

Have You Drained Your Adrenals?

Your adrenal glands are small in size but mighty in function. As endocrine glands that sit on top of your kidneys, adrenal glands produce specific hormones in response to stress such as cortisol. They also help regulate immune function and blood pressure.

Adrenal Diseases

Anytime someone has an overt and severe over functioning or under functioning of the adrenal glands, he or she could have one of the few types of true adrenal diseases. These diseases are fairly rare. The two most common are highlighted here:

Cushing's Disease

Cushing's Disease causes the adrenal glands to *over* function. Some characteristics of this disease are having a "moon" face, abdominal obesity, muscle weakness, poor wound healing, and sometimes kidney stones. Cushing's Disease is usually caused by a tumor that promotes over secretion of cortisol – our body's stress hormone. Having high levels of cortisol all the time is like having your body in a continuous state of being prepared to run from a bear (fight or flight concept). Over time, this has detrimental effects on your body.

Addison's Disease

Just the opposite, Addison's Disease is when the adrenal glands *under* function. This is characterized by unrelenting fatigue, low blood pressure, dehydration, anorexia, nausea, and intolerance to cold. Sometimes Addison's Disease can be caused by a tumor on the adrenal glands that causes them to shut down. But it can also be caused by a severe shock to the system. Over time, this can also have adverse effects on your body.

Adrenal Insufficiency

But what about those folks who don't have an overt disease but still don't have optimal adrenal function? This scenario is actually very common and is often not recognized by the conventional medical community. Signs of adrenal insufficiency could be fatigue, depression, weight management issues, mood swings, sleep disturbances, and low blood pressure. Typically, these types of complaints to your doctor will result in a prescription drug recommendation.

Unfortunately, without proper intervention and finding the root cause, the problem only gets worse. And if the problem gets worse, it increases your risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and reduced immune function – which leaves you vulnerable to a whole host of illnesses. Yikes!

Root Causes of Adrenal Imbalances

Adrenal dysfunction is attributed to persistent stress. The key word here is persistent. Under "normal" circumstances, our adrenals help us get through brief moments of stress such as running from a bear to stay alive. But the world we live in today gives our bodies the perception that we are almost continuously running from the proverbial bear. After some time, our adrenals wear out; they can no longer get us through periods of stress as they were designed to do.

Furthermore, the sources of persistent stress are different for everyone. The first thing most people think of is a stressful job. You know, the one that is over-the-top demanding, has ruthless hours, and is managed by leaders that expect perfection. And most people feel trapped in their dreadful day-to-day job because they have a mortgage to pay. Which is stressful. Ouch.

But there are plenty of other sources of stress that most people don't realize. Without a doubt, poor diet and nutrient deficiencies are key players in adrenal dysfunction. Sometimes it's not just the poor diet, but food sensitivities that are contributing to compromised adrenal function.

Other things that might overtax the adrenal glands include exposure to toxins and/or heavy metals, overuse of stimulants (you know that person who drinks a pot of coffee to keep alert through the day), chronic infections, poor sleep habits, trauma history, emotional and/or relationship stress, family changes, and so much more...you get the idea.

Rescuing Your Adrenals

First and foremost, identify foods that are causing inflammation and promptly remove them from your diet. This would most certainly be processed foods with harmful fats, sugars, and chemicals, but it could also be perfectly healthy food that your immune system has wrongfully identified as a bad antigen. In other words, identifying food sensitivities can help restore adrenal function. Secondly, determine the key nutrients your body needs to support immune function. Correct deficiencies, but also correct insufficiencies to achieve optimal function. Do ensure adequate magnesium and B6 intake as they are key players in adrenal function.

Find helpful ways to manage stress. Notice we didn't say eliminate stress. That's impossible. We may be able to reduce it by selectively prioritizing certain things in our lives, but the reality is that we'll always have stressors. We just need to manage them. Try meditation, counseling, prayer, exercise, etc. – find what works for you.

Personalized Support

Following the advice above is a great start, but it might not be enough. Get personalized support with a professional that can help you identify the foods that are most supportive of your immune function and key nutrients that your body needs.

Do you suspect you have adrenal insufficiency? Are you tired all the time? Is your capacity to manage stress limited? Connect with [A to Zinc Nutrition, LLC](#) for a free assessment to find the food and nutrient path to help you feel better.