

Healing Beyond Symptoms: Autoimmune Lupus and Food Allergy Recovery Through Nutrition

- A case study based on Lupus, Thyroid and severe Hairfall

Abstract

This case study presents the nutritional management of a 47-year-old female client, Tammanna sharma , diagnosed with autoimmune Lupus with thyroid involvement, accompanied by severe hair fall, gut sensitivity, and multiple food allergies. The client reported persistent fatigue, progressive hair thinning, digestive discomfort, food-triggered flare-ups, and heightened inflammatory responses despite medical management.

Given the autoimmune overlap, compromised gut integrity, and immune hyperreactivity, a phased, personalised nutrition and lifestyle intervention was designed. The approach focused on reducing immune triggers, restoring gut barrier function, supporting thyroid activity, and improving micronutrient absorption critical for hair and immune health. Special emphasis was placed on elimination of allergenic foods, anti-inflammatory nutrition, gut-healing strategies, and stress-modulating lifestyle practices.

Over the course of intervention, the client demonstrated improvement in digestive tolerance, reduction in food-related reactions, visible improvement in hair quality, and enhanced overall energy levels. This case reinforces the importance of addressing autoimmune conditions as systemic disorders, where gut health, immune regulation, and nutritional adequacy play a pivotal role alongside medical therapy.

Introduction

Autoimmune disorders such as Lupus often coexist with other immune-mediated conditions, including autoimmune thyroid dysfunction, creating a complex clinical picture that extends beyond isolated organ involvement. These overlapping autoimmune processes are frequently associated with chronic inflammation, altered immune responses, impaired gut integrity, and increased sensitivity to foods, all of which can significantly impact quality of life.

Hair fall is a common yet distressing manifestation in lupus patients and is often multifactorial-driven by immune-mediated follicular damage, micronutrient deficiencies, gut malabsorption, hormonal imbalance, and systemic inflammation. When compounded by gut sensitivity and severe food allergies, nutritional

management becomes both essential and challenging, as inappropriate food choices can exacerbate immune flares and gastrointestinal symptoms.

Emerging evidence highlights the central role of the gut–immune–thyroid axis in autoimmune conditions. Increased intestinal permeability (“leaky gut”) can amplify immune activation, worsen food intolerances, and perpetuate autoimmune flare cycles. Therefore, therapeutic nutrition strategies aimed at gut repair, immune calming, and thyroid support are critical in achieving sustainable symptom control.

This case study documents a structured, dietitian-led intervention for a middle-aged female client from the United States, focusing on individualised nutrition, elimination-based healing, and metabolic support, with the goal of reducing autoimmune burden, improving gut tolerance, and restoring hair and overall health resilience.

Client Profile

Name- Tammana sharma

Age- 47

Wt- 54kg

Ht- 162cm

Lifestyle - Moderate

Region- US

Date initiation- 21st aug 2025



Medical Background

Tamanna Sharma , a 47-year-old female, presented with a known history of **lupus with autoimmune thyroid dysfunction**. Her primary concerns included **severe hair fall**, persistent fatigue, gut sensitivity, and multiple food-triggered reactions, which significantly impacted her overall well-being.

She reported chronic digestive intolerance, including bloating, abdominal discomfort, and altered bowel patterns, indicating compromised gut health and heightened immune reactivity. Several foods were identified as triggers, often leading to inflammatory flare-ups and worsening symptoms, suggesting impaired gut barrier function and poor nutrient absorption.

Autoimmune thyroid involvement further contributed to metabolic instability, low energy levels, and deterioration in hair health. Despite a moderate lifestyle, ongoing immune burden and gut dysfunction continued to drive symptom persistence.

Given the strong interconnection between **lupus-related inflammation, thyroid autoimmunity, and gut sensitivity**, a structured and personalised nutrition intervention was required to address root causes rather than isolated symptoms.

Her Journey Before Joining Us

Before joining the programme, Tammana had been living with **autoimmune lupus**, which significantly affected her overall health and daily functioning. Despite medical management, she continued to experience **severe hair fall, persistent fatigue, gut sensitivity, and recurrent food-triggered flare-ups**, leading to physical discomfort and emotional distress.

In an effort to control symptoms, she had tried **multiple dietary modifications and eliminations** on her own. While certain foods were avoided to prevent reactions, the lack of structured guidance resulted in **nutritional imbalances, increased gut sensitivity, and heightened fear around food choices**.

Frequent **digestive reactions and food allergies** made meals unpredictable, often worsening inflammation, bloating, and energy crashes. Hair fall progressively worsened, likely driven by ongoing autoimmune activity, systemic inflammation, and compromised nutrient absorption due to gut dysfunction.

Over time, it became evident that symptom-based restriction alone was insufficient. The recurring cycle of flare-ups, gut distress, and nutritional depletion highlighted the need for a **personalised, immune-calming and gut-healing nutrition approach** focused on restoring balance rather than further restriction.

