

# Targeting Wellness Newsletter

## Good News for Good Health!

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Our greatest glory is not in never  
falling, but in rising every time  
we fall.

“

**THERE IS SOMETHING SO  
SPECIAL IN THE EARLY  
*leaves drifting*  
FROM THE TREES—AS IF WE  
ARE ALL ALLOWED A  
CHANCE TO PEEL,  
TO REFRESH,  
*to start again.***

– Ruth Ahmed

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## What is Autoimmune Disease?

An **autoimmune disease** is a condition in which your immune system mistakenly attacks your body. The immune system normally guards against germs like bacteria and viruses (COVID-19). When it senses these foreign invaders, it sends out an army of fighter cells to attack them. Normally, the immune system can tell the difference between foreign cells and your own cells. In an autoimmune disease, the immune system mistakes part of **your body** — like your joints or skin — as foreign. It releases proteins called auto-antibodies that attack healthy cells. Some autoimmune diseases target only one organ. Type 1 diabetes damages the pancreas. Other diseases, like lupus, affect the whole body.

### Why does the immune system attack the body?

- \* Autoimmune diseases are the third most common category of disease in the United States after cancer and heart disease; they affect 5%-8% of the population." (CDC, 2004)
- \* Doctors don't know what causes the immune system misfire. Yet some people are more likely to get an autoimmune disease than others.
  - \* There is a higher prevalence of autoimmune diseases in women, with conservative estimates to be 78.8%. Often the disease starts during a woman's childbearing years (ages 14 to 44).
  - \* Some autoimmune diseases are more common in certain ethnic groups. For example, lupus affects more African-American and Hispanic people than Caucasians.
- \* Certain autoimmune diseases, like multiple sclerosis and lupus, run in families. Not every family member will necessarily have the same disease, but they inherit a susceptibility to an autoimmune condition.
- \* Because the incidence of autoimmune diseases is rising, researchers suspect **environmental factors** like infections and exposures to chemicals or solvents might also be involved.
- \* A "**Western**" diet is another suspected trigger. Eating high-fat, high-sugar, and highly processed foods is linked to *inflammation*, which can set off an immune response. If you are predisposed to this (as mentioned above) this may be the fuel needed to like that fire (auto-immune disease).
- \* Another theory is called the *hygiene hypothesis*. Because of vaccines and antiseptics, children today aren't exposed to as many germs as they were in the past. The lack of exposure could make their immune system overreact to harmless substances.

### Some of the more common autoimmune diseases include:

- ◆ Type 1 diabetes
- ◆ Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)
- ◆ Psoriasis/psoriatic arthritis
- ◆ Multiple sclerosis—damages the protective coating that surrounds nerve cells
- ◆ Lupus—first described as a skin disease because of the rash it produces, but it affects many organs.
- ◆ Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) - Crohn's or Ulcerative colitis
- ◆ Addison's disease—affects the adrenal glands
- ◆ Grave's disease—attacks the thyroid gland
- ◆ Hashimoto's thyroiditis



Sources: CDC and NIH



## Autoimmune Disease and Gut Health: What's The Connection

Inflammation is our body's way of healing cells that have been damaged. We see this happen every time we get a paper cut. Our body jumps into action to first stop the bleeding and then inflammation sets in to allow fresh nutrients and oxygen to fight off infection. It's pretty amazing what our bodies can do when they are able to work properly. But sometimes inflammation in the body does more harm than good. Often times the amount of inflammation increases due to the types of food we eat, our level of stress and environmental toxins. Added sugars, red and processed meats, trans fats, and omega-6s can all trigger spikes in inflammation.

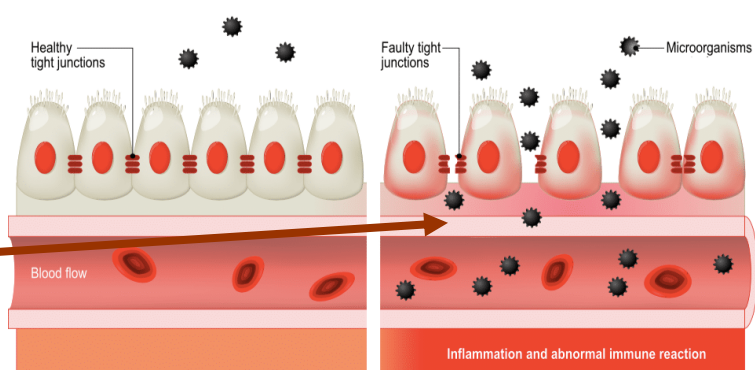
### What foods may actually help reduce inflammation in our body?

