

COPING WITH HERX REACTIONS

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It's very common during Lyme treatment to have periods of feeling worse, particularly when starting a new treatment regimen, modality, medication or supplement, or increasing doses of antimicrobials.

This is known as the Herxheimer reaction (or Herx). Herxes are caused by the toxin release that comes from killing off pathogens, causing the body to work hard to clear the toxins. Generally speaking, Herx reactions cause an exacerbation of one's own, familiar symptoms. They may occur immediately, or more often, can take several days to manifest. Herx reactions can last anywhere from a few hours to days or even weeks.

If a Herx reaction is really unmanageable (a 8/10 to 10/10 in severity), then the "offending agent" (the medication, supplement, change in dosage etc – whatever it was that provoked the Herx) can be stopped entirely for a few days, then restarted at ¼ of the previous dose, building up more slowly to the prescribed dose to give the body more time to adjust.

If the Herx reaction is somewhat manageable (5/10-7/10 in severity) the dose can be reduced by ½ for a few days to a week, again, to give the body time to calm down. Build up the dose more gradually when it is reintroduced.

If the Herx reaction is mild to moderate (1/10-5/10 in severity) then one can "soldier on", knowing that the pathogens are being killed and good things are happening!

To manage/ minimize herx reactions here are some things that I have found helpful:

- Drink fresh squeezed lemon or lime juice in warm water, 2-3 times daily. Clean your teeth afterwards to protect tooth enamel as lemon and lime juice are acidic.
- Drink ionized, alkaline water – 2 liters per day.
- Eat a clean diet of lean proteins, healthy uncooked oils and vegetables. Juice greens if possible or drink wheatgrass juice.
- Take Epsom salts baths as the magnesium sulfate assists with detox. Magnesium is also relaxing for sore aching muscles.
- Alka-Seltzer Gold (must be gold, not regular) can be helpful.
- Try to rest and sleep as much as possible.
- Use far infra red sauna if possible, but only for short durations as tolerated.
- Do coffee enemas to help the liver and bowels flush out toxins.
- Activated Charcoal – 1-2 capsules twice daily, 2 hours apart from other meds/ supplements. Acts as a binding agent in the gut to bind up the neurotoxins.