

Ten years ago, one day in July, 2005, I was sick with Lyme, and vacillating between extremes. I was feeling pretty positive most of the day, symptoms not horrible, merely terrible...a big improvement.

But at that moment, my naturopath called, and our conversation sent me into a mental funk.

Through the brain fog, I strained to comprehend what he suggesting.

He explained that he really didn't want to prescribe antibiotics. But in the next breath he said that because I was not out of the woods, I really must use them.

He said antibiotics were crucial now, because there was a neurological involvement we must address. *Neuroborrellia*.

He recommended intravenous antibiotics, and thought I should have an IV for the next several weeks. That meant getting a catheter stuck into my arm and bringing home a portable IV stand with a bag. Then I would be injecting myself with antibiotics every day.

The thought of having a tube stuck into my arm me depressed me to no end. But the problem was, there was evidence that with Lyme disease, long-term antibiotics are effective. In fact, they may be the only way to prevent

symptoms from returning.

It was a conundrum. I felt like I was being pulled in two directions at once. I did not want the catheter. I did not want to stay on antibiotics. I dreaded the Herx. But, I did want to kill the spirochetes, and I did want to get completely well.

Evan, however, was convinced that I was coming along really well. He was my systems-thinking cheerleader.

“Look at the numbers,” he says. “You have only been on the antibiotics for twelve days. You added a second antibiotic on Friday. Okay, so you herxed in misery. But instead of seeing that as bad,” he said, “look at it this way. The Herx proves the antibiotics are doing their job. They're killing the spirochetes efficiently.”

And it turned out that he was right. Doctors call it a *die off*. The Herx is one of the ways of measuring the effectiveness of the antibiotics. It's a case of the cure being as bad as the illness.

### **Spirochetes — the original survivalists**

Spirochetes are ancient organisms, eons older than dinosaurs. Over the ages they have had nothing else to do but refine their survival techniques.

For such minuscule critters, they've got a sophisticated arsenal of ways to keep from detected by your immune system. They can armor themselves with cysts to keep the antibiotics from reaching them, and morph into other forms, thus playing hide 'n seek in your tissues, muscles, organs, and brain.

The spirochetes are the villains, and the last thing they want is for the Terminator — your immune system — to locate and destroy them.

### **Fight back! Why anaerobic exercise helps**

Lyme spirochetes thrive in a cold, low body temperature. I was beginning to get the idea that I would have to fight back, and fight hard. As much as possible, I started to include therapies and lifestyle changes that would increase my core body temp.

The good news is that *Borrelia burgdorferi* are anaerobic organisms and can't survive in a high oxygen environment.

My plan to fight back began to take shape back then. It started off pretty slowly I admit. Surviving the Herxes was easier said than done. I drank a whole lot of water with lemon. I slept. I endured and persevered, like you are doing.

### **Don't let the Herx scare you**

I knew in my heart that the more I could manage to raise my core body

temperature, the more the spirochetes I could kill. It was my main goal, to kill them, and to try to not kill myself with a Herx.

It wasn't easy trying to get enough exercise. I had a hard time standing up, let alone walking around the neighborhood. But I kept at it, determined to be as proactive in my healing as I could.

Today, ten years to the month from my diagnosis, I'm a martial artist, with two solid years of practice logged on my journey from Borreliosis to black belt.

You don't have to join a Taekwondo school. You don't have to do hot yoga, play basketball, dance, or climb steep mountainsides if you don't want to. But you do have to make a plan to be as proactive in your own healing as you possibly can. The doctors can only do so much. The rest is really up to you.

Did I ever get the IV antibiotics?

In the end, the decision was made for me. I couldn't afford it, so I passed. These days, I might have been tempted, since now I've got health insurance. But in 2005, it simply wasn't a choice.