

7 Signs You May Have Leaky Gut Syndrome

Plus: How To Heal Your Leaky Gut Naturally

By Jeff Horacek, MD, IFMC



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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Page 4
What is Leaky Gut Syndrome and Why Does it Occur?.....	Page 5
Seven Signs and Symptoms of Leaky Gut	Page 7
The 4 R's For Healing Your Leaky Gut	Page 10
Healthy Connections: The Best Place to Treat Leaky Gut Syndrome.....	Page 15
Your Next Steps.....	Page 16
About the Doctor	Page 17



Introduction

Suspecting that you may have Leaky Gut Syndrome can be scary and stressful. It's only natural that you'll have a lot of questions.

You want to understand the signs and symptoms of the disorder. You'll also want to know what you can do to treat the underlying causes of your condition.



I am routinely asked a variety of questions about Leaky Gut and how we work with patients to treat the underlying causes of their condition. In response to all of these great questions, I decided to put together this small booklet with the answers you need to put your mind at rest.

The purpose of this guide is to answer your questions and calm anxieties you may have about treating your Leaky Gut. While researchers are still learning a lot about Leaky Gut Syndrome, there are treatment options available. One of the best options for you may be to naturally treat the underlying problems that are causing your symptoms in the first place. As a physician, my primary concern is for your health and safety.

After reading this guide, you'll know everything you need to know about Leaky Gut Syndrome. You'll quickly understand why it's important to consult with a medical professional and why Healthy Connections Hood River is a wonderful place to start.

Because the symptoms of leaky gut may be similar to those of other medical conditions, it's important to see a doctor for an official diagnosis and to learn about your options. Healthy Connections has a solid history of diagnosing and treating people with this condition. And if you have any questions, please email info@healthyconnectionsshr.com.

To your health and wellness,

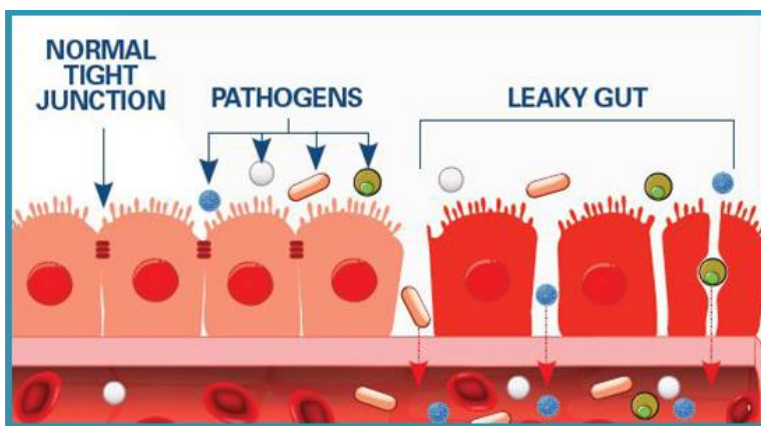
Jeff Horacek, MD



What is Leaky Gut Syndrome and Why Does it Occur?

Leaky Gut can be a confusing condition, but it's becoming more and more of an epidemic. Many of the causes and cures of Leaky Gut are widely debated, but the health field is becoming more aware of the condition and are identifying ways to treat it.

What is Leaky Gut Syndrome?



Leaky Gut Syndrome is a term used to describe the condition of “*Hyperpermeable Intestines*,” a medical term that means the lining of our intestines (aka: our “Gut”) has become more porous, with larger spaces between the cells that line our gut. In turn, the screening out, or filtering process is no longer functioning properly. The end result is that larger, undigested food molecules and other “bad stuff”

(yeast, toxins, and all other forms of waste) that your intestinal wall normally blocks out, are now able to escape your intestine and freely enter your bloodstream where they don’t belong.

The first reaction your body has to these “foreign” bodies in your blood is to FIGHT!

Initially, your Liver is called into action to work overtime and try to screen out all the particles that your intestinal lining was supposed to be taking care of. In most cases, the liver has no chance of keeping up with the constant flow of waste into your blood.

