



AIP DIET STARTER GUIDE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
THE
AUTOIMMUNE PROTOCOL

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hey there, I'm Michele

I'M A CERTIFIED HEALTH AND LIFE COACH, NLP PRACTITIONER, QI GONG AND YOGA TEACHER, AIP COACH, AND OWN THRIVING AUTOIMMUNE. I'M ALSO A WIFE, MOM OF 2 BOYS, AND I LIVE WITH TWO AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES - HASHIMOTO'S THYROIDITIS AND CELIAC DISEASE.

For years I was told I had "hypothyroidism", that my symptoms were in my head, and that there was absolutely nothing that could be done beyond the medication that I was given for my thyroid.

Yet it wasn't until my quality of life suffered so greatly that I turned to diet and lifestyle as ways to feel better. It was then that I learned I could stop all of the symptoms I was experiencing, my body would no longer keep harming itself, and I could live a life feeling fantastic. In fact, I feel better in my 40's than I did in my 20's!

Now I lead an active lifestyle where my family and I go hiking, skiing, camping, etc and I feel constant, great energy all day long. I no longer suffer from the brain fog, inability to articulate, cold hands and feet, achiness, heart palpitations, bloating, gas, and debilitating exhaustion that used to be a normal part of my day.

You might be asking - what were the diet changes I made that finally got me back on track?

The biggest improvement I saw was from doing the Autoimmune Paleo Protocol (AIP diet). I fully believe this is the most effective diet out there for helping those suffering from autoimmune disease. More than once I've used this protocol to first put my disease into remission and then quell flares.

It's an amazing gift we've been given - this ability to heal ourselves with the food we eat. This guide aims to help you understand the basics of this protocol so you can help reduce or remove your symptoms as well.

Michele Spring

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What is AIP?



An elimination and reintroduction protocol where you remove all of the foods known by scientific research to be a problem for those with autoimmune disease



The diet helps heal a leaky gut, calms the immune system to prevent further attacking of bodily tissue, and reduces inflammation throughout the body (which helps symptoms to stop)



Developed by Dr. Sarah Ballantyne who endlessly researches autoimmune disease-related topics and suffers from autoimmune disease herself



There are 2 phases - strict elimination and reintroduction of foods



Typically one stays on the strict AIP diet for 30-90 days (but sometimes longer) at 100% compliance, then starts reintroducing foods one at a time to find any sensitivities



Two important components - Diet & Lifestyle

Why it's so effective



01. Most people are deficient in the essential nutrients needed by the body to regulate the immune system. By giving the body the nutrients it needs it will help destroy antibodies that attack our own tissues and possibly regenerate tissue as well.



02. The foods removed all contribute in some way to leaky gut, immune system stimulation, and bacterial overgrowths in the body. Including them is like keeping your body under constant attack. By removing them you give your body a chance to heal.



03. It reduces inflammation, which in turn helps stop your symptoms.



04. True customization - You understand at the end what foods make you feel good and which ones don't help you feel your best



05. It helps regulate hormones (though you might need further blood sugar regulation by reducing the treats and baked good-type foods for a while to achieve this)



