

The Autoimmune Diet

At the outset we want to mention a disclaimer: there is no single diet that cures autoimmune diseases, however certain dietary approaches can help manage symptoms, reduce inflammation, and improve overall health.

Based on several individual dietary preferences, this blog features various diets for autoimmune conditions and their potential benefits.

Why Treat Autoimmune Disease with Diet

Treating autoimmune disease with diet. The latter plays a crucial role in modulating the immune system and managing inflammation, which are key factors in autoimmune diseases. Certain foods can either exacerbate or alleviate the symptoms of these conditions. This makes it important to be mindful of dietary choices for better symptom management and overall well-being. Here's what Plexus' nutritionists follow when devising a diet plan for autoimmune conditions:

- Identifying Triggers: Through an elimination and reintroduction process
- Reducing Inflammation: With an anti-inflammatory diet
- Supporting Gut Health: Through probiotics, prebiotics, and fiber-rich foods
- Ensuring Nutrient Adequacy: Through a balanced and varied diet

With the above in mind, we recommend a balanced diet that focuses on whole, unprocessed foods is ideal. It should contain the following:

- Anti-inflammatory and antioxidants-rich foods: Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Lean Proteins: Chicken, fish, and plant-based proteins
- Healthy Fats: Olive oil, nuts, and seeds
- Hydration: Adequate water intake supports overall health

What Does an Autoimmune Diet Have?

A diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods has been known to reduce chronic inflammation, a classic symptom of autoimmune diseases. Foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and fatty fish provide essential nutrients and antioxidants that combat inflammation and support immune function.

Second, gut health is intimately linked to the immune system. A diet that includes probiotics and prebiotics, found in fermented foods and fiber-rich vegetables, can promote a healthy gut microbiome. A balanced gut microbiome helps regulate immune responses, potentially reducing autoimmune activity.

Keep in mind that certain dietary components, like gluten, dairy, and refined sugars, can trigger or worsen autoimmune symptoms in some individuals. An elimination diet can help identify these triggers, allowing for a tailored diet that minimizes symptom flare-ups.

Lastly, maintaining adequate levels of essential nutrients such as vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids, and selenium is vital for immune health. A well-planned diet ensures that these nutrients are sufficiently consumed, supporting overall health and reducing the severity of autoimmune conditions.

Indian Diet for Autoimmune Disease

Traditional Indian diets, rich in spices and plant-based foods, can be beneficial for managing autoimmune diseases.

- Turmeric: Contains curcumin, which is known for its potent anti-inflammatory properties
- Ginger: Has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects
- Legumes and Lentils: High in fiber and protein; supports gut health
- Whole Grains: Such as brown rice and quinoa, provide essential nutrients and fiber

Plant-Based Diet for Autoimmune Disease

A plant-based diet rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and seeds, can be beneficial for autoimmune diseases. It should ideally contain:

- Fiber: Supports gut health and reduces inflammation
- Antioxidants: Helps combat oxidative stress
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Found in flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts, support immune function

In the case of plant-based diets, vitamin B12 and iron supplementation is often recommended. Please consult your doctor before starting any supplements.

Paleo Diet for Autoimmune Disease

Mimicking the eating patterns of our ancestors, the Paleo diet eliminates processed foods, grains, legumes, and dairy to include:

- Vegetables and Fruits: Providing vitamins, minerals, and fiber
- Lean Meats: Grass-fed beef, free-range poultry, etc.
- Healthy Fats: From avocados, nuts, seeds, etc.

The Paleo Diet reduces inflammation and significantly improves gut health.

Autoimmune Thyroid Disease Diet

Autoimmune thyroid diseases, such as Hashimoto's thyroiditis and Graves' disease, benefit from specific dietary adjustments. We recommend the following besides the above mentioned autoimmune diet:

- Choose foods rich in selenium and iodine: Important for thyroid function
 - Foods rich in selenium: Brazil nuts, whole grains, dairy, eggs, seeds, meat, etc.
 - Foods rich in iodine: Fish (tuna, cod, sea bass), eggs, cranberries, dairy products, salt.
- Avoid Goitrogens: Foods like soy and cruciferous vegetables in excess

Meat Diet for Autoimmune Disease

If you're a meat eater then we've got you covered too. A diet focusing on high-quality meats can be beneficial for individuals with autoimmune diseases. Here's what you need:

- Grass-Fed Meats: Rich in omega-3 fatty acids and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA)
- Protein-Rich Foods: Supports muscle health and immune function
- Organ Meats: Nutrient-dense and supportive of overall health

We recommended following a balanced approach by integrating meats with vegetables and healthy fats for a well-rounded diet.

What is the Autoimmune Protocol Diet?

The **Autoimmune Protocol (AIP) diet** is a specialized, anti-inflammatory diet designed to help manage autoimmune diseases by promoting gut health and reducing systemic inflammation. It is a more stringent version of the Paleo diet, focusing on eliminating foods that may trigger immune responses and introducing nutrient-dense, healing foods.

Key Features of the AIP Diet

Elimination Phase

Avoid: Grains, legumes, dairy, processed foods, refined sugars, industrial seed oils, alcohol, nuts, seeds, nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplants), and eggs.

Focus On: Vegetables, fresh fruits in moderation, meats and fish, organ meats, fermented foods, bone broth, and healthy fats

Reintroduction Phase

After symptoms improve, foods are gradually reintroduced one at a time to identify potential triggers.

This method determines which foods are safe and do not cause flare-ups.

Benefits

Reduces Inflammation: By eliminating inflammatory foods, the AIP diet aims to decrease autoimmune responses.

Improves Gut Health: Nutrient-dense foods and fermented foods support a healthy gut microbiome, crucial for immune regulation.

Nutrient Density: Emphasizes foods rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants to support overall health and immune function.

If you wish to consult our nutritionists, then reach out to our centres in Bangalore and/or Hyderabad right away.

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FAQs

What is the best diet to reverse autoimmune disease?

Let your diet be rich in nutrient-dense, anti-inflammatory foods. Eliminate potential triggers like gluten, dairy, soy, legumes, and processed foods. Eat vegetables, fresh fruits, lean meats, fish, healthy fats, and fermented foods. Such a diet is ideal for improving gut health, reducing inflammation, and supporting immune function. Please note, autoimmune diseases are not reversible. But with timely diagnosis and intervention they can be managed effectively.

What foods are bad for autoimmune disease?

It is advisable to limit the intake of processed foods, saturated fats, and potential allergens like gluten or dairy.

How can I heal my autoimmune disease naturally?

Adopt an anti-inflammatory diet (like AIP), keep your stress levels in check through mindfulness practices, get adequate sleep, exercise regularly, and support gut health with probiotics and

prebiotics. Some individuals may also require vitamin D and B12 supplementation. Please consult your doctor before starting any supplements.

What are the top 5 worst autoimmune diseases?

The most common autoimmune diseases are:

- [Systemic Lupus Erythematosus \(SLE\)](#): Affects multiple organs and can be life-threatening.
- [Multiple Sclerosis \(MS\)](#): Leads to progressive neurological damage.
- [Rheumatoid Arthritis \(RA\)](#): Causes severe joint damage and disability.
- [Type 1 Diabetes](#): Requires lifelong insulin management.
- [Inflammatory Bowel Disease \(IBD\)](#): Includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, causing severe digestive issues.