

Anja Hecht
Hashimoto's Primer

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Between Flouting and Fad

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Bibliographic information from the German National Library: The German National Library lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data can be accessed on the Internet via <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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*It could have been such a
comfortable evening.*

Ulrike's day had been exhausting, but still satisfying. Just before it is time for the well-deserved sprawling on the couch in the living room, dizziness is washing over her out of the blue. The next moment the world feels completely unreal to her – her lips start to tingle, followed by her arms and legs. The young woman assumes she is about to faint – she feels like she is unable to breathe, and panics.

Her heart is beating like crazy, by a narrow margin she makes it onto the sofa and lies down. She is utterly anxious about what is just happening to her – affected by sweats, panic flooding her veins.

With difficulty, she manages to calm down; at the same time she is completely unsettled. She keeps asking herself if it is physical or if her mind is playing tricks on her.

*Have you experienced these or similar situations
– or the paralyzing fatigue that waives you ha-
ving a life after work?*

**This is the exact reason
why I wrote this book.**

Introduction

People with Hashimoto's thyroiditis (also known as Hashimoto's disease or briefly Hashimoto's) are deeply conflicted, because they themselves do not know what is going on with them – as well as their family and friends, who are also confronted with the fact that they are becoming more and more anxious.

So many time people said, “Oh, you only have Hashimoto's,” and so many times I asked myself, if that is “only Hashimoto's”, what is presumed really bad then? Or that look, combined with the incidentally uttered phrase, “Ah, you have got this fad now, too.” Only people who have never experienced such severe symptoms can say that. People who do not have the faintest idea how powerless and helpless you feel in your own body when these symptoms suddenly appear out of nowhere. During my worst phase I asked myself so many times what I was doing wrong that it was so bad for me. Today I know that there are many women, men and children struggling with the same symptoms and do not know how to get out of this. I wrote my book for these people – just for you, if you want to live carefree again, and to find your way out. Today I look back on our trip around the world which started at the end of 2017, and with the greatest confidence and certainty I believe that in terms of health nothing can knock me down anymore – that I will always be fine, because I know exactly what I need and what is important to me. Until today I have already worked with some clients and did a lot of research. I am comfortable, relaxed and

so happy, and there is not any indication that it is ever been any different.

But it was different – just a few years ago I was seriously overrun by Hashimoto's. Looking back, I know that my tiredness was by no means ordinary – neither were my mood swings, the constant back pain, etc. I had just gotten used to it. For one thing everyone told me that this is normal, for another thing I had somehow gotten used even to the symptoms over the years. I assumed other people probably felt the same way, even though I was struggling to keep up with the people around me every day. And suddenly there were these anxiety attacks. Something I had never felt before. From one day to the next I was literally not myself anymore; most of the time I felt like I was all at sea. There were even days when it was extremely tough for me to look after my three children.

And that is how one day, I found myself in my doctor's office who discharged me with the diagnosis Hashimoto's thyroiditis. And there I was and I absolutely did not know what to do with it. I only knew that life should not feel like that. This was not right – especially not for a young woman like me.

I started my own research, read an incredible amount of information about this topic, but no matter how much I read, I never got any further. It was quite the contrary! Especially after researching on the Internet and in support groups, I was even more afraid than before.

After several more doctor's appointments, it became clear that I would not receive any help other than thyroid medication. Although I had hoped so much for the thyroid medication which was supposed to make things good again. But nothing happened, there was no improvement, and sometimes after taking the thyroid medication I felt worse than before. And that is where I hit the road and stood up for myself and my health.

How this book came into being

It is explained quite quickly how I came up with it. You already know the beginning of my Hashimoto's story. And at the point where many affected people decide to discontinue their own way, my way began. Over the years, I did an incredible amount of research, I completed an infinite number of training classes – just to get on somehow. During the first year, I left quite a few symptoms behind me. Usually I knew a lot more than the doctors could tell me, and I identified an incredible number of connections. Thus I found out that my symptoms were not random, but triggered by various conditions in my life. With each additional module of knowledge and with each further implementation – which also meant a lot of testing out – I got better bit by bit. Here I would like to insert a short time lapse, because I presume that your story is similar to mine.

