

Excerpt from the book, "Freedom From Lyme Disease." [Click here to learn more about the book.](#)

Preface

The Librarians of the Lyme Disease World

Has the internet rendered librarians obsolete? Librarians used to help us find the information we were seeking amidst a sea of choices and chaos. While a librarian was never the source of information, he or she was certainly a critical part of our search for information.

Now, search engines like Google largely perform the role of a librarian automatically and almost instantly. While this has led to fantastic benefits, it also has drawbacks. If you are looking for an apple pie recipe, you can save yourself a trip to the library and grab a recipe online. However, what about more complex information with less obvious solutions? Google sorts information based on a very advanced algorithm, but Google can't provide expert guidance on the results it presents to you.

Many people hop on Google, search for *Lyme disease treatment*, and are faced with tens of thousands of resulting web pages. These people have two choices: simply read the first article in the search results and hope that

it is the best approach to treating Lyme disease, or, feel completely overwhelmed by the many available treatment perspectives, therapies, and medical paradigms. In a sense, when it comes to treating Lyme disease, a person facing Google search results is a little bit like a person standing in a library without a librarian to help them: there is no shortage of information (thousands of websites and articles), but it is exceedingly difficult to discover which information is the most valuable, and, more importantly, how to use that information.

In this day and age, we simply assume that we don't need a librarian to help guide us through. As a society, we have more information at our fingertips than ever before, but this information doesn't necessarily come with instructions—or strategies—that explain how to use it. When researching a simple topic, that may not be a problem. But, when researching more complex topics, the information is only as good as the instructions for putting it to good use.

Recently, social networks have entered the scene, and there are hundreds, even thousands, of Facebook pages and groups dedicated to Lyme disease. While these resources can be tremendously valuable, they also have drawbacks similar to those described in the previous paragraph. Lyme experts post to these groups and share tidbits of information. But the question remains: How does all of the information fit together? What strategies and wisdom should guide its use? Again, information abounds, but a cohesive model which ties it all together is elusive.

Therefore, I would argue that the problem facing Lyme disease patients is not a shortage of information, but instead, a shortage of guidelines on how to use that information. The information is available like never before, but how do we make sense of it? How do the hundreds of beneficial treatment protocols compare to one another, and when should they be used? Do they work for everyone? Are some more tried-and-true than others?

One of the best solutions to the problem of making sense of this abundance of information is to hire a knowledgeable Lyme doctor who can guide you through the treatment process based on his or her years of experience. And I certainly recommend doing just that; in fact, that is the first thing you should do. Lyme doctors are often the best librarians because they have vast experience in making sense of all the available information. Get a referral to a Lyme doctor via the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society (ILADS) at www.ilads.org.

While having a Lyme doctor is important, as you know if you have read my past writing, I have observed that the patients who do the best are those who take control of their own recovery, become educated, and learn to be the captains of their healing ships. In other words, it's not enough to have a librarian helping you; you have to become a librarian yourself. The reasoning behind this assertion is sprinkled throughout my books and is essential to the approach I take to treating Lyme disease. Doctors can certainly help guide you, but they often don't have enough time to actually teach you how to guide yourself, nor will they have enough time to completely understand your body, your health history, and your unique response to treatments. You'll need to make many course adjustments along your healing journey, and sometimes, these adjustments may need to happen so frequently that no single doctor could keep up with them. While doctors typically adjust treatment programs monthly or even less frequently, in reality, your treatment program will probably need to be adjusted weekly, or even daily!

Do some people get well without ever becoming their own librarian? Yes! But I personally believe that they are the exception, not the rule. Healing from Lyme disease is such an individualized process that the individuals themselves are the ones who are best equipped to find the shortest path to their own healing. Without the tools and wisdom to make your own treatment decisions, you will be at a tremendous disadvantage, unless you are rich enough to afford a private Lyme doctor who

can be at your beck and call and with whom you can consult daily. 99% of us do not have that luxury.

And that is where this book comes into the picture. In writing this book, I think of myself as a Lyme disease librarian who is teaching other Lyme sufferers how to be their own librarians. While this book does present many new and exciting treatment options, its primary purpose is not to simply list treatments for you; that is a secondary purpose. The primary purpose is to actually organize those treatment options into a logical structure and provide a framework, or paradigm, through which to view the options. In my opinion, this kind of structure and organization is much more important, and more difficult to establish, than simple information on the treatments themselves. The treatments themselves can be easily researched by using Google; you don't need to buy a book for that. But the strategies for their use cannot be found on Google. I like to refer to this organizational structure as the "Lyme disease treatment template." You'll hear me refer to this template many times throughout the book, and we will build the foundation for this template in Chapter 3.

