



Dr. G's 8 Steps for Better Health

Gerard L. Guillory, M.D.

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8 STEPS FOR BETTER HEALTH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	page 5
What are the steps to better health?	page 9
STEP 01: Decrease Inflammation	page 11
STEP 02: Avoid MSG & Aspartame	page 21
STEP 03: Eliminate Gluten	page 31
STEP 04: Eat Organic	page 39
STEP 05: Consider Iodine Needs	page 49
STEP 06: Fix Your Sleep	page 57
STEP 07: Find Your Tribe	page 65
STEP 08: Strengthen Your Mind & Body Every Day	page 71

BONUS

The Four Pillars of Real Cooking	page 77
Pillar 01: Knife Skills	page 79
Pillar 02: Seasoning Basics	page 81
Pillar 03: Make Your Own Salad Dressing	page 87
Pillar 04: Basic Cooking Techniques	page 89



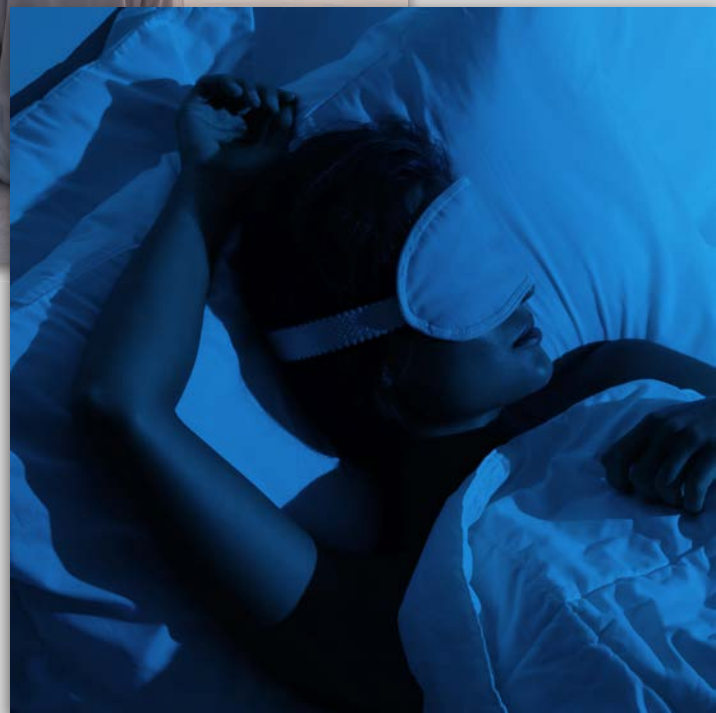
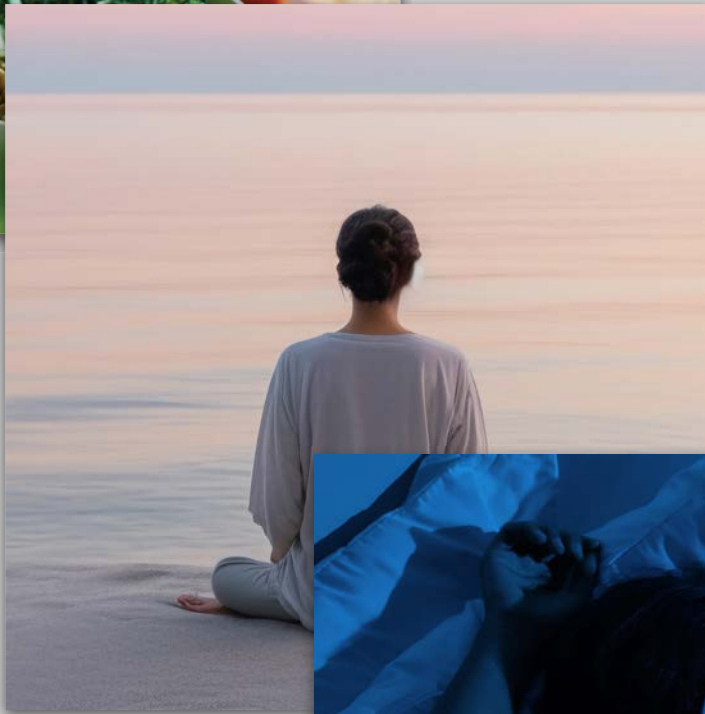
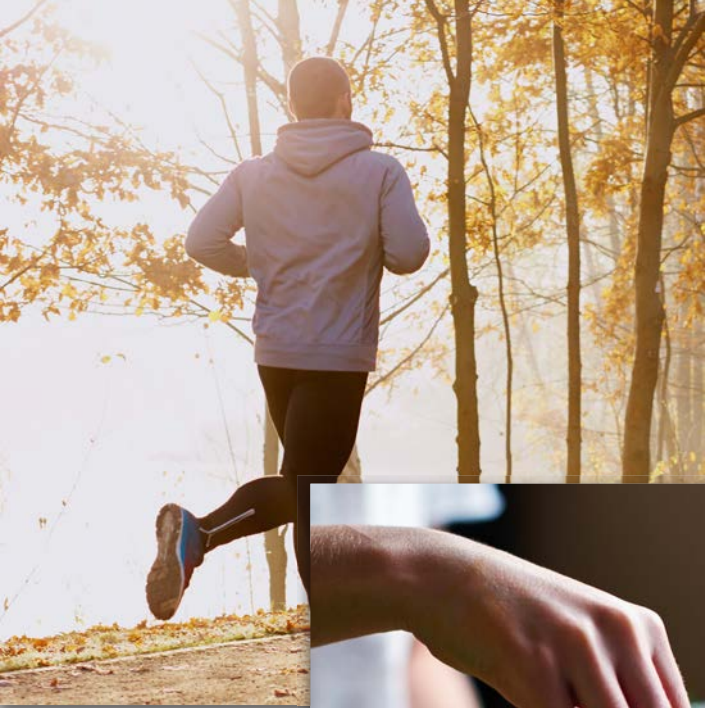
WELCOME TO

DR. G's
8
STEPS

FOR BETTER HEALTH

INTRODUCTION





Who is Dr. G?

Hi, I'm Dr. Gerard Guillory, co-founder of It's My Health. I spent nearly four decades practicing functional medicine - an approach that looks for the root causes of symptoms and supports your body's own healing.

I taught students and mentored clinicians, but what I enjoyed most was helping patients understand the “why” behind their symptoms.

