mother worked in limestone pits exposing her to excessive amounts of fluoride while pregnant. Isabel had all her immunizations before 1999, when thimerosal was removed from vaccines. She also had a thimerosal-containing flu shot every year.

Thimerosal contains mercury, and mercury is a known immune toxin. This problem became compounded by her diet, which included large amounts of tuna and sushi that she loved and ate regularly (and which exposed her to even more mercury), and loads of dairy and sugar. In the year before she got sick, she also had many courses of antibiotics.

Mold, mercury, antibiotics, sugar, gluten, and dairy—these are all potential immune irritants.

Isabel’s lab tests were frightening. Her muscle enzymes and liver function tests showed severe damage. She had many autoimmune antibodies (anti-nuclear antibodies, rheumatoid factor, anti-SSA, anti-DNA, anti-RNP, lupus anticoagulant), at extremely elevated levels, a sign that the body was intensely attacking itself. Other markers of inflammation were extremely high as well. Her white blood count and red blood cell count were low. Her vitamin D was also low. She had elevated levels of antibodies to gluten, which is a common cause of autoimmune disease and triggers significant intestinal inflammation. And her mercury level was extremely high in her urine after a provocation test (the only way to assess total body burden of metals). Normal is less than three. Isabel’s was 33.

At the first visit, I simply put Isabel on an anti-inflammatory elimination diet to remove possible triggers of inflammation from food allergens. She stopped eating sugar, dairy, and gluten (from wheat). I gave her a multivitamin; vitamins D, B12, and folate; fish oil; and evening primrose oil, all of which are anti-inflammatory. I also gave her nystatin (a non-absorbed anti-fungal) to treat suspected yeast because of her multiple courses of antibiotics. I gave her n-acetyl cysteine (NAC) to support her liver, and told her to get off the acid blocker, the calcium channel blocker that she used for her Raynaud’s, and the intravenous steroids she had been taking.

After two months, her rash was totally gone. She had no joint pain and her hair was growing back. Her autoimmune markers had dramatically improved. Her muscle enzymes, liver function, and level of inflammation were all normal.

At the second visit two months later, I added probiotics to support healthy digestive function and reduce gut inflammation. I also started her on DMSA (a chelating agent) to help bind the mercury from her tissues and cells and help her excrete it. To help her get off the prednisone, I gave her herbs to support her adrenal gland function.

Seven months later, her tests were normal, including her white blood count. Her mercury came down from 33 to 16. After 11 months, her mercury was down to 11 and her gut inflammation was gone. She was off all her medications and feeling happy, normal, and was able to ride and show her horse again.
Some may dismiss this as an anecdote, a “spontaneous remission,” claim the testing methods unconventional, or the treatments used unproven. But if there is a shimmer of a possibility that this approach works, that it can help patients recover from some of the most debilitating, devastating human diseases out there, are we not obligated to investigate further?

Shouldn’t we expect that scientists and physicians would be motivated into new avenues of research, that the National Institutes of Health would fund studies to test this model? And if found to be effective, shouldn’t academic medical schools change their curriculum and teach this new method of practicing medicine? This is the mission of the Institute for Functional Medicine, but it needs help because it has no funding from the usual sources: government and Big Pharma.

Isabel’s experience is not rare. The approach of finding and removing triggers of disease such as hidden microbes, toxins, or allergens, and supporting the body’s function with nutrients and herbs and “pro” drugs, such as probiotics, is more than just an idea that needs to be proven. It is a movement that is now being practiced by thousands of practitioners at the cutting edge of medicine. It is an approach called Functional Medicine that has helped tens of thousands of patients worldwide. Shouldn’t this revolutionary new method of practice be expanded and made available to more patients? Shouldn’t we see more cases like Isabel’s?
If you have an autoimmune disease, here is what you need to think about and do:

1. **Check for hidden infections** like yeast, viruses, bacteria, and Lyme with the help of a doctor and treat them.

2. **Check for hidden food allergens with IgG food testing.** Alternately, you can try the 10-Day Detox Diet (which I discuss below), designed to eliminate most food allergens.

3. **Get tested for celiac disease,** which is a blood test any doctor can do.

4. **Get checked for heavy metal toxicity**—mercury and other metals can cause autoimmunity.

