Adrenal Support

Adrenal glands are the two small yellow masses of tissue situated anterior to each kidney. Each adrenal gland is divided into two parts: the outer region, or adrenal cortex; and the inner core, or adrenal medulla. Each part functions as a distinct gland, but they both help the body regulate metabolism and deal with stress.

The adrenal cortex is involved with maintaining blood pressure and blood volume, the regulation of the immune system and metabolism, and the production of cortisol, estrogen and testosterone.

The adrenal medulla is controlled by the sympathetic nervous system. It secretes the hormones adrenaline and noradrenalin in response to sympathetic nerve stimulation, such as when you are physically injured, frightened, angry or under stress. Those hormones also bring about the response necessary for fight or flight, including causing blood to be routed to those organs necessary for emergency action.

It is important to care for the adrenal glands and keep them healthy. Our ancestors used adrenaline to fight wild animals to protect their families. Today people produce adrenaline while stuck sitting at a stoplight when they are late for a meeting. However, they are often not exercising enough to use up the adrenaline. Prolonged chronic stress causes elevated levels of cortisol, which can in turn lead to high blood pressure, arthritis and lowered immunity, among other conditions. Long-term stress will also lead to adrenal fatigue or exhaustion.

Here are some ideas to keep your adrenals in top form:

- Get counseling if you are in an unhappy situation, such as a job or marriage
- Explore ways to make positive change so you are not under stress
- Learn to let go of fear and worry
- Cultivate things that make you happy and nurture your soul
- Give yourself credit after accomplishing a goal
- Practice deep, relaxed breathing
- Exercise on a regular basis
- Receive massage
- Take time to listen to music and read an enjoyable book
- Nurture friendships with positive people
- Dine in a relaxed atmosphere
- Get a good night's sleep
- Practice living in harmony with your body's natural rhythms
- Forgo stimulants such as caffeine, sugar and nicotine
- Eat raw nuts and seeds
- Get vitamin B complex, calcium, magnesium and zinc

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“Adrenal Fatigue is Your Midlife Crisis? Create the Life You Desire,” by Ellen Ben Jones (Cote: in press, 2006)
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