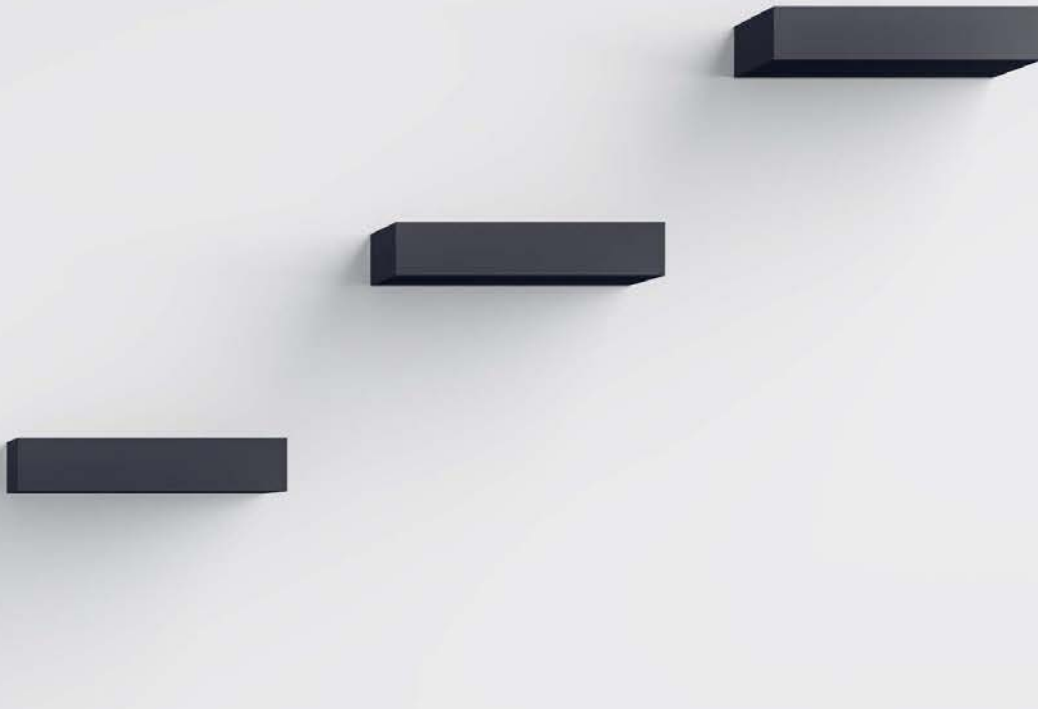
Over the years, I learned something really important. The body can often heal without prescribed meds. Modern medicine has lost track of the body's ability to heal. I wanted to educate my patients because people get better treatment when they know what's going on with their bodies.

That is why I built **It's My Health**. It's not just another clinic. It's not just another program. It's a community to help you take charge of your health. This is a community where you can ask your questions, learn what's going on, and we can all thrive together.





WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR BETTER HEALTH?



These eight steps make a real difference but they aren't meant to cover every aspect of living a healthy life. They're simply **the areas I believe deserve more attention** because they are often overlooked in routine healthcare. **Think of these steps as a starting point** - simple, doable actions that help you take charge of your health. Stick around for the bonus to learn practical cooking techniques.



STEP 01 DECREASE INFLAMMATION

**Lower Cellular Inflammation to
Feel Your Best**

*Why does inflammation show up at the
root of so many symptoms - and even
accelerate aging?*

Have you noticed some people look younger than their age? And some people look so much older? A big reason for that difference is **inflammation**. Not the kind you see when you cut your finger. The quiet kind that works behind the scenes.

Have you heard of CRP?



Do you know anyone who's had it measured? Back in my practice, we checked CRP often. I used to joke that we should measure CRP levels at a high-school reunion and compare those numbers to how everyone aged.





CRP (C-reactive protein) is a simple blood test that reflects the level of inflammation in your body. And inflammation plays a big role in why some people look older or younger than you expect. Many folks assume aging is just something that happens and that there's nothing they can do about it. But that's not true. Chronic inflammation can speed up the aging process, and when you lower inflammation, you can often slow the aging process down and feel better at the same time.

FROM MY DECADES OF CLINICAL EXPERIENCE, THOSE PATIENTS WHO HAD ELEVATED CRP DIDN'T AGE SO GRACEFULLY.



Inflammation is not always bad. When you fight a virus or heal from an injury, inflammation is your immune system doing exactly what it's designed to do - protecting you from a threat and repairing any damage. That kind of short-term, targeted inflammation is an appropriate and healthy response.

Chronic inflammation is different. In this case, your immune system stays switched on even when there's no infection to fight and no tissue to repair. Sometimes it even misfires and begins attacking your own cells, which is what happens in autoimmune conditions.

When the immune system stays activated for too long, it creates a constant, low-grade inflammatory state that sits at the root of many chronic diseases *and* accelerates the aging process. It's similar to what happens with chronic stress - when a system designed for short bursts of protection never gets a chance to turn off, it eventually wears the body down.

Why does inflammation matter?

Chronic inflammation not only makes you age faster, it is linked to heart disease and autoimmune problems.



It also shows up in everyday symptoms you may think are just part of getting older:

- ➡ Joint pain
- ➡ Headaches or migraines
- ➡ Digestive issues
- ➡ Skin rashes
- ➡ Fatigue
- ➡ Brain fog

When inflammation is high, your biological clock ticks faster. When it is low, you age more gracefully.

What causes inflammation?

Chronic inflammation often builds slowly from common stressors like a terrible diet or insomnia.

Stressors

- ➡ Unhealthy diet
- ➡ Poor sleep
- ➡ Environmental toxins
- ➡ Not moving enough
- ➡ Smoking
- ➡ Excess weight

Is there anything I can take to help lower inflammation?

Food always comes first. An anti-inflammatory diet - built around real, whole foods and low in added sugars and processed ingredients - is the foundation. But many people also use supplements to support a healthy inflammatory response.

Two of the most common are omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish oil, and curcumin, the active compound in turmeric. These nutrients don't replace good nutrition, but they can add another layer of support.

The Bottom Line

Lowering inflammation is one of the best ways to feel better, think clearly, and age gracefully. Don't try to change everything at once. Start with small steps and watch how your body responds.



What can I do?

You don't need
to be perfect.

Small, steady habits
make a big difference
over the long term.

Good Habits

1. Prioritize good sleep.
Aim for a regular schedule and a restful night.
2. Move your body throughout the day.
Light, frequent movement keeps inflammation down.
3. Eat real food.
Limit processed foods, added sugars, and artificial ingredients.
4. Reduce toxins.
Choose organic when you can.
5. Support your gut.
For starters, pay attention to how you react to certain foods.
6. Practice relaxation.
Build a simple mindfulness or meditation routine.





STEP 02

AVOID MSG & ASPARTAME

**Learn to Avoid Additives That
May Be Making you Sick**

*Could hidden food additives be
overstimulating your brain?*

Did you know that at least two common food additives may cause reactions that often go unrecognized for years?

MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE (MSG) AND ASPARTAME ARE BOTH CONSIDERED “GENERALLY SAFE,” YET MANY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE ISSUES.

Symptoms from these additives can be vague or delayed, and the real problem is that they're rarely traced back to the root cause - exposure to MSG or aspartame.

These are known as neuro-excitatory amino acid compounds, meaning they can stimulate certain receptors in the brain, and in some sensitive individuals, may even overstimulate them.





As you become your own medical detective, you may start to recognize patterns. I often encourage people to keep a simple diet-and-symptom diary, and many discover that they react to MSG or aspartame.

Because these two additives affect the same pathways in the brain, they can trigger similar symptoms. You can see some of the most common reactions in the list below.

Common symptoms of too much MSG and aspartame:

- ➔ Headaches or migraines
- ➔ Flushing or sweating
- ➔ Facial pressure
- ➔ Numbness or tingling
- ➔ Heart palpitations
- ➔ Nausea
- ➔ Weakness or fatigue

Most people don't realize how often they're exposed to food additives that can overstimulate the brain. Years ago, I had a patient who chewed sugar-free gum all day.



He suffered from migraines and even tried Botox injections because nothing else helped. When we traced the problem back to the aspartame in his gum and he stopped chewing it, the migraines disappeared.