Over time, all the toxins, undigested food molecules, yeast, and other pathogens start to accumulate in your body. Obviously, this is not good.

Your immune system slowly goes into full battle-mode to fight the evil intruders and purge them from your body. More often than not, the body cannot keep up with the task at hand and the majority of these foreign bodies absorb into tissues throughout the body leading to tissue inflammation.

Inflammation is also an immune response and causes even more stress on your system. Now that



your body is focused on fighting the large war, the little battles are starting to be ignored, like filtering out the blood, calming inflamed areas of the body, fighting bacteria, regulating the gut, etc. This process flow can lead to your body fighting itself and an array of autoimmune diseases such as Chronic Fatigue, MS, IBS, Ulcerative Colitis, Diabetes and Fibromyalgia.

What Causes Leaky Gut Syndrome?

If you're having sensitivities to more than a dozen foods, you likely have Leaky Gut Syndrome. Any undigested foods that are absorbed into the bloodstream are now considered enemies of the state, and your immune system will develop reactions to many of them, leading to food intolerances.

Four Main Causes of Leaky Gut:

1. Poor diet
2. Chronic stress
3. Toxin overload
4. Bacterial imbalance

The most common components of food that can damage your intestinal lining are the proteins found in un-sprouted grains, sugar, GMO's and conventional dairy. The problem with un-sprouted grains is that they contain large amounts of anti-nutrients or nutrient blockers called phytates and lectins.



Lectins are sugar-binding proteins that act as a natural defense system for plants that protect them from outside invaders like mold and parasites. This is good news for plants but bad news for your body. Your digestive lining is covered with sugar-containing cells that help break down your food. Lectins gravitate toward this area and when they attach to your digestive lining, it damages your gut and causes inflammation.



An Unsolved Mystery

Leaky Gut symptoms aren't unique. They're shared by other problems, too. And tests often fail to uncover a definite cause of the problem. That can leave people without a diagnosis and, therefore, untreated. It's therefore crucial to find a doctor who will take time with you and take your concerns seriously.

7 Signs and Symptoms of Leaky Gut

Symptoms of a leaky gut do vary, but there are signs that tend to be consistent across many symptomatic individuals.

If the leakage is minor, symptoms will generally be confined to the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Such symptoms include bloating, gas and cramps. More significant leaks are more likely to produce body-wide symptoms, including fatigue, joint pain, rashes, respiratory issues, asthma, and autoimmune conditions — including psoriasis.

Here are seven signs and symptoms you'll recognize if you have Leaky Gut Syndrome.

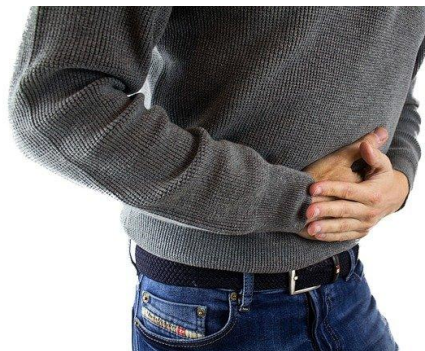


1. Food Sensitivities

People affected by food sensitivities often find that leaky gut is to blame. Because of the onslaught of toxins that enter the bloodstream, the immune systems of people with intestinal hyperpermeability are on overdrive mass-producing various antibodies, which makes their bodies more susceptible to antigens in certain foods (especially gluten and dairy).

2. Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Researchers from Hungary have recently uncovered that elevated gut permeability is oftentimes localized to the colon in people suffering from irritable bowel syndrome and ulcerative colitis.



