

# FATIGUE

Fatigue was the most debilitating symptom I experienced due to Hashimoto's. I am so grateful to have my energy back and I want you to have yours back, too! Here are some of my strategies to address fatigue:

## 1. TSH

One major symptom of hypothyroidism is low energy. Make sure that your TSH is within the range of a healthy person without thyroid disease, not within the range of an elderly person or someone with subclinical thyroid disease.

In recent years, The National Academy of Clinical Biochemists indicated that 95% of individuals without thyroid disease have TSH concentrations below 2.5  $\mu\text{U}/\text{mL}$ , and a new normal reference range was defined by the American College of Clinical Endocrinologists to be between 0.3- 3.0  $\mu\text{U}/\text{mL}$ .

However, most labs have not adjusted that range in the reports they provide to physicians, and have kept ranges as lax as 0.2-8.0  $\mu\text{U}/\text{mL}$ . Most physicians only look for values outside of the "normal" reference range provided by the labs, and may not be familiar with the new guidelines. Thus many physicians may miss the patients who are showing an elevated TSH. This is one reason why patients should always ask their physicians for a copy of any lab results. Despite some lab tests stating that a TSH of 8, or 5 is "normal", **most people feel best with a TSH between 0.5-2  $\mu\text{U}/\text{mL}$ .**

Read this article for more on TSH and how to talk to your doctor about [TSH and adjusting your thyroid medications](#).

## 2. LOW T3/HIGH REVERSE T3

T3 is our main "energy" hormone produced by the thyroid. When our cells see T3, they produce more energy. Reverse T3 is a molecule that looks like T3, but has slowing down effects. When cells see this molecule, they slow down energy production. Levothyroxine is the most commonly prescribed thyroid medication, but only contains T4, a precursor to T3, our main "energy" hormone. T4 is converted to T3 in the body, but in many people, due to stress, nutrient deficiencies and other factors, this doesn't always happen, and we can continue to feel exhausted despite normal T4 levels.

If you continue to be fatigued while on medications, you can have your doctor test your **free T3 levels**, (and reverse T3, although sometimes it's not necessary) and you may benefit from a **T4/T3 combination medication**, such as adding Cytomel to levothyroxine, or switching to Armour, Nature-Throid or compounded T4/T3.

For further information, you can read my article about [thyroid medications](#).



### 3. ANEMIA IS AN ENERGY THIEF

People often think of iron deficiency as anemia, but there are three types of nutrient deficiencies that can lead to anemia that are common in those with Hashimoto's; [iron, B12, and folic acid](#). Your doctor will usually run a blood test to check for hemoglobin and hematocrit. While helpful for advanced cases of anemia, this test may miss some subtle cases of anemia that can make us exhausted. I recommend doing a [test for ferritin, B12 levels, and folic acid](#). Always be sure to get a copy of your lab tests. As with the "normal" range for TSH, the "normal" lab values for B12, ferritin and folic acid are not often correct. For example, normal levels of B12 are between 200-900 pg/mL, yet levels under 350 are associated with neurological symptoms. If your levels are below 800, you may still benefit from a supplement. For B12, be sure to get a [methylcobalamin version rather than a cyanocobalamin version of B12](#). The methylcobalamin absorbs better. You can read more about [thyroid and B12](#).

[Normal ferritin levels for women are between 12 and 150 ng/mL. According to some experts, the optimal ferritin level for thyroid function is between 90-110 ng/mL.](#) You can read more about [Hair Loss and Ferritin](#).

### 4. FOOD SENSITIVITIES

Food sensitivities are different from food allergies and eating a food that one is sensitive to may result in fatigue. [People with Hashimoto's often present with gluten, dairy, soy, egg, corn and nut sensitivities.](#) Undertaking an elimination diet or food sensitivity testing can give you a tremendous amount of your energy back. You can read more about [food sensitivities and Hashimoto's](#).

### 5. BLOOD SUGAR IMBALANCES

Blood sugar imbalances can wreak havoc on our energy levels as well as cause anxiety. Some people will test blood sugar when feeling tired and will note that it is low. Opt to eat more protein and fat with each meal rather than carbohydrates.