If I'm going to give you a treatment template, then why do you need to become your own librarian? Can't I just give you the template, and we're done? While the treatment template I provide in this book may be very helpful to you, it will almost certainly need to be adjusted based on your individual situation and needs. If there's one thing we know, it is that Lyme disease affects people very differently, and there's no one-size-fits-all template. So, throughout this book, I'm not going to simply tell you how to use the treatment template; I am going to tell you about the logic behind the template, so you can gain a full understanding of it, and so you can adapt it to your own healing journey. In this way, you will become your own librarian, able to filter any new Lyme disease information that comes your way through your new-found understanding of how that information fits into the puzzle before you, just like a real librarian knows what section of the library to place new books. Accordingly, the usefulness of what this book teaches you should far outlive the time frame

during which the treatments presented in this book are still considered cutting-edge. In a nutshell, becoming your own librarian means understanding Lyme disease so well that you can easily determine why certain treatments are needed at certain times, and how these treatments are related to other healing modalities you might choose to use. It also means being able to tell the difference between a new treatment that has the potential to be a breakthrough, and a new treatment which may provide little to no real, lasting value in your recovery. This knowledge will help you for years to come, long after this book has become obsolete.

Taking ownership of your own treatment template is where a doctor's expertise ends and your role begins. It is where my ability to help you ends and your need to help yourself starts. You are the one who will have to learn to interpret how treatments affect you and which ones are worth continuing. Unlike a normal research project, on, say, World War II, your research project is more like a "choose your own adventure" book, where the story will be different for each and every person who has Lyme disease.

So, this book will never replace Google, nor will it replace other Lyme disease books which have great treatment ideas. It will not replace your doctor. Likewise, it won't replace Lyme disease support groups, where you'll find fantastic ideas for recovering your health. What this book will hopefully accomplish is to help you learn how to apply the new information you discover from those various sources. Sifting through the onslaught of information and choosing which treatments might be beneficial becomes much easier when you know what you are looking for and why you are looking for it. And, in our information-rich era, learning how to assimilate and apply information is more important than ever.

I contend that understanding the overarching principles of Lyme disease treatment will benefit you much more than simply becoming an expert on a singular herb or treatment option. Don't misunderstand me. There is certainly a place for a master herbalist who can tell you everything you would ever want to know about a particular herb. However, for

the Lyme disease patient, a different kind of challenge emerges: As the days, weeks, and years pass, you will be continuously bombarded by new information, new treatments, and new perspectives. There will be far too much information coming at you for you to become an expert in all areas. Instead, the tool you will need most will be the ability to rapidly assess the new treatments and decide if they are of benefit to you in your Lyme disease recovery, and, if so, how they should be integrated into your treatment program. While this book can't completely equip you with this ability, at the very least, it will make you aware that you actually need this skill, and it will get you started in developing it.

Here's a practical example: Let's take the herb known as Olive Leaf Extract. Anyone can Google this herb and learn everything there is to know about it: what species of plant it is, what the potential side effects may be, when it was discovered, and so on. Would it really be worth your time to read a book that contained this kind of information? Probably not! First of all, it would require thousands of pages to even come close to duplicating the fantastic information on all of the available treatments which can be found on the internet. And second, why even bother duplicating information that is already available? I am not saying this kind of information isn't important: you should fully understand any new treatment you will be using, so if you are planning to use Olive Leaf Extract, by all means, go read about it. Instead, I'm saying that this kind of information isn't worthy of a book in our modern, technologically wired world. And I'm also saying that this kind of information isn't what we are really lacking as a Lyme disease community.

In other words, we aren't missing the library; we are missing the librarians.

What we really need isn't a detailed description of Olive Leaf Extract. Instead, we need the following questions answered: Does this herb work for Lyme disease? Should it be taken continuously, or only once in awhile? How does it fit in with the rest of a Lyme disease treatment protocol?

