



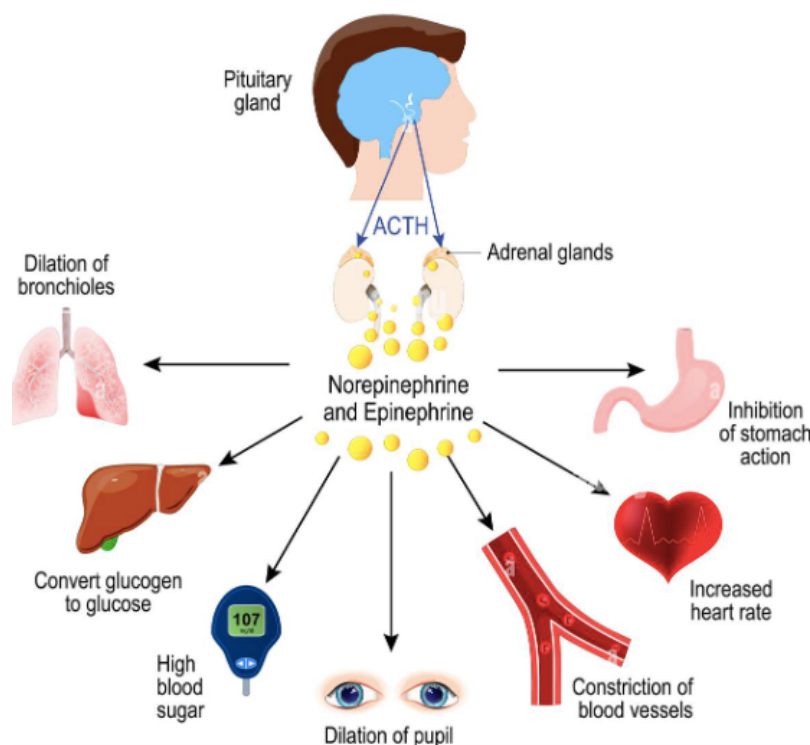
What is Adrenal Fatigue?

Our functional medicine doctor, Dr Zodwa Ngobese of (Livingfit-iQ) explains why standard lab tests sometimes overlook symptoms of adrenal disease.

Fatigue, aches and pains, weight fluctuations, light-headedness, hair loss...

All of these signs and symptoms point to a potential case of "adrenal exhaustion," a term used to describe a type of persistent stress. Although many other health issues can present with same symptoms, it's important to remember that adrenal exhaustion is not usually the source of these symptoms. Adrenal fatigue is a topic that frequently comes up in conversations about functional medicine.

Acute stress response





Understanding Your Body's Stress Response

Understanding adrenal exhaustion first requires some context about how the body's stress organs and stress responses typically function under ideal conditions. This is because the purpose of functional medicine is to return the body to optimal performance.

The parasympathetic state, also known as the "rest-and-digest" state, and the sympathetic state, sometimes known as the "fight-or-flight" state, are the two stress-related states that the human nervous system is always in.

The parasympathetic nervous system is activated during moments of relaxation, and we benefit from all of our bodies' physiological processes that are healthful, restorative, and balancing. These include regular menstrual cycles, lowered heart rate and blood pressure, healthy digestion, and a peaceful feeling.



When under stress, the sympathetic nervous system, sometimes known as the "fight-or-flight" response, takes over, raising blood pressure and heart rate while slowing down biological processes that are not necessary for overcoming the stressor.

While experiencing periods of stress throughout our lives is both normal and expected (possibly even on a daily basis, to some extent), staying in the



sympathetic state for too long or being exposed to stress triggers too frequently can result in health issues that frequently have incapacitating symptoms.

What is Adrenal Fatigue?



Although there are many other ways that life stress can manifest, we frequently consider it to be caused by psycho-emotional elements like relationship or work pressures. However, in addition to these factors, the body's stress response can also be brought on by sickness, exertion (particularly vigorous exercise), dietary deficiencies (especially undereating), and other factors.

