



## With Dr Michael Elstein

### QUESTION

I am a 47 year old and want to know about your approach to the management of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis? I apply Daivobet ointment for the psoriasis twice daily and am concerned about the effects of the steroid. I take 200mg daily for the psoriatic arthritis and am concerned about the cardiac effects long term.

### ANSWER

Daivobet is a combination of a form of vitamin D with a cortisone medication. Vitamin D might raise your calcium levels and these need to be monitored. I could not find any evidence that this medication would compromise your heart, but you would need to check this out with your doctor. There is some evidence that a gluten-free diet would be beneficial but there are studies indicating this may not be so. You can get your doctor to do a gliadin antibody blood test to assess your reactivity to gluten.

Maintaining your optimal weight would also be a good idea. Anecdotally some natural therapists claim that avoiding tomatoes, pineapple, vinegar, sugar, white flour and cured meats and increasing filtered water and fresh vegetables might be beneficial. In other words trying a gluten, yeast and sugar-free diet might result in positive changes. There is some scientific evidence that supplementing with selenium, coenzyme Q10 and vitamin E is helpful. Using aloe and an Oregon grape extract on your skin might alleviate your psoriasis. Fish oil and bovine cartilage extract might also be useful. Improving the detoxification capacity of your liver might improve your condition. Taking natural substances that increase an antioxidant called glutathione and superoxide dismutase, which shore up your cellular defences, might lead to benefits.

### QUESTION

I am extremely worried about my Hashimoto's disease. I feel that this was brought about by overdosing with an iodine extract. The naturopath had no idea that too much iodine can be harmful and I was so distressed at the time with family concerns that I didn't stop to think about this until too late. As the iodine is gradually reduced in the system, will the antibodies also reduce? Or am I stuck with this condition always? I am taking 50mg of thyroxine, which keeps blood levels of the thyroid test normal.

### ANSWER

If you are iodine deficient, which can be assessed by means of a urine test, best collected over a 24-hour period, after you have taken iodine, then it would be unlikely that boosting your iodine levels would cause problems. Supplementing with iodine might be the trigger or even the cause of thyroiditis, but scientific evidence remains inconclusive, as the precise cause of Hashimoto's thyroiditis has yet to be determined, with genetic and environmental factors including viruses and even coeliac disease being implicated. Therefore it is unclear if avoiding iodine would normalize your antibodies and resolve your underactive thyroid condition. Assessing your vitamin D and vitamin A status together with food allergy, heavy metal toxicity and the overgrowth of abnormal bacteria in your gut might prove helpful, but this is based on anecdotal evidence rather than extensive scientific investigation.

**QUESTION**

My mother is a very active, very healthy 70 year-old. She plays a lot of tennis and finds that when she is more active her restless leg syndrome plays up. It has never been diagnosed as this, just a self-diagnosis. The jumpy pain, like an electrical current activates at night time or when she is resting. At times it is so bad she cannot sleep. She takes magnesium but this only helps mildly. Do you know what would cause this or what she might do/take to relieve her symptoms?

**ANSWER**

Iron, vitamin B12 and folic acid deficiency together with imperfect kidney function and a nervous system that is not functioning to its full capacity might be implicated. It would be a good idea to have these assessed by your mother's doctor.

**QUESTION**

I am a 30 year-old vegan female with chronic irritable bowel syndrome. I have symptoms of oestrogen dominance and a lack of progesterone. How can I naturally reverse my hormone imbalances without side-effects? Why has this occurred in the last couple of years or so? My weight is healthy.

**ANSWER**

Vegans can be deficient in vitamin B12, iron and protein and these are necessary for the metabolism of your hormones and the health of your gut. Overgrowth of abnormal germs in the gut might be implicated in the cause of irritable bowel syndrome and these can also affect the immune system and in turn the function of your hormones. Optimal bowel and liver function are also needed to breakdown your hormones. My advice is to find a health practitioner who understands all these factors and how hormones impact each other, in order to uncover the underlying cause of your problems. These are explained in detail in '[You Have The Power](#)'

**QUESTION**

Why not try arginine for erectile dysfunction?

**ANSWER**

There is some evidence that combining arginine at a dose of 2 grams daily with the antioxidant pycnogenol improves erectile dysfunction and erectile performance. Another trial has shown that the combination of propionyl-L-carnitine, L-arginine and niacin or vitamin B3 improves erectile function.

**QUESTION**

What are the side effects with [Memozeal](#)? Does it affect blood pressure?

**ANSWER**

For those taking a special form of diuretic called a thiazide medication to treat high blood pressure taking extra ginkgo biloba, found in [Memozeal](#), might further lower blood pressure. This medication is not employed much now. Rarely some get headaches with ginkgo. Extra folic acid in [Memozeal](#) can be monitored by assessing folic acid status with a blood test.

**QUESTION**

I am 62 and been taking Livial for a few years. I want to cease taking all forms of HRT, but am nervous about the best path to take. I am active, walk daily, do aqua aerobics, yoga, take vitamins (including Vit D and Calcium) and try to maintain a healthy diet.

**ANSWER**

The current conventional advice on hormone replacement therapy is not to take this for an extended period of time. I am not sure I agree with this, as mental function, skin health, bone strength and cardiovascular function might be compromised when stopping hormones, but there are other ways to look after these, which reflect the lifestyle and wellbeing practices you have adopted. I always warn my patients who take long-term hormone replacement therapy about the dangers of cancer, as these can never be eliminated, even with the so-called 'natural hormone treatments.' Some women find they react favourably to Livial, a form of hormone treatment not available in the USA.

**QUESTION**

Can you explain for me sundown syndrome?

**ANSWER**

Sundown syndrome is characterised by agitation, confusion, anxiety, and aggressiveness in the late afternoon, in the evening, or at night. Sundowning is highly prevalent among individuals with dementia. It is thought to be associated with a breakdown in the body's regulation of day-night rhythms, which is related to the action of a hormone called melatonin. A variety of treatments have been found to be helpful to improve this disorder including bright light therapy, melatonin, medications and behavioural modifications. Melatonin levels can be assessed by means of a saliva test performed at night.

# Have a question for Dr Elstein?

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