What have been the experiences of Lyme patients who used this herb? What do Lyme doctors think of the herb? Is it better to be used alone or in combination with other treatments? How does it compare to pharmaceutical options? Which part of the Lyme disease complex is it targeting, and for which part is it ineffective? How can a person tell if it is working? Is it a really important treatment or just one that will provide a minor degree of healing? And ultimately, how can a person really understand the role that this particular treatment plays in the overall recovery process?

These are the most pressing questions, and these are precisely the types of questions which go unaddressed in most Lyme patients' research. Obviously, I won't have perfect answers to all of these questions. But, it is my goal to at least try to address these questions, where many Lyme disease resources either ignore them or don't know how to tackle them. And remember, the correct answers will differ for each person. My goal isn't to give you easy answers; it is to help you see the importance of the questions and give you some guidance on how to find your own unique answers.

So, now you can see what the primary purpose of the book is. It is not to compete with the internet on descriptions of available treatments (how could anyone possibly provide more information in a book than what is contained on the internet?), but to share my own perspective, as would a librarian, on how all that information should be conceptualized, organized, applied, and understood.

Let's get back to the treatment template I mentioned. I believe that the word "template" accurately describes the treatment plan that you will develop as you read and understand the information in this book. A template is, by definition, a structure which is not yet completed or filled in. Once you have the template, you can use it to determine how, when, and why to use various treatment options which come your way, and which you find via Google or Facebook. You'll be able to figure out why certain treatments are helpful and others are not, and you'll be able to decide how to integrate various treatments into a cohesive treatment plan. A template

is flexible, but in order to benefit from that flexibility, the user of the template needs to understand how it works.

Here's an example of the timelessness and usefulness of good treatment templates: When I look back at the two Lyme disease books I published in 2005 and 2007, it is clear that many new treatments have become available since those dates. However, while some of the treatments in my prior books may be old and out-of-date, the treatment templates presented in those books are almost completely applicable, even today. Furthermore, a person who really grasped the ideas behind the templates I provided in those earlier books can quite easily assimilate the new information in this book, because the new template is only an incremental improvement over the old ones. Treatment templates are like the chassis on a car: Newer parts and technologies become available in the automobile industry almost daily, but they eventually all get plugged into the same frame. The frame itself, or the template, undergoes changes but not nearly as quickly as what is installed on the frame. Because of this, investing in a good understanding of your treatment template will pay dividends for many years.

To put it another way, the most important thing you can learn from my books isn't which treatments I've found to be most helpful, but instead, why I've found them to be helpful. If I do my job well and you understand the template (and the need for a template), you won't need me to write books anymore; you'll be able to evaluate new treatments for years to come, based on whether or not those treatments fit into your treatment template. Of course, your template itself will evolve and change as new information becomes available. And, there may even come a time when the template needs to be trashed in favor of a completely new way of thinking about Lyme disease treatment. However, based on what I've learned about Lyme disease, I believe that the more likely scenario is that the treatment template will need slight revising here and there, not replacing. And regardless of the degree to which the template will change, those who understand how it works will have a much easier time with any nec-

essary transitions than those who mindlessly pop pills because their doctor told them to do so.

The concept of a treatment template is at the heart of this book, and I have divided the book up accordingly. The earlier chapters of the book focus on building and understanding the template itself, and these chapters serve as a foundation for the rest of the book. The later chapters of the book focus on the individual treatments and treatment protocols, which can be plugged into the template. I will describe in more detail how the book is divided and organized in the following section, entitled, *Information for the Reader*. To avoid frustration, it is important to note that when I talk about the “treatment template,” I’m not referring to any one rigid, or defined, methodology. You won’t find an easy summary of this template anywhere, and you won’t find a page or chapter which fully describes it. Instead, the treatment template is better understood as the overarching direction of a person’s Lyme disease treatment, or the foundational guidelines used to make decisions on which treatments to use and how to use them. The appropriate template will vary from person to person, and will be formed for each individual gradually as they read through the book.

Finally, please note that by reading this book, you are getting the opinion of only one librarian, and you are discovering only one librarian’s treatment template. Others who have studied the same information may come to very different conclusions than I have. Such controversy isn’t necessarily a bad thing. It is precisely this kind of tension that leads to progress in our understanding of Lyme disease. Still, though, please remember that my answers to the pressing questions should not be viewed as the final word in Lyme disease treatment. I encourage you to seek the guidance of many librarians.

OK—I’m sure by now you’ve heard enough of my philosophizing on treatment templates and librarians. Let’s move on!