

9: TREATMENT

LIKE MANY WITH CLD WHO have enough energy and endurance to venture out into their community, Cindy has become an advocate to help others to overcome these infections and get well. Her positive approach to life is stunning, as is her courage in facing her own illness.

CINDY'S STORY

Cindy recalls a tick bite when she was nine. She remembers being sick often throughout her life. But when she was 33 years old, symptoms began in earnest with flu-like symptoms and fever. Then came stiff neck and shoulders, headaches, and exhaustion. Creeping numbness and tingling followed. The headaches became constant and scared her enough to go to an urgent care clinic, where she was told it might be meningitis, but the tests were negative.

For over 10 years, providers told Cindy she had Multiple Sclerosis (MS), but Cindy didn't believe them. Then one morning, she felt the left side of her chin go numb. The numbness progressed, and she lost feeling in her throat and then the entire left side of her body. She was terrified. Numbness and tingling of her toes and feet followed next and progressed to her fingers and hands. Sharp pains, deep and low, in her abdomen occurred. Fatigue was overwhelming. Cindy would tear

up when trying to communicate her symptoms to doctors, mostly because she could tell by the look on their faces that they didn't believe her. They would tell her, "I don't know what's wrong with you. You have too many symptoms." Test after test came up negative.

For Cindy, this time in her life was a mixed bag. She felt physically ill, but also extremely happy, as she had just met her future husband. She had never been happier. She knew, though, that something was wrong in her body. She saw multiple specialists and did numerous tests, all negative. The doctors were convinced "it was all in her head." Cindy was routinely offered antidepressants and anti-anxiety medicines, which she refused.

Marrying the love of her life, Cindy and her husband soon started a family. All three of the children were delivered C-section. With all her babies, she was unable to nurse as her pituitary gland wasn't working well. Being pregnant was great, but afterward, she felt unrelenting fatigue. It was shortly after the birth of her second child that Cindy came down with pneumonia for the first time. It took three months to get over it. Cindy had several episodes of pneumonia throughout the years after that. A few months after the birth of her third child, Cindy was so tired that she didn't want to leave her home. She feared socializing. Realizing this wasn't healthy, Cindy finally tried antidepressants, five different ones in a nine-week period. She would rock herself and curl into a fetal position and cry. Cindy couldn't get out of bed for weeks. She couldn't care for her children. Finally, a friend moved in with them to help.

A naturopath physician tested her brain neurotransmitters and found they were out of balance. So Cindy stopped the antidepressants and used natural amino acids that are precursors to neurotransmitters, and within a few weeks, she began to smile again. She felt alive and happy once more. However, her symptoms continued. She would be bedridden often. After 15 years of seeking help and a diagnosis, Cindy was told she had CLD. It was difficult for her to accept, as she had been tested repeatedly for Lyme and the tests were always negative. Finally, she was tested at Igenex lab by a Lyme-literate provider, and the results came back positive.

During the years before diagnosis, Cindy searched for the help she finally received. Besides the several bouts of pneumonia, she had root canals, was given cortisone injections into her spine for a supposed pinched nerve, and had her appendix removed unnecessarily. Remember that steroids like cortisone make treating Lyme more difficult.

Cindy has been dealing with brain fog for most of her adult life, another Lyme symptom. Once she got lost in her own laundry room. She found her phone in the refrigerator. She pays a nanny to help with the children and to drive them to school and activities so they are safe. She doesn't trust herself to take them places. Before the disease took a firm hold on her life, Cindy was active and loved to dance.

Cindy submitted over \$100,000 in medical expenses to her insurance company and has paid over \$20,000 out of pocket, excluding premiums and the cost of the nanny. Treatment is ongoing but some of the co-infections are gone. Cindy remains hopeful for

complete recovery. She has a passion to help others who are suffering with these infections and to increase awareness so others do not have to experience what she has had to endure.

