
Women's Nutrition Matters, LLC

February Newsletter

February 2010



February Focus—Managing the Stress in your Life: What you need to know about Adrenal Fatigue!

I thought about writing about heart health, being that it is February, and Valentine's Day is around the corner, but I felt more drawn to talk about the problem of adrenal fatigue because it is a pervasive and insidious problem that often goes undiagnosed. And besides, we are all overcome by stress!

I have taken the liberty of reviewing and summarizing information from the October 2008 issue of *Integrative Medicine: a Clinician's Journal*, and also the October 2009 issue of *Natural Solutions Magazine*.

What is Stress?

Everyone knows what stress is, and no one can avoid it—stress is any response of the body to any demand, whether it is good or bad. The most stress-inducing emotion is a sense of helplessness---a feeling all too common in these times of job loss and financial woes. Stress can be emotional or physical, and it is our reaction

to stress that determines how our health will ultimately be affected. Stress causes a cortisol response and an adrenaline release, both of which release blood sugar into the blood stream. This prepares our bodies to fight or flee! If these levels of stress hormones remain elevated for too long (as in chronic stress) we see negative effects on fertility, immune function and many other areas as the adrenal glands become fatigued. Symptoms that you may experience include fatigue, always being sick, decreased sex drive, panic attacks or depression, cloudy thinking and hair loss. For every minute you experience stress, it takes 60 minutes to remove the flood of stress hormones. Think about that for a moment! I have written about stress reducing techniques such as breath work, meditation and developing a mindfulness practice in past articles, but it bears repeating: in order to get a handle on stress management, it is imperative that you include these techniques in your daily living. It can be as simple as a meditation practice for 10 minutes in the morning and night. It can be deep, cleansing breaths when you feel tension mounting in your jaw and shoulders. It can be a lunch time walk or bike ride. Find things that switch you out of stress mode, and incorporate them into your life. Period.

The role of Diet and Adrenal Health

Diet is intimately related to adrenal health and therefore to the stress experience. Cortisol levels are naturally highest in the morning after your night-long fast because low blood sugar causes a release of cortisol. You need to know this, because every time you skip a meal, you cause a surge of cortisol—it is your body's way

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of ensuring you have enough blood sugar available to meet your needs. Caffeine produces a similar response. What does this mean? It means to eat small meals throughout the day to keep your cortisol levels (and therefore your blood sugar levels) at an even keel, and keep caffeine consumption to a minimum. You also need to be mindful of replenishing the nutrients that are often used up dealing with chronic stress- namely, the water-soluble vitamins such as vitamins C and B-complex. And, there are many nutrients that help the body deal with stress and act as calming agents—minerals like calcium and magnesium to name two.

Nutrients and Foods to Support the Adrenals

Here are some things to keep in mind to nourish and support your adrenals. Try to incorporate several of these items daily, and especially in times of blatant, unrelenting stress!

- ✚ **Have breakfast** within an hour of rising, and have dinner completed by 7. Add in mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks and a small snack before bedtime to keep cortisol levels even.
- ✚ Eat enough **high-quality protein** which includes organic meats, eggs and fish, nuts, seeds and beans. Include small amounts of protein in all meals and snacks.
- ✚ Include **healthy fats** which your body needs to make hormones and cholesterol—which your body needs! This includes coconut, almond and olive oils, avocado, nuts and seeds
- ✚ **Keep your carbs complex:** 5-6 servings of veggies daily, and whole grains such as kasha, oatmeal, wild rice and barley.

Sprouted grains are easier to digest and are higher in protein and other nutrients.

- ✚ **Consider herbs.** Adaptogenic herbs help to support the body particularly during stressful times. There are many adaptogens out there, but my favorites are Siberian Ginseng, Holy Basil (also known as Tulsi), Rhodiola and Ashwaganda. Buy a reputable brand and take as directed—or contact me and I will recommend herbs specifically for your type.

There are several nutrients that I deem essential for supporting the body and mind. Mind you, a simple multivitamin won't come close to giving you what you need. Everyone should consider taking a vitamin/nutrient regimen which I would be glad to help set up for you! Here are the basics for supporting adrenal health:

- ✚ **Vitamin C** preferably in powdered form—it absorbs better. Take 1 gram, 2 to 3 times a day.
- ✚ **B complex**, a balanced blend of the complete B vitamin family—take twice daily.
- ✚ **Calcium citrate** which is a very usable form. Take 400-600mg twice daily.
- ✚ **Magnesium** (a form other than oxide, which is terribly absorbed!) at 400 mg twice daily.
- ✚ **Vitamin E complex** which should include alpha and gamma tocopherols, at 400 IU twice daily.
- ✚ **Vitamin D3-** check your levels, but everyone should be taking at least 2000 IU daily, and you may need more like

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5000-10,000IU daily to get your levels up to snuff!



products I recommend and more.
www.womensnutritionmatters.com

It is a privilege to create these newsletters for you each month. It is my hope that you will forward them to people you know and love that might benefit from the information herein. Please feel free to print them out and pas them along.

Have a great February!

Warmly,

Diane Lassen, RN, HHC, Health Researcher

Supporting your adrenals really isn't much different from the healthful program that I recommend for my clients. Certain things get added or deleted with each specific case, but in general, the plan is the same.

- ✦ Eat real, whole foods
- ✦ Eat small amounts more frequently
- ✦ Don't eat garbage
- ✦ Supplement accordingly
- ✦ Exercise
- ✦ Develop a repertoire of de-stressing techniques

I hope I have given you some things to think about this month. As always, I am available for consultation both in person and by phone. I would love to work with you!

You can contact me via email at

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Or by phone at 908-377-0773

Please visit my website where you will find archives of my past newsletters, blog posts,