The sympathetic division of the nervous system, which is part of the body's natural stress response, is well-equipped to deal with stress in the life of a healthy individual. A person's brain communicates with two glands in their abdomen to release stress hormones during a healthy stress reaction.

Although life stress can manifest in a variety of ways, we typically blame psycho-emotional elements like pressures from relationships or the employment. In addition to these causes, the body's stress response can also be triggered by sickness, activity (especially hard exercise), nutritional deficiencies (particularly undereating), and other factors.

The sympathetic nervous system, a part of the body's natural stress response, is well-equipped to deal with stress in a healthy person. The brain communicates with two glands in the abdomen to release stress hormones during a healthy stress response.



Along Comes Too Much Stress

The body's stress response degenerates when a person is exposed to stress for too long or too frequently. This malfunction has a recognizable pattern and ends with a combination of signs and symptoms that are frequently referred to as adrenal fatigue:

Stage 1

The body's stress reaction kind of becomes overactive during the first stage of chronic stress. This indicates that when a stress trigger occurs, the release of stress hormones rises faster than usual and stays elevated for a considerable amount of time after the stress stimulus has passed.

Stage 2

In the second stage of chronic stress, the body starts to lose track of what is and is not a proper reason to evoke a response after being entrenched in a high-stress state for a while. As a result, the body develops a functionally backward pattern in which it releases stress hormones when no stress trigger is present and does not respond appropriately to situations where a person might anticipate to be provoked.

Stage 3

The body completely fails to elicit a typical stress response in the third stage of chronic stress. Even when actual triggers are present, the neurological system is unable to adequately communicate with the adrenal glands, which causes them to underproduce stress hormones. The medical term for all three stages of the chronic stress syndrome is hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis dysfunction, or HPA axis dysfunction. The symptoms that come along with this stage are frequently referred to as "burnout" or "adrenal exhaustion."

For each individual, the timing for progressing through the three stages of chronic stress and HPA axis dysfunction will appear different and be influenced by things like age, biological sex, co-existing conditions, and personal experience. This indicates that while some people with chronic stress may go swiftly to stage 3, maybe in only a few months, other people may not do so for years.



What are the symptoms?

Although the precise symptoms may also vary from person to person, the majority of people report some of the following:

- Muscle aches and joint pains;
- hair loss;
- headaches or migraines;
- skin blemishes;
- weight increase or loss;
- diminished libido or lack of enthusiasm;
- anxiety or depression
- Regular respiratory infections,
- low blood pressure,
- light-headedness,
- fatigue,
- mental confusion (also known as "brain fog"), and
- insomnia

What causes Adrenal Fatigue?

Although it is not the only cause of HPA axis dysfunction, chronic exposure to psycho-emotional stress is the most well-known one. Adrenal fatigue may also result from excessive activity, poor eating habits (particularly undereating), the use of stimulants like caffeine or nicotine, insufficient sleep, the use of specific drugs, and other lifestyle choices. The majority of individuals are ultimately predisposed to symptoms by a variety of triggers compounded over time.

However, HPA axis dysfunction is not the only cause of the signs and symptoms of adrenal fatigue. This implies that other circumstances might actually be the real cause. Other circumstances that could influence the emergence of these symptoms include:

- Nutritional deficiencies;
- clinical depression,
- anxiety, or other mood disorders;
- adrenal ailments including Addison's Disease;
- neurologic illness;
- autoimmune illness;
- thyroid dysfunction;

