

THRIVING ON PALEO

**AUTOIMMUNE
PALEO
(AIP DIET)
STARTER
GUIDE**



Hi! I'm Michele. I'm a wife, a 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.

XO, Michele



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

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.

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.

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

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

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)



2 parts

Elimination

&

Reintroductions

THE DIET

PART 1: ELIMINATION

NC

- 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)

YES

- 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

Stage 2

Seeds
Nuts (except cashews and pistachios)
Cocoa & Chocolate
Egg Whites
Grass-fed Butter
Alcohol (in small quantities)

Stage 3

Cashews and Pistachios
Eggplant
Sweet Peppers
Paprika
Coffee
Grass-fed raw cream
Fermented grass-fed raw dairy (yogurt and kefir)

Stage 4

Other dairy products (grass-fed)
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

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

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

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

Limit caffeine to before noon and remove it completely if possible

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

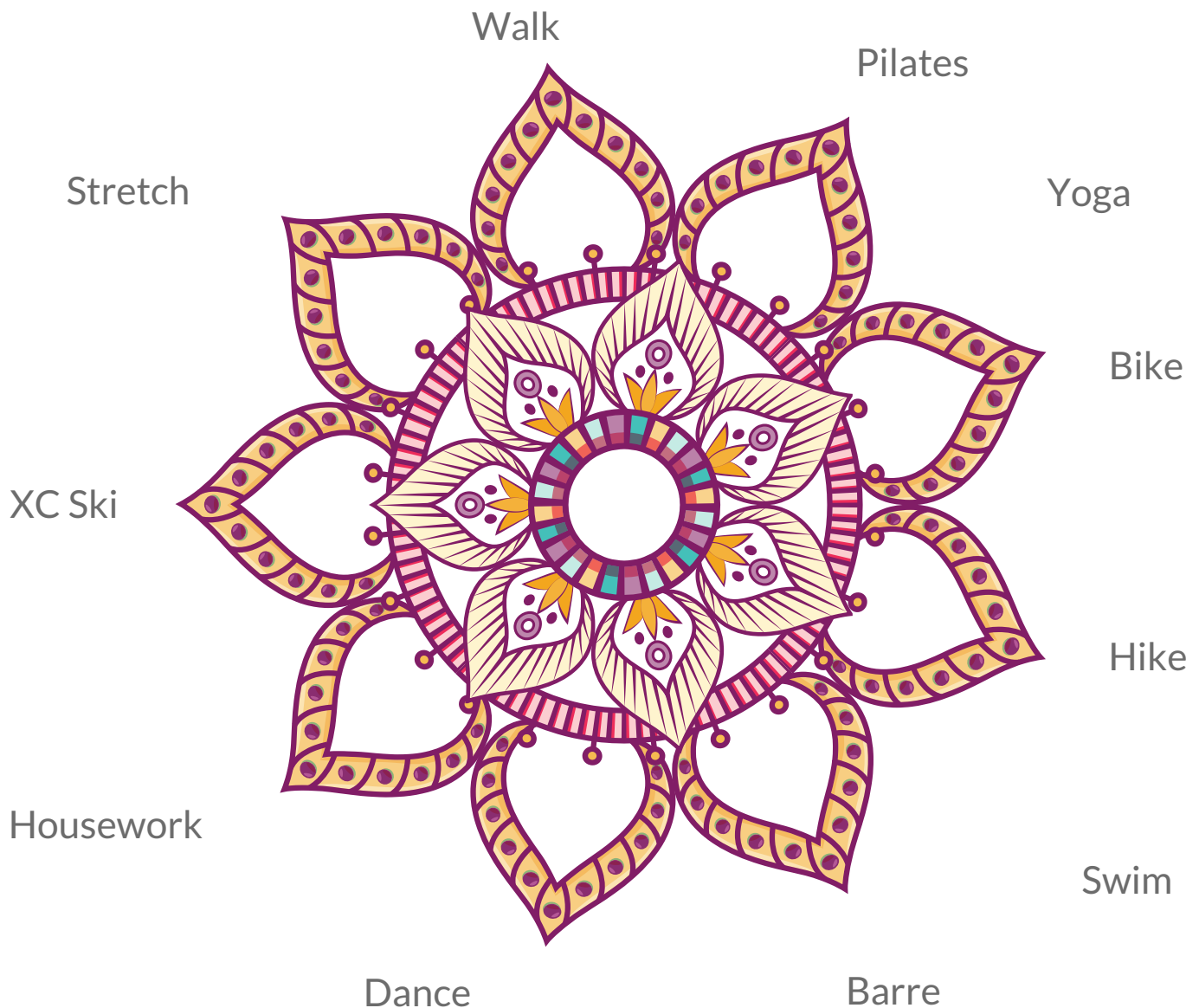
Your room should be between 62-68 degrees F

