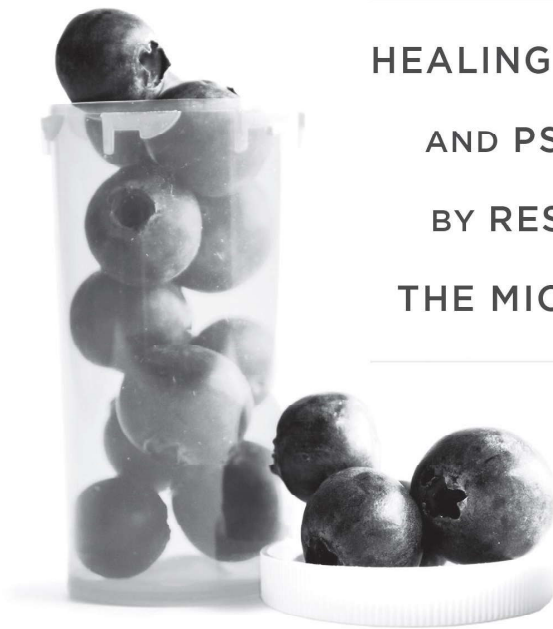


# THE KEYSTONE APPROACH



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HEALING ARTHRITIS  
AND PSORIASIS  
BY RESTORING  
THE MICROBIOME

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Franklin Fox Publishing  
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The Keystone Approach: Healing Arthritis and Psoriasis by Restoring the Microbiome

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similar changes to the microbiome in adults with Crohn's following the SCD: an increase in overall diversity and a specific increase in bacteria associated with immune regulation (such as *F. prausnitzii*).<sup>286</sup>

Although these studies were focused on inflammatory bowel disease, they are highly relevant to those forms of arthritis that overlap with inflammatory bowel disease. As explained in detail in chapter 1, spondylitis, psoriatic, and juvenile arthritis all show similar changes to the microbiome, the pattern of immune activation, and intestinal inflammation. When the research is viewed as a whole, it appears that excluding starch and sugar from the diet can reduce inflammation by rebalancing the microbiome. For some, this could make a tremendous difference to the severity of symptoms. There are, however, no guarantees of success; the only way to know how you will respond is to perform the experiment.

### **The No-Starch Diet in Practice**

There are several formulations of starch-elimination diets, ranging from Dr. Ebringer's basic recommendation to reduce grains and potatoes to the elaborate rules of the various formulations of the SCD diet (including the Gut and Psychology Syndrome diet, known as GAPS). Some of these diets encourage consumption of inflammatory saturated fats and involve complex recommendations that have little scientific support.

With the ultimate goal of reducing inflammation in the context of psoriasis and arthritis, a better approach is to start with the Autoimmune Mediterranean diet described so far, then eliminate those foods that contain significant starch, lactose, and sucrose. In practice, this means strictly

eliminating grains, starchy legumes, most root vegetables, most dairy, and added sugar. The end result is a diet with even greater focus on berries, leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, fish, meat, and olive oil. In more detail:

### **Foods to Include**

- Non-starchy vegetables
  - Leafy greens (kale, lettuce, arugula, bok choy, collards)
  - Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, cauliflower)
  - Zucchini, summer squash, scallion, leek, celery, asparagus, cucumber, fennel, snow peas
  - Borderline low-starch: avocado, radish, mushroom, spaghetti squash, celeriac, green beans
- Fruit (no more than 3 servings per day)
  - Blueberries
  - Blackberries
  - Lychees
  - Ripe pears
  - Honeydew melon
  - Grapes
  - Pomegranate and pomegranate juice
- Fresh herbs
- Raw honey (no more than 1 tablespoon per day)

- Pomegranate juice (1/4 cup per day, diluted with sparkling water)
- Meat, fish, poultry
- Olive oil

### **Foods to Exclude**

- All grains (including wheat, rice, oats, corn)
- Pseudograins such as quinoa and buckwheat
- Legumes, except for some in an edible green pod
- Starchy vegetables
  - Corn, potato, sweet potato, yam, parsnip, turnip, taro, yucca, cassava, plaintain, beet, okra, green peas (other than snow peas)
- Starchy fruits
  - Apples that have been picked unripe and cold stored
  - Bananas (may be tolerated in small amounts if ripe)
  - Pears (ripe pears that are soft and sweet are allowed)
- Sucrose: in table sugar, maple syrup, some fruits (see “gray-area foods” below), apple juice, orange juice, dried fruit
- Lactose: in dairy
- Maltodextrin, carrageenan, xanthan gum

**Gray-Area Foods (test your tolerance)**

- Vegetables with unpredictable starch and sucrose content (winter squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, garlic)
- Vegetables with significant sucrose: carrots, onion
- Apples have great variability in starch content. They may be better tolerated if allowed to ripen at room temperature for several days.
- Fruits with significant sucrose: dates, pineapple, clementines/mandarins, nectarines, mangoes, peaches, apricots, cantaloupe/rock melon, dried fruit
- Some people who are extremely sensitive to starch have reported reactions to the very small amounts found in cauliflower and cabbage, but most people can include them.
- Bananas are starchy when green, but the starch converts to sugars as they ripen. The small amount of starch in a ripe yellow banana may not be a problem for many.
- Nuts: Cashews and peanuts are very high in starch; other varieties have small amounts. Nuts are also very allergenic, as discussed in the next chapter. In terms of allergies and starch, pecans and macadamia nuts are the best choices.
- Pumpkin seeds