

# Lyme Disease Recovery

## HEALTH & WELLNESS TIPS

The Lyme Care Resource Center is a holistic-minded support group, encouraging those with Lyme disease to become active participants in their healing journeys.

\* Always consult a physician before changing your health and wellness protocol.

**Lyme disease** is a complex, multi-system illness that for some individuals can become protracted and debilitating.

**To facilitate recovery** from the significant body, mind, and spirit imbalances that can occur, it is important to have the courage to do everything possible to promote and support your immune system and reestablish balance.

**Restorative and complementary health and wellness** approaches are important adjuncts to traditional medical care that can help you cope with and heal from chronic Lyme disease.

## LIFESTYLE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HEALING FROM CHRONIC ILLNESS

- Good sleep
- Healthy living environment
- Healthy and balanced nutrition
- Regular exercise
- Good support system of friends, family, community, and a professional counselor
- Regular mindfulness meditation, restorative yoga, or spiritual practices
- Practices that promote joy, positive thinking, self-compassion, and hope
- Vitamins and supplements
- Integrative/complementary practitioner support when needed

Your lifestyle choices matter. Taking an active role in your health and wellness can make a big difference in your recovery journey.

Adopting practices that reduce stress and inflammation can help support your healing from chronic illness.

Healing takes time and patience. Be patient and willing to take small steps at a time.

Implement these practices under the supervision of a certified health care professional, at your own pace, and as you are able.

Have faith your health will improve.

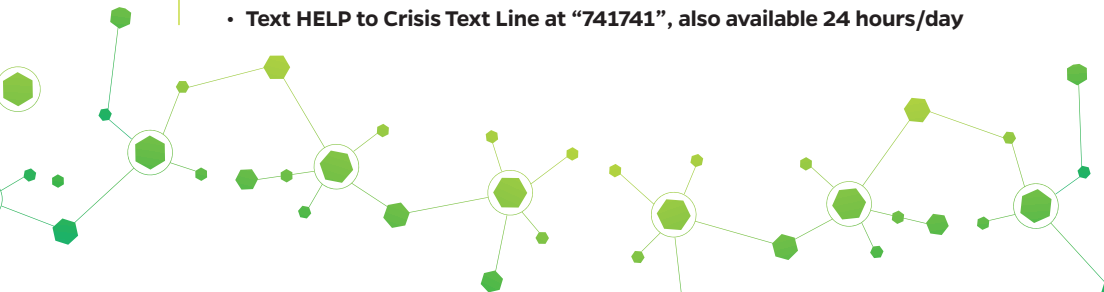


### BELIEVE IN THE RESILIENCY OF YOUR MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT.

Your illness is real, and we know your symptoms can be painful and challenging. Chronic illnesses such as Lyme disease can predispose an individual to depression.

**PLEASE SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY** if you are experiencing depression that includes extreme hopelessness, insomnia, loss of appetite, persistent feelings of worthlessness, marked mental and physical sluggishness, or if you have suicidal thoughts:

- Call your physician
- Call 911
- Go to the nearest emergency room
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number 1-800-273-8255, available 24 hours/day
- Text HELP to Crisis Text Line at "741741", also available 24 hours/day



**Restorative health and wellness practices can help reduce inflammation, support your immune system, and rebalance your body. Many of these strategies are useful in improving pain, depression, anxiety, fatigue, and arthritis.**

## **GOOD SLEEP<sup>i</sup>**

### **Remedies to Help You Sleep**

- Aim for 7-9 hours of uninterrupted sleep at a regular timeframe, but do not worry if sleep does not come
- Choose calming evening activities prior to sleep.
  - Try guided meditations or sleep stories, such as on the phone app, Calm.
- Avoid alcohol
- Eliminate caffeine in the afternoon and evening
- A few hours before bedtime, try drinking warm milk or chamomile, passionflower, lemon balm, or ashwagandha tea
- Consider melatonin supplements to help rebalance disrupted sleep patterns
  - Start slow and with a low dose
  - Tart cherry juice is a natural melatonin source
- Exercise (not within two hours of bedtime)
- Keep room cool and avoid extreme temperatures
- Keep room dark and with limited electronic devices
- Make your bedroom a non-allergenic environment
- Try adding white noise
- Be mindful of and release any negative thoughts or fears of your body's ability to sleep



**Calming bedtime rituals such as reading or meditation can help promote sleep**

### **Benefits of Sleep:**

- Central to brain health and restoration
- Reduces stress and inflammation
- Improves mental well-being and acuity
- Benefits immune system
- Benefits cardiovascular system



### **If leg cramps occur, consider:**

- Magnesium glycinate
- Potassium
- Drinking more water throughout the day
- Avoiding alcohol and caffeine

## **HEALTHY LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

Investigate your living environment if you suspect mold, dust, or other allergens. Environmental triggers can contribute to ongoing inflammation and immune reactivity. It's important to make your home, and particularly your bedroom, a non-allergenic environment.