MSG shows up in many processed foods, fast food, and seasoning blends. Both MSG and aspartame stimulate certain receptors in the brain, and in sensitive individuals, may even overstimulate them.



Some people react almost immediately with symptoms like migraines or brain fog. For others, chronic exposure can contribute to cognitive issues over time.



I also learned this firsthand. When diet soda came out in the early 1980s, everyone thought it would be the perfect solution for people struggling with weight or diabetes.

I started drinking one every day at lunch. After lunch, I'd get terrible brain fog that lasted for hours and made it hard to concentrate. Eventually, I discovered that I was reacting to the aspartame. Removing it made a dramatic difference.

FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO THESE ADDITIVES, ELIMINATING THEM CAN BE A TRUE GAME-CHANGER.

Where is MSG?

MSG is everywhere. It's found in flavored chips, instant noodles, frozen meals, canned soups, fast food, and seasoning blends.



Other Names for MSG

MSG also hides under names like hydrolyzed protein, autolyzed yeast extract, natural flavors, and soy protein isolate.

Where is aspartame?

Aspartame is found in diet sodas, sugar-free gum, low-calorie drinks, and even some chewable vitamins.

What if I want something sweet?

If you want sweetness without artificial additives, try natural options like **Stevia** or **Monk Fruit**. For flavor, use spices like

cinnamon, nutmeg, or vanilla that satisfy the palate without overstimulating the brain.

Do you get migraines?

Did the medical detective in you discover you were reacting to MSG or aspartame?

It's hard to avoid MSG and aspartame 100%. Once you start paying attention to where these additives show up, it becomes surprisingly easy to reduce them. It's really all about awareness.

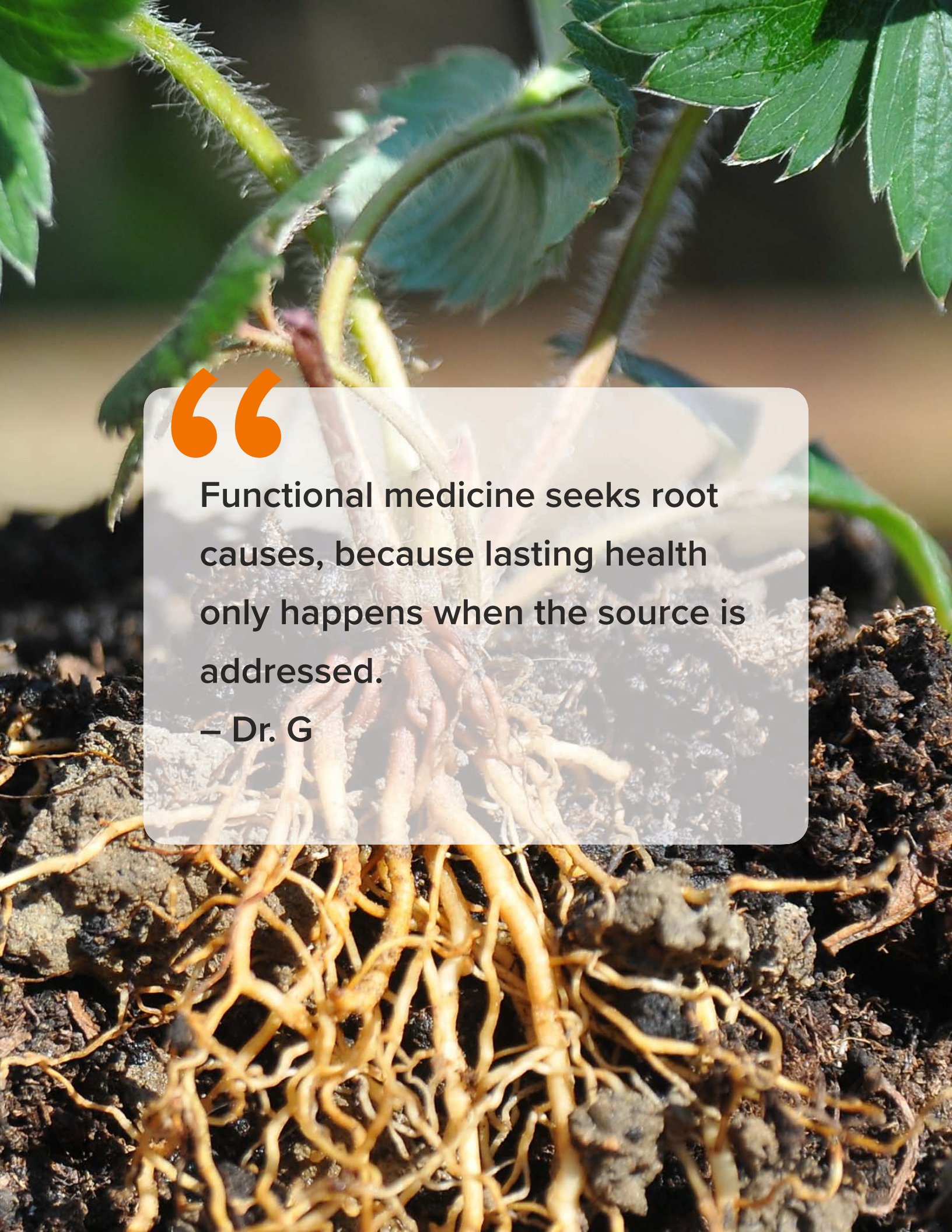
I always recommend keeping a food and symptom diary. It is the best way to spot patterns between what you eat and how you feel. Your brain and your body will thank you.



What can I do?

You can lower your exposure with simple habits.

1. Read ingredient labels. MSG and aspartame often hide behind other names.
2. Choose whole foods. Minimally processed foods are safer.
3. Swap your drinks. Trade artificially sweetened sodas for sparkling water or herbal teas.
4. Check your spices. Use seasoning blends without additives. Experiment with making your own seasoning blends.
5. Cook at home. This is the best way to control the ingredients.