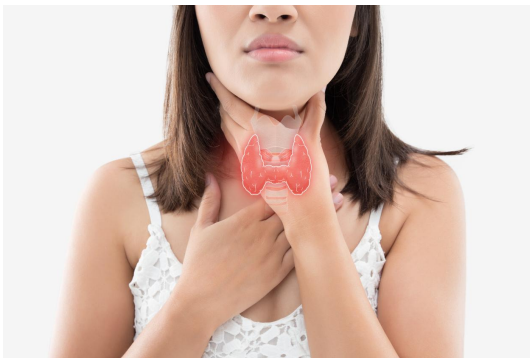
Another study suggests that, for Crohn's disease patients, leaky gut is prevalent in a majority of cases and even up to 10% – 20% of their “clinically healthy relatives,” which suggests a likely genetic component.

3. Autoimmune Disease

The key to understanding how Leaky Gut can cause an autoimmune disease is through the research done on a protein known as “zonulin.” When the finely tuned zonulin pathway is deregulated in genetically susceptible individuals, both intestinal and extraintestinal autoimmune, inflammatory, and neoplastic disorders can occur.”



Eating gluten can oftentimes trigger this dangerous cascade. University of Maryland, School of Medicine researchers have discovered that gluten “activates zonulin signaling irrespective of the genetic expression of autoimmunity, leading to increased intestinal permeability to macromolecules.”



4. Thyroid Problems

One of the autoimmune diseases that Leaky Gut Syndrome may directly affect is Hashimoto's disease. Also known as “chronic thyroiditis,” this disorder can lead to hypothyroidism, impaired metabolism, fatigue, depression, weight gain, and a host of other concerns.

5. Malabsorption

Various nutritional deficiencies result from Leaky Gut. These include vitamin B12, magnesium and key enzymes that help digest food. People with leaky gut should supplement with a whole foods based multivitamin and live probiotic to not only help digest the



food that they eat, but also to make sure that they get the vital nutrition that they need to survive and thrive.



6. Inflammatory Skin Conditions

The gut-skin connection theory describes how intestinal hyper-permeability can cause a slew of skin conditions; particularly acne and psoriasis. Generally, dangerous creams and drugs are prescribed for these skin disorders, yet they can oftentimes be fixed by healing the gut.

7. Mood Issues and Autism

According to a study published in the journal *Neuro-Endocrinology Letters*, Leaky Gut has been shown to cause various neurocognitive disorders. For example, the inflammatory response characteristic of intestinal hyperpermeability triggers the release of pro-inflammatory cytokines and other chemicals that induce depression.



The key to healing a leaky gut is changing your diet and eliminating the foods that your body treats as toxic. You'll learn about this in the next section.



The 4 R's For Healing Your Leaky Gut

The good news is that the cells of the intestinal lining replace themselves every three to six days. This means that, provided you have the proper support, your Leaky Gut can repair itself quickly.

The four steps recommended by our panel of gut-health experts to naturally heal your Leaky Gut include the “four R’s” – remove, replace, repair and rebalance.

Step 1: REMOVE Foods and Factors That Damage the Gut

With leaky gut, the first step is to identify and remove the source of gut-lining irritation, rather than attempting to suppress its symptoms with drugs.

Start An Elimination Diet

Removing common irritants like sugar, dairy, gluten, soy, and the chemical additives found in many processed foods can provide surprisingly quick relief.

Begin A Food Journal

Write down what you eat and how it affects you. If you feel bloated, fatigued, or gassy, add that food to your elimination list.

Limit Use Of Alcohol And NSAIDs

Alcohol taxes the liver and steals nutrients from the gut. NSAIDs inhibit the body’s production of prostaglandins, substances needed to rebuild the intestines’ lining.

Root Out Infections

Leaky gut can be instigated by any number of pathogenic microorganisms and parasites that thrive in the gut’s warm, mucosal environment.



Step 2: REPLACE With Healing Foods And Digestive Aids

The second step is to **give your body what it needs to rebuild the gut lining.**

Eat Plenty Of Whole Foods

The body needs the components in real, fresh food to repair damage and rebuild healthy new tissue. Whole foods, particularly vegetables and fruits, are full of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and phytonutrients. They also contain enzymes that our small intestine needs to heal. Be sure to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables that are rich in color!



Take Digestive Enzymes

Digestive enzymes are needed by your body to break food into component parts: carbs, fats, and proteins. In a leaky gut, enzyme support is critical to the healing process.

