



Episode 325: Hashimoto's Update:
How I Got to Remission & What I Do to Maintain

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

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This episode is brought to you by Beekeepers Naturals... superfood products from the hive that help support your family's health. Right now, Propolis has been a lifesaver with all of the sniffles and coughs going around where we live. Propolis is a resinous mixture that bees make in the hive and contains over 300 compounds including polyphenols and compounds that are antibacterial and a compound called pinocembrin that acts as an antifungal. Some studies have shown that propolis can speed wound healing. It's natural antibacterial and antifungal properties also make it great for fighting the sniffles. At first sign of any sniffles, sore throat or coughing, I spray propolis in the throat and it almost always helps us bounce back quickly. I also use propolis before flying to avoid picking up anything on the plane. You can save 15% on propolis and all beekeepers naturals products at beekeepersnaturals.com/wellnessmama with the code wellnessmama

Katie: Hello and welcome to the "Wellness Mama" podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com and wellnesse.com, my new personal care line that you can check out. And today I'm gonna give an update on my journey with Hashimoto's and from beginning to end all of the steps I tried, what worked and what didn't work, and where I currently am with that because I get quite a few questions about this, especially when I mentioned being in remission and it was very much a decade-long journey for me.

I'm hopeful that some of you can benefit from maybe some of the things I've tried. I will say before we jump in that if I've learned anything through this whole process, it is just how personalized and individualized health is and especially when you're dealing with something as intricate as autoimmune disease. I do think a lot of these things, in general, can be helpful in some way to people with lots of different autoimmune disease, but I don't mean them to be diagnostic or prescriptive. What worked for me, ultimately, was trying a lot of different things and finding the things that worked for me by tracking.

So as I go through all of these different things that worked, I will also say that I have kept a relatively detailed health journal that's now in digital form actually through... It's been at some points notes on my phone in Evernote and now lives in Google docs so that I always have it with me and I track things very carefully, including my labs using Heads Up Health, which is a health dashboard.

Anytime I'm trying something new, I'm definitely looking at the empirical data of what's happening in my body. And I also keep notes on any changes in exercise, in general and dietary stuff, and also sleep and use my Oura Ring as well so that I can see what's actually working and what's not. I think that that's a really important step for all of us, whatever we're trying to work through in a health perspective, not that we need to be obsessive about it, but just to be able to see trends over time. It's really helpful to have all of the data in one place.

So starting from the beginning or as much as in the beginning as possible without being too long-winded, years ago about, gosh, almost 14 years, more than 14 years ago now, I was pregnant with my first child. And I had recently finished college and had been in an extremely stressful academic environment. I loved it, but I was pushing myself incredibly hard. I wasn't sleeping very much. I took 28 hours my final semester while I was pregnant and while I was working on a lot of other projects, so I was extremely stressed. I was not eating much food. And then when I did eat I was not eating very well and I was pregnant. So lots of potential factors all hitting at one time.

And I've joked before that if you want to create autoimmune disease, my recipe seems to be don't sleep, eat really bad food, and be stressed all the time. And that's enough too, if you've got a genetic predisposition, to kind of trigger something. And I think, based on my research at least, a lot of factors can go into it. It can be toxicity from certain things. It can be deficiencies of certain nutrients. It can be stress. Like, stress alone can trigger autoimmune disease from many of the stories I've heard from you guys and from my research.

So I think there's a lot of factors that go in. I've explained this almost as like a bathtub concept that if you have a bathtub you can put a lot of different things in it. You could put rocks. You could put kids' toys, which are usually what are in my bathtub. You could put sand. You could put golf balls. You could put water, Kool-Aid, whatever. You can put a lot of stuff in. But when it reaches the top, no matter what you put in, something is going to overflow. And that's kind of how I think of health problems and autoimmune disease. And I think some of us maybe have genetically bigger bathtubs and more leeway than others based on genetics. But everybody has that point at which health problems will start.

And so I think there's a lot of different factors that can go into this. And I think there's also a lot of different factors that can help clean out the bathtub and reset things. So this was my journey of finding what those things were. At this time in my life, that was where I was health-wise. I was very young. I wasn't thinking about health problems. I was certainly not thinking about what I ate or what impact it might have on my health. I wish I had thought more about what impact it would have on my child and I wish I had known now all of the things I know to take and to do when pregnant. But at that point, I was pregnant with my first, extremely busy, extremely stressed, and had a tough birth with him, and then was adjusting to life as a mom, which is a relatively large life adjustment to begin with, as well as adjusting to a move and to still being a newlywed. And a lot, and it was just a lot of things that happened at once.

