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# Adrenal Function

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When you're exposed to stress, your adrenal glands produce hormones called cortisol and adrenaline that help you adapt to the stress. If the stress accumulates or becomes chronic, your adrenals can be over worked causing them to slow down. When that happens, you can't adapt to normal everyday stress. Hans Selye wrote a book called Stress without Distress. He discussed the side effects of too much stress. They include: 1. Hypertrophy or swelling of the adrenal cortex causing adrenal dysfunction. 2. Shrinking of the thymus gland and lymph nodes causing diminished immune function. 3. Gastro-intestinal irritation causing ulceration. 4. Thyroid dysfunction causing low energy (fatigue.) 5. Pancreatic dysfunction causing blood sugar regulation problems contributing to hypoglycemia and even type II diabetes. As you can see, stress can have far reaching effects.

The following is a list of symptoms that indicate possible adrenal dysfunction: fatigue, anxiety, an inability to deal with everyday stress, chronic sickness (lowered resistance), muscle weakness, dizziness, light-headedness, inability to sleep or interrupted sleep, and many other symptoms confused or associated with hypoglycemia.

If you have any of these symptoms, you should be evaluated immediately. I have some simple tests that can assess your adrenals. One is done by taking your blood pressure in both the sitting and standing position. Normally, it should increase slightly when you stand. If it drops, adrenal dysfunction is suspected. A second test is done by shining a light in the eye. If the pupil dilates rather than constricts, adrenal dysfunction is also suspected. A third test is called the adrenal stretch test. If a strong muscle becomes weak after being stretched, it is another indicator of adrenal dysfunction.

Caffeine intake should also be evaluated when adrenal dysfunction is suspected. Caffeine has the same effect as too much stress causing the adrenals to be over worked. For optimal health, caffeine intake should be eliminated to reduce the drain on the adrenals.

If your adrenals test weak, we have some natural alternatives to relieving your symptoms and supporting healthy adrenal function.

If you have questions, please call or email me at [gbirdsley@msn.com](mailto:gbirdsley@msn.com).

Dr. Galen

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