Get More Omega-3 Fatty Acids

The gut uses them to calm inflammation and rebuild healthy cell walls. Omega-3 fats are found in cold-water fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring, and sardines. Be sure to purchase wild-caught fish and avoid those fish that are high in mercury, such as tuna, seabass, swordfish, tilefish, grouper, marlin, and farmed Atlantic salmon.



Omega-3 fats are also found in pastured eggs and grass-fed beef (conventionally raised beef and chickens yield significantly less omega-3 fats). Flaxseeds and walnuts can be good sources of omega-3 fatty acids, although our bodies must first convert them into EPA and DHA, which is an inefficient process in humans. Omega-3 supplements may be an option. These can be found in fish oil, cod liver oil, and algae oil supplements.

Steps 3 & 4: REPAIR and REBALANCE With Supplements and Probiotics

Once you've got your gut on the road to wellness, it's time to focus on lasting lifestyle changes. Sliding back into the habits that caused your leaky gut will only invite the return of health problems you want to avoid. Here are several key strategies for supporting ongoing gut health.

Eat Mindfully

Before taking your first bite, look at your food and take in its aroma. As you eat, chew thoroughly, paying attention to your food's flavor and texture. Avoid multitasking or rushing while you eat. Take pauses and breaths between bites, allowing your digestive system to keep pace.

Supplement With Glutamine

The most plentiful free amino acid in the body, glutamine supports immunity and digestion by fueling the cells that line the small intestine.

Try Licorice Root (DGL)

This is an adaptogenic herb that helps balance cortisol levels and improves acid production in the stomach.



Use Quercetin

It has been shown to improve gut barrier function by sealing the gut because it supports creation of tight junction proteins. In addition, it stabilizes mast cells and reduces the release of histamine, which is common in food intolerance.





Add a Probiotic

High-intensity probiotic support rejuvenates and replenishes damage done by antibiotics and/or a poor diet. We recommend a high-potency probiotic of at least 20 billion active cultures twice daily.

Probiotics can also be found in fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi, and kefir (coconut milk kefir is a wonderful dairy free version).

If we conduct stool testing, we can determine which probiotic bacteria you specifically need to boost and can prescribe targeted probiotics for your current microbiome.

Eat *Pre*biotics To Feed The *Pro*biotics

Prebiotics are specific types of starches that serve to feed our healthy gut bacteria. You can find them in many vegetables and fruits, including onion, garlic, leeks, radishes, tomatoes, and bananas.



The “four R’s” we’ve just described is the protocol we use with our patients. This 4R protocol consistently shows powerful results that have helped patients reclaim their health.



REMINDER TO AVOID HARMFUL FOODS:

The top foods that cause leaky gut should be removed from the diet. These are sugar, grains, processed foods, conventional meat, and conventional dairy.

Stress overload or chronic stress is very toxic and affects our mental health, glucose control, and gut bacteria. Stress can also cause leaky gut and perpetuate digestive symptoms.

Everybody's treatment for leaky gut looks different. The underlying cause of your leaky gut is unique to you and depends on your personal history. At Healthy Connections, we ask the right questions to learn your story and fully heal your specific version of leaky gut.



The Best Place to Treat Leaky Gut Syndrome

Here are just a few of the reasons why Healthy Connections Hood River is an excellent place for you to address your Leaky Gut Syndrome.

We have a strong reputation and are fully trained at the Institute for Functional Medicine

We have an excellent reputation in treating difficult gut symptoms and restoring balance for our clients. We run a clinic where the connection with YOU is our number one priority.



We offer the best natural remedies for healing Leaky Gut

By taking your whole body into account, and testing your unique body's status, we're able to pinpoint and treat your condition through a specific diet and supplements.