- Investigate sources of dust and mold in your living environment
- Consider using an air filter
- Try having pets sleep outside your bedroom
- Evaluate your skin care and household products and shift to natural products when possible

## HEALTHY AND BALANCED NUTRITION<sup>ii</sup>

- Eat a balanced, nutrient-rich, whole foods diet, including:
  - 4-9 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables daily
  - Healthy fats and omega-3's such as fish, extra virgin olive oil, avocado, and nuts
  - Quality protein such as pastured/grass-fed or wild meats and seafood
  - Organic when possible
- Minimize foods that increase inflammation such as processed foods, sugars, refined flour, saturated fats, and alcohol
- Reduce caffeine
- Be aware of the possibility of food sensitivities including gluten, dairy, or alpha gal meat allergy
- Consider nutrient deficiencies (Magnesium, Vit D, Zinc, etc.) or other GI conditions<sup>iii</sup>
- Drink 8 glasses of water per day
- Include anti-inflammatory spices such as turmeric, basil, oregano, cinnamon, rosemary, cumin, curry, ginger, thyme
- Eat naturally fermented foods such as kombucha, yogurt, sauerkraut, miso
- Don't smoke
- Eat meals at regular hours and not too late
- If you have arthritis symptoms, an anti-inflammatory diet can be particularly beneficial. Also consider minimizing certain night shade vegetables such as eggplant, tomatoes and potatoes.



**Eat a diversity of colors such as blueberries, kale, garlic, beets, carrots**

### Benefits of Healthy and Balanced Eating:

- Lowers inflammation
- Enhances sleep
- Improves energy
- Reduces pain
- Strengthens immune system
- Improves weight control
- Helps moderate mood swings



**2/3 of your immune system is in your gut**

## REGULAR EXERCISE, IF POSSIBLE<sup>iv</sup>

- Aim for 30 minutes per day
- Find exercises that work for you, such as walking, yoga, swimming, Tai Chi, Qigong, Pilates, aqua therapy
- Begin slowly with breath work, gentle stretching, and low intensity exercise
- Progress gradually to moderate exercise as tolerated

### Benefits of Exercise for Physical and Mental Health

- Promotes blood flow and vascular function
- Keeps muscles strong and decreases bone loss
- Helps control joint swelling, stiffness, and pain
- Decreases fatigue and improves sleep
- Enhances weight loss
- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Improves mood and well being



**Even mild intensity exercise is beneficial.  
Try gentle walking.  
Then try moving your arms while walking.**

## GOOD SUPPORT SYSTEM OF FRIENDS, FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND A PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

It's important to ask for help and create a support system of friends, family, community, and professionals.

- Adjust your expectations, set boundaries, and establish realistic goals
- Don't become isolated
- Attend a local Lyme Disease Support Group such as the Lyme Care Resource Center in the Baltimore area—  
**LymeCenter.org**
- Find online forums to connect with others having similar health issues



**Embrace social support**

## REGULAR MINDFULNESS MEDITATION, RESTORATIVE YOGA, OR SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Stress is a powerful immune system disruptor that can cause a fight, flight, or freeze response and upset body, mind, and spirit balance. Find ways to promote calm and living in the present moment.

- Nurture a regular connection to spirit
- Take a course in mindfulness meditation
- Find daily practices that relax and de-stress, such as yoga or meditation
- Find a de-stress app for your phone that you like, such as Calm, Headspace, Insight Timer



**It's okay to slow down**

## PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE JOY, POSITIVE THINKING, SELF-COMPASSION, AND HOPE

- Your healing journey, although challenging, is also an opportunity for personal transformation and growth
- You can shift your mindset, priorities, and health habits to focus on and support your healing
- Be mindful of your inner voice and how you speak to yourself. Remember that your illness is not your fault and treat yourself with kindness.

- Acknowledge that coping with chronic illness is challenging. Listen to and accept the feelings and emotions that come along with this.
- Tap into your intuition.