5. **Fix your gut.** Imbalances in your gut flora have been linked to a whole host of diseases including autoimmune disease. One of the best ways to get your gut back in balance is to give the bugs good food in the form of prebiotics. This food can come in many forms, including inulin (not insulin) from chicory or Jerusalem artichokes.

6. **Use nutrients** such as fish oil, vitamin C, vitamin D, and probiotics to help calm your immune response naturally.

7. **Exercise regularly**—it’s a natural anti-inflammatory.

8. **Practice deep relaxation** like yoga, deep breathing, biofeedback, or massage because stress worsens the immune response.

9. **Tell your doctor about Functional Medicine,** encourage him or her to get trained or buy them a *Textbook of Functional Medicine* as a holiday present. Go to [www.functionalmedicine.org](http://www.functionalmedicine.org) for more information.

---

**EATING FAT REDUCES INFLAMMATION AND AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE**

Many people feel confused about eating dietary fat. I was confused myself, and I recommended low-fat diets to my patients for years.

For decades, the advice from pretty much every doctor, nutritionist, professional society, and government agency had been to eat less fat to lose weight and prevent disease. Not only is this advice not working, it’s actually doing us harm. It turns out that eating less fat results in *more* obesity, inflammation, and disease.
Bad fats such as omega-6 refined vegetable oils cause inflammation, but good fats reduce inflammation. Omega-3 fats have been extensively studied as a way of treating inflammatory and autoimmune disease. They modulate inflammatory pathways and help improve the expression of anti-inflammatory genes.

There have been many studies assessing the benefits of supplementation with fish oil in inflammatory and autoimmune diseases in humans, including rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, psoriasis, lupus erythematosus, multiple sclerosis, and migraine headaches. These studies show great benefits, including decreased disease activity and less of a need for anti-inflammatory drugs. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12480795

I have found that fish oil supplementation along with a low-glycemic, anti-inflammatory, higher-fat diet that is also gluten- and dairy-free can dramatically help my patients with autoimmune disease.

Gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) has been well researched in autoimmune disease and shown to be effective. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10617996 GLA is found in evening primrose oil or borage oil and can be synthesized by the body, but often not very well, especially under conditions of illness. I have used it effectively in combination with diet and other therapies in many of my autoimmune patients.

Simply put: If you want to reduce inflammation and reverse autoimmune disease, please don't fear fat!

Include the following healthy fats in your daily diet. Be sure to include 4 to 5 servings of fat per day. (Serving sizes for each are in parentheses.)

- Extra virgin coconut oil (1 tablespoon)
- Extra virgin olive oil, avocado oil, macadamia oil, walnut oil, almond oil (1 tablespoon) – Use these in salads or stews, they should not be used for high-heat cooking; for high-heat cooking, use coconut oil or ghee.
- MCT oil (1 to 2 tablespoons a day)
- Organic coconut milk (¼ cup) – Native Forest brand is my favorite, the cans are BPA-free.
- Avocado (½ to 1 avocado)
- Fatty fish like sardines, mackerel, herring, black cod, and wild salmon (4 to 6 ounces); aim to include these 3 to 4 times per week.
- Nuts and seeds (2 to 3 handfuls); all are okay except peanuts.
- Olives (¼ cup)
- Grass-fed butter, clarified butter, or ghee (1 tablespoon); if you are allergic to dairy, just use ghee.
THE AUTOIMMUNE SOLUTION

THE AUTOIMMUNE PROTOCOL

One popular diet sometimes used for autoimmune disease is the Autoimmune Protocol (AIP) diet, based on the Paleolithic diet.

The AIP diet incorporates many dietary changes previously studied in autoimmune diseases like IBD, including avoiding gluten and refined sugar. It also involves an initial elimination phase of foods like grains, legumes, nightshades, dairy, eggs, coffee, alcohol, nuts and seeds, refined and processed sugars, oils, and food additives.

The idea behind the AIP diet is to avoid these problem foods but also things like additives and medications (such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs or NSAIDs) that can trigger intestinal inflammation, dysbiosis, and/or symptomatic food intolerance.

The AIP diet emphasizes eating fresh, nutrient dense foods, bone broth, and fermented foods, while addressing lifestyle factors including sleep and sleep hygiene, stress management, forming a support system, and physical activity.