Our on-staff specialists are Leaky Gut experts

Our team is qualified to understand and treat your condition. Dr Horacek is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, and has completed 3 years of specialty training in functional medicine. He is well-versed in treating Leaky Gut Syndrome. Heather Nielsen, LPC, CHWC has been counseling and coaching individuals with health conditions for 10 years; she completed

a 10-month training at Functional Nutrition alliance and is particularly interested in helping people heal their GI tract in order to heal their minds and bodies authentically. You can rest assured that we know how to take care of you and will meet your needs with compassion and care!

We carefully consider your medical history

We care about your health and want the best outcome for you. Not every place reviews and considers your unique medical history. Our clinicians ask the right questions to ensure appropriate treatment for your Leaky Gut.



We offer post treatment support

After your treatment ends, we'll continue to work with you as needed to help you balance your nutritional needs with the recommendations for treating your condition. With this level of continued support, you'll heal faster and more quickly achieve a "normal" life. Your Leaky Gut will eventually feel like a distant memory.

Your Next Steps

You've learned a lot about Leaky Gut Syndrome. Now it's time to put what you learned into action. To take steps towards healing your gut.



Conventional approaches to treating Leaky Gut usually involve "watching and waiting." But you're in pain now – you shouldn't have to suffer needlessly when there are ways to heal your gut.

Remember, all-natural remedies (like adjusting your diet and lowering your stress levels) are among the quickest, least invasive and most effective treatment options available today. Treating the root cause of your symptoms is less invasive and extremely advantageous to your overall health.

Learn How We Can Address Your Leaky Gut Once And For All!

Schedule a Free, No-Obligation Discovery Call with Healthy Connections Today!

541-716-5786



About The Doctor

For over 20 years, Dr. Jeff Horacek has spent each day helping people transform their health. Board certified in Internal Medicine in 1995 after graduating with honors from the U. of Oklahoma Medical School, he served as Chief Resident at Providence Portland from 1995-96.

For Dr. Horacek, medicine is part of his heritage. His grandfather was a respected family practice doctor in rural Nebraska; his mother was a beloved RN in rural Oklahoma. Through them, he learned that the “healthy connection” between doctor and patient is the foundation for all healthcare.

After attending the Applying Functional Medicine to Clinical Practice (AFMCP) conference in early 2015, Dr. Horacek found his passion. The centerpiece of Functional Medicine is the “whole person approach” of treating patients who have complicated, unrelenting chronic illnesses. Reinvigorated by his new-found passion, Dr. Horacek began implementing the functional medicine approach in his practice.

After launching two daughters to the University of Oregon, Dr. Horacek relocated with his family from Portland to beautiful Hood River in 2016, returning to small-town life with all its community benefits and connections. Here, he enjoys time in nature and loves the abundant recreational options of The Gorge.

The following year, in 2017, he founded our clinic, Healthy Connections Hood River, along with his wife, Heather. Healthy Connections serves the Columbia Gorge and Portland Metro communities. We also serve clients via our online courses and workshops from anywhere in the world!

Dr Horacek is proud to bring his decades of medical knowledge to his own clinic. He is equally honored to be joined by his wife Heather, an experienced and compassionate mental health counselor, certified health and wellness coach, and Functional Medicine lifestyle educator and advocate.

Dr. Horacek believes the blend of traditional and functional medicine - in a team approach with lifestyle education and support - provides the best outcomes for his patients. We support participatory care where the patient is an instrumental partner in returning their body back towards health. He implements the latest in scientific and medical breakthroughs to advance the healing of his patients, with individualized care for each one. Our unique approach to diagnosing and treating diseases and disorders recognizes



that lasting health depends on resolution of the root causes of your dis-ease.

Dr. Horacek is the co-founder and leader of the non-profit board of Mindful Medicine PDX, an organization providing mindfulness training and weekend workshops for healthcare providers. He also served on the board of Living Yoga which helps people overcome personal challenges through mind-body practices.

In December of 2020, after months of intense preparation and study, Dr. Horacek became an Institute for Functional Medicine Certified Practitioner (IFMCP). We are proud of this accomplishment!

We look forward to connecting with you!

Jeff Horacek, MD, IFMCP

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