

# Integrative Approach to Treating Autoimmune Disease



## What is Autoimmune Disease?

Autoimmune Disease (AD) is the result of an abnormal immune response that causes our immune system to attack our own tissue. Examples of Autoimmune Disease include:

- Celiac Disease
- Hashimoto's Disease
- Graves' Disease
- Crohn's Disease
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Eczema
- Lupus/LSE
- Sjogren's Disease
- Alopecia

There is a common saying when dealing with AD - "genetics load the gun, but the environment pulls the trigger". We are beginning to understand how strong the effect of our environment is when it comes to development of disease. This is good news since, although you cannot change your genetics, you can definitely change your environment - internally and externally.

The traditional methods of treating AD involves the use of immunosuppressive medications. At Integrative, we prefer to support your immune system, while taking into account the five components of health that play a large role in the development of Autoimmune Disease:

- Gut Health
- Stress/Sleep
- Hormones
- Toxins
- Infections



*Your lifestyle can either be the greatest foundation on which to build health, or the obstacle your body has to try to consistently overcome -- Dr. Maya Kuczma, ND*

## Gut Health

Today, we are exposed to many substances that can damage our gut lining. Toxins, bacteria, medications, and even certain foods can damage our gut lining and promote the development of leaky gut. Some of the top offenders are: gluten, NSAIDS, stress, antibiotics, yeast overgrowth, and pesticides.

This constant onslaught causes the tight links between the gut cells to separate. Common genetic mutations can also influence our ability to create new cells and repair the leaks.

When our gut lining is damaged, it becomes 'leaky' and allows large particles to pass through the lining and into our bloodstream. Our immune system, not used to being exposed to particles of this size, views them as invaders and attacks them, creating complexes of food particles and immune cells that can deposit all over the body, creating inflammation. Through this process, an issue in our gut can create trigger autoimmune disease, creating symptoms within our joints, skin, even our brain.

Leaky gut becomes a gateway for toxins and infections to enter our system, placing further stress on our immune system. Additionally, it interferes with our ability to absorb nutrients.

In order to heal a leaky gut, we use the 5Rs of healing:

1. REMOVE: food sensitivities, inflammatory foods, toxins
2. REPLACE: components required for digestion
3. REPAIR: the gut lining
4. REINOCULATE: with good bacteria
5. RELAX: create stress-free eating habits

Depending on your condition, we additionally may prescribe a Paleo, Autoimmune Paleo, or Ketogenic diet. These diets are nutrient dense, and also eliminate commonly reactive foods such as gluten, dairy, legumes, and sugar.

# Integrative Approach to Treating Autoimmune Disease



## Stress and Sleep

Chronic stress creates inflammation in the body and alters our hormone balance. As a result, Autoimmune Diseases may be triggered. We recommend choosing a stress management routine that you enjoy and will make time for every day. Additionally, we encourage a healthy sleep hygiene routine that ensure at least 8-9 hours of sleep each night, with you ideally falling asleep by 10pm. Your doctor will be able to provide additional support if a sleep hygiene routine isn't enough to help you fall asleep and stay asleep through the night.

## Hormones

Most Autoimmune Diseases occur in higher rates amongst women. A leading theory as to why this difference between genders occurs is due to differences in sex hormones. Stress management and adequate sleep play a large role in balancing hormones but at times we need further support, utilizing medicinal herbs, supportive nutrients, or bio-identical hormones. Your doctor will evaluate your case and determine what type of support you may need.

## Toxins

The single greatest change you can make to help your body detox is to remove sources of toxins from your life. Many toxins have been directly connected to Autoimmune Disease, as well as contributors to leaky gut, which in turn, triggers autoimmunity. Choosing organic produce as well as organic grass-fed meat will dramatically decrease the amount of toxins you are exposed to every day. Depending on your case, you may also need a more aggressive plan that incorporates supplements and/or intravenous therapies. Whatever your individual concerns, your doctor will be able to guide you towards your optimal detoxification plan.

## Infection

There are a number of bacterial and viral infections associated with Autoimmune Disease. Common viruses known to trigger Autoimmune Diseases include HSV, EBV, and CMV. Your treatment plan may include testing for infections and subsequent treatment.

No matter which Autoimmune Disease you have, your doctor will create an individualized plan, a well-rounded treatment plan can not only alleviate many, if not all, of your symptoms, it can help you to live a vibrant life.

## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---