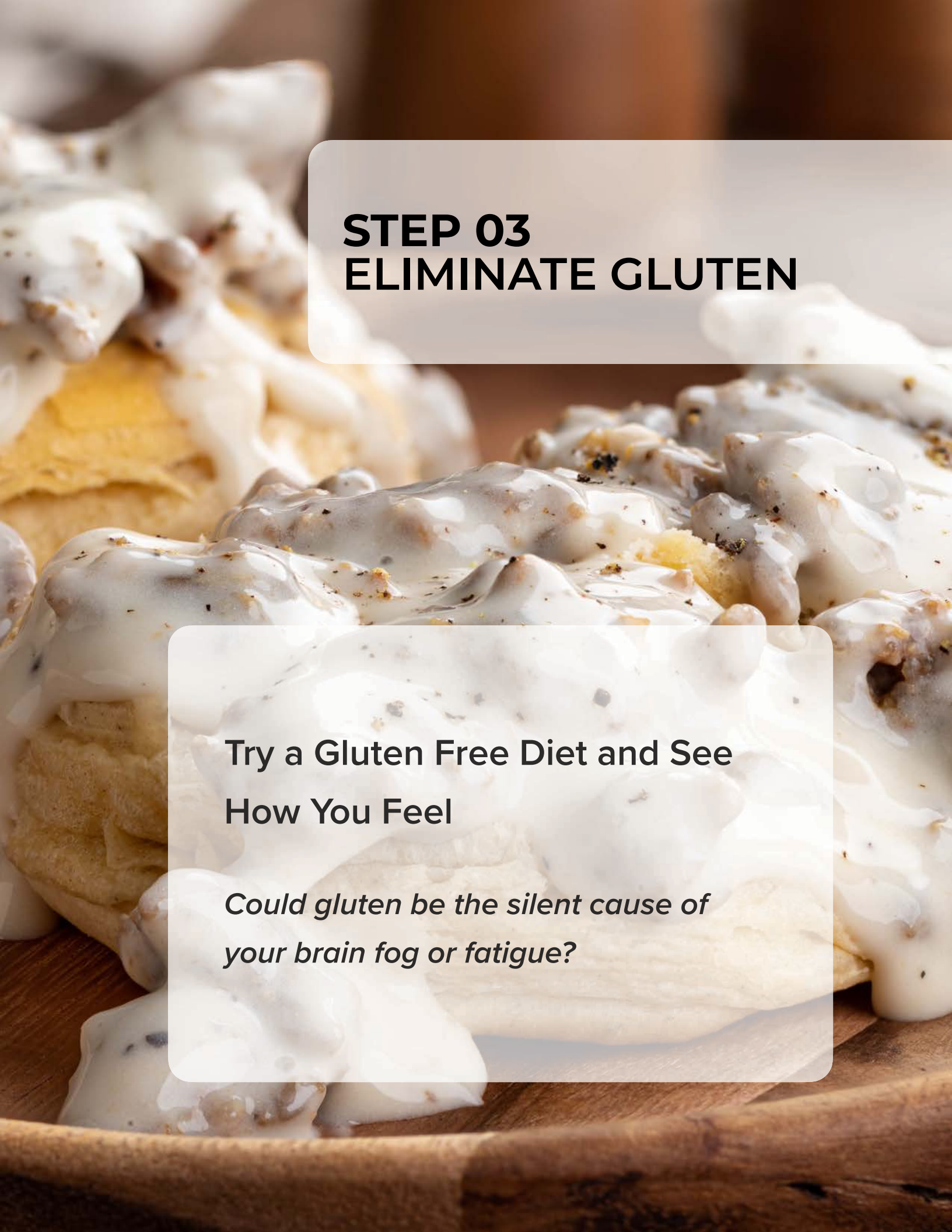


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Functional medicine seeks root causes, because lasting health only happens when the source is addressed.

– Dr. G





STEP 03

ELIMINATE GLUTEN

**Try a Gluten Free Diet and See
How You Feel**

*Could gluten be the silent cause of
your brain fog or fatigue?*

Long before gluten-free eating became popular, I used elimination diets in my practice to look for hidden food triggers.

An elimination diet is simple. You remove certain foods for a short period of time and then reintroduce them to see how your body responds. The goal is to listen to your body, and you may discover which foods don't agree with you.





I was often surprised by how many people felt better when they stopped eating gluten. Their digestion improved. Their headaches eased. Their energy went up. Looking back, many of these patients likely had what we now call non-celiac gluten sensitivity.

Why do some people react to gluten while others don't?

Celiac disease is a good example of a prototypical autoimmune disorder. In celiac disease, the immune system mounts a strong immune reaction to gluten and at the same time begins attacking the lining of the small intestine.

Non-celiac gluten sensitivity is different. It isn't an autoimmune disease and doesn't follow the same autoimmune pathway.

Instead, it's a more nonspecific reaction that can still cause symptoms, but through a different mechanism than celiac disease.

Why should I care?

If you are sensitive to gluten, you may experience many negative symptoms:

- ➔ Gas or bloating
- ➔ Diarrhea
- ➔ Heartburn
- ➔ Headaches or migraines
- ➔ Brain fog
- ➔ Fatigue





Where is gluten?

Gluten hides in everyday foods: bread, pasta, cereal, crackers, baked goods, soups, sauces, and processed snacks. Even small amounts can cause symptoms in sensitive people.

Gluten may also play a role in autoimmune thyroid conditions such as Hashimoto's Thyroiditis (autoimmune thyroiditis) and Graves' Disease. This can happen through a process called cross-reactivity, where the immune system mistakes thyroid tissue for gluten and reacts to both.

In functional medicine, we've talked about this connection for years. While actively running my medical practice, I saw countless patients who removed gluten from their diet and later showed a decrease in their anti-thyroid antibodies - the blood markers commonly used to identify autoimmune thyroid disease.

What can I do?

You can do a gluten-free trial.

Gluten-free trial

1. Choose whole foods that are naturally gluten-free.
2. Swap wheat-based foods for gluten-free options.
3. Read labels. Gluten hides in sauces, dressings, and packaged foods.
4. Give it 2-4 weeks. Watch how you feel. Keep a diary.
5. Notice changes. Track your digestion, energy, headaches, or mood.

When these antibodies dropped, many of the individuals who were suffering appeared less likely to progress toward full-blown Hashimoto's. This predictable response - removing gluten to calm the immune system - showed up again and again in my practice.

How do I get a diagnosis?

There are blood tests that can help identify the autoimmune reaction to gluten seen in celiac disease, and there are also blood tests that can detect autoimmune thyroid activity, such as the antibodies seen in Hashimoto's.

But for non-celiac gluten sensitivity, there is no established clinical test. The only reliable way to know if you fall into this group is to do an elimination diet - in other words, remove gluten on a trial basis and see how your body responds.







STEP 04 **EAT ORGANIC**

**Choose Organic Foods to
Support Better Health**

*Are these twelve “dirty foods” in your
fridge right now?*

Choose Organic Foods to Support Better Health

Choosing organic foods is one of the simplest ways to lower your exposure to chemicals, herbicides, and hidden additives. It's a small shift that can make a big difference in your long-term health.

What does organic mean?

The goal is to produce food without relying on chemicals that can linger on or inside the food you eat. Organic foods are grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics, hormones, or GMOs (genetically modified organisms). Organic





farming focuses on soil health, crop rotation, natural pest control, and sustainable growing methods.

Conventional farming often uses synthetic chemicals to grow crops faster, increase yield, or improve appearance. Organic farming uses a different approach. It prioritizes natural methods that support the soil, the environment, and your health.

What does "organic" actually mean? The goal is simple: To eat food grown without chemicals that linger on - or inside - what you eat.

Why should I care?

Your body is like a filter. It works well when the load is manageable, but if too much debris comes through, the filter clogs and can't do its job.

We are exposed to toxins every day through our water, our homes, and our environment. Many of these we cannot avoid. But food is different. This is the one "valve" you can control.

Many conventional crops are sprayed with chemicals that stay on the food even after you wash them. Some of these compounds have been linked to:

- ➡ Chronic Inflammation:
Fueling the fire we discussed in Step #1.
- ➡ Hormonal Imbalances:
Acting as endocrine disruptors.
- ➡ Long-term Risks:
Potential associations with cancer-causing effects.

"But Dr. G, it's too expensive." I hear this a lot! Yes, organic food often costs more. But you do not need to buy everything organic to see a benefit. You just need to be strategic.



1

Use the "cheat sheet". You don't need to memorize which foods are safe. I have provided a list of the Dirty Dozen (always buy organic) and the Clean Fifteen (safe to buy conventional) on the next page. Prioritize your budget for the foods that matter most.