Every autoimmune disease is different yet research is showing that our food choices could impact when it comes to healing and preventing the development of autoimmune diseases. There was a study published in 2017 in the Frontiers of Immunology which found that "leaky gut" may trigger the initiation and development of autoimmune disease. Our gut health is crucial to the proper functioning of our body. It is made up of trillions of different bacteria (microbiota) which help with digestion, protects the intestinal wall and supports normal immune function.

The whole issue of whether leaky gut syndrome (LGS) causes or is a symptom of any of the autoimmune diseases is still not 100% clear. But there are many studies that are stating there could definitely be a connection. With that said, there is a good chance that what you eat is either increasing or decreasing your symptoms.

#### "Leaky Gut Syndrome" (LGS)

This is a digestive condition that affects the lining of the intestines. Gaps occur in the intestinal walls allowing bacteria and other toxins to pass into the bloodstream. (Medical News Today)



So what might be some ways to take care of your gut?

- \* **Eating fermented foods** increase the beneficial bacteria (probiotics): kimchi, sauerkraut, unsweetened yogurts, coconut kefir, tempeh, kombucha (fermented black or green tea), miso
- \* **Eat more anti-inflammatory foods** such as mushrooms, onions, leafy greens, squash, turnips or rutabaga to name a few.
- \* **Add some spice to your life:** ginger, cayenne pepper, cloves, garlic, cinnamon, and turmeric.

Sethi, Dr. Saurabh. August 21, 2019. What to know about leaky gut syndrome. Medical News Today.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/326117#what-is-it> Other Sources: Cleveland Clinic, Food Revolution





## Get Your Immune System "Fall Ready"

As we begin this fall season, we are still being challenged with the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and the different variants being discovered. With children going back to school, the availability of a "buster" shot, with work protocols becoming the new normal, there is no time than the present to take a hard look at our lifestyle and how we can make changes when it comes to our overall wellness. We know our immune system is always more vulnerable this time of year, and with COVID-19 still lurking, many may feel even more convinced and concerned.

As mentioned, our immune system is simply our defense against danger whether external or internal. It's pretty obvious that external infections from bacteria, viruses and other organisms pose a threat, but often we forget how vital our immune system is for growth, development and living longer. It stays alert 24/7 to remove internal "invaders" by finding ways to remove them from our system. When the immune system is compromised, we suffer from inflammation. Sometimes inflammation can help fight an acute and specific threat, but long-term inflammation is dangerous. And factors that increase comorbidities such as poor diet, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle make inflammation worse! Chronic inflammation can increase ones risk of cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline and premature aging, not to mention COVID-19.



If we stop a minute and think about it, our immune system is pretty darn amazing! We have trillions of bacteria in our gut and colon. It is their job to figure out which are harmful, which are neutral and which are helpful to our bodies health and function. Over 70% of our immune system is contained in our gut *microbiome* (a community of bacteria).

### Falls impact on our immune system

Change in the weather tends to produce ideal conditions for viruses to flourish while at the same time, tends to lessen our immune system's strength to fight them.

#### Hot, Dry Indoor Air:

Indoor heating can irritate are nasal, sinus and throat passages, causing tiny cracks in our skin and pores which allow bacteria and viruses to enter the body much easier. **Installing a humidifier can help.**

#### Less Sunlight:

With days getting shorter, our exposure to Vitamin D is reduced. Our skin produces vitamin D when exposed to sunlight. This "sunshine vitamin" is a key nutrient needed to support a healthy immune system. Getting a **sunlamp** for your desk may not only help with vitamin D but may also help against seasonal affective disorder (i.e. SAD).

#### Fluctuating Weather:

We experience frequent changes in the weather during this time of year. Changes in temperature, humidity, wind levels and barometric pressure can all take a toll on our body. The constant adaptation to these changes can put stress on the functioning of our system. Learning natural ways to reduce pain/stress can aid in maintaining a healthy immune system by maintaining a healthy mindset (yoga, meditation, movement).

