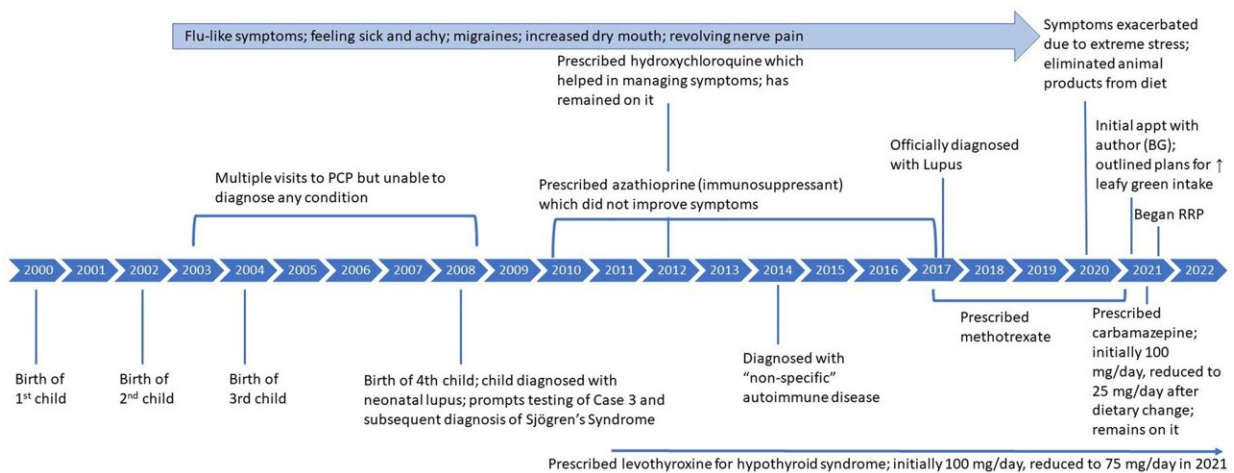


Research case series presents food as medicine as a potential treatment for lupus and other autoimmune diseases

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Case 3: Timeline of symptoms and medication use. Credit: *Frontiers in Nutrition* (2024). DOI: 10.3389/fnut.2024.1208074

A new research case series [published](#) in *Frontiers in Nutrition* presents food as medicine as a potential treatment for autoimmune diseases, describing three patients with chronic autoimmune disease who showed remarkable improvement after following a predominantly raw dietary

pattern high in cruciferous vegetables and omega 3 fatty acids.

The research focused on three women with systemic lupus erythematosus and Sjögren's syndrome who adopted a nutrition protocol that emphasized leafy greens, [cruciferous vegetables](#), flax or chia seeds for omega-3 polyunsaturated [fatty acids](#), and water and included predominately raw foods. All three women reported that nearly all their symptoms of both diseases resolved after just four weeks of making the dietary changes.

Furthermore, all three patients have remained symptom-free, with two of them reporting no symptoms for more than six years without recent medication use. The research was published as part of an upcoming special issue of the journal focused on food as medicine and edited by the American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM).

"Although the healing benefits of a predominantly plant-based eating pattern have been clearly demonstrated for cardiometabolic outcomes, clinical attention, and research has been lacking on its effectiveness at treating and managing [autoimmune diseases](#)," the study's author, Brooke Goldner, MD, said.

"The dramatic improvements in symptoms and quality of life reported by the three patients in this case series demonstrates what I see every day in my practice: that autoimmune diseases can quickly improve with optimal nutrition."

"My hope is that these cases generate greater recognition, making patients and clinicians aware of food as medicine as a [treatment option](#) for systemic lupus erythematosus and Sjögren's syndrome. This case series also reflects the immediate need for more research into dietary

changes as a potential treatment strategy for autoimmune disease."

Dr. Goldner herself has been free from debilitating lupus symptoms, including arthritis, photosensitivity, [renal impairment](#), and antiphospholipid antibody clotting issues for over 18 years, which she attributes to the nutrition protocol.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, systemic lupus erythematosus is the most common type of lupus, an autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks its own tissues. It has no cure, and common symptoms include extreme fatigue, [joint pain](#), and swelling as well as hair loss. Sjögren's syndrome is an immune system disorder that causes symptoms such as dry mouth and eyes and can accompany [systemic lupus erythematosus](#).

The patients presented in the case series followed a strict, customized, plant-based nutrition protocol called the Rapid Recovery Protocol (RRP), which was developed by Dr. Goldner and eliminates all processed food. The nutrition protocol shares similarities with a whole-food, [plant-based diet](#) but focuses "on predominately raw foods and high intakes of [leafy greens](#) and cruciferous vegetables, omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (whole, ground flax or chia seeds; cold pressed flaxseed oil), and water."

Once remission was achieved, patients were allowed to begin a maintenance phase and incorporate cooked whole plant foods, and more fruits, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.

The study publication includes a supplemental set of personal accounts from the three patients, who described in their own words their experience of achieving remission of symptoms within four weeks or less. One patient, a 40-year-old who was diagnosed with lupus when she was nine months pregnant, reported experiencing symptoms since 2010

that included fatigue, extreme photosensitivity, and leg pain that required her to spend much of the day lying down.

After beginning the RRP protocol in 2017, she reported that her joint pain dissipated within weeks and that she could experience sunlight comfortably again.

"The most exciting thing for me was when I realized being in direct sunlight didn't hurt my skin," she said. "I'll never forget the feeling of going to the beach two months after giving birth and enjoying the feeling of the warmth of the sun on my face and body."

The second patient, a 54-year-old educator, experienced photosensitivity, butterfly rash, itchy scalp, and constant fatigue. Before starting the protocol, she was frequently hospitalized with pleurisy, an inflammation of the tissue separating the lungs and chest wall, and suffered from severe dry mouth that made it difficult to eat. She had brain fog and worried at one point she suffered from early-onset Alzheimer's.

After completing the protocol, she said, "I can walk everywhere. I can play with my kids, I can remember things, and I don't have to write everything down. I can type, I can text, and I don't take any painkillers anymore."

The third patient, a 45-year-old teacher, and mother of four, suffered from severe brain fog, debilitating fatigue, nerve pain, a grittiness in her eyes, and patches of skin that hurt as if they were sunburned, among other symptoms. She started the protocol in 2021 and said many of her symptoms went away within weeks.

"I was able to stay up late," she said. "I wasn't tired anymore. My skin and joint pain vanished. I didn't feel nauseous anymore. My body felt

amazing...It absolutely feels amazing to be well."

More information: Brooke Goldner et al, Case series: raw, whole, plant-based nutrition protocol rapidly reverses symptoms in three women with systemic lupus erythematosus and Sjögren's syndrome, *Frontiers in Nutrition* (2024). [DOI: 10.3389/fnut.2024.1208074](https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2024.1208074)

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