And so, in the beginning, I didn't fully realize that I was in a health crisis until it got pretty bad because I wrote off a lot of the things that were happening as, "Oh, that's just because of the pregnancy," or, "That's just because of having a new baby," or, "That's just because I'm not sleeping," or all of those different things. But when my oldest son was six weeks old, I was sitting in the doctor's office waiting for the doctor for my followup appointment. And he was running late because he was delivering another baby. And I read through pretty much every magazine in that waiting room. And one of the last ones I picked up, I believe it was "Time" magazine. And it said that for the first time in two centuries, the current generation of American children would have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

And that just...it was such a stark contrast. You might've heard that part of the story before because it was so, so pivotal for me that day. But to hear that and to think about and read through all these statistics in that article about how they were gonna face such high rates of cancer, diabetes, and autoimmune disease, and heart disease and how everything was drastically on the rise, and looking back mathematically, it didn't even make sense that in such a short period of time, in such few generations, we could see such drastic changes. And reading that while holding this tiny baby who I was just overwhelmed with love for, it made me so mad that I wasn't just not okay with that as a new mom with so many hormones. I was not okay with the idea that that was the future for my child or for all of our children.

So something, a ball started rolling that day. Something clicked in my head and I didn't know if I'd ever be able to or how, but I was determined that I wanted to help change that statistic. I wanted to help change it, certainly for my own children, but hopefully also, for lots of other children because I wanted better than that for our kids. And around the same time, I started just, like I said, noticing some symptoms but largely writing them off as, "Oh, maybe that's just post-pregnancy," or, "Maybe it just is harder to lose weight after having a baby," or, "Maybe it's normal to be cold when you're nursing," or, "Of course, your hair's supposed to fall out after pregnancy," and, "Of course, I'm tired because I'm not sleeping."

And so I just kind of kept writing those things off. But I did have like all of those symptoms. I had trouble losing the weight after my son and then got pregnant with my daughter less than a year later. And so the whole process kind of started again. And in hindsight, I can see almost kind of a snowball effect, having now had six kids within a nine-year period, just how difficult that was on my body, but also how I was able to ignore so many of the symptoms that would line up with Hashimoto's because they also line up with things like pregnancy and breastfeeding and lack of sleep with being a new mom.

But over the course of having my next couple of children, there were these persistent symptoms and I wasn't able to lose weight. And I kept thinking, "I wonder if something else is going on." I would read things in my research about thyroid disease and I kept wondering if that's what it was. And through my self-research, I think I probably actually made the problem worse in the beginning because at first, I would ask my doctor when I was pregnant to test me for any thyroid issues.

And they do some routine thyroid tests, typically, most doctors during pregnancy, but they were just testing a couple of the hormones. Usually, it was just T3 or sometimes TSH, but nothing else. They were just testing a

couple of things. And then if those were normal, they wouldn't go any deeper. So I was asking for tests and I was being told everything was fine. And increasingly, I kept thinking like, "I don't think everything is fine," but I couldn't get a doctor to help me figure out why. And so then I started taking different supplements that were labeled for thyroid. In hindsight, this probably made things worse because a lot of those supplements are iodine-based. And if you have certain thyroid issues, iodine can be a little bit complicated, to say the least. And so I was taking iodine that probably actually, now understanding my version, made things worse.

And I'll try to explain a little bit of why. I definitely, again, I'm not trying to give medical advice on this. I think if you even suspect that you have a thyroid issue or any kind of autoimmune disease, it is very, very important to work with a doctor who knows about that condition and who can know your full medical history. I'm just sharing what worked for me. If you do need to find a functional medicine doctor, I use a company called SteadyMD and I will link to them in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. They have been phenomenal. I worked with Dr. Lauren Jefferis who is highly experienced in this, but I'm back to the iodine note.

So iodine is often recommended if you have thyroid problems because there's this idea that an iodine deficiency can lead to hypothyroidism or there's a correlation between low iodine and hypothyroidism. And so a lot of people end up taking iodine, but in some cases it can do more harm than good. And I didn't learn this for a lot of years. I'll explain how I learned it in a little while. But basically it depends whether or not... Like, iodine can be both good or bad for the thyroid. And there's a lot of factors that come into play.

So when the term thyroid problems is a pretty broad category and there's a lot of actual medical conditions that can fall into that and they all need to be handled differently. So like I said, I found this out the hard way. And after all my initial research and a chiropractor said I needed to start taking iodine. So I did. I took these supplements with iodine and I started feeling a lot worse. And I kind of wrote it off thinking, "Oh, maybe it's an adjustment reaction." And I continued taking it, but I eventually had to stop taking it because I didn't feel any better.

And now I'm seeing research and my own experience that really verify that. So there's data from a lot of countries that can really kind of speak to the whole iodine thing because a lot of countries started adding iodine to salt to combat hypothyroidism. But then on the flip side of that, they would see rising rates of autoimmune thyroid problems. And so Chris Kresser talks about this. He has a great post. You can Google Chris Kresser in pretty much anything and great articles will come up.