Below is a **structured, clinical yet practical Nutrition Intervention** designed **specifically for her lupus-related autoimmune activity, severe food sensitivities, gut reactivity, and hair fall**, based on the food intolerance panels you shared.

This is **case-study ready** and can be used for **reports, presentations, or client documentation**.

Counselling & Emotional Support

At INDYTE, equal emphasis was placed on emotional well-being alongside nutritional therapy, recognising the psychological burden associated with autoimmune lupus, chronic food reactions, and persistent hair fall. The client initially presented with heightened anxiety around food choices, fear of triggering flare-ups, and frustration from repeated dietary failures.

Regular counselling sessions focused on education, reassurance, and confidence-building, helping her understand the immune–gut connection and the rationale behind each dietary decision. This reduced fear-based eating and improved

adherence without emotional distress. She was guided to shift from a mindset of restriction to one of nourishment and healing.

Ongoing emotional support helped her cope with the unpredictability of autoimmune symptoms and visible hair changes, fostering patience and realistic expectations during recovery. Stress-management strategies, mindful eating practices, and lifestyle consistency were reinforced to support nervous system regulation, which plays a critical role in immune balance.

Through continuous guidance and compassionate support, the client developed greater self-awareness, emotional resilience, and trust in her body's healing process. This integrative approach at INDYTE ensured that progress was not only physiological but also psychological, enabling sustainable long-term management and improved quality of life.

Mode of Counselling & Follow-Up

As the client was based in the **United States**, counselling and follow-up sessions were conducted **remotely** to accommodate time-zone differences and ensure continuity of care. All consultations were delivered **online**, maintaining the same level of personalisation and clinical oversight as in-person sessions.

Nutrition counselling and emotional support were provided through **scheduled Google Meet sessions**, supplemented with **WhatsApp voice calls, video calls, and text-based follow-ups** for ongoing guidance, clarification, and progress monitoring. This flexible, multi-platform approach allowed timely resolution of concerns related to food reactions, symptom changes, and dietary adjustments.

Despite geographical distance, consistent communication ensured **high adherence, emotional reassurance, and real-time dietary modifications**, reinforcing the effectiveness of a structured, digitally delivered nutrition and counselling model at **INDYTE**.

Anthropometric Assessment & Dietary History

At the time of initial assessment, Tammanna sharma was a 47-year-old female with a body weight of **54 kg** and a height of **162 cm**, corresponding to a **BMI of approximately 20.6 kg/m²**, placing her within the normal weight range. Despite a normal anthropometric profile, the client reported **low energy levels, muscle fatigue, and visible hair thinning**, indicating compromised internal health rather than weight-related concerns.

Lifestyle assessment revealed a **moderate activity level**, with daily routines affected by autoimmune fatigue and digestive discomfort during flare periods. No primary concern of weight gain or loss was reported; instead, the focus remained on **nutrient adequacy, immune stability, and symptom management**.

Dietary history indicated a **highly restricted and inconsistent eating pattern**, largely driven by fear of food reactions and previous elimination attempts. Multiple food groups had been removed without structured planning due to **documented food allergies and sensitivities**, resulting in limited dietary diversity and potential micronutrient gaps.

Meals were often repetitive, low in protein distribution, and irregular in timing, contributing to **poor satiety, fluctuating energy levels, and suboptimal nutrient absorption**. Digestive tolerance varied day-to-day, with frequent reports of bloating and discomfort following meals, reinforcing the need for a **personalised, structured nutrition strategy** focused on gut healing and immune regulation rather than caloric manipulation.

Nutrition Intervention Strategy

Given the presence of **autoimmune lupus with extensive food sensitivities**, the nutrition intervention was designed with a **phased, immune-calming, gut-protective approach**, rather than aggressive elimination or restrictive dieting.

Key Objectives

- Reduce immune activation and food-triggered flare-ups
- Restore gut barrier integrity and digestive tolerance
- Prevent nutritional deficiencies despite multiple food exclusions
- Support hair follicle health and reduce inflammatory hair fall
- Improve food confidence and long-term sustainability

Phase 1: Immune Calming & Trigger Elimination

Strategy

- Immediate removal of **high and moderate reactive foods** identified in the food sensitivity panel
- Avoidance of **cumulative exposure** to mild-reactive foods within the same day to prevent immune overload
- Focus on **low-antigen, simple meals** to reduce immune stimulation

Key Focus Areas

- Elimination of reactive grains, dairy proteins, selected legumes, mushrooms, certain fruits, spices, and beverages

- Strict avoidance of **alcohol, processed foods, additives, sauces, and fermented triggers**
- Preference for **freshly prepared, minimally spiced foods**

Rationale

Autoimmune lupus is highly sensitive to immune triggers. Reducing antigenic load was essential to calm systemic inflammation and prevent gut-immune cross-reactivity.