### 6. OPTIMIZE DIGESTION

The digestive process takes a lot of energy. As those of you who have read my book will know, [poor gut function is always a factor with Hashimoto's and autoimmunity.](#) Anything you can do to aid the process of digestion will help you get some energy back. My favorites? [Green smoothies and digestive enzymes like Betaine with Pepsin.](#) I felt like Bradley Cooper in "Limitless" after I started taking Betaine with Pepsin. You can learn more about [Hashimoto's and Betaine with Pepsin](#) and try my [thyroid and green smoothie recipe](#).



## 7. CHECK YOUR VITAMIN D LEVELS AND FIND THE LIGHT IN YOUR LIFE

Low levels of vitamin D can be associated with fatigue, hypothyroidism and autoimmunity in general. Be sure to get enough Vitamin D through sunshine, foods or supplements. **Your goal should be to get your Vitamin D levels between 60-80 ng/dl.** This is especially true for those who have a history of mono. The fighter cells that keep the mono virus active are dependent on Vitamin D! I like using **5000 IU of Vitamin D** (be sure to check your levels as it can build up), and I also recommend **blue light therapy boxes** in the winter to boost energy levels and mood. If you are someone that tends to feel better in the summer, and not so good in the winter, I'm talking to you! Read more about **thyroid and Vitamin D**.

## 8. MTHFR GENE

Up to 50% of people have a gene variation that prevents them from properly converting synthetic folic acid. These individuals may benefit from increased green veggies and the activated form of folic acid, **methyfolate**, as well as additional substances that aid with breaking down homocysteine. Read more about **MTHFR and Hashimoto's**.

## 9. ADRENALS

Adrenal fatigue can make you feel like you are dragging yourself around the place, especially in the later phases of adrenal fatigue when our cortisol becomes depleted. Cortisol spikes in the morning to give us a natural jolt to get us out of bed. Those without sufficient cortisol levels may become dependent on caffeine like I did. Coffee may seem like it's helping, but only weakens the adrenals in the long term. Adrenal fatigue is one of the major reasons we feel exhausted despite taking thyroid medications.

Adrenals are no quick fix, and I have an entire long chapter dedicated to them in my book, *Hashimoto's: The Root Cause*, as well as a whole adrenal protocol in *The Hashimoto's Protocol*, but to get started on the right track, I recommend **adaptogens like Adrenal Support** from Pure Encapsulations, and adrenal saliva testing with your health-care professional to determine an appropriate course of action. You can learn more about **thyroid and adrenals**.

## 10. IS YOUR LIVER CONGESTED?

Some of us may be exhausted because we do not have the ability to process the toxins our body is dealing with. The toxins may be external such as molds, or internal, such as an imbalance of gut bacteria or pathogens. The toxins saturate the liver enzymes and we feel exhausted. **N-Acetyl-Cysteine** is a supplement that supports the liver's detox capacities. I also have a whole chapter on detoxification in *Hashimoto's: The Root Cause*, and liver support will be covered in great detail in *The Hashimoto's Protocol*.



## 11. THIAMINE

Last but certainly not least on this list is the **B vitamin thiamine (B1 to be precise)**. This vitamin can be deficient in people with Hashimoto's and adrenal fatigue. What's really exciting is that taking **600 mg per day** can restore energy levels in as little as three days! I wrote about the thyroid and thiamine connection on my blog post a while back and I still get hugs from random people at conferences who have reported that thiamine has changed their lives! I recommend [Benfomax from Pure Encapsulations](#) for best results. You can read more about the [thiamine and thyroid connection](#) on my website.

## 12. L-CARNITINE

**L-carnitine** is an amino acid that is naturally produced in the body but may be decreased in hypothyroidism. L-carnitine supplementation may be useful in alleviating fatigue symptoms in hypothyroid patients, especially in those younger than 50 and those who have hypothyroidism due to a thyroidectomy.

I have personally seen people "awaken" with the use of **L-carnitine**. A dose of **two capsules twice a day, or 2,000 mg of L-carnitine per day, is recommended**. For more information, check out my [article on thyroid fatigue](#).

Disclaimer: None of the statements in the Hashimoto's Self-Management Program have been evaluated by the FDA, or any other government body.

The opinions expressed, while based on scientific research and experience, are the personal opinions of Izabella Wentz and may not adhere to current practices.

The guidelines in this program are not meant to replace your physician's advice, your personal beliefs or your own common sense.

If you have a medical emergency, please call 911.