But there's countries like Sri Lanka, Brazil, Greece, China, and I think others that saw an increase in autoimmune thyroid issues after increasing iodine. And this is because increased intake of iodine, especially in supplement form, they think can increase the potential of an autoimmune attack on the thyroid. And one reason from what I understand might be that iodine reduces the activity of an enzyme called thyroid peroxidase or TPO, which is something that is required for proper hormone production and something that they measure. I'll talk more about that soon.

But there's also a confounding factor. So my own treatment plan, I now avoid any supplemental iodine whatsoever. And there is evidence that shows that those with autoimmune thyroid disease can see a benefit from just from avoiding iodine. But on the other hand, those with the iodine deficiency-induced hypothyroidism can benefit from very careful supplementation. But again, it's that very careful balance and why you'd wanna work with a doctor who knows what they're doing.

Another researcher I really admire is Dr. Paul J M Annette [SP]. And he talks about another factor that might come into play with the iodine autoimmune relationship. And that's selenium. So he says that excess intake like of iodine can cause autoimmune thyroid problems that bears all the characteristics of Hashimoto's but might not actually clinically the Hashimoto's. And he found that an animal studies this occurs only if the animal is deficient or has an excess of selenium, which is another one we need to get in very careful amounts.

And also in animal studies, very high intake can make a preexisting autoimmune condition worse. But again, only if selenium isn't too high or too low. So he found that if you're selenium levels are correct, then your thyroid follicles are healthy, people don't have goiter in those scenarios, and autoimmune markers go into normal levels. So it seems that there is a really important and very carefully-balanced thing that comes into play with optimizing selenium. And I'll talk more about that when I talk about supplements I now take. But the bottom line is I think actually made my own thyroid problems worse in the beginning by taking way too much iodine.

So for the next several years, I went through a variety of different doctors that I would try to find locally and asked them to test different thyroid markers or help me try to figure out what was wrong and largely with no beneficial results because they would test the same things. They would tell me everything was normal and that all of the symptoms, the fatigue, the hair loss, the cold, the tired, etc, those were all just normal with being a mom and they're not. And so if you're listening, no matter what you think you might be dealing with, I would say don't settle for being told those things are normal. And unfortunately, sometimes we do have to be very strong advocates in our own health. That is a lesson I've learned over and over and all of this that when it comes to actually finding our own health answers, we can find incredible doctors and practitioners who can be amazing partners, but we can never outsource the responsibility because health is so personalized.

And at the end of the day, our best-case scenario is going to require us being patients and n equals, one, and experimenting on ourselves. I went through many, many doctors. I think it was eight by the time I finally started to get answers. And when my fourth child was young, I actually traveled to a health conference with her and had my mom there to help babysit. I was still tired. I still couldn't lose weight. I was feeling all the emotions of feeling like a fraud at a health conference because I couldn't figure out how to get the weight off and not being able to get a diagnosis. And I was talking to someone there who said she had had a diagnosis of thyroid problems and it had taken her a long time. And I was like, "Who did you finally see? How did you finally get answers?" And she recommended her doctor, who is now a doctor I've worked with and a very close friend, Dr. Alan Christianson. And I will link to his website also in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. He has incredible resources that you can read and find for free. And he has books on this topic.

But she told me, "I worked with Dr. Alan Christianson. He was able to diagnose me immediately and my entire life changed. I felt so much better." And for the first time and a really long time, I had this glimmer of hope and it was like, "Can you please send me his info? I'm willing to work with him. I'll go anywhere." And she's like, "Oh no, he's here at the conference." And I ran into him later that day and I started barely just talking about my symptoms. And before I could even finish explaining all this stuff, he looked at me, he reached out, he actually felt my thyroid, and he said that he would...he wanted to run some labs. But he was pretty sure just based on that that I had Hashimoto's and that like he could tell that my thyroid was a little bit enlarged. There were likely nodules and based on symptoms he said, "They probably aren't testing the correct labs. They probably haven't tested your antibodies," which was true and, "They probably haven't identified, but I would..." He said, "I would be willing to bet that you likely have Hashimoto's."

And while for some people hearing that might be a bad thing, I was so overwhelmingly excited to just have potentially a glimmer of hope of knowing what it might be and then having a way to try to research and figure out how to get over it that I actually hugged him. I didn't just want to hug him. I did. And over the next year, he worked with me through lab testing, through all kinds of different methods that I'll talk about. And I started to see improvement in my symptoms and also in my labs. And he's now become a very close friend. I absolutely love him.