THE DIET

2 parts

Elimination
&
Reintroductions



PART 1: ELIMINATION

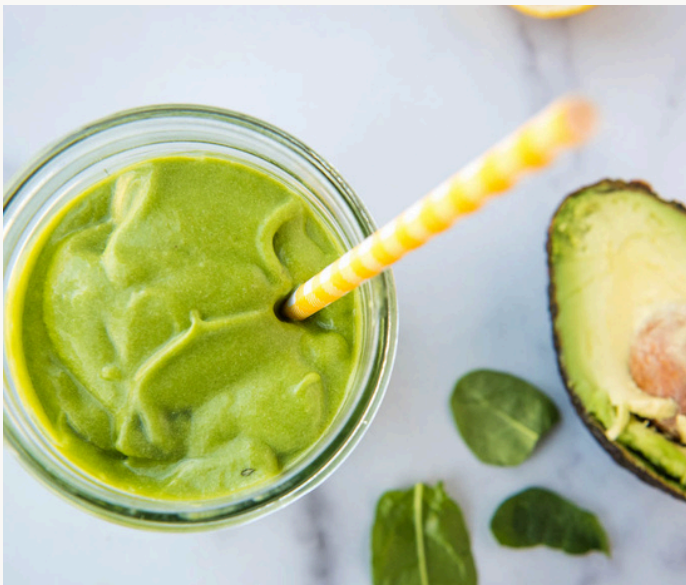
NO

- grains (including wheat, any rice, oats, millet, barley, sorghum, etc)
- pseudo grains (like quinoa, buckwheat)
- dairy (including butter and ghee)
- beans (even with edible pods, like peas and green beans)
- legumes (like peanuts and peanut oil)
- refined sugars (like white and brown, agave nectar)
- refined vegetable oils (like canola oil)
- food chemicals (like guar gum, carrageenan, MSG, xanthan gum)
- nuts (coconut is ok)
- seeds (like sunflower, chia, pumpkin, poppy, hemp, sesame)
- seed-based spices (like mustard, fennel, cumin, nutmeg, coriander)
- nightshades (like tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, white potatoes, goji berries, ashwagandha, tomatillos)
- nightshade-based spices (like paprika, chili powder, red pepper flakes)
- nut and seed-based oils (like sunflower, sesame, macadamia nut)
- eggs (including chicken, duck and other species)
- coffee (it's a seed)
- chocolate (including cocoa powder)
- alcohol (unless cooked off, like in a stew)
- sugar alcohols and artificial sweeteners (aspartame, erythritol, stevia, xylitol)
- Fruit and berry spices (like allspice, anise, caraway, cardamom, juniper, and pepper)





- pastured meats and poultry
- pastured organ meats (like liver, very nutritious!)
- seafood
- vegetables
- fermented foods (like sauerkraut, kombucha, kvass)
- fats (like avocado, lard, coconut oil, tallow, bacon fat, olive oil)
- fruits and berries
- sweet potatoes/yams
- coconut products
- Tigernuts (these are actually a tuber, not a nut)
- flours like cassava, tapioca, arrowroot, coconut, and tigernut
- apple cider vinegar
- occasional sweeteners like honey, maple syrup, coconut sugar, molasses
- Capers
- Olives
- Fish Sauce
- Carob Powder
- Balsamic Vinegar
- Coconut Aminos
- Red Wine Vinegar
- White Wine Vinegar
- Sea Salt
- Lots of Herbs and Spices (like basil, cilantro, cinnamon, garlic, ginger, oregano parsley, rosemary, thyme, turmeric)
- tea (though make sure no nightshades or seeds)



Emphasis is placed on getting nutritionally dense foods like organ meats, seafood, vegetables, meats, fruits, fermented foods, and fats. These foods are needed for the immune system to start to function normally

PART 2:

REINTRODUCTIONS



After you've felt measurable improvement with your disease symptoms, typically 30-90 days, you can start reintroductions of foods.



Done in stages. There are 4 stages (see next page)



Wait at least 72 hours between each reintroduction



It's important to keep a detailed journal of symptoms, sleep, bowel movements, mood, etc to figure out if a food is a trigger for an abnormal symptom



Make sure you don't do reintros during a time of stress or sickness



If a food causes a negative side effect, remove it for a few more weeks and then retry it again, unless it's a really bad reaction, in which case you might want to wait several months or never reintroduce it



After a bad reaction, it's best to go back to the elimination phase for a few weeks to recover



Some foods, like gluten, aren't recommended to be ever reintroduced as they are just too harmful for those with autoimmune disease (whether you are Celiac or not)

If you have no reaction to a food, it's safe to bring back into your diet!

After you've successfully reintroduced several items from a stage you may move onto the next stage.

Stage 1

Egg yolks
legumes with edible pods
fruit and berry-based spices
seed-based spices
seed and nut oils
ghee from grass-fed dairy
chocolate
cocoa
coffee (occasional basis)

Stage 2

Seeds
Nuts
Egg Whites
Grass-fed Butter
Alcohol (in small quantities)
Coffee (regular basis)

Stage 3

Eggplant
Sweet Peppers
Paprika
peeled Potatoes
Grass-fed Dairy

Stage 4

Chile Peppers
Tomatoes
Potatoes
Other nightshades & nightshade
spices
Alcohol (in larger quantities)
White Rice
Soaked/Fermented Legumes
Soaked/Fermented Gluten-free
Grains



THE LIFESTYLE

Just as important as the food

Sleep,
Movement
&
Stress Management

SLEEP



Sleep is one of the most important things you can do to improve your health

If you wake in the middle of the night every night you might need to get your blood sugar under control - best to remove all natural sugars for a few weeks and make sure if you eat fruit or starches (like sweet potatoes or squash) that you do so with a fat and/or protein

You need at least 7-8 hours of sleep, but if you need more at first that's OK

Limit caffeine to before noon and remove it completely if possible

Avoid electronics in the evening if possible. If you must use them, install a program like F.lux or Night Shift on your computer or wear amber-tinted blue-blocking glasses

NO light in your room at night. Even if you can't see it your skin can absorb it and this affects your hormones

Your room should be between 62-68 degrees F




M O V E M E N T

You want neither too little nor too much exercise. Too little doesn't allow for proper detoxification, immune function, resistance to stress, and circadian rhythms. Too much leads to dysregulated hormones, susceptibility to colds & viruses, leaky gut, inflammation, and immune suppression.