### Does our age make us more vulnerable to sickness?

Our immune system is at its peak during our reproductive years and begins to decline as we get older. This is why our elderly can be more at risk in getting sick and may have more difficulty fighting it off if they do get sick. However, that is NOT always the case. We can slow down or speed up this trajectory by our **lifestyle choices** and the environment in which we live. Our diet, whether or not we get enough exercise and quality sleep, how we deal with stress, if we smoke or take drugs, if we drink alcohol in excess or come in contact with other toxins...all impact our immune system and it's ability to do it's job properly.

**What changes are you ready to make today?**



## Main Components That Support Your Immune System

### Managing Stress

What is your go-to method for dealing with stress when you have taken all you can take? Now ask yourself, is this a healthy practice or one that could lead to other problems accompanied by additional stress? No doubt there are things that happen daily to cause you some level of negativity. You might think that some stress helps **push** you forward. However when negative emotions are involved, it's does not result in happiness. Most times, it causes you to become immobile and unable to focus clearly. It is crucial that when you feel the stress and anxiety building up you have a plan to calm yourself: step away from the situation and focus on deep breathing; go for a walk outside to change your tunnel vision to optic flow; talk to a friend or co-worker. You can learn to become more resilient in times of stress but it will take awareness and practice. It's worth the effort because your immune system will be stronger for it!



### Setting Boundaries

This can be the toughest thing to do when you are everything to everyone (spouse, parent, employee, coworker, friend, family member....). Where do YOU come into the picture? Saying "no" may be very difficult for many reasons. But instead of thinking of it as saying "no" to someone else, think of it as **saying "yes" to yourself**. With many uncertainties in life, make sure you don't over commit. Each day take some time to do something for yourself. Self-care is not being self-fish! Put the mask on yourself first! Saying "no" once in awhile allows you to say "yes" to yourself more often. Give it a try.

### Getting Enough Sleep

If you are pushing the envelope of sleep to get in another movie, surf the web, or peruse your favorite social media, think again. Sleep is when your immune system registers any of the day's invaders. Our immune system, during sleep, gathers up the information it has "learned" about viruses and bacteria it came in contact with during the day. It identifies characteristics and methods of attack and creates antibodies to fight off that invader in the future. Research shows that this process of "**immune memory**" creation can **ONLY** happen during sleep.



### Eating a Healthy Diet

Many have mentioned that some of the extra pounds that found their way around their waistline since the start of the pandemic have been tough to get off. In addition, with the holiday months fast approaching, it's important to get control of your diet now. Since more than 70% of our immune system resides in our gut, eating a healthy diet will definitely have a huge impact on its strength and ability to fight off sickness. One way to do that is to incorporate color into your diet. Eating more whole foods such as vegetables, fruits, grains, legumes and beans will fuel your body with the powerhouse nutrients and vitamins needed to ward off external and internal invaders. Remember autoimmune disease is caused by inflammation in the body. **Animal products are known to increase inflammation!** Make sure you are eating foods rich in vitamin C, vitamin D and Zinc. Also elderberries have long been used in herbal medicine to support the immune system. They are packed with antioxidants that may help in blocking viral proteins and inhibit early stages of an infection.

### Staying Physically Active

Some are turned off by the word "exercise" If that is you, think more in line with incorporating more movement into your day. Fall is a great time to get outside and take a walk or ride your bike. It's a great way to have alone time to think and dream, and it can also be a great time spent with your family. Getting outside in the middle of the work day is a great way to soak in some vitamin D. I have done many after dinner remote "walks and talks" with friends. It's a great way to stay connected while getting in your steps. Tai chi, yoga and strength training are also great options to incorporate into your routine. It can help reduce stress, strengthen muscles, and help your immune system all at the same time!



Strive for the 3 C's in all the above: **COMMITMENT, CONVENIENCE, AND CONSISTENCY!**



## Start A “Gratitude Movement” in the Workplace

Okay I'll be honest, I really love the warm nights, the long days and all the beautiful flowers and song birds of summer. HOWEVER, I feel so fortunate to be able to experience the profound beauty of autumn! The crisp air, the blanket of colorful leaves, the smell of freshness and the beauty of nature in a different way. I'm reminded, as I gaze out of my kitchen window, with a warm beverage in my hands and a roof over my head, of how fortunate I am and how grateful I feel to be here to celebrate another day. Many cultures around the world traditionally celebrate the bounty of the fall harvest and/or the changing of the season. It seems to trigger in many of us a time to reflect on what we have, a time to remember how important our love ones are in our life and it opens our hearts to expressing gratitude to all people and beings.