The elimination phase of the AIP diet is followed by a maintenance phase (usually 30–90 days or longer), until you achieve a measurable improvement in your symptoms and overall well-being.

You then gradually reintroduce food groups to pinpoint symptoms and add more variety to your diet.

The AIP diet yields impressive results. One study with 15 participants with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis looked at the efficacy of an autoimmune protocol diet to reduce inflammation and improve IBD.

Researchers in this study used a six-week elimination phase where participants eliminated grains, legumes, nightshades, dairy, eggs, coffee, alcohol, nuts and seeds, refined/processed sugars, oils, and food additives. They followed this with a five-week maintenance phase where no food group reintroduction was allowed.

Overall, the results were impressive. The AIP diet helped lower inflammation and reduced the symptoms these 15 patients experienced. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5647120/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5647120/)

While it gets amazing results, the AIP diet can feel incredibly restrictive about what you can eat, though remember it is only for a short period before you reintroduce some of the foods you eliminate on this plan. Even then, some people don’t do well on certain foods.

My 10-Day Detox Diet simplifies this process. It eliminates many culprits that contribute to autoimmune disease, including gluten and dairy, but it isn’t as restrictive as the AIP diet.
THE 10-DAY DETOX DIET

The first step to curb inflammation and feel better is to eliminate the junk. It’s simple. First, you stop eating certain addictive and inflammatory foods for 10 days, and then, after 10 days, you’ll have the opportunity to add some of these foods back in to see how your body responds.

Eliminating inflammatory and toxic foods is just part of the 10-Day Detox Diet. The other part involves adding in the good stuff—real, whole foods that nourish your body with every single bite. We all know that food can harm us, but we should all take advantage of the fact that food can heal us, too.

The 10-Day Detox Diet is naturally anti-inflammatory because it removes these foods that create harm and increases all of the wonderful anti-inflammatory nutrients your body needs using whole foods.

THE 10-DAY DETOX DIET WILL HELP YOU DIAL DOWN INFLAMMATION AND PROVIDE A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR HEALING FROM AUTOIMMUNITY

When you follow my 10-Day Detox Diet program, you will:

1. **Cut out the flour and sugar** because these are inflammatory foods.
2. **Get rid of the gluten.** We know gluten can be the trigger for celiac disease, Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, and contributes to a leaky gut.
3. **Eat the right fats.** Increase the anti-inflammatory foods that are rich in omega-3 fats including cold-water fish, seafood, grass-fed beef, walnuts, chia seeds, flax seeds, and hemp seeds.
4. **Eat the rainbow.** Choose a variety of colorful non-starchy vegetables and berries each day. These foods are packed with phytonutrients.
5. **Identify and remove food sensitivities from your diet.** Some people with autoimmune conditions feel better omitting eggs. You might experiment with a lowered intake of eggs or choose to eat the highest quality local eggs.
6. **Steer clear of non-organic soy.** Some people with autoimmune conditions feel better removing soy, others tolerate whole forms of soy like tempeh or tofu moderately. You may want to experiment with soy to see how it affects you. Always opt for non-GMO soy.
7. **Exercise** appropriately for your physiology.
8. **Manage** your stress and practice breath work and relaxation activities.
9. **Take supplements** to help boost levels of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, zinc, magnesium, probiotics, antioxidants, and low-inflammatory protein—all of which are instrumental at calming down an overactive immune system.
10. **Keep a low to moderate intake of nightshades (tomato, eggplant, peppers, etc.)** to lessen the potential for an autoimmune reaction.
I’ve provided more details about the 10-Day Detox Diet and how to re-introduce foods to maintain that plan for life in *Food: What the Heck Do I Eat?*

This book is founded on the principle that food is medicine. It is information. Food literally controls almost every function of your body and mind. And it connects almost everything that matters in our lives.

Food connects us to one another and to our bodies. It can reinvigorate our health, bring families together, restore vibrant communities, improve the economy and the environment, reduce pollution, and even help our kids get better grades and avoid eating disorders, obesity, and drug abuse; food can even reduce poverty, violence, homicide, and suicide.

I wrote *Food* as a roadmap, based on the best and latest science of what to eat, to dispel the confusion and contention that keeps you overweight, sick, and unhappy.

