

Attendee Q&A: Launch LIVE! The Autoimmune Upsurge

- **When building healthy eating habits, does it matter if a food we think of as a vegetable is technically a fruit?**

Answer: Mostly, no. The most important thing is to get a variety of different fruits & vegetables regularly.

- **Can a multivitamin cause you to get too much of a nutrient if your diet is already rich in that nutrient?**

Answer: While the risk is low, the answer is “yes” it can. A few tips to keep in mind:

- Take a standard multivitamin/mineral supplement that’s designed for your age, gender, or specific health need. For example, many multivitamins that are designed for women before age 50 include a higher amount of iron due to potential need during premenopausal years.
- If taking a multivitamin supplement, do not also take additional single-nutrient vitamin or mineral supplements unless recommended to you by a healthcare professional.
- More isn’t always better. Don’t take more than the recommended dosage unless specifically recommended by your healthcare provider.

- **What’s the best way to eat flaxseed: whole, ground, or soaked?**

Answer: We recommend eating ground flaxseed over whole or soaked because the grinding makes the nutrients (omega-3s, phytonutrients) more accessible to the body.

- **How can I get enough omega-3s if I have MCAS and react to many types of fish?**

Answer: MCAS can make food choices more challenging because reactions can vary by person and even over time. Plant-based sources of omega-3s may be an option. Supplements may also be worth discussing with your healthcare provider, since ingredients and fillers vary by brand and may affect tolerance.

- **What are some easy ways to add vegetables to breakfast?**

Answer: Think beyond traditional breakfast foods! A few ideas shared during the webinar:

- Add spinach, mushrooms, onions or peppers to scrambled eggs
- Make a breakfast hash with potatoes and mixed vegetables
- Add shredded zucchini to pancakes or quick bread
- Try avocado toast with tomatoes and greens
- Eat your favorite lunch or dinner foods for breakfast, including soups, salads or lentil chili
- Any food can be a “breakfast” food! **There’s no rule that says breakfast has to look like “breakfast food.”**

- **Is there a meal-planning resource that helps increase food variety while reducing food waste?**

Answer: We like **EatLove** for meal planning.

- **What symptoms might suggest a food sensitivity or a reason to consider an elimination diet?**

Answer: Common reasons someone may consider an elimination diet:

- To investigate recurring symptoms that haven't been explained by other factors, such as:
 - Ongoing joint or muscle discomfort
 - Unexplained fatigue or low energy

- Brain fog or difficulty concentrating
- Headaches or migraines
- Digestive (bloating, excess gas, pain, cramping, diarrhea, constipation, nausea, reflux, heartburn)
- Skin (eczema, flushing, recurring rashes, acne)
- Nasal congestion or runny nose, itchy ears
- Other symptoms related to their autoimmune condition
- Feel stuck in their health journey and do not know what to do next
- Feel that many options have been exhausted
- Prefer to manage health conditions through lifestyle approaches, either alone or alongside conventional medicine

➤ **Should you start an elimination diet during an autoimmune flare, especially while taking steroids?**

Answer: In general, we recommend waiting until the flare has ended if you are using short-term steroids. Since steroids can improve symptoms, it can be harder to tell whether changes are due to the medication or the elimination phase.

➤ **Are there labs you should have done before starting an elimination diet?**

Answer: While you can have labs done prior to an elimination diet, it is not required. We do *highly* recommend taking time to assess and rate your current symptom frequency & severity prior to beginning an elimination diet. A simple way to do so is by tracking when your symptoms happen over 1-3 weeks' time and rating them on a scale of 1-4 (1=mild, 4=severe).

➤ **Why might a probiotic cause bloating, and what should you do if that happens?**

Answer: There are a few potential reasons your probiotic supplement may be causing bloating:

- The dosage you are taking is more than you may need. If possible, cut back to ½ your current dosage to see if your symptoms improve.
- If the supplement contains prebiotics along with the probiotics, you may be reacting to the prebiotic fiber that is included in it (often listed last on the nutrition label). A few examples of prebiotic fibers used in probiotic supplements are inulin and Fructooligosaccharides (FOS). While prebiotics are good for our gut bacteria, some people experience digestive symptoms when taking them in supplement form. You could try switching to a probiotic supplement that does not contain any prebiotics.
- If you've tried making changes related to the first 2 reasons mentioned, then consider this: you may want to inquire with your physician about testing for Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO). SIBO is a condition where too many or the wrong types of bacteria grow in the small intestine, which can interfere with digestion and cause symptoms such as bloating, gas, abdominal discomfort, and changes in bowel movements. Probiotics may temporarily worsen bloating in someone with SIBO because adding more bacteria to the digestive tract can increase fermentation and gas production in the small intestine.
- One other note: If you continue to experience bloating after making these changes or completely stopping the supplement, make sure to meet with a healthcare professional to get a more personalized plan and rule out other causes.

➤ **What routine lab testing should people consider, and how often?**

Answer: There isn't one lab test that can screen for all autoimmune conditions. If you're concerned about autoimmune conditions or chronic inflammation, make sure to share that with your healthcare provider so they can help tailor the lab tests to your health history and goals.