Like I said, I recommend his books very highly. I recommend his website and his work and he's also just one of the most fascinating people I have ever met just as a person to hang out with. He's incredibly smart. He read the encyclopedias before he was five and he now is...he competitively unicycles up mountains. So an incredibly interesting human being, and incredibly smart, and I am forever grateful to him for starting me on this journey to recovery.

So at that point through lab testing, it showed elevated TSH, elevated antibodies, and an ultrasound of my thyroid revealed nodules. So all of those things lined up and led to an official diagnosis of Hashimoto's. At that point, I started to really wanna understand for the first time autoimmune disease in general, what was going on within my body. I'll link to a lot of the resources I used to start understanding it in the show notes. I read all of Dr. Christianson's work. I read a lot from Dr. Tom O'Bryan, some from Dr. Sarah Valentine, Dr. Isabella Wentz. There are so many incredible researchers who have written and shared incredible information about this. And there are differences based on the different types of autoimmune disease, but there's a lot great resources as a starting point.

In the beginning of treatment, the things that Dr. Christianson and I did together were basically developed a plan based on diet, lifestyle, and careful supplementation and medication for a while. I think that's an important part to talk about in this story to be able to let my body come back to baseline and recover. In general, I typically try to avoid medication when I can, but I also think that there is a time and a place for certain things. And I don't ever want to like exclude traditional medical treatment, as I do think there's a time and a place for that. And I talk about cases, just like for instance, the birth of my third child. I would be dead and so would he without a C-section and without medical care because I had placenta previa.

I think there's absolutely time and place for conventional medicine. And for me, this meant that I took in the very beginning something called WP Thyroid, which is a natural thyroid supplement. Now, it's very difficult to get. So I take Nature Throid. And the logic here was that taking that would help give my body a break because my TSH was high. And when your TSH is high, which is a stimulating hormone, those nodules were more likely to grow as well. So in order to hopefully shrink the nodules, I wanted to keep TSH low for awhile. And so I was taking WP Thyroid and now Nature Throid at the end to give my body a break to keep TSH low so that I'd be able to shrink the nodules. And I was using a lot of things like in conjunction with this with a focus on reducing inflammation and trying to figure out the root causes.

Dr. Isabella Wentz has multiple books on this and her website is full of great information on finding your own root causes. I think this part is extremely individualized. So I'm not even going to go deep on what ended up working for me other than the dietary side because I think there are some commonalities there. But things that can potentially be root causes or at least root triggers of these kinds of things are chemicals or toxicities in the body from any variety of different factors, things like an underlying undiagnosed virus. Epstein-Barr is apparently very common and in conjunction, people may not even know they have it and they might have a latent version of some virus in the body that is keeping the body from being able to come back to homeostasis and to recover from something like this.

And so I started really researching and experimenting and delving into all of the things I could do to lower inflammation, to give my body a break, and to let it recover. And I tried a lot of things over the last 10 years to finally get this to happen. And I think that it would be very difficult to say even a number of things that were the actual causes that let me fully recover. But I think there were some contributing factors that were really helpful. I think the common factor is inflammation. So for people who are struggling with this, again, I think it's very important to find a doctor who you can work with to figure out what are your own root causes and then what do you need to do to address them.

So for me, there was a combination of diet and lifestyle factors. And I'll talk about some that I mentioned a little bit in past podcast episodes. But it was also really important to note that for me, I had to address all of these factors and be very patient with my body and let all of these things come back into normal, get my hormones in normal range, support my body nutritionally, keep inflammation low, and I was not able to lose weight easily during that entire process. It was not until my body recovered and really came back to baseline that I was able to lose weight. And at that point it was incredibly easy. And I've also shared in a recent podcast episode the emotional side of that and how I think really dealing with our stress and emotions is a huge key.

So I'm not gonna go back through that, but listen to episode 309 of this podcast if you want to understand that whole side. In this one, I'm just gonna focus on the medical and nutritional and lifestyle things I did. So one thing Dr. Christianson recommended right away, he said that you know, hormones all work together almost like a symphony and you won't just have one out of place. They all depend on each other.

So when you end up with something like a thyroid issue or hormones that are not where they should be, you want to make sure you're supporting it across the board. And one thing he is a big fan of is getting sunlight in

the morning. It doesn't have to be on your skin. You don't have to get a suntan or a sunburn. In fact, you won't early in the morning typically anyway. But being outside in natural light as soon as possible after waking up, and I've mentioned this before, but I wanna reiterate because it really does make a difference. It's easy to ignore because you think it won't make a very big difference just getting outside. But there's a cascade of hormones in our body that depends on light.

And light has a very important signaling purpose in things like melatonin production, cortisol production, and keeping those things in proper ranges. And if your cortisol is messed up or you're not making melatonin or you're not sleeping well because you're not making melatonin, you are going to have a difficult time getting inflammation down in the body and letting your body recover from something like, for me, Hashimoto's. So his advice was to spend 30 minutes in the sun. For me, it's on my porch in the morning as soon as possible after waking up and I often do this sipping tea or having coffee some days.