Treatment is a long process. It requires a lot of faith. It requires one to be compliant. A person has to be motivated and has to be willing to do the work that's required to get better; and when somebody's feeling sick and weak, it's hard to be motivated. Having someone to support and encourage is really helpful.

One of the things that happens when you start to treat is there's die-off of the "bugs," and in that process, a lot of dead cellular debris in the system that needs to be removed. The body has to be able to process this die-off and the neurotoxins that the bugs create. There are supplements, like zeolite and bentonite clay, and a medicine, a powder called cholestyramine, which is one of the original cholesterol medications that actually bind the die-off and toxins and remove them from the body. By taking a binder, you keep the body flushing, and by keeping the body flushed, then the body can better handle long-term antibiotic therapy.

There is a reaction that was coined back when treatment for Syphilis first began, called a Herxheimer reaction. It was Dr. Herxheimer who coined it. A Herxheimer reaction is one in which the symptoms a person is having actually get worse at the start of treatment. It has been shortened to a HERX response. If they had joint pain or they had nausea, those symptoms would worsen, and that would be called a Herxheimer reaction, and it meant that some of the bacteria were dying and the body wasn't processing the

die-off well. People don't have these reactions if their body is clean and able to process and get rid of all of these substances.

People with long-term infection don't have clean bodies, so it's really critical to go slowly. One of my patients told me that another provider told her that her body was a cesspool that needed cleaning. For example, someone who's been really, really ill and reacts easily, and hasn't reached a place where they are able to process the die-off might be able to do only one drop of a tincture every three days, versus an optimal dose of 15 drops twice a day. They're so sensitive to the response that it makes them sicker. The immune system becomes so hypersensitive to this constant insult to it from these chronic infections that it goes haywire and reacts to everything.

What follows is a general overview of what might occur with treatment of CLD. It is not intended to be all inclusive. The current wisdom among many Lyme-literate providers is that antibiotics alone are not enough.

If you have had CLD for greater than a year, then it has adversely affected your immune system and your body's ability to detoxify and to eliminate the die-off of bugs and the neurotoxins they produce. IV antibiotics are an important tool if you have had CLD for longer than one year, if you are 60 years old or older, or if you have taken steroids and/or immune suppressants. For those with highly sensitive bodies that react to any small amount of die-off or toxin, then this can be a daunting decision.

IV antibiotics cross the blood-brain barrier more effectively getting at the bugs that are hiding in the brain. Many different co-infections respond to IV antibiotics, like Bartonella, Ehrlichia, Anaplasma, Mycoplasma, and C. pneumonia, as well as Borrelia or Lyme. IV antibiotics can be less devastating to the intestinal tract. The length of time necessary to do IV antibiotics ranges from three months to over a year. The medicines are usually pulsed, four days on and three days off. They are expensive, and it is rare that health insurance will pick up the cost, which is anywhere from three to four thousand dollars month. An indwelling central line or PICC line is indicated, and the cost to insert it is around fifteen hundred dollars—then there is the cost of maintaining the line.

Oral medications include antibiotics, antifungals, antimalarials, antivirals, and other medicines that deal with parasites. They are used in combination, depending on which infection is being treated. For example, when treating Babesia, it is necessary to use an antibiotic and antimalarial, and Artemisinin, an herb that drives the parasite out of the cells so the medicines can get them. Bartonella requires different antibiotics than Lyme or other bacterial co-infections.

While taking antibiotics, it is helpful to add the herbal tincture for the infection being treated. The tinctures are specific to each infection. Their benefits are supportive, and they do kill bugs. The bugs do not become resistant to them, unlike antibiotics, if it is necessary to stop due to a flare. The tinctures get in to the cells. The bugs can interfere with the energy pathways in the body, and the tinctures actually keep this from happening. They address the infections on all

levels, unlike the antibiotics. Using antibiotics and tinctures together optimizes treatment. Finally, once treatment is done, the tinctures can be used for three to six months more to be sure all the bugs are gone.