**Having a positive attitude helps build emotional strength**

### Try:

- Gratitude practices such as daily gratitude journaling and positive affirmations
- Hobbies such as photography, singing, dancing, expressive art, volunteering, walking outside and gardening, with proper tick protection<sup>v</sup>
- Meditation practices that focus on self-compassion and loving kindness

## VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS

Many Lyme disease patients benefit from taking vitamins and supplements. However, results and side effects vary by individual. Thus, it is important to:

- Only take supplements under the direction of a certified health practitioner<sup>vi</sup>
- Research the quality of your supplements<sup>vii</sup>
- Start low and slow: begin with a low dose & add one supplement at a time
- Some supplements to discuss with your health provider include:
  - Multi-species probiotics for gut microbiome balance<sup>viii</sup>
  - Anti-inflammatory herbal teas such as decaf green tea, ginger, lemon, dandelion, milk thistle
  - Multi-vitamin with antioxidants and minerals including magnesium, vit D, vit C, and B complex with B12 and folate (not folic acid)
  - Turmeric
  - Garlic extracts to tolerance
  - Liposomal glutathione
  - Omega-3 fish oil
  - CoEnzyme Q10<sup>ix</sup>
  - Glycophospholipids
  - Acetyl- L-carnitine<sup>x</sup>
  - Aloe vera
  - Antimicrobial herbs such as Cat's claw, Teasel root, and Lauric acid/Monolaurin

## OTHER POTENTIAL BENEFICIAL PRACTICES TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR HEALTH PROVIDER

- Infrared sauna to increase blood flow and promote sweating<sup>xi</sup>
- Dry skin brushing to improve lymphatic flow
- Epsom salts bath

## INTEGRATIVE/COMPLEMENTARY PRACTITIONER SUPPORT

### Potential helpful avenues include:

- Integrative Medicine
- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic care
  - Cranio-Sacral
  - Network Spinal Analysis
- Osteopathy
- Clinical Nutrition
- Gentle Massage Therapy
- Lymphatic Massage
- Reflexology
- Physical Therapy
- Reiki
- Homeopathy<sup>xiii</sup>

## DISCLAIMER

This pamphlet is for informational purposes only. Nothing contained on these pages should be considered a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your physician before changing your health and wellness protocol. If you have a medical condition, please seek advice from your physician. The information provided here represents multiple views but does not represent an official position of the Lyme Care Resource Center, nor should it be considered an endorsement by this organization

## ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT CAUTIONARY NOTES

- <sup>i</sup> Certain medical conditions such as GERD, snoring, sleep apnea, and restless leg syndrome can contribute to sleep problems and may require further evaluation by your physician.
- <sup>ii</sup> Consult your doctor or a dietitian before making changes to your diet.
- <sup>iii</sup> Certain medical conditions such as IBS, Crohn's disease, Celiac, nutrient deficiencies, food allergies, and others may require further evaluation by your physician.
- <sup>iv</sup> Consult with your doctor before beginning a new exercise program. If exercising causes increased pain, fatigue, or difficulty breathing consult your physician immediately.
- <sup>v</sup> Tick prevention practices are important, including wearing insect repellent, long sleeves and pants sprayed with permethrin, and performing daily tick checks.
- <sup>vi</sup> Only take supplements under the direction of a certified health provider.
- <sup>vii</sup> FDA regulates dietary supplements under a different set of regulations than those covering conventional food and drug products (the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994). FDA is not authorized to review dietary supplement products for safety and effectiveness before they are marketed. The manufacturers and distributors of dietary supplements are responsible for making sure their products are safe before they go to market.
- <sup>viii</sup> Ask your doctor if probiotics (containing 5 to 10 billion live cultures, taken 2-3 hours away from antibiotics) are appropriate for you.
- <sup>ix</sup> Do not use CoQ10 while taking the anti-Babesia drug atovaquone (Mepron, Malarone) because CoQ10 interferes with the action of the medication.
- <sup>x</sup> Consult with your physician before using acetyl- L-carnitine. Do not use if you have an under-active thyroid or history of seizures. Be cautious of interactions with Sintrom, coumadin and thyroid hormone.
- <sup>xi</sup> Consult your physician before using an infrared sauna since certain medical conditions, including heart illnesses, could be contraindicated.
- <sup>xii</sup> Consult a certified classical homeopath (CCH).

Produced by the Lyme Care Resource Center  
LymeCenter.org