2

Stop throwing money in the trash! The easiest way to afford organic food is to stop wasting it. An estimated 30–40% of the average food budget ends up in the garbage.

Buy only what you need.

Love your leftovers. Repurposing last night's dinner saves time and money. Personal Tip: I hate waste. When I come home from the farmers' market, I wash and prep my vegetables right away. But instead of throwing away the "trash" - onion ends, celery tops, carrot peels - I save them. I throw them in a pot with water to make a simple, nutrient-dense vegetable stock. It is an easy way to stretch your dollar and get every ounce of value out of that organic produce.

How do I eat organic?

Eating organic does not have to be complicated. Start with a few swaps and build from there. Every organic choice lowers your chemical exposure.

What can I do?

You can start eating organic with a few simple steps. Look for the USDA Organic seal on produce and packaged foods. Start with the "Dirty Dozen." Use this list to prioritize which produce to buy organic. Buy organic animal products to avoid hormones and antibiotics. Read labels. Avoid foods with long ingredient lists. Shop at farmers markets. Many small farms use organic methods even if they are not certified.



The Organic Cheat Sheet: Where to Spend & Where to Save

You don't need to buy everything organic. In an ideal world, we would all eat 100% organic. But in the real world, budgets matter. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) releases a report every year analyzing pesticide residue on produce. They group them into two lists:

The Dirty Dozen™

These fruits and vegetables tend to have higher levels of pesticide or herbicide residue. In many cases, the sprays are applied directly to the edible part of the plant - think berries, leafy greens, or thin-skinned produce. Because you're eating the part that gets sprayed, washing simply isn't enough to remove all of the residue. Being aware of this helps you decide when choosing organic may make the biggest difference.

The Clean Fifteen™

These foods generally have thick skins, peels, or natural protective barriers that reduce how much chemical residue reaches the part you actually eat. Examples include avocados, melons, and pineapples. Knowing which foods fall into each group helps you make choices that fit your budget and your priorities.

The Dirty Dozen

STRAWBERRIES*

SPINACH

KALE, COLLARD & MUSTARD GREENS

GRAPES

PEACHES

PEARS

NECTARINES

APPLES

BELL & HOT PEPPERS

CHERRIES

BLUEBERRIES

GREEN BEANS

***OFTEN THE #1 OFFENDER**

The background of the image is a chalkboard with handwritten text in various colors. At the top, it says "EVERYTHING WE GROW IS CERTIFIED ORGANIC". Below that, it says "ALL BOXES \$3.00". Further down, it says "We have whole CHICKEN * frozen * Pasture-raised" and "call: 734-358-3777". In the foreground, there are several baskets of fresh vegetables. On the left, there are red and yellow bell peppers. In the bottom left, there are purple rutabagas with a small sign that says "RUTABAGA". In the bottom center, there are purple eggplants with a small sign that says "PURPLE".

The Clean Fifteen

**AVOCADOS
SWEET CORN**

**PINEAPPLE
ONIONS
PAPAYA**

SWEET PEAS (FROZEN)

**ASPARAGUS
HONEYDEW MELON**

**KIWI
CABBAGE
MUSHROOMS**

**MANGOES
SWEET POTATOES**

**WATERMELON
CARROTS**

Dr. G's Pro-Tip

If you peel it, it's more likely to be on the clean list. If you eat the skin it's probably on the dirty list.





STEP 05 CONSIDER IODINE NEEDS

**A Missing Mineral that Can
Leave Your Thyroid Struggling**

*Is iodine the missing piece in your
thyroid puzzle?*

Are you tired, cold, or struggling with slow metabolism?

IN MANY CASES, YOU MAY NOT BE GETTING ENOUGH IODINE. WHEN WE SUPPORT OUR IODINE LEVELS, IT IS LIKE WATERING A WILTED PLANT. WHEN I DID THIS IN MY PRACTICE, MY PATIENTS' ENERGY AND CLARITY CAME BACK TO LIFE.

Iodine supplements can be a game-changer. One patient was the picture of health. He ate well, frequented farmer's markets, exercised, and took great care of himself. But, he still felt drained.





A test revealed his low iodine level. Turns out all along iodine was the root cause of his problem. He couldn't believe the solution was this simple. Once addressed, he rediscovered his vitality.

Why are the most health-conscious people at risk for iodine deficiency?

Ironically, the people who try the hardest to eat well are often the ones who fall short on iodine. Many avoid salt altogether, or they choose specialty salts like sea salt or Himalayan salt. These salts taste great and feel more natural, but they are often not fortified with iodine. Since iodine is a vital nutrient - meaning you cannot live without it - this creates a gap.



Your body cannot make or synthesize iodine. You must get it from your diet or through supplementation.

What does iodine do for me?

Every cell in your body depends on thyroid hormones. One of the many functions of iodine is to support thyroid hormone production. Iodine, along with the amino acid Tyrosine, are the two key ingredients to make these important thyroid hormones.

These hormones guide your metabolism.

If you do not get enough iodine from food, your thyroid cannot make the hormones you need.

Why do I care?

Low iodine can affect many parts of your body. It may show up as:

- ➔ Fatigue
- ➔ Feeling cold
- ➔ Dry skin
- ➔ Slow thinking
- ➔ Low mood
- ➔ Changes in weight



THERE HAS BEEN A POSSIBLE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN IODINE DEFICIENCY AND CERTAIN HORMONE-RELATED CANCERS.

The strongest association appears in organs that use iodine and includes possible links to:

- ➔ Breast cancer
- ➔ Ovarian cancer
- ➔ Endometrial cancer
- ➔ Thyroid cancer
- ➔ Prostate cancer in men

THE BOTTOM LINE: IODINE IS A SMALL NUTRIENT WITH A BIG JOB. PAYING ATTENTION TO YOUR INTAKE CAN HELP YOUR THYROID WORK AT ITS BEST.



What can I do?