Phase 2: Gut Repair & Digestive Resilience

Strategy

- Introduction of **easily digestible probiotics and probiotics (curd, yogurt and rice kanji) , low-reactivity foods**
- Emphasis on **cooked over raw foods** to reduce digestive strain
- Support for gut lining regeneration

Key Interventions

- Soft-cooked vegetables tolerated per report
- Gentle carbohydrate sources for energy without gut irritation
- Inclusion of **gut-soothing fats** (olive oil, tolerated seed oils in small quantities)
- Use of calming herbs and simple seasonings within tolerance range

Rationale

Her food reactions indicated **compromised gut barrier function**. Healing the gut was critical to improving nutrient absorption, reducing food fear, and lowering immune flare frequency.

Phase 3: Nutrient Repletion & Hair Health Support

Strategy

- Careful nutritional adequacy planning despite multiple food restrictions
- Focus on **micronutrients essential for hair, immunity, and tissue repair**

Target Nutrients

- Protein adequacy through tolerated sources (distributed evenly across meals)
- Iron, zinc, biotin, B-complex vitamins (especially folate forms)
- Omega-3 fatty acids for anti-inflammatory support
- Antioxidants to counter oxidative stress linked to lupus activity

Rationale

Severe hair fall was driven not only by lupus activity but also by **inflammation, nutrient**

malabsorption, and dietary restriction. Supporting internal nutrition was key for hair recovery.

Phase 4: Food Rotation & Tolerance Building

Strategy

- Gradual **food rotation protocol** to prevent immune sensitisation
- Introduction of mild-reactive foods one at a time under observation
- Avoidance of repetitive daily consumption of the same foods

Key Principles

- One new food at a time
- Monitor symptoms for 48-72 hours
- Maintain dietary diversity without triggering immune overload

Rationale

Long-term elimination without rotation can worsen sensitivities. Controlled exposure helped rebuild tolerance while protecting immune stability.

Phase 5: Lifestyle & Inflammation Modulation

Supportive Measures

- Fixed meal timings to reduce gut stress
- Stress-regulating practices to lower immune flare risk
- Adequate hydration with non-reactive fluids
- Sleep hygiene to support immune and hair follicle repair

Rationale

In lupus, nutrition works synergistically with lifestyle. Calming the nervous system was essential to sustaining dietary progress.

Allergy Testing & Clinical Findings

A comprehensive **food allergy and sensitivity test** was conducted prior to nutrition planning to identify immune-reactive foods contributing to gut distress and lupus flare-ups. The test revealed **multiple food sensitivities**, explaining the client's recurrent digestive symptoms, skin reactions, and inflammatory responses.

Based on these findings, dietary eliminations and rotations were **evidence-driven and individualised**, avoiding unnecessary restriction while targeting true immune triggers. The

test results formed the foundation of the nutrition intervention, enabling a **safer, more precise dietary strategy** focused on immune calming, gut healing, and symptom reduction



Dietary Approach

A personalised, phased dietary approach was implemented to support **autoimmune lupus, severe food sensitivities, gut dysfunction, and inflammatory hair fall**. Foods showing moderate to high reactivity were eliminated initially to reduce immune activation, while mildly reactive foods were carefully rotated to prevent cumulative inflammatory responses rather than removed entirely.

The diet emphasised **freshly prepared, warm, and easy-to-digest meals** to minimise gut irritation and support intestinal lining repair. Anti-inflammatory food choices were prioritised, with balanced inclusion of tolerated proteins, carbohydrates, and healthy fats to maintain nutritional adequacy despite multiple restrictions.

Special focus was placed on **adequate protein distribution and micronutrient sufficiency** (iron, zinc, B-complex, antioxidants, and omega-3s) to support hair follicle health and immune recovery. Fixed meal timings and gradual food reintroduction were used to stabilise digestion, improve food tolerance, and ensure long-term sustainability without excessive restriction.

Guidance & Add-On Supplementation

Nutritional guidance at **INDYTE** focused on reducing inflammation and supporting immune balance while respecting the client's **autoimmune lupus activity and food sensitivities**. A **Mediterranean-style anti-inflammatory dietary framework** was adapted using tolerated foods, emphasising whole grains, fish, vegetables, fruits, and healthy fats to help modulate inflammation.

Chia seeds were included as a tolerated source of plant-based omega-3 fatty acids and fibre, supporting inflammation control, gut health, and satiety. Tulsi (holy basil) was recommended in infusion form for its immune-modulating and stress-reducing properties, aiding nervous system balance without triggering immune reactions. Turmeric was incorporated in small, well-tolerated amounts for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits, helping reduce lupus-related inflammatory activity.

