Insights Into Lyme Disease Treatment:

13 Lyme-Literate Healthcare Practitioners Share Their Healing Strategies: Ginger Savely, DNP: Part 2 of 3

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Available from www.LymeBook.com or by calling (530) 573-0190

Chapter 4: Ginger Savely, DNP, Part 2 of 3

About this article:

The following is an excerpt from the book, Insights Into Lyme Disease Treatment: 13 Lyme-Literate Health Care Practitioners Share Their Healing Strategies, by Connie Strasheim. The book is 443 pages and retails for $39.95; it is available from BioMed Publishing Group by calling 530.573.0190 or online at www.LymeBook.com. The book is based on interviews with 13 Lyme-Literate health care practitioners. Each doctor is given their own chapter in which to explain their Lyme disease treatments. This chapter focuses on the treatments of Ginger Savely, DNP, of San Francisco, CA. Note: This book excerpt will be broken up into multiple issues of Public Health Alert due to space constraints, so be sure to pick up the next few issues of the Public Health Alert!

(continued from previous issue of PHA)…

Treating Mold, Candida and Environmental Toxins

I treat my patients' Candida towards the end of their treatment regimen, because the antibiotics for Lyme cause yeast, so there's no point in treating for yeast as long as patients are taking antibiotics. When I do treat them for yeast, I also treat them for mold, using Cholestyramine (as advocated by Dr. Ritchie Shoemaker, M.D.) to bind the mold's biotoxins. I think that mold is a huge problem for Lyme disease patients, too. For some, it may even be the main reason why they got sick, and is the reason why they stay sick. Recent work by Dr. Ritchie Shoemaker has also shown that Lyme patients who are continually exposed to environmental mold will not get well.

Besides Candida and mold, heavy metals and other toxins can potentially affect recovery from the Lyme disease complex. As a practitioner, I have to look at everything that could be impacting my patients' immune systems. So I must do two things at once: get rid of their infections, and empower their immune systems, which means getting rid of everything that drags the system down. Eliminating patients' allergies and sensitivities, for instance, such as wheat or milk, can lift tremendous burdens from their immune systems. Also, reducing their exposure to different environmental toxins, such as mold (as mentioned above) and heavy metals, can help. Some of my patients have heavy metal toxicity, but since I don't specialize in heavy metal toxicity removal, I refer them to a heavy metal detoxification specialist. I haven't had the time to learn how to treat this aspect of illness in depth. I already have too much to do as it is. I'm taking care of my patients' hormones, blood pressure, infections and many other things. There are so many aspects of treatment to consider, and I just can't cover all of the bases.

Treating Insomnia

Sleep is restorative and necessary for the body to heal. Sleep dysfunction is one of the most significant and debilitating aspects of Lyme disease. Unlike the insomnia that is experienced by the average person due to stress, Lyme disease insomnia is a central nervous system prob-

lem and can't be treated with the same methods that are used for the average person, such as a warm bath or glass of milk before bed.

If patients' sleep cycles are turned around, then it's important to get them back to sleeping when it's dark. Taking melatonin at doses of 0.5-3.0 mg at 9:00 p.m. can help to regulate their sleep cycle, while taking three teaspoons of Natural Calm magnesium powder in the evening can help them to relax. If frequent urination prevents them from sleeping through the night, then avoiding fluids a few hours before bedtime can be helpful. If this doesn't work, then some may require DDAVP, a prescription hormone that prevents frequent urination.

Whenever I give my patients a prescription sleep medication, I tell them to take it every night right before they get ready for bed. If they wait too long to get to bed after taking the medication, it may not be effective. I also advise them to start by taking the lowest dose necessary and gradually increase it each night, until they are able to sleep soundly through the night without feeling groggy the next morning.

Nutrition

Anyone can benefit from good nutrition, both for feeling good and for maintaining a healthy body over the long run. A body that is under physical and/or mental stress has nutritional needs that are above normal. Those with tick-borne diseases have specific, and above normal, nutritional needs due to abnormal body processes. B-12 and magnesium, for example, are two nutrients that those with Lyme tend to need more of than the average person. Also, free radicals are thought to be more abundant in Lyme sufferers, which makes antioxidants an important nutritional requirement.

What Those with Lyme Disease Should Do for Proper Nutrition

1. Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking. Limit caffeinated beverages.

2. Drink eight to ten glasses of water per day.

3. Those with tick-borne illnesses crave sugars due to faulty carbohydrate metabolism, but indulging in these makes the situation worse, leading to hypoglycemic fatigue. Limit simple carbohydrates such as potatoes, pasta, rice, and white bread to one small serving at lunch and dinner. Avoid sweets but if you feel that you must have them, it should always be after a healthy meal and never before noon.

4. Double protein intake to 90-100 grams per day, stressing low-fat proteins such as fish, skinless chicken, lean cuts of beef and pork, fat-free milk products, egg whites, seitan loaf and soy powder. Snack on roasted soy nuts, which are packed with protein.

5. Aim to get at least 25 grams of fiber per day. One-third cup of Kellogg's All-Bran Buds can be added to your morning cereal, which will provide half of the recommended daily requirement for fiber. (By the way, these are tasty and don't get mushy!) Eat lots of veggies, four servings of fruit per day, and always choose whole grains.

6. Since it's difficult to get enough dark greens in the diet, try buying a product like Kyo-Green or Green Magnum and add a tablespoon of this to a smoothie. It's a tasteless powder, but has the same amount of nutrients as a pound of spinach!

7. Add ground flaxseeds to smoothies, cereals, rice, casseroles, etc. Flaxseed provides many benefits to the body, including high amounts of fiber and omega-3 fatty acids, which are natural anti-inflammatory substances. Start with a low dose, as too much may initially cause gas or loose stools. Flaxseeds should be kept in the refrigerator to avoid rancidity.