What you put on your fork is the most important thing you do every day. It influences your capacity to live a rich, energetic, connected, soulful life—a life in which you have the energy to care for yourself, to love your friends and family, to help your neighbor, to fully show up for your work in the world, and to live your dreams.

If you enjoy real, whole, fresh foods that you cook using real ingredients, you are positively affecting everything around you.

### EXERCISE

I encourage 30 to 45 minutes of cardiovascular exercise at least six times a week.

You may try interval training (also known as wind sprints and described in *The Blood Sugar Solution*, if you are feeling stronger). I also encourage strength training to build muscle and reduce body fat composition.

Exercise is a necessity, not a luxury, in preventing almost all chronic disease, from heart disease to cancer, from dementia to diabetes, from osteoporosis to osteoarthritis. You cannot age successfully without it. It is how we are designed.

### STRESS REDUCTION

Stress alone can cause a heart attack. It is often the trigger that leads to the cascade of events that causes that final, fatal heart attack.

But all along the way, it contributes to heart disease by creating inflammation, contributing to autoimmune disease, causing high blood pressure and even making your blood more likely to clot.
Therefore, finding ways to manage stress, to relax, and to hit the pause button is essential for dealing with nearly all chronic health conditions, including autoimmune diseases.

Learn to reduce stress by doing regular relaxation exercises such as yoga, tai chi, meditation, breathing, guided imagery, or whatever it takes to engage the relaxation nervous system, which can reduce your overall level of inflammation and blood sugar as well as increase metabolism and help with your overall health.

Try classes, buy CD's (you can try my UltraCalm audio program), try therapy, or just go out and have fun. But you must do something daily to switch out of the alarm response to maintain your health.

SLEEP

I used to think that "MD" stood for "medical deity" and meant I didn't have to follow the same sleep rules as every other human being. I stayed up late working long shifts in the emergency room, ignoring the demands of my body to rest. It wasn't until I learned that shift work (like I did when I worked in the emergency room) leads to a shortened life expectancy that I quit.

Unfortunately, our lives are infiltrated with stimuli—and we stay stimulated until the moment we get into bed. This is not the way to get restful sleep. Frankly, it's no wonder we can't sleep well when we eat late dinners, answer emails, surf the internet, or do work, and then get right into bed and watch the evening news about all the disaster, pain, and suffering in the world.

Instead we must take a little "holiday" in the two hours before bed. Creating a sleep ritual—a special set of little things you do before bed to help ready your system physically and psychologically for sleep—can guide your body into a deep, healing sleep.

We all live with a little bit of post-traumatic stress syndrome (or, I should say, traumatic stress syndrome, because for many of us there is nothing "post" about it). Much research has been done on the effects of stress and traumatic experiences and images on sleep. If you follow my guidelines for restoring normal sleep below, your posttraumatic stress may become a thing of the past.

Here's how to restore your natural sleep rhythm. It may take weeks or months, but using these tools in a coordinated way will eventually reset your biological rhythms:

• Practice the regular rhythms of sleep – go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
• Use your bed for sleep and romance only – not reading or television.
• Create an aesthetic environment that encourages sleep – use serene and restful colors and eliminate clutter and distraction.
• Create total darkness and quiet – consider using eyeshades and earplugs.
• Avoid caffeine – it may seem to help you stay awake but actually makes your sleep worse.
• **Avoid alcohol** — it helps you get to sleep but causes interruptions in sleep and poor-quality sleep.

• **Get regular exposure to daylight for at least 20 minutes daily** — the light from the sun enters your eyes and triggers your brain to release specific chemicals and hormones like melatonin that are vital to healthy sleep, mood, and aging.

• **Eat no later than three hours before bed** — eating a heavy meal prior to bed will lead to a bad night’s sleep.

• **Don’t exercise vigorously after dinner** — it excites the body and makes it more difficult to get to sleep.

• **Write your worries down** — one hour before bed, write down the things that are causing you anxiety and make plans for what you might have to do the next day to reduce your worry. It will free up your mind and energy to move into deep and restful sleep.