And so sitting outside with my family in the sun every morning, that is an easy, super simple free thing that we can all do that has, I noticed, measurable changes in my hormone levels from doing. So my cortisol was...actually, when he first tested me, it was the exact opposite of what it was supposed to be. So cortisol is supposed to spike at certain times and fall at others and that signals that your stress levels are in the correct ranges. And mine was doing the exact opposite. And getting sunlight in the morning along with some of these other methods, helped correct that for me.

Another thing that he recommended for me was broccoli sprouts, eating broccoli sprouts every day. And some of these things, at first I doubted like, "Is this actually gonna be beneficial? Like the sunlight, is that actually gonna be helpful?" And I will say I still do these things to this day because I do feel like they make a difference. But he also recommended broccoli sprouts regularly. And the reason for this is broccoli sprouts are high in a substance called sulforaphane. If you have never heard of this, I have a couple of posts on it that I will link to in the show notes. Dr. Rhonda Patrick also has some great posts and podcasts about this. But it's found in cruciferous vegetables, especially in broccoli sprouts.

There are studies that show that sulforaphane can be anticancer, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, which is why I was using it. And there are even studies looking at it to help fight aging and diabetes. And the great thing is this is something inexpensive that you can make at home. I have a tutorial on wellnessmama.com that'll be linked in the show notes on wellnessmama.fm. But if you haven't heard of this compound before, I'll try not to keep this or I'll try to keep this from being too boring. But so sulforaphane is the name for this cancer-fighting compound that's found in cruciferous vegetables and especially sprouts.

If you care about the science, sulforaphane is created when the enzyme myrosinase transforms the glucoraphanin into sulforaphane. Hopefully, I pronounced all that correctly. Since myrosinase and glucoraphanin are found in different parts of the plants, this change actually happens when the plant is damaged. So when you chew it or blend it up, then these two compounds mixed together and react and young sprouts or broccoli or particularly good sources of glucoraphanin. And more specifically, sulforaphane is part of a group of plant-based compounds, phytochemicals called isothiocyanates, which in the body, this

stimulates the production of important enzymes that fight free radicals. You've probably heard of those for their effect on aging in the body.

So inflammation and free radicals are also, they get the blame for a lot of types of cancer. So this is a big deal and there's a lot of cool research right now happening about these particular phytochemicals and protection against cancer. And since I had nodules on my thyroid, I was very cautious to make sure that those weren't gonna turn cancerous. And so like I said, sulforaphane is found in all cruciferous vegetables, but much higher in broccoli sprouts and other sprouts.

And these are things you can grow easily at home. There're studies, like I said, showing that this can boost brain health. It can help with detoxification, which is another factor that's often present with autoimmune disease. Taking sulforaphane can help increase glutathione as an NRF-2 activator and also slowing aging. There's a lot of studies about this, so, and again, it's an easy thing that he recommended adding in. You can grow them in your own kitchen. I've got tutorials in the show notes.

But I also think before I move on, it's important to talk about cruciferous vegetables because just like the iodine thing, there's, you know, the conception that you should take iodine if you have thyroid problems. There is also some advice if you start reading into the research on thyroid issues, in general, that you should not eat cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, etc. if you have thyroid problems. And again, the answer to this is a little bit more complicated and nuanced than just whether you should or shouldn't.

As I started really digging into this, I found that some sources claim that all cruciferous vegetables should be avoided if you have thyroid issues while others say it's fine to eat them if they're cooked. You just don't want to eat them raw. And then I also read, some sources that said, if you're gonna eat cruciferous vegetables, you need to take iodine. Again, that didn't work for me, but there was a lot of conflicting information about this. So I asked Dr. Christianson when I first started this and he explained that it's perfectly safe to consume cruciferous vegetables regularly if you have Hashimoto's. And here's why.

He said cruciferous vegetables are, they basically belong to the mustard family and cruciferous vegetables is a broad term for this whole group of things that everything could include bok choy, arugula, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, horseradish, mustard greens, radishes, turnips, watercress, etc. And, in general, there's a lot of benefits to these kinds of vegetables. They contain a lot of phytochemicals and important things. But a lot of people with thyroid issues are hesitant to consume them, especially in large amounts because of some conflicting opinions online.

So in my opinion, like I said, they can be extremely healthy. They contain folate, Vitamin C, E, K, and a lot of phytochemicals that can reduce inflammation. So there's potential reasons to consume them. The reason people say you might not wanna eat them if you have thyroid issues is that they also contain goitrogens, which are substances that affect the thyroid in certain ways. And goitrogens can interfere with the thyroid's ability to

take in iodine. So that's also why people say you might wanna take iodine if you're consuming a lot of those because your body needs that to produce thyroid hormone.

