

My name is Alex and I am a Certified Health Coach. My journey to health has been a long road traveled.

I weighed 240 lbs by my late 20s, a Doctor was very concerned about my weight, cholesterol and blood pressure at a pre-employment physical. This was my wake up call, I started to shift my eating habits soon after. I started taking diet advice from fitness and bodybuilding magazines, some may call it the bro-science. For those not familiar with the bro science diet, it consists of: Mostly healthy whole foods like chicken, rice, grains, dairy, vegetables, oatmeal and egg whites. This also included a weekly cheat meal. This had helped me lose 50-60 lbs initially, but I did not realize that I had underlying food sensitivities. I did not even know they existed back then. I had yo-yo dieted on and off for years and plateaued many times. Between this and consuming more alcohol than I should have, I did too much damage to my body. I also had a bad reaction to a flu vaccine, I got really sick and ended up with bad psoriasis soon after. Add taking antibiotics several times for getting sick and the damage was stacking up. I was able to eliminate my psoriasis by eliminating dairy, thanks to a tip from a co-worker. I felt fine for the most part, until my late 30s, the underlying damage came on like a firestorm.

I was working with chemicals that caused an autoimmune reaction in my skin, extreme burning that felt like sunburn. A few weeks later I developed arthritis, soon after that chronic fatigue, brain fog and blurry vision. A few years earlier I had developed tinnitus due to a reaction from vicodin and ibuprofen after I had knee surgery. The more inflamed my body was, the worse the tinnitus got. For those of you not familiar with tinnitus, it is a perceived ringing in the ears. When you go to lay down at night, no matter how hard you try, you can not sleep, because it feels like your head is vibrating like a bell being rung. I would be lucky to get 30 minutes of sleep every 4 days. Add the tinnitus in to the autoimmune mix and I was exhausted. I passed out at work and eventually could not get off the couch for 4 days and I was let go from my job.

During this time though, I started listening to more health podcasts. I had stumbled across a handful autoimmune podcasts and kept hearing about the autoimmune protocol diet. The protocol requires at least 30 days of elimination of dairy, gluten, grains and pseudo-grains (like quinoa, buckwheat, and amaranth), legumes, nuts, seeds, nightshade vegetables, eggs, modern vegetable oils, alcohol, added sugar or sweeteners, food additives and NSAIDs (Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug), which are medications like ibuprofen. After the 30 days of the elimination phase, you add foods back in, one at a time, to find out what your trigger foods are that cause inflammation. I call these foods kryptonite. It also included anti-inflammatory foods, especially lots of turmeric and bone broth. Not only to get the inflammation down, but to heal leaky gut.

Leaky gut, or "intestinal permeability," is a condition in which the lining of the small intestine becomes damaged, causing undigested food particles, toxic waste products and bacteria to "leak" through the intestines and flood the blood stream. The foreign substances entering the blood can cause an autoimmune response in the body including

inflammatory and allergic reactions such as migraines, irritable bowel, eczema, chronic fatigue, food allergies, several forms of arthritis and more.

I basically had to relearn how to cook, prepare foods and eat. It took me a while to put together a game plan, but it ultimately worked! It got me to about 80-90%. To get to 90-100% I had to address some nutritional deficiencies, genetic damage and implement some other modalities, such as sauna, meditation, breath work and cold showers. My kryptonite turned out to be dairy, nightshades, and most grains, the ones containing gluten, even some gluten free grains caused inflammation. When I get to 100%, I can get away with some gluten and nightshades, I just make sure to take some good digestive enzymes. I just try to keep these occasions few and far between, better to be safe than sorry.