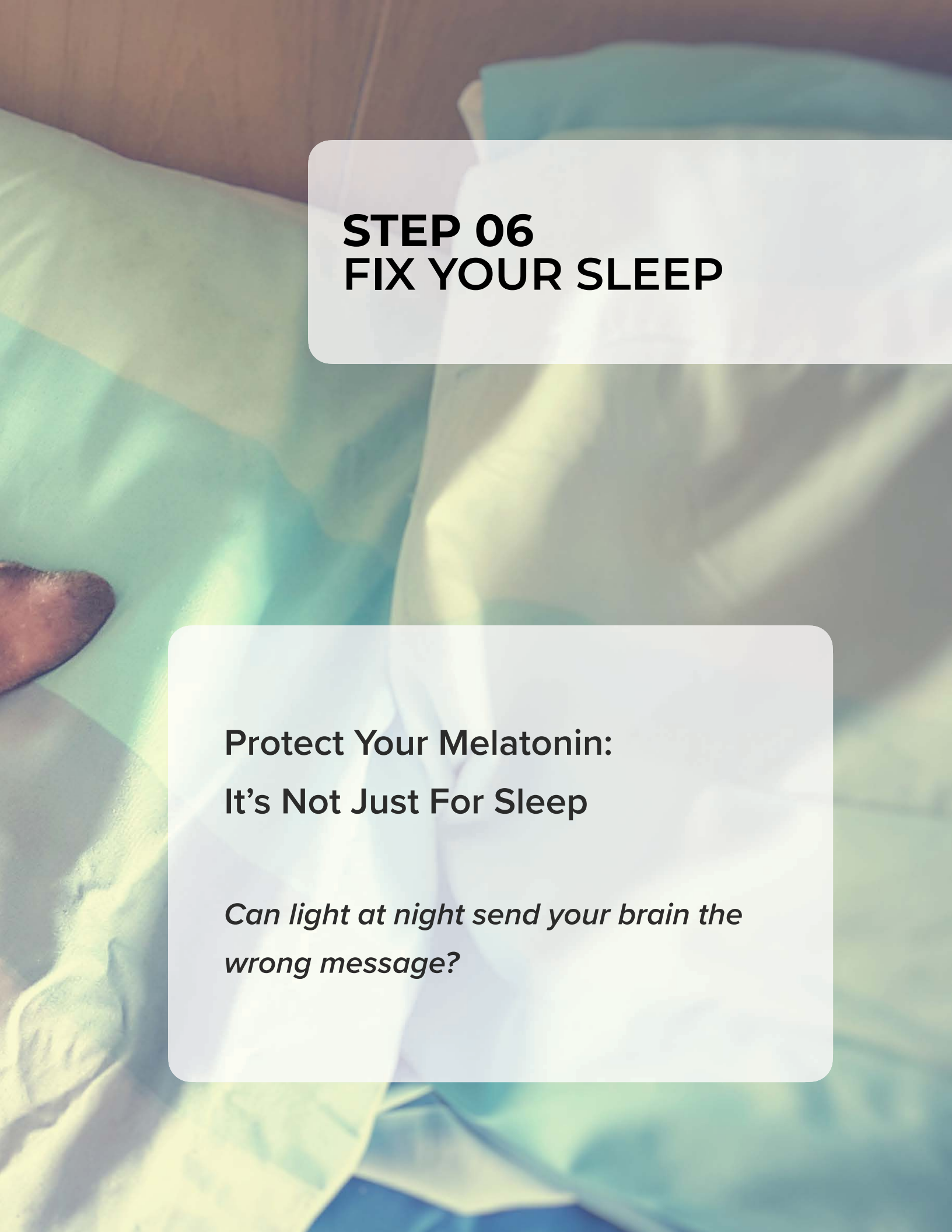
You can support healthy iodine levels with simple habits.

Eat more iodine-rich foods. Focus on seafood, especially seaweed and kelp.

Consider taking an iodine supplement. Remember to check with your healthcare practitioner before starting any new supplement.

Pair with Selenium. These two nutrients work as a team in thyroid health, so they are best taken together.





STEP 06

FIX YOUR SLEEP

**Protect Your Melatonin:
It's Not Just For Sleep**

*Can light at night send your brain the
wrong message?*



YES - LIGHT AT NIGHT CAN ABSOLUTELY SEND YOUR BRAIN THE WRONG MESSAGE. THE BODY WANTS TO WIND DOWN WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN AND WAKE UP WHEN THE SUN COMES UP. THIS IS YOUR CIRCADIAN RHYTHM.

Ideally, we would follow the sun. But work schedules - especially night shifts - often force us to fight our biology. (There is a reason they call it the graveyard shift.) Indoor lighting and screens can trick your brain into thinking it is still daylight.

Melatonin is the hormone that regulates this rhythm, and it's especially sensitive to light at night. It naturally rises when the sun goes down and you're in darkness, but any light - natural or artificial - suppresses its release.

How do I address this?

Start by reducing blue light at night. When you lower your exposure to bright, artificial light in the evening, your brain can finally do what it's designed to do - release melatonin naturally from the pineal gland.

Melatonin does far more than help you fall asleep. It's a powerful antioxidant used throughout the body, supporting immune balance, healthy inflammation responses, and even gut function. Some research suggests it may help lessen acid reflux and heartburn by tightening the lower esophageal sphincter. In other words, melatonin supports whole-body health.



You can support healthy melatonin levels in two ways: by protecting your circadian rhythm - dimming lights at night, limiting screens, and getting morning light - and by considering supplements if appropriate. Reducing blue light and supporting your natural melatonin rhythm is one of the simplest ways to help your body wind down and restore itself.

Melatonin may help lessen acid reflux.





Blue light is especially stimulating. It comes from phones, computers, tablets, TVs, and many LED bulbs. Too much blue light in the evening can confuse your brain and delay the onset of sleep.

Why does it matter to me?

Blue light does more than keep you awake. It can also cause:

- ➔ Eye strain
- ➔ Headaches
- ➔ Trouble falling asleep
- ➔ Poor sleep quality

What can I do?

You can lower your blue light exposure with simple habits.

1. **Set a curfew.**

Turn off screens at least two hours before bed.

2. **Use "Night Mode."**

Use warm color settings on your devices.

3. **Change your bulbs.**

Choose low-wattage incandescent bulbs or warm-toned LEDs in the evening.

4. **Wear Blue Light Filter Glasses.**

Put them on when the sun goes down.

5. **Shift Workers:**

Put blue light blocking glasses on a couple of hours before you plan to sleep.

The Bottom Line

Protecting your eyes from blue light at night is one of the easiest ways to improve your sleep. Blue light filter glasses are a great tool, and melatonin supplementation may play a role for some people.









STEP 07

FIND YOUR TRIBE

**Build Meaningful Relationships
for a Happier Life**

*How much can meaningful
relationships add to your lifespan?*



Do you know what some of the happiest people in the world have in common? It's something that doesn't cost a penny.

STRONG MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS.

People who stay connected tend to stay sharper, healthier, and more fulfilled as they age.

Why should I care?

Your brain and body thrive when you feel connected to others. Healthy relationships support your mood, your thinking, and even your physical health. You are wired for community.

Why does community matter?

Strong social ties can help protect you from depression, anxiety, loneliness, and cognitive decline. There are places called the Blue Zones where people live the longest. One aspect researchers found is that people in these zones share a deep



sense of belonging. They grow up learning teamwork, connection, and collaboration.

Meaningful relationships grow from simple habits: showing genuine interest, being generous with time, helping others, and staying open to differences.

What can I do?

You can strengthen your social life with a few simple steps. Pick an activity you enjoy and join a weekly group. Try something active. I find pickleball fun and social. Volunteer. You will meet people who share your values. Invite colleagues to lunch. Break the routine. Prioritize friends and family. Build stronger bonds through shared activities.