**Gratitude generates happiness and happiness strengthens the immune system. Let's spread some kindness!**

The holidays are approaching. Why not start a “gratitude movement” now in your department. Research shows that when people feel grateful for the good things in their lives, they are happier, feel more supported and even tempered. It even helps to prevent burn out. A simple thank you can help to improve someone's mood, even for the giver of praise, yet 60% of workers never express gratitude to their colleagues.

**‘Catch’ your employees/coworkers doing something right, helping another person, or coming up with an idea. Acknowledging such activities can harvest more in everyone!**



**Be specific and authentic with your praise. Don't just say “thank you”. Give feedback on a particular task. Express why you are thanking them.**

**Help your employees be the best they can be by offering training and appropriate tools to do their job.**



**Encourage gratitude sharing within your team. Maybe kick off your meetings (monthly or quarterly) by going around the table and sharing something at work that each member feels grateful for. Focusing on what is working and what is appreciated rather than what is wrong, results in immediate improvement in morale.**

**Remember we are all in this together. Success as a manager, supervisor or team leader is largely due to the hard work of the entire department and municipality.**





**All About Tofu:** I recall prior to my decision to follow a vegan lifestyle, tofu was just NOT appealing and seemed a waste of time to eat. I wasn't crazy about the texture. It had no taste except whatever it was mixed with. And I wasn't even sure how to prepare it. When you read the word "tofu" you might immediately think of a white block of "mush". Yes, that is one form but really what we are talking about are soybeans.

I had always heard women should avoid soy products because of the "estrogen" it contained. However, after reading science-based research, my opinion of soy has changed AND more importantly, the science backs up its nutritional BENEFITS, even to women! It's important to know that soybeans (the main ingredient in tofu, soymilk, miso, tempeh and edamame) contain a type of phytoestrogen called "isoflavones". When folks see the word "estrogen", they immediately think of the hormone and associate soy with having estrogen-like effects. Without getting too complicated, "soy seems to lower breast cancer risk and can also help reduce menopausal hot-flash symptoms". For more detail, I encourage you to read Dr. Greger's article on Tofu at, [www.nutritionalfacts.org](http://www.nutritionalfacts.org).

I would suggest, like with everything, eat it in moderation. Tofu would be considered a "processed" food because of the transformation it under-goes to get from soybeans to its final product. Since soybeans are typically genetically modified to produce more and "enhanced" crops, be sure to purchase the brands containing the non-GMO and Certified Organic labels whenever possible.

Contrary to popular belief (including my pre-plant-based belief) tofu is pretty easy to cook with and can be made into just about anything including a variety of breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert, snack and condiment options! There are different types for different uses:

- \* Silken Tofu—great for making creams, mayo, dressings and sauces
- \* Regular Tofu—used in stir fries, baked dishes or grilling (best to use firm or extra firm for this)

Be sure to drain and press the liquid out of your tofu before using, with the exception of silken which is meant to have a creamer texture.

**Not crazy about the texture of tofu or taking the time to press it? Try freezing it first!** I learned this trick from a plant based nutritionist years ago. Freeze tofu in its original container with its liquid. Remove it 24 hours before using (it will take awhile to defrost) or submerge in a large bowl of very warm water for about an hour, changing the water a couple times to maintain the heat. The texture TOTALLY CHANGES to a sponge-like consistency. When it has been frozen, you literally can squeeze any remaining liquid out with your hands. And like a sponge, it soaks up whatever you marinated it in. It resembles chunks of white bread. It has become a favorite in my home; I share my stir-fry recipe here. Unfortunately I don't really have precise measurements, I basically eye-ball it, taste it, and add more. Start with less because you can't take it away once it's added 😊

### Debby's Tofu Stir-fry "Winging-It" **Recipe**

#### Tofu Marinade:

After all the water has been drained from tofu, cut into bite sizes and marinate in:

- \* 1-2 Tbsp Tahini or other nut butter
- \* 1-2 Tbsp soy sauce/Bragg Liquid Aminos
- \* Chopped fresh garlic, fresh or dried ginger, red pepper flakes and scallions.

Add water to thin out the tahini/nut butter so it has a pouring consistency for the tofu pieces. Marinate at least 30 minutes. Bake on parchment paper at 400 degrees for about 30 minutes to get a little crust on the outside of the cubes. (They will still be soft when you add them to your stir-fry.)