• **Take a hot salt/soda aromatherapy bath** — raising your body temperature before bed helps to induce sleep. A hot bath also relaxes your muscles and reduces tension physically and psychically. By adding one-and-a-half to one cup of Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) and one-and-a-half to one cup of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) to your bath, you will gain the benefits of magnesium absorbed through your skin and the alkaline-balancing effects of the baking soda, both of which help with sleep.

• **Get a massage or stretch before bed** — this helps relax the body making it easier to fall asleep.

• **Warm your middle** — this raises your core temperature and helps trigger the proper chemistry for sleep. Either a hot water bottle, heating pad, or warm body can do the trick.

• **Avoid medications that interfere with sleep** — these include sedatives (these are used to treat insomnia, but ultimately lead to dependence and disruption of normal sleep rhythms and architecture), antihistamines, stimulants, cold medication, steroids, and headache medication that contains caffeine (such as Fioricet).

• **Use herbal therapies** — try passionflower, or 320 mg to 480 mg of valerian (**Valeriana officinalis**) root extract standardized to 0.2 percent valerenic acid one hour before bed.

• **Take 200 to 400 mg of magnesium citrate or glycinate before bed** — this relaxes the nervous system and muscles.

• **Other supplements and herbs can be helpful in getting some shuteye** — try calcium, theanine (an amino acid from green tea), GABA, 5-HTP, melatonin, and magnolia.

• **Try one to three mg of melatonin at night** — melatonin helps stabilize your sleep rhythms.

• **Get a relaxation, meditation, or guided imagery CD** — any of these may help you get to sleep.

If you are still having trouble sleeping, you should be evaluated by your doctor for other problems that can interfere with sleep, including food sensitivities, thyroid problems, menopause, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, heavy metal toxicity, and, of course, stress and depression. Also, consider getting tested for a sleep disorder.
SUPPLEMENTS

A supplement protocol to address autoimmune disease focuses on reducing inflammation and calming down an overactive immune system. These nutrients include:

1. Metabolic Synergy
2. OmegaGenics EPA-DHA 2400
3. Vitamin D3 Liquid
4. Zinc Supreme
5. Magnesium (Citrate) 150 mg
6. Probiotic 50B
7. UltraInflamX PLUS 360
8. PGX – 3-6 capsules or 2.5 to 5 grams of powder before each meal with a cold glass of water
CONCLUSION

Inflammation is a hot topic in medicine. It appears connected to almost every known chronic disease from heart disease to cancer, diabetes to obesity, autism to dementia, and even depression. Other inflammatory diseases such as allergies, asthma, arthritis, and autoimmune disease are increasing at dramatic rates.

As physicians, we are trained to shut off inflammation with aspirin, anti-inflammatory medication such as Advil or Motrin, steroids, and increasingly more powerful immune suppressing medication with serious side effects.

But we are not trained to find and treat the underlying causes of inflammation in chronic disease. Hidden allergens, infections, environmental toxins, an inflammatory diet, and stress are the real causes of these inflammatory conditions.

Autoimmune diseases, specifically, now affect 24 million people and include rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis, thyroid disease, and inflammatory bowel disease.

These are often addressed by powerful immune-suppressing medication and not by addressing the cause. That’s like taking a lot of aspirin while you are standing on a tack. The treatment is not more aspirin or a strong immune suppressant, but removing the tack.

It you want to cool off inflammation in the body, you must find the source. Treat the fire, not the smoke. In medicine, we are mostly taught to diagnose disease by symptoms, NOT by their underlying cause.

I encourage you to try my 10-Day Detox Diet and see if you don’t start feeling less inflamed.

Even armed with these strategies, finding the right foods to normalize blood pressure can sometimes feel confusing. That’s why I wrote Food: What the Heck Should I Eat?, to help you undo all the beliefs about food that are making you fat and sick and replace them with a new understanding that will lead to health and longevity.

I believe that cultivating and consuming real, whole food is the answer to many of our world’s problems. How we grow it, produce it, and eat it affects almost every aspect of our lives and our society. Food is an honest how-to guide designed to answer the question, “What the heck should I eat?”

Food is the doorway to living well and loving well— and to fixing much of what’s wrong with our world. You have the power to heal autoimmunity, starting with your very next meal.

The answers are right in front of you: Treat the underlying causes of your illness and you will begin to experience vibrant health once more.