

My Recovery from Sjogren's Syndrome

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My Sjogren's Recovery Journey

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So please forgive me for any grammatical/spelling errors in this blog as I am an Electrical Engineer by trade and writing is definitely not my forte. Now if you need to design a better widget, I am your guy!

So this blog is about my journey through sickness and how I got well again. I hope I can help others to also improve their health by giving some insight to what I went through, and the experiments I tried in an effort to regain my health. The views expressed in this writing are mine, and you should always consult with your doctor before trying any new diet or supplement regime. I am a strong advocate of Functional Medicine Doctors if you can find one. Functional Medicine doctors have a standard medical degree but additional training in nutrition and supplements. They also focus on addressing the root cause of disease instead of just treating the symptoms with Pharmaceutical solutions.

So let's start with a little background on myself. I was for the most part always pretty healthy and athletic throughout my life. I played many sports and was deeply into weightlifting and bodybuilding throughout my 20's and early 30's. Never overweight, always fit, no medical problems other than a few chronic injuries from sports. Sometime in my early to mid-thirties I started experiencing acid reflux. It was minor at first but by age 35 it was getting bad. I developed a hiatal hernia at that time probably due to body building. I was eating over 5000 calories a day and I think it took a toll on my digestion. So I went to see my family doctor and he gave me a prescription for the little purple pill (Nexium). At first I only took it as needed, but after a while I was taking it every other day. After about a year I was taking it every day. Man it worked great! No pain at all. I did notice however that I couldn't do pushups anymore after eating without food coming up my throat. I thought that was weird. Later I found out that Nexium turns off ALL your stomach acid. This makes it unnecessary for the LES valve to close to protect your esophagus. So what happens is the valve gets weak from lack of activation. By the time I reached age 42 I was having to take Nexium 2x a day to keep the pain in check. Shortly thereafter the Nexium just stopped working.

Then I went through 2 years of hellish pain. I saw four different Gastroenterologists, had upper GIs, lower GIs, endoscopes done etc. They switched me to a new PPI, it worked for about 1 week, then another PPI, worked for 1 week, then another PPI etc. I was having pain every night that felt like a

heart attack. I would wake up with panic attacks. The inside of my mouth turned white ... what the heck? They wanted to try motility drugs to get my digestion going. I was drinking Maalox like an Irishman drinks beer. The doctors were all scratching their head.

Then I got desperate and decided to give one of them "Quack" doctors a try. I went to see a Naturpathic doctor first. She asked me a bunch of questions, did some weird stuff called muscle testing on me and told me to take a bunch of supplements. It was expensive and it didn't work, but she did give me a piece of the puzzle I needed. She told me I needed to take HCL with pepsin to cure my acid reflux. I vividly remember her telling me this because I laughed at her. You want me to take stomach acid to get rid of my acid reflux? Preposterous. She just lost all credibility. Except she was right.

So the Naturopath lady gave me some pills that contained HCL (Hydrochloric Acid) and pepsin as well as some digestive enzymes, but I did not take them. Tried all the other supplements but they did not help. They only lightened my wallet. So a few weeks go by and I am talking to this Chiropractor and I tell him about my reflux and he tells me the same thing. Take HCL with pepsin. He also tells me to read a book by Dr Johnathan Wright called "Why Stomach Acid is Good for You". So after talking to him, I decided to try the pills the Naturpath gave me. I popped a couple of them with my next meal. Low and behold for the first time in a couple of years I felt good after eating a meal. No bloating, no food sitting in my stomach for hours, less burning pain in my esophagus. I still had some burning pain, but much better overall. I knew right away that this was the answer.

I ordered Dr Johnathan Wrights book off amazon and read it cover to cover. The key points I learned from the book is that turning off your stomach acid results in a cascade of health problems due to impaired digestion. Things like minerals (Calcium, magnesium, zinc) need acid to be digested as well as key vitamins like B12, B6, etc. If you turn off your stomach acid for long periods of time your overall health will suffer. Did mine? Let me tell you. Three years after starting Nexium, me at age 35, male, athlete bodybuilder, diagnosed with osteopenia, also diagnosed with hypothyroid, also diagnosed with high cholesterol. Hummm... I asked my doctor if Nexium could cause bone density issues. He assured me it could not. A few years later it was all over the news that Nexium causes bone fractures in elderly women. This year Nexium has been associated with increased risk of arterial disease, kidney failure, and diabetes. Nexium also increases your risk of bacterial infection because stomach acid acts as a barrier to bacteria entering your gut. So here I was at age 42 with multiple medical issues and prescriptions wondering how I got myself into this mess.