About after a year I was doing so well that the doctors finally confirmed that my antibody levels were below the limit for Hashimoto's and my blood levels were also very, very good. As a note: Thanks to the knowledge I acquired during my training and the further education, I was able to independently reduce the intake of my thyroid hormones bit by bit, always in parallel with naturopathy.

**However, I would only
recommend this when there is also
supervision by a doctor!**

So I made it, I was doing really well. Despite everyone telling me that this would not happen – it happened to me. I have been free of symptoms ever since!

During my process, I learned an incredible amount of facts and I acquired a great deal of knowledge. In the beginning, I was very successful in advising women from my circle of friends and acquaintances. For several years now I have been working as an international health coach on the topics of the thyroid, the adrenal and the endocrine system. With so many women, my mentoring had great results. Since most of these women asked me if I would like to write a book on this subject, I am now sitting here and writing this book with joy and zeal.

This is not a common guideline, but a kind of workbook. I want to enable you to work with it, so that your current life with Hashimoto's improves multiple times.

I believe that there are enough medical and advisory books on the subject; however, my concern is the prioritization of the actual implementation without completely turning your current way of life upside down.

I would absolutely like to show you how you can accomplish it! This is my desire. I live to show that there are other ways, that you should never surrender, that the right therapy exists for you, too.

At this point – and for motivation – I would like to point out that the journey starts for you right here, and that a great improvement is also possible for you, if you bit by bit implement the information contained in this book.



The most important step for you!

Most important for you is to first acknowledge that you have a chronic disease.

Yes, you are chronically ill – that means your disease is long-lasting, insidious, always in the background. Now the most important thing: this means that you always (!!) have to look after yourself. Even or especially when you are feeling better again – because in addition to the current treatment, your second step is to maintain a healthy condition.

You have an autoimmune disease.

More of this kind are for instance rheumatism, type 1 diabetes, Crohn's disease, lupus, etc.

Many of these diseases are taken very seriously in conventional medicine. Unfortunately, Hashimoto's has fallen behind. But the dominating factor is your acknowledgement to suffer from a chronic condition, which is also a disorder of the immune system.

If you knew you had diabetes or rheumatism, you would never treat them lightly. With Hashimoto's, this is unfortunately very common – unconsciously, unaware. That is how it is suggested by society. So as a first step, get to know the disease better that you will always have to keep a close eye on.

What is Hashimoto's thyroiditis?

Hashimoto's is an immune system disease. Expert groups tend to tout Hashimoto's as a disease of the thyroid gland. But the process of destruction of the thyroid gland is only an expression of the disease behind it – meaning it is literally the symptom, such as fatigue, mood swings, weight gain, etc.

The actual cause of Hashimoto's is an unbalanced immune system. Imagine a scale with ideally both sides balanced which is not the case with Hashimoto's.

There is a TH1 side and a TH2 side. If it comes to a derailment of the immune system, e.g. through severe stress, pregnancy, menopause, etc., one side becomes dominant and balance is lost.



TH1 (T Helper Cells 1)

That is the inflammatory side – it is related to all inflammatory diseases – such as Hashimoto's, but also with many other autoimmune diseases. As Hashimoto's could develop anytime along with other autoimmune diseases and thus you rarely suffer from Hashimoto's exclusively, you will understand the importance of balancing out your immune system.

TH2 (T Helper Cells 2)

This is the anti-inflammatory side – this dominance can be found e.g. for asthma, allergies, hay fever, food intolerances and much more.

Hashimoto's is now triggered by too many TH1 cells and too few TH2 cells.

