

Is Gluten to Blame for Your Thyroid Dysfunction?

 amymyersmd.com/2016/08/is-gluten-to-blame-for-thyroid-dysfunction/

8/15/2016



In my first book, [The Autoimmune Solution](#), I explain the health hazards of gluten for those with autoimmunity. However, did you know that gluten is also particularly damaging and inflammatory to the thyroid and that ditching gluten is one of the most important steps you can take in restoring your thyroid function? This week I'll explain how gluten wreaks havoc on your thyroid and why I recommend that all of my thyroid patients eliminate it for good.

The Autoimmune Connection

To understand why gluten is so harmful for your thyroid, we need to first be aware that the two most common types of thyroid dysfunction, hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism are actually autoimmune in nature. This means that your immune system is mistakenly attacking your own thyroid, causing it to either underproduce (Hashimoto's) or overproduce (Graves') thyroid hormones.

Shockingly, many people with thyroid dysfunction don't even know if their condition is autoimmune-related or not. This is because conventional doctors don't routinely check for thyroid antibodies when testing thyroid blood levels. I could go on for days about why this is such a disservice to patients, and I cover this much more in-depth in my book, [The Thyroid Connection](#). However, the important thing to know is that if you are experiencing thyroid dysfunction, there's a good chance that it's autoimmune, and I would recommend asking your doctor to check your thyroid antibodies next time she checks your thyroid blood levels. You can find a full list of recommended thyroid tests and optimal ranges, [in this post](#) as well as in my new book [The Thyroid Connection](#).

So if the majority of thyroid dysfunction is caused by autoimmunity, what causes the autoimmunity in the first place? The answer is complex, which is why my first book is dedicated entirely to understanding and overcoming autoimmune disease, but without a doubt, one of the biggest contributing factors is gluten. Gluten wreaks havoc on your gut, increases your inflammation, and can directly cause your immune system to attack your thyroid. Let's take a look at how and why that is.

Gluten, Leaky Gut, and Autoimmune Thyroid Disease

Thanks to the [pioneering work of Dr. Alessio Fasano](#), we know that leaky gut is one of the primary triggers for all autoimmune disease, including autoimmune thyroid disease. As you might guess by its name, leaky gut occurs when your gut (specifically your small intestine) becomes permeable, allowing particles to leak from your digestive tract and travel freely through your bloodstream.

Gluten is one of the main causes of leaky gut in people that I see with thyroid issues and autoimmune diseases, and not just among Celiac patients, but in anyone with gluten sensitivity. When anyone, whether they have gluten sensitivity or not, eats a gluten-containing food, the gluten proteins make their way through the stomach and arrive at the small intestine, where the body responds by producing zonulin, a chemical that signals the tight junctions of the intestinal walls to open up, creating temporary permeability. This permeability will heal as the gut cells renew every 48 hours. However, if you have gluten sensitivity and you eat gluten, then this permeability will not heal in that 48 hours and your gut remains leaky. Leaky gut can also be caused or exacerbated by gut infections such as [Candida overgrowth](#) or SIBO, medications such as antibiotics, steroids or birth control pills, as well as a high stress lifestyle. [New research](#) shows that spraying Glyphosate (Roundup) on the wheat is also a major contributor of leaky gut and gluten sensitivity.

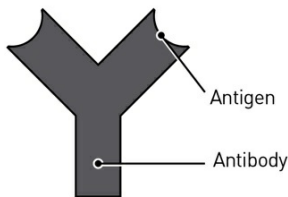
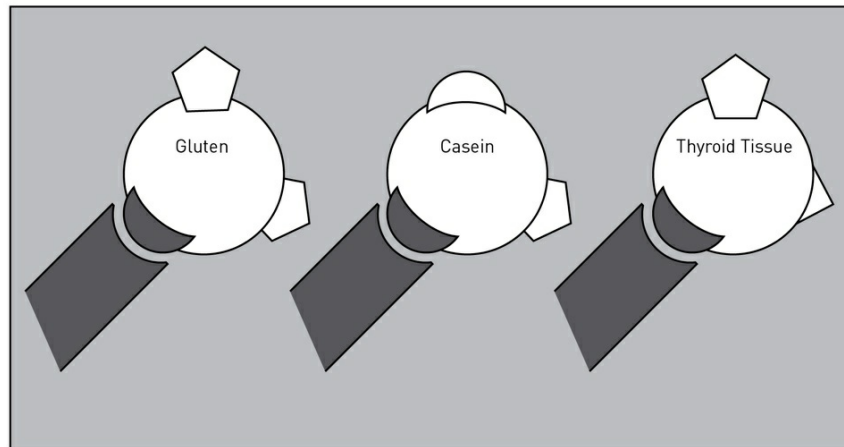
Now that your small intestines are open and permeable this allows toxins, microbes, and partially digested food to leak into your bloodstream, your immune system goes on high alert to neutralize all of these threats. But, because your gut is still leaky, the threats just keep on coming, putting your body in a state of chronic inflammation and putting you on the path to develop an autoimmune disease (including thyroid dysfunction) as your immune system becomes so stressed and confused that it begins attacking your own tissue by mistake. Unfortunately, the gluten that caused your gut to become leaky makes it even more likely that you will develop thyroid dysfunction (autoimmune and non autoimmune), thanks to a phenomenon called molecular mimicry.