So I started taking HCL w/pepsin with every meal I ate that had protein and complex carbs. I found that if you took too little of the HCL the LES valve would not close and the pain would actually be worse. So it took some time to find the right amount of HCL to take with each meal, but when I got it right there was little to no pain and I could sleep through the night again, which was a blessing from God. I had to take 5 600mg pills at first with a big meal to get the best results. Slowly over time I was able to take less and less with each meal. After a period of about 1-1.5 years I no longer needed to take HCL. My stomach acid returned to normal levels and my digestion seemed perfect again.

So once my digestion got better my Cholesterol improved and I was able to get off Crestor. My thyroid improved a bit as well but I still needed medication. I had a period of about 6 months when I was feeling great. Then the real storm hit.

I started to notice that my mouth was dry at times which seemed weird since I wasn't taking any medicines that cause dryness. Also periodically my hands and feet would get extremely cold. At first it was infrequent but then it became more and more frequent. I started having pain in my prostate. It gradually got so bad I had to go see my doctor. He diagnosed me with prostatitis and put me on a broad spectrum antibiotic (Bactrim DS). The pain didn't subside so my doctor kept me on Bactrim DS for 3 months. After 3 months I went to see a specialist and he couldn't believe my family doctor kept me on antibiotics for 3 months. He took me off them and had me take hot baths every night in Epsom salt which actually worked to get rid of the prostate pain. I didn't know it at the time but long term antibiotic use does extreme damage to the gut.

After 3 months on antibiotics the dryness and cold/hot hands and feet had gotten much worse. I am not talking about a little dry like when you take allergy meds. This was like bone dry. I had to drink water constantly. My tongue was full of fissures and had a strange whitish yellow coating. I went to my primary physician and they tested me for diabetes and a few other things, but they did not know what was going on. More time went by and the waves of dryness continued and became more frequent and severe. Then my eyes started to hurt and become very dry. I went back to my doctor and he mentioned it might be Sjogren's syndrome. So they sent me off for blood tests and I waited. When they came back I was negative for Sjogren's (SSA/SSB) so I continued to suffer with no answers. A few months went by and then my joints started to hurt. First my shoulders, then wrists, then knees and hips and elbows. Soon I was no longer able to exercise due to inflammation in all my joints. I went back to the doctor to get tested again. Everything came back negative. A few more months go by and then crushing fatigue. It's hard to get out of bed, hard to continue working at my job. Things are getting scary and I am very depressed and anxious. Other strange symptoms going on too. My hands and feet are turning bright red along with alternating between freezing cold and burning hot. Also I have to urinate very frequently, like every 30 minutes and there is pain in the bladder area.

So about 1 year after my symptoms started I finally have some blood markers showing evidence of autoimmune. CRP and ANA Titer are elevated. They send me to an ENT suspecting possible Sjogren's Syndrome. I have lip biopsy and it comes back inconclusive, so they do a parotid gland biopsy. It comes back positive. The diagnosis is made, the ENT gives me a prescription for Evoxic and they send me to a Rheumatologist.

At first I tried to get by on just the Evoxic but eventually it got so bad that I asked the Rheumatologist to put me on Plaquenil. Also depression and anxiety were becoming severe so they put me on Effexor and Ativan to get me through my days. Also my marriage started to fall apart at this time, so I was swirling in the perfect shit storm of hopelessness.

So I slowly found ways to cope with the issues. I found a type of eye drops that worked for me after experimenting with many. I found that if I used a vaporizer I could sleep a little better. I started using Xylimelts in my mouth when sleeping at night which helped quite a bit. After about 3 months the Plaquenil started kicking in and the symptoms lessened a little bit to where I didn't feel like killing myself 24/7. I would wear goggles at work so my eyes wouldn't dry out as fast in the lab environment. I was just surviving basically.

I tried using Restasis drops in my eyes but it didn't work at all for me. My Schirmers test scores around this time were 0mm/2mm, basically no eye moisture. Luckily it never got to the point of corneal abrasions for me. After about 6 months on Plaquenil my eyes got a little better and I was able to manage with frequent use of eye drops (about every 15-30 minutes).