At first, this sounds difficult – but if you imagine that both sides complement each other and only a balanced immune system reacts “normally” to diseases, then you realize that your body does not react “normally” anymore. So it is not that your body is destroying your thyroid at random, it is due to an imbalance in the immune system. Many people get scared because they do not understand why their body suddenly destroys itself. It does not just do it like that, but because of the imbalance in the immune response.

So your aim is to restore a balance between the two imbalances, then your immune system is likely to function again, and it is also very likely that there will not be any excessive reactions in the future anymore. In a healthy person with a healthy immune system, the balance is restored quickly. However, as soon as a disease like Hashimoto's adds, the body cannot establish this balance any longer and depends on help from outside. This often occurs after pregnancy, for example.

Since the immune system is prone to inflammation, inflammation of the thyroid occurs. Since the immune system tends to overreact, e.g. when you are stressed-out, Hashimoto's often develops a flare-up.

It is important to know that Hashimoto's does not have a set disease process. Cases occur in which the thyroid is completely destroyed, but also some in which Hashimoto's heals without any consequences. It of course has to be taken into account that your immune system also reacts to external conditions, e.g. to vaccinations, tattoos, operations etc.

Your immune system always reacts – and when it does, it shows up as an inflammation of the thyroid gland, for example.



For Hashimoto's, there is no such thing like a uniform disease pattern

So Hashimoto's is much more than a thyroid disease or a fad disease. Even the symptoms of each affected person are different. Most people have Hashimoto's and hypofunction as a result. When Hashimoto's flares up, symptoms occur. So one week you think everything is great, but the next week, you feel really bad again. Or for a while, you may think, "great, I am out of the woods" and then everything goes down the drain again.

You may either have elevated antibody levels, or you may as well not have them. it is called seronegative Hashimoto's. This back and forth is obviously very confusing. Maybe one doctor diagnoses you with Hashimoto's, and the next one tells you the opposite.

Things that may indicate whether you suffer from Hashimoto's disease

- Your thyroid is smaller than normal (women: 15-18 ml).
- You have increased antibody levels (TPO AB over 34).
- The inflammation can be identified on the ultrasound.
- You have knotty tissue (cold or hot thyroid nodules).

**If only one of these factors applies, it
could be an indicator that you possibly
might suffer from Hashimoto's.**

There is no such thing like a uniform progress of disease in Hashimoto's

Some affected people do not notice when Hashimoto's flares up and only find out about by an incidental finding. Others become aware of Hashimoto's by being extremely restless, having panic attacks or weight changes. Still others have been latently tired for years and eventually diagnose Hashimoto's themselves. There is also no codified "ending". Many people assume that by the end of Hashimoto's, their thyroid will be completely destroyed.

Apart from the fact that if you make some changes today, you definitely can bring the Hashimoto's disease process to a standstill, the thyroid gland does not always destroy itself. There is a broad variety of options – starting with an enlarged or normal sized thyroid gland up to its destruction, anything is possible. Destruction of the thyroid is relatively frequent. But no reason for despair, because mostly the destruction stops and also regeneration is possible.

An enlarged thyroid could be indicative of deficiency.

Most of the time, your thyroid lacks vitamins or mineral substances. It expands its size to increase the absorption capacity, thus to be able to absorb more of the missing substance. A normal-sized thyroid with Hashimoto's usually "only" becomes noticeable by elevated antibody levels or by "poor" thyroid levels. An enlarged thyroid gland often lacks iodine or manganese.

Find out more in the "Iodine sensitivity" chapter.
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Check-up

Nothing works without a good check-up.

Unless you know what the current problem is, you are unable to address it. As the brain is incredibly intelligent, many affected people just adapt to the condition. They get used to the symptoms – do not even notice them any longer – and the changes in their body are not scrutinized anymore as well. As a consequence, symptoms are not associated with Hashimoto's at all. Not every symptom evolves from Hashimoto's, BUT every symptom is made worse by Hashimoto's respectively gets better the more the autoimmune disease is supervised.

