

Are You Stressing Your Hormones?

Creating health during menopause is every woman's goal. We are led to believe estrogen-or lack of it-is the cause of menopause symptoms. To clarify, estrogen is not the primary hormone produced by the ovaries. Ovaries also produce androgens, such as DHEA and testosterone, as well as progesterone. Total well-being depends on adequate levels of these hormones.

Organs and body sites other than just ovaries produce androgenic hormones. These include adrenal glands, the skin, muscles, brain, pineal gland, hair follicles, and body fat. As the hormone production decreases in the ovaries, the production of androgenic hormones increases from these other sources. It's clear, healthy women are well equipped to handle hormone changes, not requiring hormone replacement. Approximately 15% of women are symptom free.

If you approach menopause in a state of emotional and nutritional depletion that has affected optional adrenal function, you will need hormonal, nutritional, emotional, and other support during the menopause transition until your endocrine balance is restored.

Symptoms of Adrenal Stress

Are you experiencing menopause symptoms? If so, your underlying problem may be adrenal stress. The most common symptoms of adrenal stress are:

- Alcohol intolerance
- Alternating diarrhea and constipation
- Apprehension
- Auto-immune diseases
- Auto-immune hepatitis
- Craving for sweets
- Difficulty building muscle
- Difficulty gaining weight
- Dizziness that occurs upon standing
- Dry and thin skin
- Excessive hunger
- Feelings of frustration
- Food and/or inhalant allergies
- Headaches
- Hypoglycemia
- Inability to concentrate
- Indigestion
- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Lightheadedness
- Low blood pressure
- Low body temperature
- Mental depression

- Moments of confusion
- Nervousness
- Osteoporosis
- Palpitations [heart fluttering]
- PMS
- Poor memory
- Poor resistance to infections
- Scanty perspiration
- Tendency towards inflammation
- Unexplained hair loss
- Weakness

Factors in Creating Adrenal Stress

When your body is stressed at sustained high levels, the over production of the hormone cortisol, produced by the adrenals, gradually tears your body down. It destroys healthy muscle and bone; slows down healing and normal cell replacement; co-opts biochemicals needed to make other vital hormones; impairs digestion, metabolism and mental function; interferes with healthy endocrine function; and weakens your immune system.

Common causes of adrenal stress include:

- Anger
- Chronic illness
- Chronic infection
- Chronic inflammation
- Chronic pain
- Chronic-severe allergies
- Depression
- Excessive exercise
- Fear
- Going to sleep late
- Guilt
- Hypoglycemia
- Light-cycle disruption
- Malabsorption
- Maldigestion
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Overwork/ physical or mental strain
- Sleep deprivation
- Surgery
- Temperature extremes
- Toxic exposure
- Trauma/injury
- Worry/anxiety

Restoring Adrenal Health

It's important to emphasize the role of emotional factors. Guilt, pain from past hurts, self-destructive habits, unresolved relationship problems-your past and present emotional experience may serve as an ever-present stressor. Dealing with these concerns directly is much more beneficial than trying to compensate for the stress they create.

Conventional medicine's focus on drugs tends to suppress early-stage symptoms rather than treat their underlying causes. This can have the effect of delaying treatment until a disease state has developed.

You can restore your adrenal health by the following actions:

- Think positive thoughts. If a concern starts to tug at your thoughts or emotions, try to find the positive side. See everything as a learning experience not a message that you have messed up or are defective in any way. Remember that there are no "problems", only situations. All situations have an answer! Learn to not take on other people's concerns. Find a favorite affirmation book or calendar to remind you each day of something positive.
- Make necessary healthy dietary changes to enrich your nutrition and reduce carbohydrates and stimulants. Take a high quality or professional vitamin/mineral supplement, including essential fatty acids from organic & coconut oil, flax seed oil or organic, unrefined hemp seed oil. Also, consider a complete Vitamin B supplement for help with stress.
- **Reducing stress includes meditation, moderate exercise, and taking more time for you.** It's helpful to make a list of your stressors, especially those that are constant. If needed, make lifestyle and/or friendship changes to get out of the stress track.
- Get more rest. Your body needs time to heal. The body does the most healing between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. If you are up during these times you are robbing your body of the natural healing process. Be sure to sleep in total darkness.
- Accept nurturing and positive feedback from those around you. Getting a pet can do wonders in this area.
- Make a list of priorities and let the rest go. Don't try to be Wonder Woman.
- Use herbs, aromatherapy, acupuncture, and massage. A massage two times a month is not only great for the body but heavenly for the spirit.
- Consider bio-identical hormone support. Please check with your health practitioner for proper testing and dosage or contact us here at BNMC for hormonal testing.

Thank you and be well!