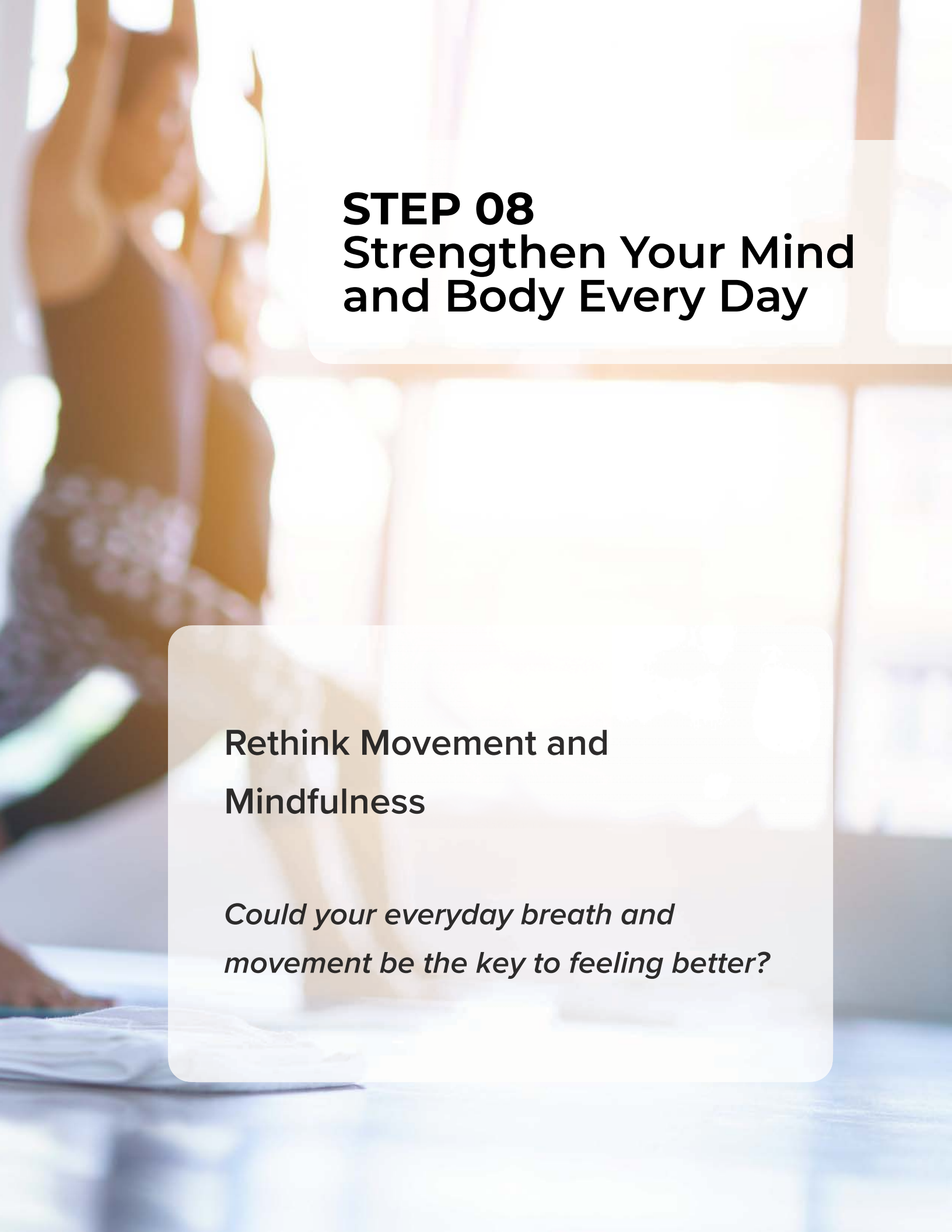


The Bottom Line

You do not need a large circle to feel connected. Even a few meaningful relationships can change your life. Reach out, stay curious, and let people in.





A person is shown in a yoga pose, with their arms raised and hands clasped. The image is overlaid with a warm, orange-toned light that creates a soft, ethereal glow. The person's legs are bent, and they are in a seated or kneeling position. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a window or a bright light source.

STEP 08

Strengthen Your Mind and Body Every Day

**Rethink Movement and
Mindfulness**

*Could your everyday breath and
movement be the key to feeling better?*

Life moves fast. Your to-do list grows. Your attention gets pulled in every direction. But here's something most people miss: you already have two built-in tools that can calm your nervous system and boost your energy - your breath and your natural movement.

Breathing and moving are part of every day. They're automatic. But when you turn these automatic actions into small, intentional habits, they become powerful. This is the Atomic Habits™ approach to feeling better: tiny steps, repeated daily, that create real change over time.

Exercise keeps your body strong. Meditation keeps your mind steady. When you combine the two - even in simple ways - you support your whole system. And if you hate “working out,” that's fine. Movement doesn't have to mean a long session or a gym





membership. Small actions count. The same goes for mindfulness. You can start with a few slow breaths.

You can build a strong routine with three simple steps:

1. Start With Breath

Use slow, steady breathing to settle your nervous system. A few minutes is enough to shift your state. This is your foundation.

2. Move Through the Day

Add small movements into your routine. Stretch. Bend. Stand on one leg. Walk for two minutes. Wave your arms. These micro-bursts keep your body awake and your mind clear.

3. Try a Weekly Activity

Pick something you enjoy - pickleball, walking, biking, yoga, tai chi, dancing, anything that gets you moving. Enjoyment keeps you consistent.

The Bottom Line

You don't need a gym. You don't need an hour. You don't need a perfect routine. Start with your breath. Add small movements. Build from there. These tiny steps, done every day, can change how you feel. Start where you are.



You are the Most Important Part of Your Health Journey

These eight steps aren't meant to cover every part of living a healthy life. They're simply the areas I believe deserve more attention because they make a real difference and are often overlooked in routine healthcare. Think of these steps as a starting point - simple, doable actions that help you take ownership of your health in ways that truly matter.

Just remember that your body is always talking to you. It tells you when something feels off and when something feels right. When you pay attention to those signals, you begin to step into the role of your own best medical detective. And you're not doing this alone. You're part of a community that believes in education, empowerment, and root-cause thinking.





The 4 Pillars of Real Cooking

THE ESSENTIAL KITCHEN SKILLS TO MAKE COOKING EASY, HEALTHY, AND FUN

Cooking doesn't start with recipes - it starts with confidence. And confidence comes from mastering a few simple, foundational skills that make everything else easier.

If you can chop an onion, season food well, make your own salad dressing, and understand a handful of basic cooking techniques, you can make healthy, delicious meals every day without stress.

Mastering these fundamentals makes cooking relaxing, creative, and fun.



PILLAR 01

KNIFE SKILLS - THE FIRST STEP TO REAL COOKING

If someone wants to start cooking, the very first skill to learn isn't seasoning, sautéing, or mastering recipes - it's simply learning how to use a knife.

Knife skills are the gateway to cooking. With just three knives - a chef's knife, a paring knife, and a serrated knife - you can prep almost anything. Once you know how to hold a knife and make a few basic cuts, cooking becomes faster, safer, and much more enjoyable.

If you're new to cooking, start here. Learn how to use a knife. It's a simple, empowering skill that opens the door to everything else. There are plenty of great videos online.



PILLAR 02

SEASONING BASICS - THE SECRET TO FLAVORFUL FOOD

Here's a fact: good chefs make their own seasoning blends. It's one of the reasons restaurant food tastes so good. They're not reaching for five different jars every time they cook. They rely on a simple, balanced blend they've mixed themselves.

And you can do the same thing at home.

A lot of people are intimidated by cooking because they don't feel confident making their food taste good. In many cases, it's not the cooking itself - it's the act of seasoning that feels overwhelming.

The fact is, fewer and fewer people are cooking these days, and when the skills aren't passed down from parents or grandparents, the art gets lost. Seasoning and making your food taste good is one of the most important skills for you to learn.

ALL YOU NEED IS JUST THREE INGREDIENTS. THAT'S IT.

1. **Salt.** Start with a good salt (something like a quality sea salt or Himalayan salt) because it has a richer flavor than regular table salt and contains an abundance of minerals.