MOVEMENT

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:



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:

1. Crafting
2. Meditative Drawing (check out Zentangle)
3. Meditation (check out Headspace.com or download the app)
4. Yoga (google Yoga with Adriene for free YouTube workouts)
5. Gardening
6. Smile (even a fake one can reduce stress hormones)
7. Get out in nature
8. Practice gratitude
9. 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

How to Start

There are two good ways 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 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 (no guar gum)

Bay leaf

Apple cider vinegar

Cassava flour

Coconut flour

Coconut oil

Lard

Avocado oil

Tapioca starch

Tigernut butter

Carob powder

Dandelion root

Chicory Root

Mace

Primal Palate spices (The Everyday Spice blends are AIP-compliant)

Plantain chips

Unsweetened banana chips

Immersion Blender

Instant Pot

Watch this [YouTube Video](#) to see my explanation of why I used each one.

Easy Swaps



MACE

WHY?

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

Cassava Flour Pancakes

Sweet Potato Bowl

Coconut Cauliflower Rice

Super Easy Kalua Pork

Baked Yellow Plantains

Avocado Lime Mousse

Lavender Shortbread Cookies

Cassava Flour Pancakes

Makes approx 8 pancakes

Ingredients

- 1 cup Cassava Flour
- 1/4 cup Tapioca Starch
- 1 tbs Cream of Tartar
- 1/2 tbs Baking Soda
- 1/4 tsp Sea Salt
- 1+ 1/8 cup Coconut Milk
- 1/3 cup Banana, mashed (about 1 small)
- 1.5 tbs Apple Cider Vinegar
- 2 tbs Coconut Sugar
- 1 tsp alcohol-free Vanilla Extract

Instructions

1. Mix all of the ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Heat a skillet on medium heat.
3. Spoon a large spoonful (approx 2-3 tbs) of batter into the pan and with your spoon, flatten and shape into a pancake shape. It should be about 1/4-1/2 inch thick.
4. Cook for 3 minutes and then flip and cook for 3 minutes more.



Sweet Potato Bowl

Serves 1

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

Instructions

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.



Coconut Cauliflower Rice

Serves 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)

Instructions

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.



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

Instructions

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.

Super Easy Kalua Pork

*adapted from NomNom Paleo's Kalua Pork recipe

Serves 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

Instructions

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.
-

Baked Plantains

Serves 4

Ingredients

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

Instructions

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.

Avocado Lime Mousse

Serves 4

Ingredients

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

Instructions

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

Lavender Shortbread Cookies

Makes 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:

- 2 tbs Coconut Oil
- 2 tbs Coconut Butter
- 1 tsp Maple Syrup

For optional topping:

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

Instructions

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.



WANNA LEARN MORE?



Come hang with me on **YouTube** - I have lots of videos about real life eating Paleo, Whole30, and AIP (and always gluten-free)



I also have tons of recipes and lifestyle articles on my blog, **Thriving On Paleo**



Ready to make a change but want accountability and a plan customized to you? I offer 1:1 health coaching. **Schedule** your free 15-minute consultation today!