

## ARTHRITIS & PAIN

When I was first diagnosed with Hashimoto's, I struggled with pain in the form of body aches and stiffness, as well as carpal tunnel in both arms in 2010. It was awful; I had to wear braces on both arms all day and even at night for about 6 months.

The most common conventional approach to dealing with pain is utilizing pain medications. Opiate medications and NSAIDs are the most frequent types of pain relievers used. Most medications have their time and place, but we also know that pain medications don't get to the root cause of the condition, and thus we need to take a comprehensive approach to reducing pain in the body.

1. **Diet:** Food sensitivities can significantly contribute to pain through inflammation caused by the immune response. A variety of different diets have been reported to be helpful for reducing pain, as each removes commonly reactive foods. Dairy, grains, and nightshades are the foods most commonly associated with pain. It may be hard to part with these foods, but for some, it can make a world of a difference.

In my study of 2232 people with Hashimoto's, 62% of people reported that removing nightshade vegetables from their diet helped to reduce their pain. Nightshades include: tomatoes, potatoes, bell peppers, eggplants, tomatillos, Goji berries and the herb ashwagandha. As a side note, even if you're not in pain, hot, capsaicin-containing peppers have the propensity to cause leaky gut, so they too could potentially contribute to autoimmunity. Side note number 2: black pepper, the seasoning, is not a nightshade, it just has a similar name. Try a nightshade free diet for 2 weeks to see if that makes a difference for you.

The Low FODMAPs Diet, which removes foods high in FODMAPs, is another diet to consider. It is typically used for small intestinal bacterial overgrowth. Forty-eight percent of those in my study saw improvement in pain levels when trying this diet.

The Autoimmune Paleo Diet, which removes grains, nightshades, and eggs (but not FODMAPs) helped another 50% of people with pain. Please note: some people didn't have pain as an initial symptom, which is why these results may seem low.

Additional diets that were reported to reduce pain include the gluten free diet (47%), the grain free diet (43%), and an egg free diet (40%).

2. **Systemic Enzymes:** Systemic Enzymes work in our blood to reduce circulating immune complexes (antibody complexes that are coupled with immune cells, which build up in our bodies when we have autoimmunity). It's important to take them on an empty stomach, so that they break down those circulating immune complexes, rather than our food. This is generally going to be one hour before you eat, or two hours after you eat. I recommend the Wobenzym version.



3. **Low Level Laser Therapy (LLLT):** This is a very promising therapy and can be very effective for healing various types of injuries and inflammatory conditions that can lead to pain.

Additionally, LLLT can help with regenerating thyroid tissue (when applied over the thyroid gland). [Here is an article on LLLT](#) that you may find of interest.

4. **Epsom Salt Baths:** Epsom salt baths are a great way to get some more magnesium into the body, which can promote relaxation and reduce pain. I recommend adding 1-2 cups of epsom salt into a daily bath (at night time if you have trouble sleeping). [Magnesium supplements](#), [oils](#), and sprays can also be helpful.
5. **Acupuncture:** Acupuncture is thought to cause physical responses in nerve cells, promoting the release of cytokines that regulate the immune system. This was one of my first interventions for Hashimoto's, to try and help balance my immune system. I found that it reduced my antibodies and kept my symptoms pretty much in check, but only when I did it every week. Unfortunately, when I skipped it for a few weeks I had an immune flare. So, this is something that you do have to get on a regular basis.
6. **Water Exercises:** Water exercises are great on the joints, as the buoyancy from water helps to support them; and pools with warm water can help to relieve pain in the joints (1). Furthermore, studies have shown that physical exercise may help improve joint tissue and reduce the pain and symptoms of arthritis (2).
7. **Chiropractic Care:** Chiropractic care includes more than just adjustments to bones. Your treatment may also include ultrasound, cold laser therapy (one of my favorites!), and sauna therapy. A chiropractor should tend to your needs on an individual basis so you are receiving personalized care, related to your specific ailments (3).
8. **Magnesium Deficiencies:** From my experience, it's reasonable to suspect that you may be deficient in magnesium when joint pain, leg cramps, menstrual cramps, and thyroid disorders are present. There are two types of deficiencies that can occur with respect to nutrients. There are overt deficiencies, which can lead to low serum calcium or potassium levels, due to a disturbed balance of minerals in the body. This is a serious condition that can present with numbness, muscle contractions/cramps, seizures, personality changes, abnormal heart rhythm and other types of serious reactions. This is relatively rare, as the kidneys kick in to prevent the excretion of magnesium during times of low intake in order to prevent this condition. There are also subclinical deficiencies, which will not be seen on standard blood tests but may manifest with the symptoms listed above.

The recommended daily value of magnesium is **400 mg per day**, and most adults following the Standard American Diet are getting less than 300 mg per day. You can find my recommended brand of [magnesium here](#).



9. **Arnica:** [Arnica gel or cream](#), applied topically, may relieve joint pain and discomfort associated with arthritis. It may also help to treat other ailments such as bruising, muscle soreness and other injuries. Different preparations are suitable depending on your preference, but I find that the gel version contains the least amount of additives.

Generally, Arnica is considered safe, but if you experience any skin discomfort, you may want to stop the immediately and visit your primary care physician (4)

10. **Bone Broth:** Bone broth has so many benefits: boosting immunity, relieving joint pain, increasing energy, improving digestion, and giving you a more youthful appearance. But the most important reason to have bone broth, in the case of leaky gut and gut health, is that the gelatin in bone broth actually helps to seal the junctions in the intestines so they are no longer permeable, and therefore those pesky substances can no longer pass through the intestinal wall and create inflammation!

All of the components in bone broth work together to help make these benefits possible. The term “Food is thy medicine” is definitely true in this case!

Some of the main nutrients in bone broth are: collagen, gelatin, amino acids (glutamine, glycine, proline), glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, and essential minerals (calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, etc).

You can find how to make my own version of bone broth [here](#).

#### REFERENCES:

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If you have a medical emergency, please call 911.