So I talk to my Rheumatologist and he says that there is no cure for Sjogren's so you just have to manage it for the rest of your life. He says we have to monitor your eyes every year to make sure the Plaquenil does not affect your retina (Blindness is a possible although rare side effect). So in my mind I am now having to accept a diminished life of just "coping" while taking a bucket load of drugs all of which could damage my eyes or kidneys or liver at any moment. I was not happy with this situation at all. I am also not good at "acceptance", so I resisted long and hard.

From my acid reflux adventure a seed had been planted in me. The "seed" was basically faith in alternative medicine. Prior to my acid reflux problem I viewed alternative medicine as "quackery". After experiencing profound healing I became a believer. Now keep in mind there are still some quacks out there, but what I am saying is there are some legit alternative modalities, and I was on a mission to find out if any of them would help my condition.

I am an Electrical Engineer by trade, so my education is steeped in science, and I am a firm believer in science, but I also believe there is much that modern science still does not understand. In my mind it was clear that modern science still does not understand what triggers autoimmune diseases. Sure they understand what is going on, like the white blood cells are attacking the saliva glands or the lymphocytes are attacking the myelin sheath, but it is the "why" that they do not understand. After I talked to my Rheumatologist, who is one of the best in Dallas, it became clear to me that they did not even have a working theory as to "why" this is happening. So there either needed to be acceptance on my part, or I had to find another path, with a working theory or hypothesis.

So I started my journey to try to heal from this disease.

First stop, the Paleo Diet. I read a book by Robb Wolf called "The Paleo Solution". Basically the premise of the book is if you remove all the inflammatory foods from your diet your health will improve and in many cases disease will reverse. Robb Wolf recovered from Ulcerative Colitis. He was scheduled to have his colon removed, but in a last ditch effort to avoid surgery he tried the Paleo Diet and quickly recovered from the disease. The Paleo Diet basically removes all processed foods from your diet. The premise is to eat as our ancestors did 10,000 years ago. So basically you are removing all grains, dairy, processed foods, and legumes. There is also a more restrictive version of this diet called the Autoimmune Paleo Diet. I just tried the regular paleo diet at first. The results for me on the diet were excellent. Within 4 weeks all the pain in my joints was gone. I had more moisture in my eyes and mouth and my neuropathy was much improved. The diet worked very well for me, and for nine months I was feeling much better, maybe 60-70% better I would say. The improvement was markedly better than what I got from Plaquenil. So as months passed I seemed to stay at the same level, so I wanted to try something else in an attempt to get more improvement.

Second Stop LDN. I started reading about Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN). My Functional Medicine Doctor put me on this path. He said some of his patients had experienced remarkable relief from this drug, while others got little or no benefit. I thought I might give it a try as there were a few folks on the

LDN forums who had Sjogren's and experienced a lot of relief when using LDN. Now LDN is a drug, but it is very non-toxic when compared to other drugs used for immune system suppression. The drug Naltrexone's original purpose was to help alcoholics suppress their cravings for alcohol.

From Wikipedia; "**Low-dose naltrexone (LDN)** describes the [off-label](#) use of the medication [naltrexone](#) at low doses for diseases such as [multiple sclerosis](#). Naltrexone is typically prescribed for [opioid dependence](#) or [alcohol dependence](#), as it is a strong opioid [antagonist](#). Preliminary research has been promising for use of LDN in treating chronic medical conditions such as chronic pain, but at this stage the use of LDN as a treatment is still experimental and more research needs to be done before it can be widely recommended.^[1]"

So I tried LDN for 3 months. At first it seemed like there was a small improvement in mouth moisture but at around the three month mark everything started to get worse. My eyes and mouth had gotten very dry and my joint pain returned as well. It seemed like all of my gains from Paleo and Plaquenil were erased. I had many conversations on the LDN forums as to why this might have been happening. One thing that was mentioned by multiple posters was I may have a candida problem in my gut. I wasn't sure about this but I kept this thought in the back of my mind.

Third Stop Healing the Gut. So it's pretty much all over the medical news these days about how much the bacteria in your gut (the gut biome) is intricately linked to your health. Did you know that there are around ten times as many bacteria in your body as there are human cells? Yes you are basically just a host to living bacteria. Did you know that 80% of the human immune system is located in the gut? Did you know the bacteria in your gut are working in a symbiotic relationship with your immune system? Does it make sense that if you damage or change your gut biome there may be health repercussions? We are still pretty much scraping the tip of the iceberg with our understanding of the gut biome but there is a large research project going on sponsored by the National Institute for Health that is producing tons of new information in this field. It is called the Human Microbiome Project, you can read about it here: <https://commonfund.nih.gov/hmp/index>. Another good place to read about recent findings in this field is here: <http://medicalxpress.com/research-news/>.