**Most of your specialty salts are not fortified with iodine*

2. **Granulated garlic** adds depth and warmth.
3. **Pepper.** Black for classic flavor, white if you want something a little more elegant.

Mix these together and you've got a clean, versatile seasoning that works on almost anything.





And here's the fun part. You get to adjust the amounts of each ingredient to your own taste. That's what makes this blend so personal and so easy. A good place to start is a third of each and adjust to your preference. Start with asking yourself, do you want more salt, more heat from the pepper, or more of a garlic flavor?

Keep a jar of this three-ingredient mix at home and the workplace. Sprinkle a little on a simple salad with good olive oil and vinegar and/or fresh-squeezed lemon juice, toss it lightly, and there's your dressing - clean, bright, and incredibly satisfying. It's amazing how something so simple can elevate everyday food.



Optional: Build a Flavor Profile

Once you're comfortable with the basics, you can start thinking about how different cuisines build flavor. Herbs and spices add character to a dish and help create a flavor profile. This doesn't need to be complicated. It's simply layering a few ingredients to match the direction you want the dish to go.

A few examples:

- ➡ Mexican-inspired: chili powder, cumin, cilantro
- ➡ Italian-inspired: thyme, oregano, basil
- ➡ Asian-inspired: lemongrass, ginger, a touch of white pepper

But honestly, you can stick with the three basics and still make wonderful food. Salt, garlic, and pepper are the triple seasoning blend of savory cooking across cultures. Everything else is just layering and shaping the flavor depending on the cuisine you want to enjoy.





PILLAR 03

MAKE YOUR OWN SALAD DRESSING

One of the easiest ways to elevate a salad is to make your own dressing. The salt-pepper-garlic blend from the seasoning section is perfect here. Just sprinkle a little of that on your greens, add some good olive oil and a splash of vinegar or fresh-squeezed lemon juice, toss lightly, and you'll be amazed at how good it tastes. If you want to take it a step further, add a pinch of dried herbs. That's all it takes to turn a simple vinaigrette into something with personality.

A Very Basic Italian Vinaigrette

- ➡ 3 parts good olive oil
- ➡ 1 part red wine vinegar (or my favorite, a white balsamic vinegar)
- ➡ A squeeze of fresh lemon juice
- ➡ A pinch of your salt-pepper-garlic blend
- ➡ A little dried oregano or basil

Whisk or shake until it comes together. Once you start making your own dressing, you'll never want the store-bought versions again. They simply can't compete with the freshness, the flavor, or the control you have when you make it yourself.



PILLAR 04

BASIC COOKING TECHNIQUES - THE FOUNDATION OF REAL COOKING

Someone once told me, “If you can boil water, you can make a stock. And if you can make a stock, you can make a great soup.”

Cooking isn’t complicated. Once you understand a few basic techniques, the whole kitchen opens up. These aren’t chef-level skills. They’re everyday methods anyone can learn that make home cooking easier, healthier, and more enjoyable.

Are you wondering how to season your braised dish? Start with your triple seasoning blend from Pillar 2.

Braising

Braising is comfort cooking at its best - and it’s my personal favorite technique. You start by taking a piece of meat and browning it to build deep flavor. Then you sauté aromatics like onions, celery, or garlic, add a little liquid. (You can use combinations of water, wine, or broth.) Let everything cook low and slow. The result is tender, richly flavored food that feels like it cooked itself.

One of the great things about braising is that it transforms inexpensive cuts of meat into something both delicious and

nutritious. These cuts often contain more connective tissue, which breaks down during slow cooking and becomes collagen - giving the dish body, flavor, and surprising nutritional value.

Some nutrition experts argue that these tougher cuts may actually be healthier than something like filet mignon because they contain more collagen and minerals from the connective tissue. This idea aligns with what many functional medicine practitioners have been saying for years.

Nose-to-tail eating provides nutrients you simply don't get from lean muscle meats alone.

Boiling

Boiling is the most basic cooking technique there is - and that's exactly why it's so powerful. If you can boil water, you can make soup. Soup is one of the healthiest, easiest meals you can prepare, and it's a fantastic way to repurpose leftovers into something new, nourishing, and satisfying.



Simmering

Simmering is simply the gentler, more controlled version of boiling. Instead of a rolling boil, you lower the heat until the surface

barely trembles. This slow, steady heat coaxes flavor out of bones, vegetables, herbs, and spices without breaking them down.



Roasting

Julia Child once said that everyone should know how to roast a chicken and fry an egg. Roasting uses dry heat, usually in the oven, to caramelize and concentrate flavor. It's one of the simplest, healthiest ways to cook, and the beauty is that you can roast your vegetables right alongside the meat. The juices from the meat enhance the flavor of the vegetables, and everything cooks together with almost no effort.

One of my favorite tricks is to take the leftover roasted vegetables - and any remaining meat - and use them as the base for a soup. It's an easy, delicious way to stretch a meal and reduce waste while building deep, rich flavor.





Sautéing

Sautéing is all about quick, flavorful cooking. It's perfect for vegetables, shrimp, thin cuts of meat, or anything that cooks fast. With just a little oil and a hot pan, you can create bright, fresh, deeply flavored dishes in minutes.

What makes sautéing so valuable is that it's also the foundation for building sauces and layering flavor. Browning the ingredients creates those little caramelized bits on the bottom of the pan (the "fond") which dissolve beautifully when you add broth, wine, or even a splash of water.

Layering flavors through sautéing turns everyday ingredients into something rich and satisfying. Once you get comfortable with the heat and timing, sautéing becomes one of the most versatile techniques in your kitchen.

The Air Fryer

An air fryer circulates hot air rapidly, giving you crisp textures with very little oil. It's great for vegetables, chicken, fish, and reheating leftovers - a surprisingly healthy and convenient tool for everyday cooking.

One personal trick I use is placing a glass container inside the air fryer and heating the food in that. It keeps the air fryer itself spotless, and when you're done, you simply put the glass container in the dishwasher. I don't know many people who do this, but it works beautifully.





Why These Skills Matter

“Simply put, cooking is a little common sense and a lot of imagination.” - Justin Wilson, cajun chef

Once you understand these four pillars - knife skills, seasoning, making your own salad dressing, and basic cooking techniques - you can cook almost anything without complicated recipes.

Leftovers aren't a burden - they're an opportunity.

I like to “cook once and eat three times.” When you learn to repurpose what you've already cooked, healthy eating becomes easier, faster, more enjoyable, and less expensive. A roasted chicken becomes chicken salad, soup, or tacos. Roasted vegetables become a frittata or a grain bowl.

A good vinaigrette or your triple seasoning blend can transform yesterday's ingredients into something completely new. Thinking this way changes everything. It saves time, reduces stress, and turns cooking into a creative, relaxing part of your day rather than a chore.

In *Dr. G's 8 Steps for Better Health*, Gerard L. Guillory, M.D., distills nearly four decades of functional medicine experience into a clear, practical roadmap for reclaiming your vitality. Rather than masking symptoms, Dr. G focuses on root causes—lowering inflammation, eliminating hidden food triggers, supporting thyroid health, protecting sleep, reducing toxic load, strengthening community, and building simple daily habits that restore both body and mind.

Written in an approachable, conversational style, this guide empowers you to become your own health advocate, offering small, sustainable steps that can lead to lasting change. If you are ready to feel clearer, stronger, and more in control of your well-being, this book shows you where to begin.