Besides killing bugs, the immune system must be restored and detoxifying pathways cleared. This involves dietary change. It is important to create an alkaline environment as most people with CLD are highly acidic, and the bugs prefer an acidic environment. Increasing alkalinity is done with raw vegetable juicing, enzymes, and alkaline water. It involves eating more alkaline foods and less acidic foods. Fresh vegetables are alkaline. Beans, potatoes, and chocolate are acidic. Almonds are alkaline, and peanuts are acidic. Olive oil is best, and corn oil the most acidic. Red meat and shell fish are acidic, while wild game, fish, lamb and turkey are less so. Amaranth, millet, wild rice, and quinoa are alkaline. Other cereals are more acidic. Dairy is acidic. So the goal is to eat more of the alkaline foods and less of the acidic ones. Eliminating foods that increase inflammation is helpful, such as wheat, soy, and dairy.

Detoxifying principles include optimizing bowel health, using probiotics, fiber, colon cleansers, ensuring good hydration, minimizing toxic exposure, and optimizing cellular function. Probiotics are essential to help restore intestinal tract health. Approximately 75% of the immune system function resides in the intestinal tract or gut. Antibiotics and the bugs cause imbalance and the antibiotics kill beneficial bacteria, as well as the bad ones. The best probiotics contain multiple strains of Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium bacteria and a beneficial yeast,

Saccromyces boulardii, that helps keep other unhealthy fungus or yeast from growing out of control. Without the probiotic, gastrointestinal symptoms worsen and fatigue increases. One of the best probiotics on the market is from Australia and is grown from human bacterial flora, so it colonizes the gut easier than others. It is called Progut and can be purchased online.

Supportive nutrients and homeopathic medicines are available to upregulate the immune system. This is beneficial as it stops the hyper-reactivity to treatment that makes a sensitive person so ill. When the immune system response begins to function optimally, then it works with the treatment regimen to rid the body of infection.

Antioxidants support immune function and are free radical fighters. For example, glutathione, which is produced in the liver and is a potent antioxidant, becomes depleted by chronic infection. By using a liver supplement, glutathione production is enhanced. Liver inflammation can be controlled with Milk Thistle. Many of the medicines and some of the bugs can affect liver function and increase inflammation, causing a worsening of symptoms.

Magnesium, Co Q10, and L-carnitine support muscle function and any muscle benefits, including the heart muscle. Magnesium is sometimes helpful for decreasing cramping and easing constipation.

Some herbal remedies are amazing support for the liver, kidney, and lymph systems. When functioning optimally, these systems help rid the body of waste. It is possible to see liver and kidney lab values change

using supportive therapies—and with no adverse side effects.

High grade, bioavailable multivitamin/minerals are very important. It is necessary to have a solid baseline of nutrients, so that it then becomes possible to add higher doses of specific nutrients, like Vitamin B₁₂ or magnesium. Many nutrients require other nutrients to be present in order to work.

At integrative practices, it is possible to access IV supportive therapies. Examples include: amino acids to help rebuild tissue; high dose Vitamin C, B, and minerals; glutathione for liver support; chelation therapy to remove heavy metals; stem cell replacement to help rebuild the body; colloidal silver to combat infection of any kind; protocols to aid with detoxification; and more.

Hormonal abnormalities must be corrected to increase quality of life. Anyone with chronic illness has exhausted adrenals, which contributes to fatigue and energy levels. Adrenal glandular, along with herbal, support helps to rebuild the adrenals, which produce stress hormones like Cortisol. The adrenals are responsible for the circadian rhythm which affects our activity cycle. If imbalanced, not enough Cortisol in the morning makes it difficult to be active during the day. If too much Cortisol is produced at night, it is hard to sleep.

Thyroid imbalance is another concern, but easily corrected when treated. Optimal function contributes greatly to energy levels and metabolism. Sexual hormones are impacted, as well. Decreased libido is a common complaint. Women can suffer early

menopause and irregular periods. Again, hormone replacement is available and helpful.