So people are worried about the goitrogenic activity of these. So they say if you have thyroid issues, you should not consume cruciferous vegetables. Before we move on, it's also important to note that the cruciferous vegetables are not the only foods that contain goitrogens. So if you're considering avoiding cruciferous vegetables, you also wanna avoid things like peaches, peanuts, red wine, soy, strawberries, sweet potatoes, teas, etc. But for people with Hashimoto's, goitrogens aren't exactly necessarily where we should be looking at for problems.

I think that personally, and based on what Dr. Christianson said, I find that the benefits of eating cruciferous vegetables, especially things like broccoli sprouts, outweigh the negatives, even for those with Hashimoto's. Again, work with a doctor. But from what Dr. Christianson explained to me, you would have to eat an enormous amount of cruciferous vegetables to affect the thyroid negatively. And not too many of us have the problem of overeating vegetables. That's statistically not what is happening in the U.S.

In fact, there's only been one case study where someone actually harmed their thyroid by eating too many cruciferous vegetables. And that was an 88-year-old woman from what I remember who developed hypothyroidism, but she was eating several pounds of raw bok choy every day for several months. She probably would have avoided the problem had she just cooked that. Unless you were eating pounds and pounds of raw cruciferous vegetables every day, probably not an issue if you have Hashimoto's.

I already talked about the iodine side. I also wouldn't consider taking supplemental iodine without very specific testing and working with a doctor who understands that. But I personally do consume cruciferous vegetables including broccoli sprouts relatively regularly. If you are worried, some ways you can reduce the goitrogen activity while still consuming these, ferment your veggies, cook them, those both deactivate a lot of them ahead of time.

If you're putting things like kale or spinach into a smoothie, you can blanch them ahead of time and freeze them. The heat will kill most of the goitrogens and then they're ready to go when you wanna blend them. Again, selenium comes into play. So for me, finding the right amount of selenium and taking it made a big difference and I minimize the iodine as well. So a little bit of a tangent there into cruciferous vegetables and broccoli sprouts. But that did make a big difference for me and I still consume broccoli sprouts regularly. There's also now a sulforaphane supplement you can take. Historically, it's extremely hard to isolate sulforaphane into a supplement form. And I have finally found a supplement that does that, so I'll link to that in the show notes as well.

This episode is sponsored by Four Sigmatic, the reason I'm on shrooms (the legal kind) every day. They make a wide variety of superfood mushroom infused products from coffees and teas to elixirs and even chocolate that is infused with ten mushrooms! I have a shelf in my pantry just for four sigmatic products and keep pretty

much off of them on hand. Some current favorites... my kids love the reishi infused cocoa, and I love that it helps them sleep! I also really enjoy their 10 mushroom blend which contains all of my favorites like chaga, cordyceps, reishi and even meshima. I add this to coffee, tea, or smoothies to get a daily dose of shrooms. As a listener of this podcast, you can save 15% by going to foursigmatic.com/wellnessmama and using the code "wellnessmama"

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I also found that I needed to do very specific exercise. So for me, that meant I only stick to now high-intensity exercise and things like lifting weights. I don't do any long-form cardio, so I'm not just running miles or on the elliptical. My body and hormones personally respond best to high-intensity training. I use the CAR.O.L bike, which I will link in the show notes, and I've done a podcast with the founder of CAR.O.L. And then I do very heavy weight lifting and I'm lifting above my body weight now in most categories. And I feel the best on that.

Sleep was also a huge component of this for me. So I know in early motherhood this was something that probably made it worse, but it was unavoidable, which was not getting enough sleep. If it's possible to get enough sleep for anyone with autoimmune disease or any kind of health condition, I think that's a definite place to start. And I've written a lot about this before, so I'm not gonna go deep on the sleep issue today, but I will make sure some of the posts are linked in the show notes if you feel like that's an issue for you.

And then also the dietary side. So without going too, too deep on this, I'll link in the show notes to a more detailed description of what I did. But for a while after my diagnosis, I went on a very strict autoimmune protocol diet that removed... Basically, the theory is removing a lot of the foods that can be inflammatory and giving the body time to rest and then introducing carefully so you can kind of gauge if you're responding to different kinds of foods.

