

## Hashi NoNos

This started as a funny, tongue-in-cheek term blurted out late one night as we were talking about missteps that people who have Hashimoto's often take. We ran with it, wrote these "NoNos," and they ended up turning into a successful, month-long series on our [Facebook page](#).

Here is the compiled list, our NoNos "chapbook" – 20 suggestions for what NOT to do when you have (or think you have) Hashimoto's...

1. Only getting one thyroid antibody tested (markers for Hashimoto's). You can have one without having the other. Get your thyroperoxidase (TPOAb) *and* your thyroglobulin (TgAb) tested.

Demand these tests, even if your doctor pushes back. You're the boss. Or order them from an independent, direct-to-consumer lab. And for good measure, add in an ANA (anti-nuclear antibody) test, which is an overall marker for autoimmunity.

[Go here](#) for our recommended functional thyroid labs panel.

2. Falling into the trap of thinking that 90% gluten-free is "good enough." At Healthful Elements, we don't take a lot of hard lines with diet and nutrition, but this is one area where we do.

As one functional medicine doctor stated, "You'll never get Hashimoto's into remission continuing to eat even the smallest amounts of gluten."

3. Thinking Hashimoto's can be forced into remission through diet alone. Never underestimate the power of some smart, targeted supplementation and gentle lifestyle modifications that reduce your body burden and your [stress](#).
4. Starting your day off with a strong cup of java before sitting down to breakfast. Caffeine on an empty stomach is like rocket fuel. It destabilizes [blood sugar](#) (which you can spend the rest of the day recovering from) and spikes cortisol, an adrenal hormone that has been shown to up the ante on Hashimoto's/autoimmunity.
5. Leaving the house with no clue what you're going to eat for the day. Dr. Joseph Mercola says, "Don't go to bed the night before until you know what you're going to eat the next day." When we leave our food to chance, the end result is usually not what serves us best.

6. Committing to a strictly vegan or vegetarian diet, because, after all, aren't these diets the healthiest way to eat?

This is a significant and sensitive topic. There are sound reasons for why people to choose to eschew animal products, all of which we understand, truly. But most vegetarians and vegans who have Hashimoto's are struggling with continued symptoms and antibody production.

Of our clients who we've gently encouraged to at least start with bone broth and fish, the vast majority have said, "I feel so great, I wish I had started with some animal protein years ago. I wish I would've listened to my body."

7. Exercising 'til you fall over. "No pain, no gain!" will backfire. It can increase your stress hormone output and deplete the adrenals, which play a significant role in thyroid function and immune regulation.

Cortisol, the adrenal hormone nicknamed "the belly fat hormone," will keep on pumpin' through your system with a rigorous workout routine. This is why so many people say, "I'm doing [insert heart-pumping exercise here] five days a week, but I'm not losing weight." [Restorative exercise](#) (yoga, walking, tai chi, etc.) is key when you're suffering from the fatigue associated with hypothyroidism and Hashimoto's.

8. Ignoring the role that [clean and green cosmetics, skin care](#), and household cleaners play in taming autoimmunity. This is part of the "lifestyle" piece that mentioned in NoNo #3. Any toxins that you slather on your skin or breathe in as a part of your home environment will make your immune system go, "What the hell is this? This doesn't belong here; I need to launch a seek and destroy mission on these chemicals and toxins."

Sure, they may be cheaper, but toxic skin care and cleaners fan the flames of Hashimoto's/autoimmunity.

9. Scouring the supplement aisle for the magic pill that will turn everything around. Don't throw darts blindfolded. Get educated on targeted, effective immune modulators, like [Vitamin D](#) and [turmeric](#). Don't waste your money on nutrients from supplements that you can get from whole food sources.
10. Assuming you'll develop Hashimoto's because other family members have. True, "[Genetics loads the gun and environment pulls the trigger](#)," but having a family history of autoimmunity doesn't necessarily mean your trigger will get pulled.