➤ **How can I find a functional medicine provider?**

Answer: A good resource to search for functional medicine providers by location is the Institute for Functional Medicine's Find a Practitioner database: <https://www.ifm.org/find-a-practitioner>.

You could also ask or search your local healthcare system's provider database to see if there are any with functional medicine training listed in their Education & Certifications.

➤ **What foods may help with gastritis while also supporting healthy iron and ferritin levels?**

Answer: The most effective way to help relieve autoimmune gastritis symptoms is to meet with a healthcare provider to get a plan that is personalized to you, your health history, nutrition preferences, and more. In general, here are a few quick tips related to gastritis:

- Eating habits: Eat slowly and chew each bite thoroughly to help with the mechanical breakdown of food and its exposure to digestive enzymes in your saliva. Spread your food intake evenly throughout your meals (avoid a pattern of skipping meals or having extremely small meals and 1 extra-large meal).
- If you eat animal protein, choose lean protein sources and lower fat dairy options more frequently.
- Pair iron food sources (shellfish, beef, liver, spinach, lentils) with vitamin C (strawberries, bell peppers) to enhance absorption. Avoid eating high calcium food sources at the same time as iron foods, as calcium inhibits absorption of iron.
- You are likely already doing so but, just in case, make sure to check in regularly with your healthcare provider to have your nutrient levels tested. This can tell you what's working well for *your* body and where things need to be adjusted. You may benefit from a supplement as well as food focus.

➤ **Do you recommend Metagenics products?**

Answer: Yes, Metagenics is one of many high-quality supplement brands that we like.

➤ **What are your thoughts on butyrate supplements and pre-, pro- and postbiotics?**

Answer: While there is more nuance to when and how much is recommended, here are Dietitian Megan's general quick thoughts:

- **Butyrate:** This is a component of beneficial postbiotics, which your gut bacteria create when you eat fibrous foods. Butyrate can help strengthen the gut barrier and regulate inflammation there. You can get some butyrate from butter, feta, and parmesan cheese. Eating prebiotic foods also supports your body's natural production of butyrate.
- **Prebiotics:** Necessary for nourishing our gut bacteria. We can get some from certain plant foods. Many probiotic supplements also contain prebiotics, so often recommend a combo supplement. Some people experience digestive symptoms when taking prebiotics in supplement form, though, so be mindful of that.
- **Probiotics:** Recommend eating fermented foods regularly to get probiotics (must be not pasteurized to have probiotic benefit). Will recommend supplement if getting limited amount from foods or a part of a protocol to improve digestive symptoms. Probiotics aren't as helpful if you're not getting enough prebiotic fiber from foods or supplement.
- **Postbiotics:** Can get postbiotics from fermented foods as well. The difference between pro- and post- biotics is that probiotics are living organisms, while postbiotics are nonliving organisms. Postbiotics are relatively new and research is still growing. If your current supplement has

postbiotics in it, that's great, but you do not need to seek it out specifically over prebiotic or probiotic intake.

➤ **What counts as one serving?**

Note: these are general serving sizes. For many of these foods, multiple servings are needed per meal to make a typical portion. Work with a registered dietitian to find out the number of servings per day from each food category recommended for you.

Protein

- Meat, poultry or fish: 3 oz. cooked, about the size of a deck of cards
- Eggs: 1 large egg
- Beans or lentils: ½ cup cooked
- Tofu: ½ cup
- Nuts: 1 oz., or a small handful
- Nut butter: 2 Tbsp.
- Cheese: 1½ oz.
- Greek yogurt: ¾ cup

Grains & starches

- Cooked rice, pasta, quinoa, oatmeal: 1/3-1/2 cup
- Bread: 1 slice
- Tortilla: 1 small
- Potato or sweet potato: 1 small, or ½ cup

Vegetables

- Most Vegetables: 1/2 cup
- Raw leafy greens: 1 cup

Fruit

- Whole fruit: 1 medium piece
- Berries, melon or chopped fruit: 3/4 cup
- Dried fruit: ¼ cup

Dairy & alternatives

- Milk or fortified plant milk: 1 cup
- Yogurt: ¾–1 cup
- Cottage cheese: ½ cup

Fats

- Oil, butter or mayonnaise: 1 Tbsp.
- Salad dressing: 2 Tbsp.
- Avocado: ½ medium avocado
- Nuts & Seeds: 1 oz., or about 2 Tbsp.

Other Resources

- **List of autoimmune conditions:** NIH Office of Autoimmune Disease Research: <https://orwh.od.nih.gov/OADR-ORWH/ADR-Across-NIH>
- Amy Myers, MD - The Autoimmune Solution book or website
- Terry Wahls, MD - The Wahls Protocol
- Isabella Wentz, PharmD - Hashimoto's Protocol book
- Sara Szal Gottfried, MD – The Autoimmune Cure book
- [IFM.org](https://ifm.org) Provider Database (Institute for Functional Medicine)
- Global Autoimmune Institute (autoimmuneinstitute.org)
- **Launch My Health Supplement Shelf**
<https://launchmyhealth.com/fullscript-supplement-shelf/>

- **Previous Launch LIVE webinars**
<https://launchmyhealth.com/live>

Still have a question?

Email us at getcooking@launchmyhealth.com