It is important to note, like I said in the beginning, based on lab results and lack of nodules on my thyroid, I am considered fully in remission for Hashimoto's and I do not follow this diet anymore. In fact, I will say this past year, now having worked through the emotional stuff and really found homeostasis, I eat more food than I've ever eaten as an adult. I am less restrictive. I still eat very clean at home, but I'm able to eat occasionally things like gluten, sugar. I do eat dairy and none of those both me. I do still have to avoid eggs based on some IgG

testing and based on how I feel. But that's really the only food that I'm not eating at all right now. I think there's...this is very personalized as well. I'll link to the test I used to figure out and to constantly monitor that. But in the two years after my diagnosis, I did eat an extremely regimented, very clean diet to give my body time to rest and recover. And I focused on really nourishing it, supporting it with certain supplements based on testing, and just making sure I was flooding my body with nutrients. And it took years for my body to fully recover from that. And like I said, I was not able to lose weight during that time.

Once my body reached balance and once I dealt with everything else and then I dealt with the emotions, the weight loss part became extremely easy. And so I think it's important to address all of these factors and not expect change to happen overnight. That said, from a broad level, kind of what the diet I did that I think let my body rest, was considered the autoimmune protocol and I'll link to my post on that topic and also to some books that are really helpful. But basically from my understanding, if the body has an autoimmune reaction, it can sometimes be necessary to removal certain inflammatory foods and inputs for a while so that you can then reintroduce and test the response.

This idea is similar to the theory behind the gaps protocol, which we also did with my son to help with his dairy allergy, but it's geared towards autoimmunity instead. And basically, from what I understand of this with autoimmune disease, the body's in a state of increased immune response. So removing these foods can help it not have to fight for a little while and can kind of reduce the autoimmune reaction. I should also say that technically, clinically, an autoimmune disease cannot be cured, which is why I use the word remission instead.

At this point, after my diagnosis, I switched to an autoimmune protocol. And I was pretty amazed at how quickly it helped. So within the first week, I saw my bloating go away, my thyroid felt less swollen, and I had more energy even after the first couple of days. And then I saw skin improvements and energy improvements, and then eventually my hair improved. And this helped me realize which foods were problematic. And like I said, I've now been able to reintroduce almost all of these foods, everything but eggs.

So I think it's...I wanna say that before I tell you just how restricted this protocol is. It's not usually forever or at least not all parts of it are forever. The general idea is that you're, like I said, you're removing any inflammatory foods. If this is new for you, some things that I find helpful, I'll link in the show notes. The Paleo Mom has a website and also a book, "The Paleo Approach." There's an autoimmune cookbook by Mickey Trescott and her website is Autoimmune Paleo. Those are both really good. I'll link to those in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. Basically, a very broad description. On an AIP protocol, you're avoiding grains, legumes, eggs, dairy, seeds, even seed-based spices and oils, nightshades, so things like tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, etc., nuts, alcohol, and then any other reactive foods.

So for me that included coconut even though that's not typically on the list. Instead, you're eating very clean sources of proteins like meats, organ meats, broth, vegetables, except for nightshades, fresh or dried herbs that are not nuts or seeds, certain fruits, nonseed-based spices, lots of healthy fats. I focused on olive oil and then dairy-free fermented foods like sauerkraut. So I have a food list in my post. You can find that in the show

notes. It does seem very overwhelming. It is extremely restrictive, but I knew that it was aimed at healing and so I was able to stick to it.

For me, a typical day would be, breakfast would be a scramble of vegetables, some kind of protein, and a cup of bone broth and then supplements. Lunch was almost always a salad with some kind of protein, a little bit of fruit and then bone broth. And dinner, the same thing, some kind of stir fry with protein and a lot of vegetables and then some kind of healthy starch like winter squash, pumpkin, etc.

Another tip from Dr. Christianson is if you're going to consume carbs to consume them at night because that also...food is another big signaling mechanism in circadian rhythm. So consuming the carbs at night helps signal the body when all the right hormones are supposed to kick in. It also seems to help my sleep. When I first started this I felt like I couldn't eat anything and I felt constantly deprived. And so it took me about 30 days to really get in the swing of this. I also focused on what I could eat versus what I couldn't and I consumed a ton of vegetables, especially in that first six months.

And this was also based on the research of Dr. Terry Wahls, who I also really respect. She has a book called "The Wahls Protocol." Her focus was on MS, which was what she recovered from. But she talks about the importance of consuming at least nine cups of vegetables a day, which is a ton, three of brightly-colored vegetables, three of leafy greens and three of onions and garlic. And I did that. I actually followed that for about probably four months and I had noticed a difference in my nutrient levels and, and my energy levels as I did that. Like I said, I also think sleep and stress really come into play here and I was taking a very specific group of supplements. This is extremely individualized so I will you what I took over. It is not prescriptive. Please don't just go take this. Work with someone like SteadyMD to find out what you specifically need.