Let's get to the check-up. Please read this chapter "Check-up" first. Then get the relevant worksheets via the download link, which you can find at the back of the book, and fill them out.

For one thing we need them to evaluate the current situation of the present symptoms, and in order to see the changes for another. And a lot will change for the better if you work through this workbook without ruffle or excitement.

Once again, this is not about speed. Hashimoto's needs a lot of time and patience in order to get the best results for your body. Therefore, this book should guide you through the

process and give you the opportunity to look things up every now and then.

I recommend to read the book slowly and put it down in between to implement what you have read. After a break, continue to work with the book. It is actually supposed to be a kind of “primer”, a reference work for times when you feel insecure and you do not know where to begin.

Let's go through the main symptoms.

1. Symptoms

So, what symptoms are you currently experiencing?

~~~~~  
Please fill out the worksheet “Symptoms”. For this,  
please go to the chapter “Primer Material” at the  
end of the book and click the link.  
~~~~~

2. Thyroid hormone levels

When we talk about check-up, we need to include the thyroid hormone levels as well. It is important that you have your up-to-date levels. Ideally, you also have the hepatic levels, the blood lipid levels and the glucose level – this way you can handle the check-up much better. Usually your general practitioner can provide you with them (mostly fee required). If this is not an option, you can also obtain them from a free laboratory (then these are also subject to a fee).

Depending on your location, it should be possible to order such a test kit online. Then your able to follow the instruction of the test kit to send in your blood and get back a result. (Also chargeable, but it is more relaxing and saves time and stress) and send in the samples yourself.

You may find one company in the chapter “Primer Material” at the end of the book, who is able to deliver to a lot of countries.

Therefore we need the following levels:

- TSH, fT3, fT4, TPO AB (thyroid hormone levels)
- GOT, GPT, GGT (hepatic levels)
- HDL, LDL, cholesterol (blood lipid levels)
- Glucose and HbA1c (blood sugar level)

In one of the following chapters we will go into the meaning of the levels.

3. Your timeline

The third topic of the check-up is your timeline! These questions are important indicators to identify potential triggers.

Triggers are conditions that caused your Hashimoto's disease, but that are also trigger a flare-up.

If you manage to identify your triggers, you can easily avoid future flare-ups.

So when you answer the these questions on the worksheet, be honest with yourself.

1. When was the last time you felt really good – physically and mentally?
2. When was the last time you felt really bad? What happened before?

Please fill out the worksheet "Timeline". For this, please go to the chapter "Primer Material" at the end of the book and click the link.

The two questions are crucial, because they can provide you with information about your triggers. Triggers are events in your life that promote the development of Hashimoto's flare-ups or a worsening of the symptoms. They are very individual and thus can vary greatly from one person to another.

4. Potential triggers

Hormonal changes

like pregnancy,
lactation,
menopause,
puberty.

Physical stress

such as infections,
surgeries,
dental treatments,
Sleep disorders,
accidents.

Medications

such as antidepressants,
antibiotics,
cortisone,
vaccinations,
birth control pills,
Hormonal IUD.

Emotional stress

such as trauma,
pressure,
divorce,
loss,
conflicts.

Nutrition

like sugar,
caffeine,
alcohol,
intolerances.

Be very diligent about this task. And be honest with yourself, because you want to find out why you are not doing well at the moment. So if smoking, sweets, or certain traumas are your triggers, be certain to write them down on your “triggers” worksheet.

Please fill out the worksheet “Triggers”. For this, please go to the chapter “Primer Material” at the end of the book and click the link.

Hypo- or hyperfunction – or is it a flare-up?

In order to complete the check-up, find out whether you are currently experiencing a hyper- or a hypofunction. Or whether you are right in the middle of a flare-up.

Most affected people do not even know what is going on in their body at these moments and it is also impossible for them to assess it properly. To make it easier for you, here is a summary that you can use to determine whether you are currently undergoing a hyper- or a hypofunction.