11. Ignoring the signals that your digestive system is sending, including rashes, allergies, symptoms of yeast overgrowth, belching. Many don't know that 70-80% of our immune system is housed in the gut.

If your gut is imbalanced, your immune system will suffer. The functional medicine community states that all autoimmunity is precluded by some level of leaky gut/gut dysbiosis. [This](#) is the first step in healing and sealing your gut.

12. Believing that the T4 medication (the most commonly prescribed) you're taking will "cure" your condition. While often warranted, taking any form of thyroid hormone replacement (T3, T4, or T3/T4 combination) is often barking up the wrong tree.

You can replace the missing hormones 'til the cows come home, but thyroid drugs will do little, if anything, to modulate the autoimmunity. Address the root of your condition.

13. Thinking that stress doesn't affect you since you're eating right and exercising. While a whole foods diet and movement are critical, some in the functional medicine community say that a "perfect" diet (does that even exist?) is relatively useless if you're plagued with relentless physical, mental, or emotional stress, including feelings of guilt, shame, and worthlessness.

Ongoing stress and will fuel antibody production and compromise digestion. "You aren't what you eat, you're what you absorb."

14. Never quite getting around to taking your supplements. We aren't big pill-pushers, but please don't be laissez-faire about the supplementation that you're on. It's a waste of money. We don't believe in being perfect about it, and it's more important to be consistent than to stress about dosing. In other words, take your supplements several times a week vs. taking everything on Saturday.

15. Ignoring the signs of systemic inflammation. What's systemic inflammation? And what does it have to do with Hashimoto's? A lot. Autoimmunity and inflammation are like kissing cousins – autoimmunity fuels inflammation and vice versa.

Signs of [systemic inflammation](#) include joint pain and stiffness, skin issues, headaches, and, you guessed it, digestive problems.

16. Going silent – rather than speaking up – when you find yourself surrounded by gluten-filled or gluten-contaminated foods in a social situation. If we don't gently educate others about what we can and can't eat, they don't have the opportunity to learn.

Don't leave your health to chance. And don't worry about offending or inconveniencing someone else.

17. [Beating yourself up](#) and fixating on what in the world you could have done differently to have avoided “getting” Hashimoto’s. Negative self-talk and blaming yourself is counterproductive.

Most of us will never truly know what our trigger was. Or triggers. Focus on what you can do now to eat right, supplement wisely, and change some things about your lifestyle. The body has an incredible capacity to heal.

18. Continuing to work with doctors/practitioners who tell you there’s nothing wrong with your health (maybe it’s “in your head”), even though you feel miserable and lifeless.

As the functional medicine community states, symptoms trump labs. Sure, labs are important, but they’re not the tell-all of your condition. If you’re getting subpar treatment (inadequate testing, working with someone who’s using outdated reference ranges for labs, or if they’re not respecting your innate wisdom and knowledge), find someone new, quick-like.

Continuing to see someone who is ignorant of thyroid treatment and autoimmunity is a waste of your precious time and resources.

19. Assuming that the anxiety and depression you feel is a separate issue altogether from your Hashimoto’s. Anxiety is often related to [adrenal dysfunction](#), which plays a big role in thyroid and immune function and depression is a hallmark symptom of low thyroid function.

This is why we cringe when doctors prescribe anti-depressants and anti-anxiety meds for people who are hypothyroid – the functional medicine community states that for someone with these conditions, always treat the hypothyroidism first.

20. Muscling through daily tasks and pretending to be superwoman, even when you’re so fatigued you could crawl into bed. Take the time for rest and rejuvenation. It’s not a luxury, it’s a necessity. Pushing and going and going and pushing will further deplete your adrenals, and negatively affect your thyroid and immune function.

The “shoulds” and the list-making and the “I’ll just do these few more things before bed” are counterproductive to your healing. It will never all be done. Try and make peace with this.