But for me at this point I was taking, like I said, WP Thyroid medication. I ended up needing to take HCL, betaine HCL with any meals that contain protein because I found I had low stomach acid during that time. So I took HCL anytime and I still take it in smaller amounts. I have weaned down as my stomach acid has naturally improved. I took probiotics. The one I take is Just Thrive. I'll link to that in the show notes along with the discount. That's the one I now take. It's spore-based. So it's dairy-free, it's vegan, it's autoimmune safe, and it reaches the small intestine. It has a higher survivability and you can also open the capsules and even bake with them, put them in a smoothie, etc. to give them to kids because they can survive at temperature.

I make sure to get enough Omega-3s through things like salmon. And then Vitamin D is a big one here as well. There's a lot of research and Dr. Christianson tested me for this almost immediately, my Vitamin D levels because there's a strong correlation with low Vitamin D and a lot of health problems including autoimmune disease. So it's something I test and I also tested my family and my kids and make sure that our Vitamin D levels are not just in safe ranges but optimized. So I actually keep mine about 80. When I first tested it was 17, so it was well below even the conventional low-level Vitamin D. And I think that probably also made a huge difference because while we call it a vitamin, Vitamin D is actually a pre-hormone. So if you don't have enough Vitamin D, all of your hormones can be off.

Magnesium was also big for me and I used both transdermal magnesium oil and took magnesium supplements and I still do. MagSRT is the supplement I take and I use magnesium oil. I have a recipe for that. On the blog, I'll make sure those are linked as well. I also took...I made sure to get enough protein and amino acids from things like bone broth and I took a lot of Vitamin C. Zinc and selenium were also important. And like I said, those are ones you want to consume only the right amount, so you don't wanna just take a ton. More is not better. But I will link to the ones that I take. Again, I would recommend working with someone like SteadyMD or a functional medicine doctor from SteadyMD to really know what you're doing before you just start taking those and certainly before taking Vitamin D because you can get too much Vitamin D.

I also took a supplement called L tyrosine. Again, not one you want to just start taking just because, but those were all things that were helpful to me. Again, I will link to more detail about all of those things, but these were all factors that for me seemed to make a difference over time. I also avoid very carefully fluoride and chlorine. I have found that both of those are triggers for me and that it's very hard to get my levels better if I'm exposed to those. I don't think that's necessarily the same for everyone, but we have a whole house filter on our house that makes sure that I'm not exposed to those and there's not fluoride in our water where I live anyway, but I have to be careful about avoiding both of those.

So long roundabout way of saying I used a whole lot of different factors and had to consistently stick with them for a period of years to start seeing changes. I felt an immediate difference in my energy levels and my sleep when I started implementing these things. And that was really encouraging. And also it felt so good just to not feel so bad, but really seeing the full recovery and now being in remission and having my labs reflect that took a very long time.

So I will say like, based on my experience, this is a marathon, not a sprint, and I don't recommend long-term cardio, but it's a marathon. So stick with it. Build the habits that let you stick with it and track so that you can see if what you're doing is having a positive effect. I don't know that it would be the same for everyone, but for me, I had to get all of these things right before I was able to see the weight loss, before my hair came back normally, before I had all the unlimited energy. And it was a slow process and it also required shifting my mindset, like I talked about in episode 309, from fighting my body to supporting my body because I had reached a point... I was so mad at my body. I felt like it had betrayed me and I realized it had protected me and it was keeping me safe and it was keeping my baby safe while I was pregnant with them. But I needed to be more supportive of my body.

So those are the things that I did. I am now clinically in remission. All of my thyroid levels test normal. I don't need to take medication. I do still take supplements and I do still follow a lot of these things that I talked about. And at home, I eat probably still very close to that autoimmune diet when we're home. But if we're out somewhere or we're at an event, I'm much, much less strict than I ever, than I used to be. And I'm able to get away with eating a wide variety of foods and not being as restrictive as long as I support my body, make sure I have my sleep and my stress and all of those factors in order.

There's probably questions I'm not thinking to answer. If you have any, please leave them in the comments at wellnessmama.fm under this podcast and I will try to respond to you directly. And all of the things I've mentioned. I have blog posts about all of these, so head over to wellnessmama.fm. If you want to read more about any of these or check out the episodes with Dr. Christianson, Dr. Isabella Wentz, Dr. Terry Wahls, or with my SteadyMD doctor, those all have really helpful resources for autoimmune disease, but I wanted to just share you with you guys an update since I can now officially say that I am in remission and share with how I got there.

I do think it's a very personalized thing. I hope that some of these will be helpful if you're in the same place to you and finding the things that are gonna work for you, but I don't think it's prescriptive, so I hope that you're able to pull some beneficial things from that.

And, of course, as always, I am so grateful to you for being here today, for listening to this podcast, and for being part of that change that I talked about at the beginning of hopefully shifting those statistics so that our kids are not living a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Thank you for your time today. Thank you for listening. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama" podcast.

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