



Health Fact Sheet Stress – Burnout!

Unfortunately chronic stress, often leading to adrenal burnout, is all too common. This is both debilitating and can have a long term impact on adrenal function if not supported. Ideally time should be taken to rest and recuperate and steps also taken to change the situation that has been causing the long term stress.

Our adrenals are small glands which sit on top of our kidneys and produce stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol. When exposed to long term stress, they become exhausted as Nature didn't intend us to live the high stress lives that seem to be so common nowadays. Common symptoms of this are:

- excess abdominal weight
- decreased immunity
- lack of concentration
- irritability
- disrupted sleep
- constant fatigue.

Almost inevitably there are knock-on effects from this – blood sugar levels go off balance, digestion becomes compromised and we start to make poor choices, partly because of high levels of adrenal hormones which put us into our 'survival' brain, rather than our 'logical' brain, and partly because we are so tired.

There are a variety of things we can do to support and nurture our adrenals on a day to day basis, and get them back to health. Talking as one who has been through adrenal burnout, it is preferable that you never let yourself get there, and take steps to prevent it happening, but if it does happen you need to spend some time and attention getting them back to health. Let's look at some of the things you can do.

Diet:

Cortisol levels in the blood will impact on blood sugar levels, so you need to eat to ensure a steady supply of energy and avoid blood sugar dips.

Breakfast is important. It is not unusual for those with adrenal issues to have no appetite first thing in the morning, but you need to eat. Even if you don't feel hungry, having a nutritious breakfast within an hour of rising – preferably containing some protein – is important, and will provide benefits to your energy levels and your metabolism and help keep cortisol levels balanced. You want to prevent increasing cortisol output beyond the normal curve as this will not only lead to increased weight being held around the middle but also increase the appetite and your body's level of unhealthy stimulation.

To prevent further energy crashes it is a good idea to eat 5 *small* meals a day – breakfast, mid-late morning, lunch, mid-afternoon and dinner. If you have a tendency to wake in the small hours of the morning a low glycaemic snack just before bed is also a good idea. (see fact sheet Glycaemic Index).

So that's when to eat, now what about *what* to eat:

- ❖ Avoid high glycaemic, sugary, highly processed foods.
- ❖ Avoid or cut right back on caffeine – it will overstimulate and stress the adrenals and affect sleep patterns. The same with alcohol.
- ❖ Strive to eat foods made of fresh whole foods, preferably organic or locally grown, without colours, dyes, chemicals, preservatives or added hormones.
- ❖ Salt cravings are not uncommon with adrenal issues - salt can increase blood pressure, but low blood pressure (hypotension) is a very common sign of adrenal imbalance. Use a good quality salt such as Himalayan salt or Celtic sea salt.

The following table may be helpful:

Adrenal Draining	Adrenal Restoring
<p>Foods: Refined foods High carbohydrate foods – cakes, biscuits, sticky buns, chocolate or snack bars, processed cereals, white bread Sugar in any form</p>	<p>Foods: Foods containing vitamins B, C, E, magnesium, zinc, selenium Green leafy vegetables Lots of fresh fruit and vegetables Brewer's yeast, fresh sprouts Deep ocean and oily fish Nuts, seeds, legumes Whole grains and brown rice Garlic, onions, shitake mushrooms Tyrosine containing foods – fish, chicken, pork, dairy, wholegrains, lentils</p>
<p>Drinks: Drinks containing caffeine Alcohol Fizzy drinks – lucozade, colas, lemonade etc</p>	<p>Drinks: Gingseng (Panax) Eleuthero/Siberian Gingseng (eleutherococcus senticosus) Herbal teas such as chamomile, valerian, passionflower Vegetable juices Water</p>

Including protein in some form, in all your meals and snacks will have a stabilising effect on blood sugar levels – this is particularly important with breakfast. This covers not just animal protein – meat, dairy, eggs – but plant-based proteins – lentils, chia seeds. Quinoa, nuts, seeds, pulses such a chickpeas (hummus), tempeh, tofu, avocado, broccoli.

Supplements

Name	Comments
Very Important: B Complex Vitamin C Magnesium Zinc Omega 3 Fish oils	<p>Needed for healthy nervous system. May need to take extra B12, sublingually, and also B5 in higher levels than in most complexes.</p> <p>Very important for adrenal function and during stress you lose high amounts through urine.</p> <p>Supports the adrenals and nervous system.</p>
Helpful CO-Enzyme Q10 Silica Protein powder (brown rice or pea) - preferably organic Glandular extract	<p>Good antioxidant and required for muscular energy</p> <p>Can help 'frayed' nerves</p> <p>This can be useful way of ensuring protein is taken with breakfast or any other meal.</p> <p>Can be helpful to support adrenal insufficiency whilst adrenals are recovering. Take under practitioner guidance.</p>
Herbs Adaptogens – schizandra, Siberian ginseng, ashwaganda, rhodiola Licorice root	<p>Adaptogens support the adrenals. Choose one of these.</p> <p>Helps support the adrenals and also to curb sugar cravings</p>

A supplement regime for supporting and restoring the adrenals looks like this:

1 B complex daily
 1 x Pantothenic acid (B5) daily
 400 -600 mg magnesium daily
 1 – 2 gm Vitamin C daily
 15 – 20 mg zinc daily
 1 – 2 gm Omega 3 daily
 Schizandra either as a tincture or capsules
 Licorice Root either a tincture of capsules

Adrenal Recovery Soup:*

This soup can be helpful as it is rich in adrenal supporting nutrients.
If you don't have culinary cups just use a smallish mug as your measure.

16 oz/ 450 gm green beans
1 cup chopped celery
1 courgette (zucchini) sliced
1 medium onion, chopped
1 cup tomato juice
1 cup spring water
2 tbsp raw honey
1 tsp paprika
1 cup chicken broth

Combine all the ingredients together in a saucepan.
Simmer for an hour until the vegetables are tender.
Season.
If you prefer a smooth soup, use a blender.

*thanks to Dolores S Downey

Finally – be aware that many people with adrenal fatigue also have blood sugar issues that are caused by the adrenal stress, but will continue to keep firing the adrenals if not addressed. (see separate fact sheet for information)