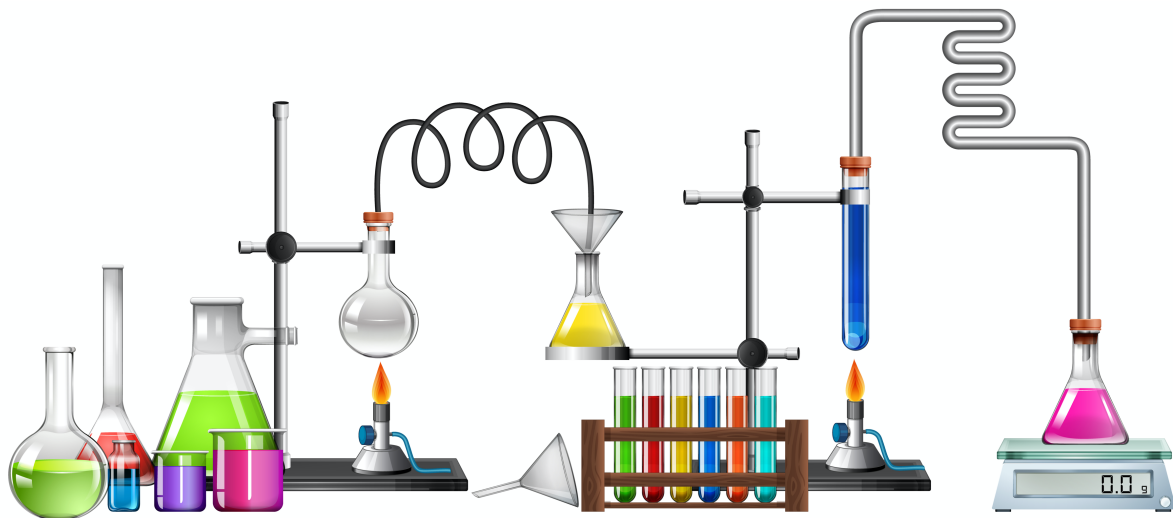


- an imbalance in gut bacteria;
- and more!

It's crucial to avoid assuming that adrenal fatigue is the accurate diagnosis due to the variety of probable factors that could be behind a person's symptoms. Functional medicine doctors are dedicated to an evidence-based approach, which means we perform diagnostic tests on our patients in order to make precise diagnoses and create a safe, efficient, and less intrusive treatment plan for them.

How Do we Diagnose Adrenal Fatigue in Functional Medicine?

A thorough history and review of your past illnesses and diseases needs to be done by a competent functional medicine doctor. The doctor will order a mix of specialty diagnostic blood, urine, saliva and urine tests that are to test for adrenal fatigue and related hormone disorders.



In order to rule out the possibility of other illnesses, a patient's Functional Medicine doctor may conduct some extra or alternative tests depending on their symptoms and medical history. The doctor uses the findings to make a diagnosis and put together a treatment plan.

How Does Functional Medicine Treat Adrenal Fatigue?



Treatment regimens also change for each patient because everyone is unique and the underlying causes of HPA axis dysfunction range greatly from person to person. Each treatment plan includes a number of lifestyle interventions, like dietary changes, physical activity, good sleep habits, and stress management. Additionally, you could be referred for co-management with other healthcare professionals.

Make an appointment with our [Functional Medicine](#) doctor if you are experiencing symptoms that you believe may be caused by chronic stress or anything else. In some instances, we additionally offer telemedicine consultations.

Costs

A baseline risk assessment will be required, which will be carried out our functional medicine consultation rates. We do not accept medical aid as payment for our services. Fees must be paid immediately following each consultation.

We will also give you a cost estimate for any additional functional laboratory costs, genomics tests, injections and IV therapies required. The costs for conventional laboratory tests are payable directly to the laboratory. All products are available on a cash-on-delivery basis.

Some of Our Partners



Our functional medicine diagnostic tests get done at accredited laboratories like Lancet, Ampath, Fagron Genomics, Geneway, Biometrix and MDS laboratories. We also source our high-quality products from renowned suppliers like Amipro Metagenics, Willow Wellness, Genologix, Xymogen, IDEXIS, Fagron and similar suppliers.

Contact Us

-  707 Josiah Gumede Road | Cowies Hill | Pinetown | 3610
-  Seda-eThekwini | 127 Johannes Nkosi Str. | Durban | 4000
-  0798957474
-  0313094484



✉ info@livingfit-iq.co.za
🖱 www.livingfit-iq.co.za