Walking is considered to be the ideal movement for autoimmune disease.

Movement Ideas:

- Walk
 - Stretch
 - XC Ski
 - Housework
 - Dance
 - Barre
 - Swim
 - Hike
 - Bike
 - Yoga
 - Pilates
- 

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Chronic stress can cause leaky gut, activate the immune system, keep your body from doing normal restorative processes, cause sleep problems, and alter your hormones. In other words, stress can be just as detrimental as eating harmful foods. Aim to get some sort of stress relief into your day EVERY day.

10 Ideas for Relaxation:



01
Crafting



02
Meditative Drawing
(check out
Zentangle)



03
Meditation
(check out
Headspace.com or
download the app)



04
Yoga
(google Yoga with
Adriene for free
YouTube workouts)



05
Gardening



06
Smile
(even a fake one
can reduce stress
hormones)



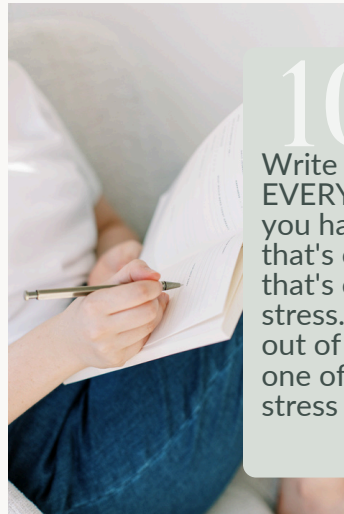
07
Get out in nature



08
Practice gratitude



09
Visualize yourself
(complete with
sounds and smells)
in a peaceful place



10
Write down
EVERYTHING that
you have to do,
that's on your mind,
that's causing you
stress. Getting it
out of your head is
one of the biggest
stress relievers.



Implementing

Start as you mean to go on

How to start,
What you need,
&
Easy Swaps

PART 2:

HOW TO START



Cold Turkey

This method is great for those who need relief NOW and are usually pretty good at making and keeping commitments to themselves. You'd pick a date to start, figure out everything you need to know, buy the items you need, batch cook a few items so you have them on hand, and start!

Advantages: quicker relief and healing, less thinking about it

Disadvantages: Can be harder to implement, easy to push the date to start off, less time to get used to it

Slow and Steady

This method, developed by Angie Alt of Autoimmune Wellness, involves slowly removing foods each week over a period of time. For example, in week 1 you'd remove gluten. Then in week 2, you'd remove grains. Then in week 3, you'd remove dairy. You'd remove groups of food like this until you get to the full elimination phase of AIP.

Advantages: Better for busy people, easier to get used to restrictions, less of a shock

Disadvantages: Longer to heal and feel relief, which can be frustrating



What You May Need

This is by no means a comprehensive list, but it's what I used the most on my recent time on AIP:

- [Coconut milk with no guar gum](#) ([see my recipe](#))
- Bay leaf
- Apple cider vinegar
- Cassava flour
- Coconut flour
- Coconut oil
- Lard
- Avocado oil
- Tapioca starch
- [Tigernut Butter](#) ([see my recipe](#))
- Carob powder
- Dandelion root
- Chicory Root
- Mace (nutmeg replacement)
- Primal Palate spices (The Everyday Spice blends are AIP-compliant)
- Plantain chips
- Unsweetened banana chips
- Immersion Blender
- Instant Pot



Easy AIP Swaps



WHY



MACE

Nutmeg is a seed, but mace is part of the same plant, tastes like nutmeg and is compliant

NUTMEG

DANDELION
ROOT
CHICORY
CAROB

Coffee is a seed, but this combo tastes surprisingly like coffee with customizable bitterness

COFFEE

CAROB

Chocolate is also a seed, so carob can lend a chocolatey taste to things instead

CHOCOLATE/
COCOA
POWDER

WHITE SWEET
POTATO

White potatoes are nightshades, but white sweet potatoes are from a different family and are not nearly as sweet as red sweet potatoes

WHITE
POTATO

TIGERNUTS

Despite the name, these aren't actually nuts. They're tubers and replace nuts rather well. Try the flour, butter, and milks as well as toasted into a granola.