#### Stir-Fry Directions:

1. Sauté chopped onion, celery, carrots, fresh garlic in veggie broth/water/white wine (or oil if you must J) If using bok choy, I add the chopped celery-like base here as well.
2. Add whatever veggies you like: broccoli, bok choy (leafy tops), mushrooms, frozen peas/corn/mixed veggies, cauliflower, all cut to about the same size. Add fresh/dried ginger, red pepper flakes, oregano, cumin, turmeric, soy sauce (or Liquid Aminos). Remember start with a little, you can add more as you taste test.
3. Serve over brown rice. And enjoy!



Soy isoflavones (a.k.a. antioxidants) not only can help provide protection against different types of cancer, studies have shown it help reduce cardiovascular disease, symptoms of menopause, and reduce the risks associated with aging such as osteoporosis and cognitive decline.

Soy consumption has also been shown to benefit our kidneys since they tend to handle plant protein very differently than animal protein.

Soy isoflavones may interfere with the absorption of iodine, therefore, always consult with your doctor when making any changes to your diet, especially if you have issues with your thyroid.

**Anyone interested in staying on track with your nutrition goals this holiday season?** Focusing more on WHAT you eat rather than how MUCH you eat may be one way. Contact me at [debby\\_schiffer@targetingwellness.com](mailto:debby_schiffer@targetingwellness.com) for a **free coaching session**. We can chat about ways to maintain healthy habits over the holiday season. Don't wait until January to think about your health. Set healthy goals NOW. Life doesn't wait for anyone; It's happening THIS MINUTE! Caring for your health today can help avoid needing health-care in the future!



## Tofu Power Scramble

### Ingredients:

1 onion, diced  
 1 red bell pepper, diced  
 2 stalks celery, diced  
 1 package extra firm tofu, crumbled  
 2 Tbsp Scrambler Seasoning  
 Sprinkle of extra curry, to taste  
 A few dashes of hot sauce, to taste  
 A few dashes of low-sodium soy sauce, to taste  
 2 large sweet potatoes, steamed and diced  
 2 to 3 cups fresh baby arugula, kale, or spinach, chopped

### Scrambler Seasoning Mix:

1 cup nutritional yeast flakes  
 5 Tbsp plus 1 tsp onion powder  
 4 tsp curry powder  
 4 tsp ground turmeric  
 4 tsp ground cumin  
 4 tsp salt  
 1 to 2 tsp ground pepper



### Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients for the seasoning mix and store in a covered jar.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Add onions and dry sauté until translucent. Add few drops of water if it starts to stick or lower heat slightly.
4. Add bell pepper and celery, and continue to sauté briefly.
5. Add tofu and Scrambler Seasoning Mix.
6. Continue cooking over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally until tofu is rich in color and begins to turn golden brown.
7. If desired, season with an extra sprinkle of curry, hot sauce, salsa and/or soy sauce.
8. Add sweet potatoes and greens, and continue to cook until potatoes are heated through and greens have wilted.
9. Remove from heat. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste, and serve hot, with sprouted whole grain Ezekiel toast or English muffins.

**Tip:** Sometimes I'll add in 1/2 cup black beans and frozen corn. Adds little more protein, fiber and crunch! This dish is great for any meal, not just breakfast. With a little pre-planning and pre-prepping, this dish will come together in no time for a weekday dinner.

## BONUS Recipe - Homemade Ranch Dressing

Wait, ranch dressing can be made without dairy using tofu instead? Heck yeah! Stick with me...I'll share how this world is a beautiful place full of plant-based and oil-free possibilities (LOL)

Prep Time: 10 minutes; Gluten-free and nut-free recipe.

### Ingredients:

2 lb (about two 14 oz pkgs) tofu	1 tsp nutritional yeast
1½ Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped	1 tsp dry mustard
¾ cup onion, finely chopped	¼ tsp paprika
2 cloves garlic	½ tsp celery seeds
3 Tbsp distilled white vinegar	1 tsp dried dill
2 Tbsp agave syrup	1 Tbsp dried chives
1 Tbsp lemon juice	¾ cup water

Both recipes taken from:  
[www.nutritionstudies.org/recipes](http://www.nutritionstudies.org/recipes)



### Directions:

1. Blend all ingredients in a food processor until creamy smooth.
2. Serve over your favorite salad, or use as a dip for vegetables.

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