Many people with thyroid and autoimmune thyroid conditions are familiar with the benefits of glutathione. Glutathione is made in the body, and is a combination of three amino acids. These amino acids are glutamine, cystine, and glycine. While glutathione is important for overall health, it is very important for the health of the immune system (a deficiency in this molecule is associated with impaired T cell function). As a result, anyone with Grave’s Disease or Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis needs to have sufficient levels of this substance.

In addition to helping with immunity, glutathione has numerous other functions as well. Since the highest concentrations of this molecule is in the liver, one of the primary functions is to help with detoxification. And since we’re exposed to many different toxins, it once again is essential to have an abundance of glutathione, as it will help the body remove toxins. So for example, when someone takes prescription drugs, the liver is responsible for getting rid of the toxins associated with these medications. And sufficient levels of glutathione is important for this to take place. It also can help to eliminate environmental toxins, including mercury.

Low glutathione levels can also affect the integrity of the gut lining. I’ve mentioned in numerous articles and posts the importance of having a healthy gut with both Graves’ Disease and Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis. Problems with the gut can lead to a compromised immune system, and while having sufficient levels of glutathione alone won’t guarantee that someone will have a healthy digestive
guarantee that someone will have a healthy digestive system, one can’t have a healthy digestive system if they have a deficiency in glutathione.

**How Do People Become Deficient In Glutathione?**

Two of the main factors which deplete the body of glutathione are poor dietary habits, along with chronic stress. And of course these are two big issues with many people, including those with thyroid and autoimmune thyroid disorders. Of course many of my patients have significantly cleaned up their diets by the time they have consulted with me. And many have also improved their stress handling skills. On the other hand, some people continue to eat poorly and don’t manage their stress well.

Either way, while eating well and managing one’s stress are both important to maintain healthy glutathione levels, this usually won’t be enough to correct depleted levels of this molecule. Don’t get me wrong, as eating well and managing your stress will help to some extent with low glutathione levels. But nutritional supplementation is frequently required to correct this deficiency. The same concept applies with any moderate to severe mineral deficiency, as for example, if someone has a severe zinc deficiency, they probably won’t correct this by eating a lot of zinc-based foods. In this case higher dosages of zinc are usually required to correct such a deficiency. Then after the person has corrected it they can usually maintain the levels through eating well, and perhaps taking a multi-mineral each day.

**How Can One Increase The Glutathione Levels?**

Even though one usually can’t correct a glutathione deficiency by just eating well, one can still increase the glutathione levels by eating plenty of fresh vegetables (onions, garlic, asparagus, carrots, and cruciferous vegetables are especially good sources), along with some fresh fruits. And if you’re not a vegetarian you can also get some glutathione from meat as well. Eggs can also be a good source. Selenium rich foods such as brazil nuts can also help to raise glutathione levels. Exercising helps with glutathione production, and so this is yet another reason why you want to exercise regularly.

There are supplements you can take, but glutathione isn’t absorbed well when taking it orally. You can take it in the form of a liposomal-based cream, or have it administered through an IV. However, this doesn’t increase the glutathione levels inside the cells, as the best method of doing this is to eat some of the foods I recommended before, and to take some of the precursors...
of glutathione. Here are some of the precursors and herbs which can help increase the production of glutathione in the cells:

**N-acetylcysteine.** This is a metabolite of the sulfur-containing amino acid, Cysteine, and metabolizes into intracellular glutathione.

**Alpha Lipoic acid.** This is a fatty acid found inside all of the cells of the body, and has the potential to recycle glutathione.

**Selenium.** This mineral is important in the formation of the enzyme glutathione peroxidase, which is necessary to form glutathione.

**L-Glutamine.** Glutamine is an amino acid that is a precursor to glutathione.

**Milk Thistle.** An herb that has been shown to increase the levels of glutathione.

**How Can One Detect A Glutathione Deficiency?**

Determining whether someone has a deficiency in glutathione can be a challenge. There are blood tests available, although they can be costly, and are not entirely accurate. I usually look at the selenium levels, as if someone has a selenium deficiency, then chances are they also have a glutathione deficiency. Unfortunately, many people I consult with do have a deficiency in selenium. And while eating selenium rich foods such as Brazil nuts and sardines can help, supplementation is usually required.

In summary, glutathione is commonly deficient in people with Graves’ Disease and Hashimoto’s Thyroiditis. And because this substance is important for immune system health, as well as the health of the liver and the gut, it is important to correct this deficiency. While it is difficult to increase the intracellular levels by taking glutathione supplements orally, one can increase their levels by eating foods that help to increase the production of glutathione, as well as taking certain precursors, such as alpha lipoic acid, selenium, and L-Glutamine. The herb milk thistle can also help to increase glutathione production.
Ribosylcysteine, or Ribose-Cysteine is recognized in improving liver and kidney function. It is also known as Riboceine, and commercially sold as a MaxOne supplement.

Alpha-Lipoic Acid, Selenium and Silymarin (Milk Thistle) are the main supplements used by Dr. Burt Berkson to regenerate the liver after amanita mushroom poisoning.