NUTS

RECIPES

*"Let food be thy medicine, let medicine be thy
food"*
- Hippocrates



01. Cassava Flour Pancakes

02. Sweet Potato Bowl

03. Coconut Cauliflower Rice

04. Super Easy Kalua Pork

05. Baked Yellow Plantains

06. Avocado Lime Mousse

07. Lavender Shortbread Cookies

recipe
Cassava Flour
Pancakes



SERVINGS: 8 PANCAKES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Cassava Flour
- 1/4 cup Tapioca Starch
- 1 tsp Cream of Tartar
- 1/2 tsp Baking Soda
- 1/4 tsp Sea Salt
- 1 cup + 1/8 cup Coconut Milk
- 1/3 cup Banana, mashed
(about 1 small - or use applesauce)
- 1.5 tbs Apple Cider Vinegar
- 2 tbs Coconut Sugar
- 1 tsp Vanilla Extract
- Coconut or Avocado Oil for the pan

DIRECTION

Mix all of the ingredients in blender (preferred method for fluffy pancakes) or in a large bowl and mix until smooth. Go for at least 30 seconds in the blender. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add a small amount (about a tablespoon) of coconut or avocado oil to the pan, melt if necessary, and then swirl around to cover. Spoon 1-2 large spoonfuls (approx 2-3 tbs) of batter into the pan to form a pancake, and repeat until you run out of space. (These will be small, silver dollar sized pancakes, about 2 inches wide) Cook for 3 minutes and then flip and cook for 3 minutes more.



recipe

Sweet Potato Bowl



SERVINGS: 1

DIRECTION

- 1 Cook the sweet potato until tender (I like cooking mine in the Instant Pot whole with 1 cup of water for 20 minutes, but you can boil diced potato for 15 minutes or roast in the oven)
- 2 Remove the peel, add the potato to a large bowl and mash.
- 3 Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well.
- 4 Add any toppings you'd like and serve.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small/medium Sweet Potato (can be white or red)
- 1 cup Coconut Milk
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- 2 tbs Beef Collagen (not gelatin)
- pinch Sea Salt
- Toppings: Fresh fruit, berries, unsweetened banana chips, shredded coconut



recipe
Coconut Cauliflower
Rice



SERVINGS: 4

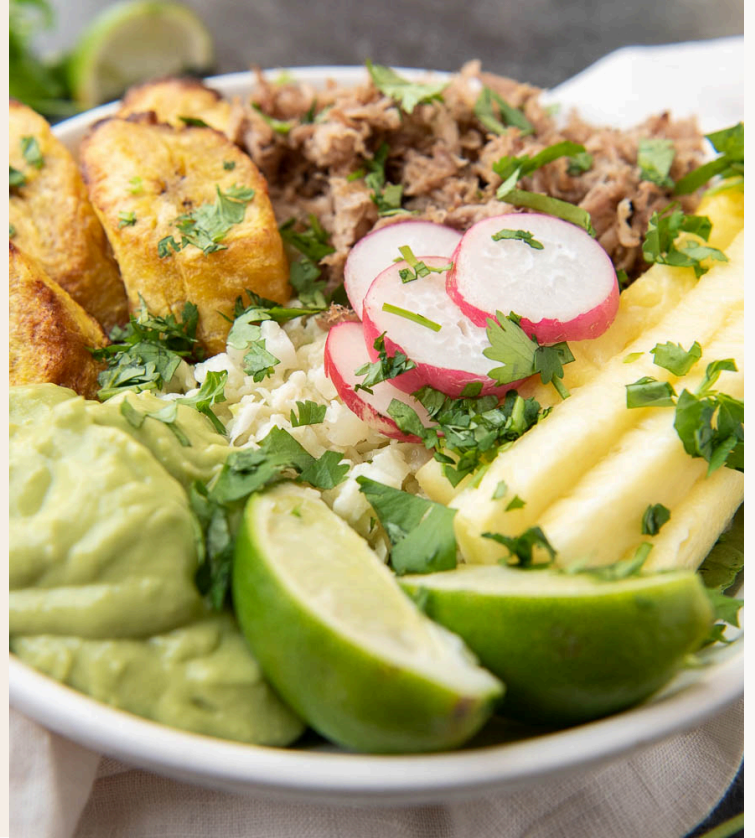
INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium/large head Cauliflower
- 1 tbs Coconut Oil for the pan
- 1/4 tsp Sea Salt
- 1 tbs Coconut Oil
- 6 tbs Coconut Milk
- 1 tbs Cilantro, minced (optional)

