



Living Well with Autoimmune Disease: What Your Doctor Doesn't Tell You...That You Need to Know

By Mary J. Shomon

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A complete guide to understanding the mysterious and often difficult-to-pinpoint disorders of the immune system--and finding the keys to diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

An estimated fifty million people suffer from symptoms including fatigue, joint pains, depression, or heart palpitations — signs that the immune system has turned on itself, causing conditions such as thyroid disease, hepatitis, or multiple sclerosis. And while doctors may prescribe treatments to relieve these surface ailments, when asked about the life-long health implications of an autoimmune condition, they often just shrug their shoulders. Yet much like cancer, having one autoimmune disease puts you at high risk for developing another, and understanding the underlying immune process can reverse a patient's approach to a dysfunction--for the author, it changed the way she ate, the vitamins and supplements she took, and the types of doctors she visited. *Living Well with Autoimmune Disease* is the first book that goes beyond the conventional treatments by showing you how to work on your underlying autoimmune dysfunction with natural and alternative therapies.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Autoimmune diseases affect 50 million Americans, mostly women, who frequently remain undiagnosed and untreated, or are treated ineffectively. *Living Well with Autoimmune Disease* helps readers pinpoint symptoms, find the right practitioner, and learn cutting-edge approaches to reduce symptoms and reverse their disease.

Author Mary Shomon, who has the immune disease Hashimoto's thyroiditis, explains how the immune system is supposed to work, and what can go wrong. Then she discusses more than 20 specific autoimmune diseases--such as chronic fatigue syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, lupus, thyroid disease, Graves' disease, rheumatoid arthritis, type 1 diabetes, fibromyalgia, scleroderma, and multiple sclerosis. For each, she covers symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment.

Shomon, a patient advocate and Web guide for people with thyroid disease, hears the most success stories from people who combine conventional treatment with complementary therapies, so she gives specific strategies for using herbs, diet, and mind/body therapies. She also includes a 30-page checklist of risk factors and symptoms (helpful when you have no idea what condition you might have), a guide to finding and working with the right practitioner, and an extensive resources section that includes patient support organizations, Web sites, and books. --*Joan Price*

From Publishers Weekly

It took physicians two years after the author complained of weight gain, depression and fatigue to diagnose her with the autoimmune disease Hashimoto's thyroiditis. Autoimmune disease, which includes such conditions as multiple sclerosis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and chronic fatigue syndrome, are estimated to afflict at least 8.5 million Americans. According to Shomon (*Living Well with Hypothyroidism*), because of the difficulty of diagnosis and tendency of some physicians to prescribe treatments that may have serious side effects, those with autoimmune illnesses are being shortchanged by the medical establishment. Since those who suffer from one are more vulnerable to other autoimmune disorders (not to mention that they may have a genetic predisposition toward a disorder), this informative self-help manual is badly needed. Drawing on extensive research, as well as doctor-patient anecdotes, Shomon's guide is designed to empower patients to participate in their own care. In addition to a detailed discussion of every type of autoimmune disease, the author provides advice on how to choose an appropriate medical team that will work to integrate conventional and alternative therapies. Based partly on her own experience, Shomon advocates an integrative approach to treatment that may include meditation, herbs, exercise and dietary changes along with antibiotics and hormones that together will minimize symptoms and maximize health.

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From Library Journal

It takes a unique combination of knowledge and skill to present complex medical information accurately and make it understandable to the average nontechnical reader; unfortunately, this book does not meet that expectation. Shomon, who wrote *Living Well with Hypothyroidism* after her own diagnosis, is a self-described patient advocate and editor in chief of several newsletters for patients. Nowhere in the book does it indicate that she has a professional clinical background, yet she feels competent to interpret autoimmune diseases, which are highly complex and comprise between 50 and 100 different illnesses, such as type 1 diabetes, Crohn's disease, and lupus. Many of these illnesses defy cure, and clinicians and patients alike hope

to be able to manage symptoms and minimize organ or joint destruction. Yet Shomon claims that her guide will go beyond symptom management to "discover cutting-edge approaches that can actually reduce and even reverse the autoimmune response [and] even cure autoimmune conditions entirely." Relying on interviews with patients and various practitioners, her own experience, and a mix of research sources, she discusses conventional and alternative approaches to more than 25 autoimmune conditions. Unfortunately, many of her references are not drawn from peer-reviewed resources but come from newswire services, electronic journals, newsletters, web sites, or press releases. Throughout, Shomon frequently interchanges IBD (inflammatory bowel disease) and IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), though the treatment and course of these two entities are completely different. And there are other such errors. Shomon has a deep personal interest in the topic, but is she the best person to interpret and present this highly important and complex information. This reviewer thinks not. Not recommended; a better choice would be Simone Ravicz's *Thriving with Your Autoimmune Disorder*. Lisa McCormick, Jewish Hosp. Health Sciences Lib., Cincinnati Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

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