High-fat and heavy foods were limited, as excessive fat intake was associated with worsening lupus symptoms and **skin flare-ups**. **Nightshade vegetables** were excluded due to their potential to aggravate inflammatory responses and skin rashes in autoimmune-prone individuals.

Supplementation Strategy

Supplement support was introduced cautiously to correct deficiencies and support immune, gut, and hair health, while avoiding immune overstimulation:

- **Selenium** -to support antioxidant defence and immune modulation
- **Vitamin C** - to reduce oxidative stress and support tissue repair
- **Vitamin B12 (including B-complex, B12 & B7/biotin)** - to support energy metabolism, nerve health, and hair integrity
- **Folate** - provided through tolerated dietary sources only
- **Zinc** -to support immune regulation, skin healing, and hair recovery
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** - for their anti-inflammatory benefits and immune support

✗ **Iron and folic acid supplementation were not permitted**, as they were observed to aggravate symptoms and were therefore managed through careful dietary planning and monitoring rather than pharmacological dosing.

The overall approach prioritised **food-first correction**, using supplements only as supportive add-ons under supervision, ensuring safety, tolerance, and long-term sustainability in autoimmune lupus management.



Macronutrient Distribution

The nutrition plan was structured at approximately **1400–1500 kcal/day**, adjusted to Rumana's body weight, moderate lifestyle, autoimmune condition, and digestive tolerance. The primary focus was on **nutrient density and immune support**, rather than caloric manipulation.

By Dietitian Priyanka

- **Carbohydrates: 45% of total energy**
Derived from **low-reactivity, easy-to-digest complex sources**, selected based on food sensitivity results. Carbohydrates were included in controlled portions to provide sustained energy, support gut health, and prevent inflammatory spikes.
- **Protein: 30% of total energy**
Protein intake was prioritised and **evenly distributed across meals** to support hair follicle repair, immune modulation, tissue recovery, and maintenance of lean body mass, while remaining mindful of gut tolerance.
- **Fats: 25% of total energy**
Emphasis was placed on **anti-inflammatory and gut-supportive fats**, included in moderate amounts to support cellular repair, reduce autoimmune-driven inflammation, and aid absorption of fat-soluble nutrients.

The daily meal pattern consisted of **three balanced meals and one to two small snacks**, planned with fixed timings to stabilise digestion, improve nutrient absorption, and reduce immune and digestive stress.

Progress and Outcome

Rumana demonstrated strong adherence to the prescribed nutrition and lifestyle plan, implementing dietary modifications with consistency despite extensive food sensitivities. Within the **initial 2-3 weeks**, she began experiencing noticeable improvements in **digestive comfort**, with reduced bloating, fewer food-triggered reactions, and improved meal tolerance—an early indicator of gut and immune calming.

With continued adherence, a **reduction in systemic inflammation and autoimmune flare frequency** was observed. Energy levels improved gradually, and episodes of fatigue became less intense and less frequent. Importantly, **hair fall stabilised over time**, with a visible reduction in daily shedding and gradual improvement in hair texture, suggesting better nutrient absorption and reduced inflammatory stress on hair follicles.

Food tolerance improved through structured rotation, reducing fear around eating and increasing dietary variety without triggering symptoms. Overall nutritional status stabilised despite prior restrictive patterns, supporting immune resilience and recovery.

Beyond physical improvements, Rumana reported enhanced confidence in managing her condition through food and lifestyle choices. Reduced symptom unpredictability and improved quality of life reinforced the effectiveness of a **personalised, nutrition-led, immune-supportive approach**, enabling sustainable management of autoimmune lupus without excessive dietary restriction.

Conclusion

This case demonstrates the impact of a personalised, nutrition-led intervention at INDYTE in managing autoimmune lupus complicated by severe food sensitivities, gut dysfunction, and inflammatory hair fall. Rather than relying on restrictive elimination or symptom suppression, the approach focused on immune calming, gut healing, and restoring nutritional adequacy to address underlying drivers of disease activity.

Through targeted removal of dietary triggers, structured food rotation, and supportive lifestyle strategies, the client experienced improvements in digestive tolerance, energy levels, food confidence, and hair health, along with reduced frequency of inflammatory flare-ups. The emphasis on sustainability ensured progress without increasing dietary fear or nutritional compromise.

At INDYTE, autoimmune conditions are addressed as systemic disorders, recognising the close interplay between immune health, gut integrity, nutrition, and lifestyle. This case reinforces that with consistent, evidence-based, and individualised guidance, long-term symptom management and improved quality of life are achievable without excessive restriction or dependency on aggressive interventions.

Client Feedback

★★★★★ 10 minutes ago

Priyanka mam & Simran mam both have helped me big time in achieving my goal, in this journey of autoimmune they have guided me and that has helped me in weight management and suppress inflammation.