DIRECTION

- 1** (Skip this step if you bought pre-riced cauliflower) Cut the cauliflower and remove the leafy outside. Put the shredder blade in your food processor and then feed the cauliflower down through the top chute while the machine is on to create the cauliflower rice. You may have to cut the cauliflower up a bit smaller to get it to fit in the chute. Alternatively, you can use your regular S-blade, but you may have to do this in batches so you don't wind up with cauliflower puree. And yet another option if you don't have a food processor – use a grater and grate the cauliflower into rice.
- 2** Heat a large pan over medium heat. Add the coconut oil for the pan and let get warm. Then add the cauliflower rice and salt and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the remaining coconut oil, let melt, then mix in. Add the coconut milk and cilantro and mix in. Serve.

recipe
AIP Pork Bowls



INGREDIENTS

- Mixed Greens
- Coconut Cauliflower Rice
- Super Easy Kalua Pork (recipe follows)
- Baked Plantains (recipe follows)
- Avocado Lime Mousse (recipe follows)
- Optional toppings: pineapple (fresh or canned), sliced radishes, cilantro

DIRECTION

- 1 Put a layer of mixed greens in a bowl. Top with some coconut cauliflower rice, then put the pork in one section of the bowl. Add some plantains next it, some pineapple on the other side, and a big dollop of avocado lime mousse. Top with any additional toppings you'd like and serve.



SERVINGS: 4-6

INGREDIENTS

4-5 lbs Pork Shoulder (doesn't matter if bone in or out)

2-3 slices of AIP-compliant

Bacon

1 tbs Sea Salt

DIRECTION

- 1 Put the bacon in the bottom of the slow cooker. Sprinkle salt all over the pork shoulder and then place it on top of the bacon in the slow cooker.
- 2 Cook for 8-12 hours.
- 3 Shred and serve.



recipe
**Super Easy
Kalua Pork**

*adapted from
NomNom Paleo's Kalua Pork recipe



recipe

Baked Plantains



SERVINGS: 4

INGREDIENTS

2-3 Yellow Plantains (almost black ok too, just NOT green)
2 tbs Avocado Oil
1 tsp Sea Salt

DIRECTION

- 1 Preheat the oven to 425 F.
- 2 Remove the peel from the plantain and slice into 1-inch pieces. Place on a baking sheet covered in parchment paper and then drizzle with avocado oil and sea salt.
- 3 Bake for 25 minutes, flipping the plantains halfway through.



recipe
Avocado Lime
Mousse



SERVINGS: 4

INGREDIENTS

2 Avocados
1 tbs Lime Juice (approx 1 lime)
1/4 tsp Sea Salt
1/2 cup Coconut Milk

DIRECTION

Combine all ingredients in a blender or a bowl with an immersion blender.



recipe
**Lavender
Shortbread Cookies**



DIFFICULTY: ★★☆☆



PREP TIME: 10 MIN



COOK TIME: 15 MIN



SERVINGS: 10 COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

For the cookies:

- 1/4 cup Coconut Flour
- 1/2 cup Arrowroot Flour
- 1/4 tsp Sea Salt
- 1 tsp dried Lavender (food-grade)
- 100 g (about 1/2 cup) Palm Shortening (in solid form)
- 1 tbs Honey or Maple Syrup

For the glaze:

- 1/4 cup Coconut Flour
- 1/2 cup Arrowroot Flour
- 1/4 tsp Sea Salt
- 1 tsp dried Lavender (food-grade)
- 100 g (about 1/2 cup) Palm Shortening (in solid form)
- 1 tbs Honey or Maple Syrup

For optional topping:

Edible flowers, chopped freeze dried strawberries, chopped freeze dried peaches, lavender

DIRECTION

1 Mix the coconut flour, arrowroot flour, sea salt, and lavender in a medium bowl. In a large bowl with a hand or stand mixer, cream together the palm shortening and honey. Add the dry ingredients to the shortening mixture and mix until the pieces start to come together into a big ball. Pour the mixture out onto a piece of plastic wrap and shape into a log shape. Wrap with the plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or freeze for up to 3 months.

2 Preheat the oven to 300 F. Remove the log from the fridge, unwrap from plastic, and cut into 1/4 inch slices. Put the slices on a baking sheet covered in parchment paper. Bake for 15 minutes or until starting to turn golden brown. Let sit for at least 10 minutes to cool before moving from sheet. Meanwhile, melt the glaze ingredients together in a small pan over medium heat. Stir to mix. Using a spoon, pour the glaze on the cookies and then sprinkle optional desired toppings on the cookies.

Want more?



I also have tons of recipes and lifestyle articles on my website, [Thriving Autoimmune](#)

Ready to really take action? Join [The Autoimmune Collective!](#) It's a monthly membership where you get expert coaching, guidance, and tools on implementing an autoimmune-friendly diet, movement, mental health, habit change, healthy lifestyle, and more so you can stop the autoimmune damage and live without regular symptom flare-ups.