Molecular Mimicry, A Case of Mistaken Identity

Every time your body is exposed to a bacteria, virus, or other pathogen, your immune system memorizes its structure, specifically its protein sequence, so that it can recognize it in the future and mount a defense.

However, the immune system's recognition system isn't foolproof; as long as a molecule's structure and protein sequences are similar enough, the immune system can be fooled into attacking look-a-like molecules that are actually your body's tissue, causing autoimmune disease. Unfortunately for the thyroid, it has a common doppelganger that puts it at risk for rogue autoimmune attacks. You guessed it – gluten. What's more, 50% of people with gluten sensitivity experience molecular mimicry with casein (a protein found in dairy). This is known as cross-reactivity, where you react not only to your original trigger, but also to another trigger that resembles the first one.

Molecular Mimicry



Thanks to the leaky gut that was originally caused by gluten, every time you eat gluten and dairy, their proteins are able to escape into your bloodstream, where they trigger an attack from your immune system. And, because of the molecular mimicry phenomenon, your thyroid tissues end up in the crosshairs as well.

Interestingly, your immune system's attack can affect your thyroid in two completely different ways. In the case of autoimmune hypothyroidism (Hashimoto's disease) your immune system's attacks decrease thyroid functionality, so your metabolic processes slow down. In autoimmune hyperthyroid (Grave's disease), the antibodies act like Thyroid Stimulating Hormone, causing your thyroid to overproduce its hormones and sending your metabolism into overdrive. I talk much more about this in [The Thyroid Connection](#).

Even in patients who have non-autoimmune thyroid disease, the molecular mimicry phenomenon still impacts thyroid function, which is why I recommend that all of my patients with thyroid dysfunction remove gluten from their diet, even if they are not autoimmune.

How to Heal the Damage Caused by Gluten

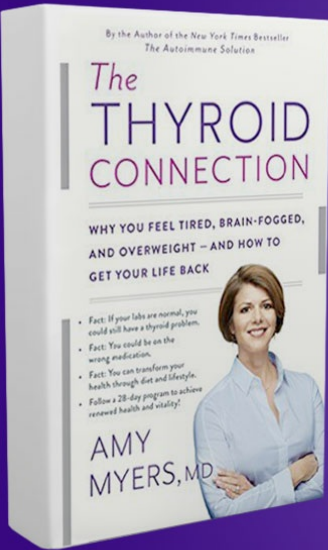
The bottom line is, if you have a thyroid dysfunction, I recommend that you ditch gluten for good. Once you've eliminated them from your diet, your gut can begin to heal, your inflammation will decrease, and your body will slow and eventually stop its rogue attacks on your thyroid.

In addition to eliminating gluten, I recommend using functional medicine's 4R approach to heal your leaky gut. The process involves removing other toxic and inflammatory foods, including gluten and dairy, restoring the ingredients needed for proper digestion, re-inoculating with healthy bacteria, and repairing the lining of your gut so that gluten and dairy proteins and other particles can no longer escape into your bloodstream and trigger molecular mimicry.

In my new book, [The Thyroid Connection](#), I take a deeper dive into other root causes in addition to gluten that can disrupt your thyroid function, show you how to heal a leaky gut, help you understand which labs to ask for and what optimal reference ranges should be, how to work with your doctor to ensure you get the right diagnosis, and most importantly I offer a step by step 28 day plan with recipes, meal plans, supplements and stress reducing techniques to restore your thyroid function and to live a more vibrant life.

Restore Thyroid Function & Take Your Health Back

In my new book, [The Thyroid Connection](#), I cover everything you need to know about thyroid disease, including its true underlying causes, how to work with your doctor, how to choose the right medication, and a 28-day program to get your life back.



By the Author of the New York Times Bestseller
The Autoimmune Solution

The THYROID CONNECTION

WHY YOU FEEL TIRED, BRAIN-FOGGED,
AND OVERWEIGHT - AND HOW TO
GET YOUR LIFE BACK

- Fact: If your labs are normal, you could still have a thyroid problem.
- Fact: You could be on the wrong medication.
- Fact: You can transform your health through diet and lifestyle.
- Follow a 28-day program to achieve renewed health and vitality!

AMY MYERS, MD

The
**THYROID
CONNECTION**

**Why You Feel Tired, Brain-Fogged,
And Overweight - And How to
Get Your Life Back**

ORDER NOW

Amy Myers MD ©2010-2016 All Rights Reserved

Content on this website is not considered medical advice. Please see a physician before making any medical or lifestyle changes.

[Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Return Policy](#)