



Dr. Melissa Bradwell, ND

735 Victoria Street, Kamloops, BC, V2C 2B5

Phone: 250.374.9700

fax: 250.374.9785

www.naturopathkamloops.com



The Stress Connection

Are you suffering from feelings of fatigue, unexplained cravings (especially for salt or sugar), poor sleep, low blood pressure, weakened immune system, low sex drive, inability to cope or a tendency to gain and inability to lose weight? If you answered 'yes' to any of these symptoms, you could be dealing with adrenal fatigue.

What are the Adrenals?

Your adrenal glands are part of the endocrine system and are located directly on top of your kidneys. They are the glands that help our bodies regulate stress and are the producers of cortisol, our 'stress hormone'. Along with producing cortisol, the adrenals are also responsible for controlling fluid regulation, initiating our 'fight or flight' reaction to acute stress, preventing osteoporosis, autoimmune disease, or cardiovascular disease and maintaining normal sex hormone levels, including a healthy libido.

The Endocrine System

The endocrine system is made up of a group of glands each with their own set of hormones that transfer information to other glands to coordinate the functions of different parts of the body. Different processes in the body that are affected include growth, metabolism, sexual development and function, adaptation to stress, mood and salt and water balance. Because the parts are interconnected so closely, any imbalance of one hormone in the endocrine system can easily affect the balance of others. This is why, in some cases, having symptoms of low thyroid function can exist in the presence of a 'normal' thyroid test.

The Damage of Stress

We all know that stress is bad and detrimental to our health. What we may not know is how other lifestyle factors like poor diet, nutrient deficiencies, impaired liver function, shift work, food allergies/sensitivities, poor gastrointestinal function and the use of certain medications are equally 'stressful' and can also contribute to hormone imbalance.

In acute stress, the body responds by releasing cortisol to help the body cope with that stress. This is useful and healthy in the short term. Chronic, long-term stress, has the opposite effect resulting in the adrenals trying to maintain high levels of cortisol and eventually burning out and left unable to produce enough cortisol, resulting in adrenal fatigue. This is then followed by low levels of cortisol, which results in a decreased ability for the body to cope and function properly.

Stress Management

Remember that good stress is still stress and that sometimes, life throws us some curveballs that can't be avoided. Stress reducing techniques like getting adequate sleep, regular exercise and eating a healthy diet are all things that can help in those unexpected or more stressful situations. Certain vitamins and herbs are also beneficial in helping the body cope as certain nutrients are used up quicker in periods of stress and adaptogenic herbs are great at allowing the body to 'adapt' to stress with a more gentle effect on the body.