



The Paleo Thyroid Solution: An Overview

By: Gary E. Foresman, MD

September 28, 2016

When asked to consult on a thyroid illness book aimed at the general public, I held a degree of skepticism, as most of these books tend towards intellectual drivel. However, upon spending only a few minutes with author Elle Russ, I knew her book would be both meaningful and heartfelt. Eventually our interviews became the final nearly 60 pages of this book, The Paleo Thyroid Solution (Russ, 2016). The collective work can change the lives of all who suffer from thyroid dysfunction or thyroid disease.

The first printing of this book sold out immediately, and although Amazon says it will take 1-2 months to ship, I believe the second printing will become available by early October. The book's popularity comes from Elle's eloquent manner of relating her personal story while integrating a comprehensive science-based approach, a component I assisted with. She recounts dealings with tens and tens of obstinate physicians who either lacked the knowledge, caring or curiosity to help her with persisting hypothyroid symptoms despite the prescription of standard labs and meds. I find this situation gut-wrenching. I deal with the carnage from this kind of mistreatment on a constant basis in my practice.

The Paleo Thyroid Solution primarily deals with the two most common thyroid disorders of our day: Hashimoto's (autoimmune) thyroiditis, and hypothyroidism from metabolic dysfunction (low T₃ and/or high reverse T₃). Both of these disorders are woefully mismanaged by most internists and endocrinologist/ "thyroid" doctors. The main reasons for mismanagement come from ignorance of the need to treat the underlying problem – autoimmunity in Hashimoto's, and from failure to even measure the two most important thyroid tests (Free T₃ and Reverse T₃) in regards to thyroid metabolic dysfunction.

Furthermore as physicians we must treat the person who has the thyroid dysfunction, not just the thyroid dysfunction that so happens to have a person! So let's discuss what a paleo thyroid solution means:

1. **How do I know if I have thyroid dysfunction? Answer: Test adequately.** At the very least *Free T₄*, *Free T₃*, *TSH* (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone – a pituitary hormone) and *Reverse T₃* as well as *Thyroglobulin (Tg) Ab* and *Thyroid Peroxidase (TPO) Ab*. *Thyroid Stimulating Immunoglobulin*

(TSI) is measured if hyperthyroid is suspected, and *Thyroglobulin* itself when evaluating nodules. Although other tests exist, these are the primary screening tests. I order ultrasounds when evaluating for nodules and rarely do nuclear medicine testing any more. Think of Free T4 (levothyroxine) as the unbound, stable storage form of thyroid hormone that must be converted to Free T3 (liothyronine), the unbound active thyroid hormone that does almost all of the work. Due to stress, dieting, medicines (including getting prescribed T4), and many other reasons, your body chooses to slow your metabolism by creating Reverse T3, a hormone that competes with T3 at the nucleus receptor site.

- 2. What other testing should I consider? Answer: Everything!** Although this might sound vague, people in general are grossly under evaluated for the conditions that cause their thyroid dysfunction especially not evaluating and treating thyroid autoantibodies. Truly, Hashimoto's is not a thyroid disease but a disease of immune dysfunction affecting the thyroid! These further tests include but are not limited to: adrenal hormones (cortisol and DHEA-S), A1C and fasting insulin, ferritin for iron stores, vitamin D, hsCRP, homocysteine—if you are older than 18, I recommend evaluating inflammation profile and nutrition adequacy testing like True Health Diagnostic Laboratory (<http://truehealthdiag.com>), and often evaluating sex steroid panels.

- 3. What kind of diet/lifestyle should I consider? Answer: Paleo.** Today's world presents a toxic soup of endocrine disrupting chemicals in our food and home care products. Please begin an organic lifestyle and eliminate plastics from your day to day use, evaluate all cosmetics and cleaning products. Join the Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org), a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting human health and the environment. I am currently evaluating an app for smartphones called “Think Dirty. Shop Clean” (found in your smartphone's App Store), which helps you identify potentially harmful products by scanning barcodes while shopping. The app provides alternatives if that product is recognized as unsafe. There are many apps on the market that assist in making better life-care choices. In terms of diet, eat real food. Our book gives good, clear information about Paleo diets. Whether treating autoimmunity or insulin resistance, the only biologically and evolutionarily sound eating system is Paleo, everything else is just a fad.

- 4. What kind of thyroid prescription medicine should I take? Answer: The one that works!** If you require thyroid medicines for your condition, there are a myriad of options! If your doctor says that levothyroxine—specifically brand name Synthroid (as I find the generics unreliable in most patients) is the *only* option, then they are telling you an untruth! If they tell you that Natural Desiccated Thyroid (NDT – specifically Nature-Throid) is unregulated or “unreliable”, then they are flat out lying to you, as Nature-Throid is a USP

regulated prescription!! Other options include adding T3 (immediate release such as Cytomel and/or sustained release from compounding pharmacies). Some MDs prescribe T3 only but that is far from my first option.

Our book has so much to offer any person who suspects they might have thyroid dysfunction, there are so many useful hints from someone who has lived hypothyroidism as well as an MD who knows how to approach it from an integrative medical perspective.

Your Journey to Health and Healing,
Gary E. Foresman MD

Website: www.middlepathmedicine.com
E-mail: info@middlepathmedicine.com