So remember early on in this blog where I said it bothered me that my rheumatologist, an expert in the field of autoimmune disease, couldn't even give me a hypothesis as to why the immune system starts attacking itself? Neither could my family physician, my ENT or any allopathic doctor I talked to, they just don't know "why" this happens. So my Functional Medicine Doctor does have a few theories as to why this happens. His theories basically had three primary culprits. One being a viral cause. A virus either triggers a malfunction in the immune system, or the virus remains active in the body and for some reason the immune system is not able to destroy it. Second cause bacterial, same type of thing, a bacterial infection has caused the immune system to malfunction or the infection cannot be destroyed by the immune system. Third is leaky gut. The theory behind leaky gut is that the gut microbiome has been altered or damaged and the resulting gut dysbiosis is causing food or protein particles to penetrate the lining of the gut and enter the blood stream causing the immune system to react as it would with a foreign antigen. You can read more about Leaky Gut on sites like this one: <http://draxe.com/4-steps-to-heal-leaky-gut-and-autoimmune-disease/>

So according to my Functional Medicine Doctor, the fact that I saw a big improvement in my symptoms on the Paleo Diet would indicate that maybe I am in the 3rd category of Leaky Gut. So he put me on some probiotics and some L-Glutamine which is an amino acid that facilitates healing of the gut. I tried the probiotics and L-Glutamine for a few months and did not notice much improvement.

Fourth Stop Fermented Foods. So I found this book called Autoimmune: The Cause and the Cure, by Annesse Brockley. In this book Annesse chronicles her recovery from Lupus and develops her own theory as to what causes autoimmune disease. Her theory in short is the cause of autoimmunity is undigested protein constituents. The cure is enzymes and changing diet to include live, fermented, enzyme rich foods. Fermented foods include things such as sauerkraut, kimchi, yogurt, kefir etc. So the thing about sauerkraut and kimchi and kefir is that if they are made properly (fermented and not pasteurized), they contain way more probiotics than you could get from a capsule or 30 capsules in any one serving. So basically Anness' strategy is to carpet bomb the gut with good bacteria and enzymes and there will be no more protein particles entering the bloodstream once the enzymes are back to take care of digestion. The theory seemed quite plausible to me. I also found Anness to be quite convincing in her research and knowledge. I talked to her on the phone several times and she was really helpful and super sharp. I could tell she had no "brain fog" at all. I on the other hand had plenty.

So I tried her protocol, which was basically to just eat fermented food with each meal and eat natural organic foods. She recommended sauerkraut primarily because of the enzyme and bacteria profile, so I had about a tablespoon of sauerkraut with each meal. Keep in mind the sauerkraut has to be Raw, Fermented and Organic. I used Farmhouse Brand which I could get at Whole Foods or Sprouts. So pretty quickly I started to feel better on this fermented foods diet. My appetite increased quite a bit and I was able to put back on some weight which I really needed. I stayed on Paleo but just added in the fermented foods. So within a couple of weeks all my joint pain went away again and my mouth and eyes felt better. I was back in the gym and everyone kept commenting that I looked much better, my skin had color again and I looked so much healthier. I really thought this was the answer. I added in homemade kefir after a few weeks. About four months into the diet though I started getting pains in my abdomen. Also the symptoms of Sjogren's started to flare again. Dryness, Joint Pain, and even acid reflux all came back with a fury. I called Anness and talked to her on the phone but she had no idea as to why I was having these problems. The more fermented foods I tried at this point, the more the flares intensified. I had to stop and abort the mission.

Why did the fermented foods help at first and then make me get suddenly much worse. I wasn't sure at this time but later I developed a hypothesis.

So now I was depressed again and feeling like I am back to square one. So I go back online and start searching for anyone that has a theory about Sjogren's or Autoimmunity, I know it sounds desperate, but that is exactly what I was at the time. So eventually I found a book called "Sjogren's Syndrome; the Cause and Recovery in Ten Simple Steps", by Hannah Yoseph.

