Glimpse into Hashimoto's disease

I have Hashimoto's disease. This is an autoimmune disease, which means that my body is attacking itself.
For an unknown reason, I have a high level of antibodies in my blood. This could be because I have had many viruses and illnesses in the past, but even with modern science, it will probably always be a mystery to me. Many things can trigger Hashimoto's disease, and one thing is said to be food intolerances. I have struggled with increasingly worsening undiagnosed food intolerances for at least ten years. My gut was badly damaged and my adrenal gland's ability to produce the correct cortisol levels was effected before I discovered my severe gastro symptoms were caused by a wide range of food intolerances. So in my case, food intolerances could well be the reason for the development of Hashimoto's.
When I was first diagnosed with Hashimoto's two months ago, my level of antibodies was 2000. It is meant to be less than 60. Four days ago, it was 2700 (Needless to say, I am currently not feeling well!).
When I am having a Hashimoto's attack, and my antibodies increase, my body becomes confused and in trying to protect me from an outside intruder, thinks the cells that make up my thyroid are what it needs to attack. Subsequently, my thyroid tissue is slowly killed off, and my thyroid overproduces thyroid hormone in its distress. This causes me to be in a state of hyperthyroidism, causing symptoms such as nausea, muscles aches and pains, dizziness, light headedness, a vertigo like sensation, anxiety, foggy brain, memory loss and confusion, shakiness, blurry vision, a fast heart rate, extreme fatigue, an upset stomach, loss of appetite, severe insomnia, weight loss; generally feeling horrible and miserable!
Eventually, someone with Hashimoto's can get to a stage where

the thyroid can not produce any more hormone, so then you sit in a state of hypothyroidism. Due to past symptoms, I can probably say I have been in this state, but as yet blood tests have not caught this stage since my diagnosis. I am currently on Carbimazole, a medication which stops my thyroid producing its own hormone so as it bring me down from hyperthyroidism (for the second time in two months!), it is possible to go hypo and I have to monitor for this. Symptoms can be severe fatigue, depression, weight gain, swelling, muscle aches etc.
Hashimoto's disease differs from other thyroid conditions. Ultimately it is an autoimmune disease which by chance chooses the thyroid to attack (Grave's disease is another autoimmune disease which happens to attack the thyroid). Hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism can be caused due to faults and damage to the thyroid. These can be treated by medication and apparently have a good success rate. (Some conditions result in the need for surgery though so they are by no means a walk in the park!). I wish I had been warned that treating Hashimoto's is different and can be difficult. My family and I heard "thyroid" and thought, based on experiences of several friends, it would be easily fixed. My doctor did mention, almost in passing, that the rule of thirds was relevant; one third of people treated feel a lot better, a third feel a bit better and a third don't feel better. However I wish he had given me more of a black and white warning. After years of doctor's shrugging their shoulders at you, you hear a diagnosis and think, this is it, I can be fixed.
The reason Hashimoto's can be difficult to treat is because of the fluctuating levels of hormones due to the attacks on the thyroid. It is therefore tricky to time commencement of thyroid hormone replacement without creating a state of hyperthyroidism. Hormone replacement is done with the intention of stopping your own production of thyroid hormone so that when the thyroid is under attack, there is not the overproduction of hormone and subsequent hyperthyroidism.
I have a long road ahead of me still. However, it feels like I have travelled miles and miles of mountainous terrain thus far

in the lead up to diagnosis, so I feel I have no option but to be optimistic. It is possible that I may not tolerate the hormone replacement. I have to wait til my levels get lower again before I try again to commence it (I was commenced on it for the first time at diagnosis, and promptly went into hyperthyroidism, had lower levels then had an attack and went hyper again.) I feel apprehensive that when I commence therapy again, I will again go into hyperthyroidism. Not only does this mean that I might never successfully be able to undertake the treatment, it also means more time feeling horrible. Without therapy, I may have to put up with the symptoms I always get as my body fluctuates between low, normal and high levels of thyroid hormone. This is a bleak prospect as even at my best, I only get a few days a week of feeling good. I also feel apprehensive because if I feel worse again with the medication, or have to deal with symptoms without medication, I have difficultly maintaining a normal life; i.e my work attendance takes a beating, my social life is not existent; everything is affected.

I plan to blog my experiences and things I learn along my road since diagnosis. I have found it so helpful reading other people’s experiences over the years, so I hope to give some help to others. I will also blog about food intolerances and the recipes I learn.

