

# Amy Myers MD<sup>®</sup>

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## The Autoimmune Solution Pillar I: Heal Your Gut

 [amymyersmd.com/2015/02/pillar-i-heal-your-gut/](http://amymyersmd.com/2015/02/pillar-i-heal-your-gut/)

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*This is the first part of a four part series, based on [The Autoimmune Solution](#). Read the other parts [here](#):*

**Pillar I:** Heal your gut.

**Pillar II:** Get rid of gluten, grains, and legumes.

**Pillar III:** Tame the toxins.

**Pillar IV:** Heal your infections and relieve your stress.

When a patient comes to see me for the first time, I play the role of detective. Each little tidbit of information revealed as they tell me their story is a clue to how they wound up where they are now: sitting in my office with unexplained fatigue, mysterious pain, or any other vague, inflammatory symptoms. Some have already racked up a collection of autoimmune diagnoses only to find themselves still searching for options.

No matter what or where the symptoms are, I want to find out what's causing them. My treatment approach, The Myers Way<sup>®</sup>, is about preventing and reversing autoimmunity by getting to the root rather than managing the symptoms.

In *The Autoimmune Solution*, I explain how genetics only accounts for about 25% of your risk for developing an autoimmune disease. The other 75% is your environment. There are five environmental factors in particular that can put you on the autoimmune spectrum or push you over the edge into full blown autoimmune disease: an unhealthy gut, poor diet, toxins, infections, and stress. I address these five factors with the four “pillars” of The Myers Way®:

**Pillar I:** Heal your gut.

**Pillar II:** Get rid of gluten, grains, and legumes.

**Pillar III:** Tame the toxins.

**Pillar IV:** Heal your infections and relieve your stress.

I always start with the gut, even though most of my patients aren't coming to me with digestive complaints. After all, rheumatoid arthritis is a joint problem, not a gut problem. And what do brain fog, fatigue, and anxiety have to do with your gut? But the first pillar of The Myers Way® is “Heal Your Gut” for a reason. What happens in your gut is vitally important for the rest of your body—if your gut isn't healthy, then neither are you.

## Why is Healing Your Gut Pillar 1?

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Your gut is the foundation of your whole body's health because 80% of your immune system is located there. Without a healthy gut, you can't have a healthy immune system. Without a healthy immune system, you're open to infections, inflammation, and autoimmune disease.

It's the place in your body that interacts with the outside world more than any other, taking in nutrients from food and keeping out bacteria, pathogens, and undigested food. When your gut loses the ability to discriminate between the good and the bad, you have a “leaky gut.”

## What is a Leaky Gut?

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The gut is naturally permeable to very small molecules in order to absorb nutrients in your food. In fact, regulating intestinal permeability is one of the basic functions of the cells that line the intestinal wall. In *The Autoimmune Solution*, I explain in depth how diet, toxins, medications, infections, and stress can cause these tight junctions to break apart. Once these tight junctions get broken apart, you have a leaky gut.

When your gut is leaky, things like toxins, microbes, undigested food particles, and more can escape from your intestines and travel throughout your body via your bloodstream. Your immune system marks these “foreign invaders” as pathogens and attacks them. The constant onslaught of inflammation from your immune system causes a widespread immune response throughout your body.

## Signs and Symptoms of Leaky Gut

- Digestive issues, gas, bloating, diarrhea, weight loss, fat malabsorption
- Seasonal allergies, asthma
- Hormonal imbalances, PMS, PCOS
- Diagnosis of an autoimmune disease
- Diagnosis of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome or Fibromyalgia
- Mood imbalances, anxiety, depression, ADD, ADHD
- Skin issues, acne, rosacea, eczema
- Gut infections, SIBO, Candida overgrowth, parasites
- Excess weight, obesity, diabetes
- Nutrient deficiency, anemia
- Brain fog
- Osteoporosis, osteopenia
- Frequent colds
- Joint pain, muscle pain

## What Causes Leaky Gut?

### **Toxic and**

### **inflammatory foods:**

- Alcohol
- Dairy
- Eggs
- Gluten
- Grains and pseudograins
- Legumes
- GMOs
- Nightshades
- Sugar

### **Gut infections:**

- SIBO
- Candida
- Parasites

### **Medications:**

- Antibiotics
- NSAIDS (aspirin, ibuprofen)
- Birth control pills
- Prednisone
- Acid-blocking drugs

### **Chemotherapy**

### **Radiation**

### **Surgeries**

### **Mycotoxins (toxic mold)**

### **Stress**

- Emotional stress
- Physical stress

In *The Autoimmune Solution*, I walk you through the details of my four-step approach to healing the gut. I've highlighted the steps below, but they are outlined in much greater detail in *The Autoimmune Solution*.

1. **Remove the bad.** Get rid of things that negatively affect the environment of the GI tract, such as inflammatory and toxic foods, and intestinal infections such as yeast overgrowth and SIBO. There are quizzes in *The Autoimmune Solution* that will help you determine whether or not you could have one or more of these infections.
2. **Restore the good.** Add back the essential ingredients for proper digestion and absorption, such as digestive enzymes, hydrochloric acid and bile acids. Aren't sure which ones you need? I cover this subject in more detail in *The Autoimmune Solution*.
2. **Reinoculate with healthy bacteria.** Restoring beneficial bacteria to reestablish a healthy balance of good bacteria is critical.
2. **Repair the gut.** Providing the nutrients necessary to help the gut repair itself is essential. L-glutamine is an amino acid that will help mend your gut lining. Drinking bone broth or collagen will also help to heal your gut, as will supplementing with omega-3s, zinc, and herbs such as slippery elm and aloe vera. For a more extensive list, there is a supplement guide in *The Autoimmune Solution*.

## From Gut Health to Total Health

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With The Myers Way®, I look at the many ways that seemingly unrelated factors come together to create a state of health, or a state of disease. Even when your symptoms seem like they have nothing to do with your gut because they manifest in other parts of your body, remember that your gut health affects your total health. That's why I made it the first pillar in *The Autoimmune Solution*—healing your gut is the first step toward regaining your health.

I outline my entire 30-day plan to prevent and reverse the full spectrum of inflammatory symptoms and diseases in *The Autoimmune Solution*. It's the same approach I use in my clinic and with which I have successfully treated thousands of patients. So what are you waiting for? Start living your solution today.

*Next week, I'll explain how diet can affect your risk for autoimmune disease with The Autoimmune Solution Pillar II: Get rid of gluten, grains, and legumes.*