When formulating a diet plan for their patients, it's important for practitioners to discover what their patients' food allergies are and eliminate those. I test all of my patients for gluten sensitivity, but whether or not they test positive to the gliadin protein, they are yet likely to feel better on a gluten-free diet, and invariably, most all of them do. I also recommend that they eat a "no white" diet, which means avoiding foods that have white flour or white sugar in them. So that means no white rice, no white potatoes or white bread. Instead, I encourage low-fat proteins, vegetables, fruits, brown rice (I don't believe that brown rice feeds infections) and complex carbohydrates. These are pretty much my standard dietary recommendations, but I also think that when it comes to diet, patients get a feel for what their bodies need.

Testing For and Treating Food Allergies

People with allergies have hyperactive immune responses to many substances that the body recognizes as harmful. Their immune systems switch into overdrive when exposed to minor insults such as dust, pollen, healthy foods, and so on. This constant activation of the immune system leaves it drained and exhausted so that when bacteria that really need to be dealt with

(Borrelia for example), come into the picture, the immune system is not as strong as it needs to be. Many people with Lyme disease have problems with allergies, even though they may not realize it. They especially tend to not recognize food allergies, because they consume the offending foods on a daily basis and their bodies have learned to mask the negative effects of the foods. It isn't until they remove such foods from their diets and then re-introduce them back in that they are able to perceive their negative effects. Those who wish to learn more about food allergies should read the book, *Detecting Hidden Food Allergies* by William Crook.

Supportive Supplements Vitamins and Minerals

To make sure that my patients are getting the nutrition that they need, I strongly urge them to schedule a consultation with a nutritionist or naturopath who specializes in helping people with chronic or debilitating health problems, and who can help them with this aspect of treatment.

It's a good idea for patients with Lyme to invest in a few plastic seven-day pill holder containers, so that they can organize their medications, including vitamins, at the beginning of each week. This can help those with brain fog remember if they have taken their supplements!

Magnesium

Magnesium tends to be very deficient in Lyme disease sufferers. Some symptoms of magnesium (Mg) deficiency include:

1. Accelerated heart rate
2. High blood pressure
3. Neuromuscular irritability
4. Headaches
5. Hyperactive reflexes
6. Muscle cramps
7. Joint pain
8. Irritability, anxiety, depression

Lyme disease is one of many illnesses that cause magnesium deficiency. The Borrelia burgdorferi bacteria (Bb) is unique from other organisms because it "goes after" magnesium in the host's body, whereas most microbes go after iron. Researchers have been surprised to find that Bb does not seek iron from its host, but that it does need magnesium. Many Lyme disease symptoms, including those that involve the muscles, joints, vision, appetite and heart, as well as inflammation and immune deficiencies that manifest in specific symptoms such as cramping and headaches, are often classic magnesium deficiency symptoms. Taking a good magnesium supplement often decreases these symptoms.

Preliminary research on Morgellons disease shows that the disease fibers are coated with minerals, which are presumably leached out of the body by illness. So Morgellons patients need to supplement with magnesium and other minerals, as well.

Magnesium is involved in an extraordinary range of functions in the body. By restoring proper magnesium levels, the immune system's ability to target pathogens improves. There is a hypothesis within the Lyme disease communi ty that if we can keep adequate levels of magnesium in the body, we will also enable the body's immune system to regain its ability to target and attack the Bb organism itself. (It is also thought that magnesium might incite Borrelia to come out of hiding to get the magnesium).

A person's response to magnesium doesn't depend solely upon the amount of elemental magnesium in a particular supplement, however. It depends more upon the amount that's absorbed and bio-available to the body, and the amount needed to correct the deficiency. The gut (the jejunum and ileum) absorbs the majority of ingested magnesium, so the solubility and absorption of a particular type of magnesium across a range of pH's are important to consider when correcting deficiencies. Some magnesium supplements, for instance, have low solubility and are poorly absorbed in the intestine. Common magnesium salts, such as sulfate (Epsom salts), hydroxide (milk of magnesia), and oxide are poor supplements due to their low bioavailability. Also, magnesium chloride may present unwanted side effects due to its hygroscopic (readily absorbing moisture) properties.

I recommend Peter Gillham's Natural Calm for correcting magnesium deficiencies because my patients have had good experiences with it (www.petergilham.com). It comes as a flavored powder that can be mixed with water, or as a plain powder that can be mixed in juice or a smoothie.

When dosing magnesium, patients should increase their nightly amount until their stools become comfortably soft. Too much magnesium will lead to diarrhea. If my patients don't like taking magnesium in powder form, I recommend MagTab SR or Mag Malate.

Patient and Practitioner Challenges and Roadblocks to Healing

One of my greatest challenges as a practitioner is getting my patients to keep plugging away at their treatments, because they get very frustrated and want to give up. It's really hard, because when they don't see any change in their symptom picture, it's

as if they can't "see the forest for the trees." If I can help them to get through their treatments, they are often then able to look back and realize that they are getting better, but in general, it's very hard for them to "hang in there." Providing reassurance is one of the best things that practitioners can do for Lyme disease patients, however, and a great majority of their job involves being cheerleaders or psychologists.

Another challenge that I have is coming up with individualized treatment plans for my patients, because they are all so different and I never know what's going to work for them. For instance, I have some people for whom artemisinin makes all the difference in the world, and other people for whom it doesn't do a thing. There is so much that we as practitioners don't know about treating Lyme disease. Further complicating things is the fact that there are so many different strains of Borrelia and other infections going around that we don't know about, which means that we don't necessarily know how or what we are treating.

To be continued in the next PHA issue! ***pha***