

# Simple Strategies to Restoring Your Adrenal Health



## Stress is, and always was, unavoidable

For that reason, the body has built-in methods to help manage it. The adrenal glands - small glands that are located on top of the kidneys - produce the hormone cortisol, as well as adrenaline and noradrenaline, in times of times. This creates what is known as the 'fight, flight or freeze' response. Traditionally, when exposed to a life threatening event, our body would fight, run or 'play dead' to ward off an attack. The threat would subside and our nervous system would quickly return to its former relaxed state.

Nowadays, we perceive stress constantly, causing our body to continually produce cortisol in an effort to resist the stress. When cortisol remains elevated, we begin to feel symptoms such as anxiety, feeling wired, insomnia, digestive upset, as well as imbalances in other hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and thyroid hormones.

If the stress continues, our body simply cannot keep up with the constant demand for cortisol. The adrenals instead dramatically reduce cortisol production in an effort to protect our body.

We may then transition into experiencing symptoms of 'low cortisol' such as:

- Fatigue
- Blood sugar imbalances (especially in the morning)
- Increased infection
- Depression
- Low libido
- Increased colds, flus, and infections

Additional hormones may be affected such as DHEA and aldosterone.

## Why Test Salivary Cortisol?

We test salivary cortisol to determine what 'stage' of adrenal stress (aka 'adrenal fatigue') you are in. There are different treatment guidelines depending on whether you are producing excess or insufficient amounts of cortisol.

## Nutritional Recommendations

- Include plenty of mineral rich foods in your diet, such as: bone broth, kelp, dark leafy greens, Himalayan sea salt
- Include plenty of foods rich in B-vitamins, such as: leafy greens, organ meats, eggs, lentils, beans, avocados
- Reduce high-sugar foods and refined carbohydrates - both encourage the release for more cortisol, stressing the adrenals further
- Decrease stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine
- Consider B-complex, Vitamin C, Magnesium, and Multi-Mineral Supplementation

## Lifestyle Recommendations

- Get plenty of sleep - at least 8 hours. If you have trouble falling asleep, ensure that you create a nighttime routine: turn off all electronics, dim the lights, stop working, and begin to prepare for bed at least 1 hour before falling asleep.
- Create 'unstructured time' - time during which you can relax, rest, or do a fun activity.
- Create a self-care/stress relief routine - this will be different for everyone. Choose activities that promote relaxation and help you to unwind. Examples include:
  - Journaling
  - Yoga
  - Walking in nature
  - Reading a book
  - Having a bath with Epsom salts
  - Painting
  - Knitting
  - Meditation.
- Whenever possible, change your appraisal of stressful situations. Our body tends to feel stress when things occur in a way that is different from what we expected: 'going with the flow' and evaluating why negative emotions may be coming up for us are both helpful methods to decrease our stress response.

