



AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

What Is An Autoimmune Disease?

- A condition where your immune system mistakenly attacks your own body when it normally can tell the difference between foreign cells and your own.
- A system that normally guards against germs like bacteria and diseases sending in fighter cells to attack them.
- Mistakes part of your body, like your skin or joints, as foreign causing the release of proteins called autoantibodies that attack healthy cells.
- Some autoimmune diseases, like type 1 diabetes targets only one organ such as the pancreas. Others, like systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), affect the whole body.

Why Your Immune System Attacks Your Body?

- The cause of why your immune system can misfire is unknown.
- Women are twice as likely to get autoimmune diseases which often begin in childbearing years (15-44).
- Autoimmune diseases are more common in certain ethnic groups such as African-Americans and Latin-Americans.
- One can inherit a susceptibility to autoimmune diseases like systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and multiple sclerosis (MS) and therefore can be seen running in families.
- Researchers suspect environmental factors such as chemical exposure and infections contribute to the development of autoimmune diseases.
- The Western Diet, eating high-fat, high-sugar, and highly-processed foods is thought to be linked to inflammation which is responsible for triggering an immune response.

Common Autoimmune Diseases

There are more than 80 different autoimmune diseases that have been identified. The following are a few:

- Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus
- Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- Psoriasis/Psoriatic Arthritis
- Autoimmune vasculitis
- Pernicious anemia
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)
- Sjögren's syndrome
- Graves' Disease
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)
- Celiac disease
- Addison's Disease
- Hashimoto's thyroiditis
- Myasthenia Gravis

Various Symptoms Of Autoimmune Diseases

Symptoms vary between the different autoimmune diseases. Some of these symptoms include:

- Bloating
- Diarrhea
- Difficulty concentrating
- Extreme thirst
- Fatigue
- Hair-loss
- Low-grade fever
- Muscles aches
- Numbness/tingling in the hands & feet
- Skin rash
- Swelling & redness
- Weight-loss

Testing To Diagnose Autoimmune Diseases

- Your healthcare professional will use a combination of tests since no single test can diagnose most autoimmune diseases.
- The antinuclear antibody test (ANA) is used to help determine the possibility of an autoimmune disease but will not confirm which one.
- Tests can be ordered looking for specific autoantibodies if a certain autoimmune disease is suspected.
- Testing for inflammation caused by autoimmune diseases.
- The Antinuclear Antibody (ANA) test is used to analyze specific autoimmune markers. It is one of the most specific in healthcare to help diagnose autoimmunity.

Treating Autoimmune Diseases

The main treatment for autoimmune disease is with medications to relieve symptoms as well as address inflammation and the overactive immune response.

- Low dose naltrexone (LDN)
- Vitamin D
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids
- Thyroid Medication
- Insulin
- Biologic Medications
- OTC Allergy Medications

Other medications are specific to each autoimmune disease and may require a specialist overseeing your care.