So this book's hypothesis is that Sjogren's Syndrome and other autoimmune conditions are caused by chronic infection, circulating toxins and acidity exacerbated by nutritional deficiency.

So the books has 10 steps on how to recover from Sjogren's syndrome. I will list them out for you

- 1) Make healthy water (ie drink spring water, not tap water, not filtered water, nothing with Chlorine or Fluoride in it. Make sure your diet is Alkalizing (add calcium, and magnesium supplements, avoid acidic foods))
- 2) Make Collagen (This is accomplished with Vit C, Glycine, L-Lysine, and L-Proline amino acids)
- 3) Support Nerve/Muscle Health (supplements and diet)
- 4) Support Hormone Function (Supplements)
- 5) Eat foods that support brain function (Supplements and diet)
- 6) Eat foods that rev up ATP production ie Mitochondrial energy (diet and supplements)
- 7) Avoid fake foods (ie low fat, sugar free or diet, low calorie)
- 8) Avoid PPG/PEG, Avoid sugar substitutes, Avoid colors and preservatives
- 9) Avoid processed foods
- 10) Eat fruit, really its ok.

Fifth Stop "The Hannah Yoseph Protocol". OK, so I read her book from cover to cover and her theories seemed plausible enough to give it a try. The downside though is her plan was very involved and required about 16 different supplements which I found to be overwhelming. But I was willing to give it a go just in case it worked. Hannah Yoseph is a Medical Doctor who has switched over to the dark side and is now practicing Functional Medicine. If you read her book you will notice that she seems very much anti-allopathic medicine and pulls no punches about it. I wasn't sure how to take it (was she a quack? Or a visionary? I was not so sure at this point). I noticed that she had written a bunch of other books detailing how to recover from "incurable" diseases like Multiple Sclerosis and ALS. So that kind of put up a red flag for me. So I started to correspond with her by e-mail. I asked her to provide some references to Sjogren's patients that she had worked with. She provided me with two references, one in the UK and one in the USA. I chatted with both ladies and they both claimed they had made major improvements on her protocol. So I decided to give it a try.

So for two months I kept a sheet of paper in my back pocket so I could be sure I took all of my 16 supplements each day at the right time and in the right amount. I also had to have a smoothie each day with the powdered collagen supplements included. I started to get improvements in my mouth moisture and eye moisture after a couple of weeks but other than that not much changed. My joints continued to hurt and I was having lot of fatigue. After 8 weeks I threw in the towel on this plan.

Sixth Stop LEAP Diet. So the LEAP Diet is predicated on the belief that certain food sensitivities cause inflammation and if you can identify the foods that you as an individual are sensitive to and eliminate them from your diet the inflammation fire will eventually go out and your gut will heal. LEAP

diet uses a food sensitivity test (MRT Blood Test) to identify the culprit foods and/or chemicals. MRT stands for Mediator Release Test, MRT is a blood test that gives a functional measurement of diet-induced sensitivity pathways. MRT simplifies a highly complex reaction and translates that into the most useable clinical information you can get – quantifying the inflammatory response to foods and food-chemicals. So I paid to have the test done to find out what foods caused a reaction in my body.

The results come back with a color and bar graph result for each food tested. Foods in the red zone created a strong reaction in your blood sample. For me wheat, oranges and cola were in the red zone. Wheat reaction was very strongly red. I had about 12 foods in the yellow zone which showed low level reactions. Everything else was green, so I didn't look horrible in terms of food sensitivities.

So I removed all these red and yellow foods from my diet for a period of 2 months. According to my LEAP diet nutritionist I should start feeling better within two weeks. Two months went by and still felt about the same. Chalked this experiment up as a failure, but I did learn that gluten is not my friend. Fortunately I never ate gluten by virtue of being Paleo. When I was doing this LEAP diet I was NOT Paleo and was eating some grains and beans that were “green” foods on my MRT test. Maybe I should have kept off the grains as well?

Seventh Stop Anti-Candida Diet. So if you remember when I was taking the LDN some folks on the LDN forums thought I might have a candida issue in my gut. Candida is basically a yeast that is normally present in the human gut, even in healthy individuals. But if the gut bacteria is disturbed or wiped out by antibiotics, steroids, birth control hormones, or infection, the yeast can overgrow in the gut. It can also change form into a fungus which basically sets root (rhizoids) into the lining of your gut. Once these roots have penetrated the gut it becomes very hard to eliminate the fungus. The theory here is that the rhizoids are causing the leaky gut. So since I had a history of long term PPI (Nexium) use and a long round of Bactrim DS, my Functional medicine doctor agrees I was a strong candidate for candida overgrowth. So he told me we could test for candida, which cost a few hundred dollars, or we could go ahead and treat it with anti-fungal medicines and see if it works. My doctor told me, the thing about the test, which is a stool test, is it often produces false negatives. So that is why I decided to proceed without the test and use the diet and anti-fungals approach.

The anti-candida diet is not much fun. I will tell you straight out. You have to be disciplined to do this diet. Basically your diet is just eating meat and vegetables. The point of the diet is to starve the yeast/fungus in your gut and then kill it with anti-fungal medicines or supplements. The way I coped with the diet was I ate “a lot” of fat. Think sausage, bacon, steak, salmon, rotisserie chicken, avocado, coconut oil. In addition to fat lots of vegetables like squash, broccoli, greens etc. Go here to see a good example of the anti-candida diet; <http://www.thecandidadiet.com/foodstoeat.htm>.

My Functional Medicine Doctor prescribed me a drug called nystatin to take while on the diet (4 month supply, 2 tablets 3x/day). Nystatin is a drug that is not absorbed through the intestines, so it is only going to act on the yeast and fungus within your gut. The doctor also prescribed me another antifungal that is a systemic antifungal, which basically kills fungus anywhere in your body. This drug was Fluconazole which I took for 2 weeks starting on wk3 of the diet.

My doctor told me that if I had a yeast overgrowth that I would probably experience what is called a Herxheimer reaction within a few days of starting the diet and antifungals. He explained to me that I

would probably feel like I had the flu or alternatively my Sjogren's symptoms would get much worse. This is because the yeast is dying off and the toxins are being removed from the body. He said if I could push through it things would get better and better as the yeast was killed off. Sounded like fun to me.

So I started the diet and supplements. For antifungals I ramped up the nystatin slowly (3 pills/day week1, then 4, then 5 on wk2, then 6 by wk3) and also added virgin cold pressed coconut oil starting at 1 tbsp per day working up to 3 tbsp/day at week 3. I noticed a little itching on my calves but not much else. Week 1 passed, week 2, week3, week4... no Herxheimer reaction. No flu like symptom other than my normal fatigue, no worsening of Sjogren's symptoms. Week 5, 6, and 7 passed, nothing but minor itching. So at this point I am thinking it's not yeast, but I was feeling a lot less pain in my joints, which I figured was just due to the strict low carb diet.

Week 8 bam. I broke out in a rash all over my torso. Really ugly looking rash which seems to wax and wane over time. So like in the morning it might be barely noticeable and in the afternoon it looks like I should be put in medical quarantine. The rash seems to come out whenever I am active, like exercising. I also start breaking out in hives periodically. The hives look different from the rash. The hives look like nasty jumbo sized mosquito bites and they itch, the rashes look more like red bumps and sunburn combined. So I go and talk to the Functional Med Doctor to tell him what's going on. He suspects that it is the body detoxifying. Detoxification can take place through the liver, kidneys, skin and lungs. Looks like in my case it's happening through my skin. Still there is a chance that I am allergic to one of the antifungals so he tells me to get some Zyrtec and take it and see if the hives go away. I get the Zyrtec and take it. The hives still come and go so I continue with the diet.

I continue with diet and anti-fungals and even start rotating in some other antifungals like Pao De Arco tea, raw garlic, and grapefruit seed extract. The rashes keep coming but I am feeling pretty good, still have dryness but joint pain is gone and able to hit the gym 3x/week.

So I continued beyond 3 months, to 4 months, to 5 months. Rashes still coming but feeling pretty good. Then I started adding in fermented foods again to carpet bomb my gut. Within 2 weeks my elbows started hurting and not in the normal way. The skin turned bright red and it felt like they were on fire, as if I had dipped them in molten lava or something. Very bad pain. So I hit the six month mark and I still have dryness, Sjogren's is starting to get worse again, elbows are on fire, other joints are getting inflamed. Rashes still coming. Pain in my gut is back. Once again, I throw in towel and quit the anti-candida diet.

So now it is around Christmas 2015. I am again in fairly bad shape. I can't exercise, I have bad fatigue, sleeping 12 hours a day. Depressed and anxious again.

I get an e-mail from a girl in the UK. It's the girl that was doing the Hannah Yoseph protocol that I had chatted with almost a year ago. She asked me how I was doing on the Hannah Yoshep protocol. I told her I gave up on it after 2 months because it didn't seem to be working and I found the amount of supplements to be excessive. She told me she was now symptom free after 1 year. She also told me that she didn't really notice much improvement either until she hit month 3 of the protocol. She also added that she was now doing Muay Thai kick boxing (as in MMA style). I thought, man if you can do kick boxing you must be doing real well in your recovery. She could barely walk up the steps when

she started the protocol. I asked her what she thought was the most critical part of the protocol. She said it was probably the collagen cocktail.

So did I give up too soon? Could I try again? I decided it might not be too bad to try again if I could simplify the program so that it was not so overwhelming for me. So that's what I did.

Eighth Step – Hannah Yoseph Protocol Abbreviated. I took steps 1 and 2 of her protocol and I just did that. I drank only spring water. I took chelated magnesium, and calcium citrate to alkalize my diet. I kept my diet Paleo but limited acidic foods. I added in zinc carnosine and a probiotic for stomach acid and digestion support. I took the collagen cocktail which consisted of 4 powder form supplements. L-Lysine, L-Proline, Glycine and Vitamin C (ascorbic acid). I took one teaspoon of each amino acid, 4 g of powder vitamin C, and added into a green smoothie each day that I made in my nutribullet blender. I also added 1 teaspoon of L-Glutamine into the smoothie as L-Glutamine is very effective for gut repair. My green smoothie typically was spinach or kale, some carrots, and a fruit for sweetness (like pineapple, strawberry or mango).

The collagen cocktail comes from research done by Linus Pauling on arterial sclerosis. It is a fascinating read which I won't go into too much detail here but basically when you supplement with Vitamin C and these amino acid building blocks your body is able to repair collagen that it otherwise would not be able to repair due to the fact that the body cannot create a key enzyme needed (gulonolactone oxidase, or GLO). To read more about it go here;

http://www.hearttechnology.com/pauling_therapy.html

I proceeded with this simplified version of Hannah's protocol. 1 month in no improvement, 2 months I feel a little more moisture in my mouth and eyes, 3 months I am feeling even more moisture in my mouth and eyes, joint pain seems less. 4 months, I discontinue evoxac and Plaquenil. I fully expect my symptoms to explode after quitting plaquenil. It doesn't happen. 5 months I am feeling pretty good, back in the gym elbows are getting much better. 6 months, things continue to improve. The bags under my eyes that I have had for the last 3 years are starting to diminish, my skin color is better, the rashes are mostly gone. 7,8,9,10,11,12 each month things improve, by month 12 I have very little symptoms and I feel like a new person. There are still some very minor signs of Sjogren's, occasional minor fatigue and mouth is still dry-ish at night, but that might be due to the glands being damaged during the active phase of the disease. Overall I felt great at the one year mark. Now I am at the 17 month mark and I feel better than I have in many years. Not only have the Sjogrens syndrome symptoms reduced to the point I rarely notice them, some of the old sports injuries I have seem to have recovered a well. I have had chronic back and shoulder pain since my 20's (I am 49 now) due to sports injuries and subsequent surgeries. I have no pain in my back or shoulders now. It seems like either my body inflammation is at an all time low, or the collagen has helped my joints to heal (either way it is awesome to have no pain in my body).

So is it remission or a cure? I don't know, and I don't care. I am just happy to be able to live a full and happy life again. Life is short, enjoy it while you can!

So what was the key factor in my recovery? I think it was the collagen cocktail, although there is a strong possibility that the anti-candida diet cleared my gut of yeast and the collagen cocktail and L-Glutamine were finally able to heal the gut lining once the candida was eliminated. Frankly I am not

100% sure what it was, but I hope to help others try some of these protocols and maybe see if it works for them.

I sincerely hope that chronicling my journey may help others who are open to the ideas of alternative medicine. Please let me know if I can be of any help to you on your journey. The best way to reach me is by e-mail at crepko1@yahoo.com. Wishing you all the best.

Best Regards and God Bless

Chris Repko

Here are supplements I am currently taking. You do NOT need to use these brands, just make sure you use a reputable supplier.





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ONE THOUGHT ON "MY SJOGREN'S RECOVERY JOURNEY"



crepko1

on [May 16, 2016 at 4:11 pm](#) said:

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