Balancing Your Energy Hormones

Empower Yourself to Take Back Your Health

Up to 60 million Americans might benefit from better evaluation and care for hormonal imbalances

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It is time for concerned citizens to recognize that if you want to feel good, you must put your health into your own competent hands. You may have been raised to believe that “doctor knows best,” but in this new era, we are certain of just one thing: the one who best knows your history, life experience, and healing potential is you, and only you.

As a Doctor-Nurse team in practice for 30 years, we were alarmed at the sheer numbers of people dragging through our office, telling us that they felt they had hormone problems for years, but their doctors said they were fine. Over several years, we created a roadmap to empower people who know there’s something not right but can’t find acknowledgement within the hallowed halls of medical science.

What if your situation is not truly an abnormal medical problem, but instead simply borderline gland function? It could eventually deteriorate into a serious medical situation, but it doesn’t have to progress—you can take charge of your hormonal balance and learn to restore and revive your glands.

First, ask yourself: does anyone in my family have thyroid or autoimmune problems, like diabetes or MS? Then reflect back to when you began to notice that you weren’t quite yourself. Was it in puberty, after childbirth, around menopause, or perhaps at the time of a very stressful crisis in your life? If so, you are likely to have identified the time when your glands were unable to maintain their previous balance.

Second, look over your medical history. When did you start telling the doctor that you thought something was wrong with your thyroid or hormones? As it turns out, 20 million Americans are currently taking thyroid medication, and twice to thrice this amount would benefit from better thyroid, adrenal, or sex gland care. This means that up to 60 million Americans might benefit from better evaluation and care for mild hormonal imbalances.

Third, consider your exposure history. Did you grow up in agricultural or tropical areas using lots of pesticides and sprays? Did you live near chemical plants or incinerators when you were younger? Do you still use insecticides in your home, and are you living in a community that fluoridates its water? These are important questions to help you begin to understand the challenges you may be facing due to hormone-disrupting synthetic chemicals.

Even if you are taking thyroid medication, you may find that there are a number of natural ways to augment this care, and that you can benefit from making healthy changes.

You can start now, helping yourself and those you love, with simple home testing and over-the-counter remedies. This approach may be enough to restore you over time to your former self—full of life, full of vitality, full of energy. When you feel more balanced, you can face the world’s demands and do your best to make it a better place for us all.

Quick Quiz: Determine Your Endocrine Type

Below are a series of questions about the three different types of glands: thyroid, adrenal, and sex glands. The one gland with the highest number of “yes” answers (both high and low) to the questions below indicates which gland system is your apparent endo-type. This is where you might best focus your healing efforts.

Could You Be Low Thyroid?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:

- Problems with weight? Very easy to gain, or extremely hard to lose, despite sensible food intake and exercise?
- Problems with body temperature? Feel chilly when others don’t? Have cold feet and/or hands? Need to wear socks to bed? Have to dress in layers during the day? Slow to heat up with exercise?

—continued on page 38

• Problems with rate of body processes such as decreased reaction time, or slowed reflexes? Sluggish bowel (constipation)? Sluggish liver/ high cholesterol?
• Problems with energy? Severe fatigue, or utterly exhausted by the end of the day? Are there times during the day when energy drops out completely? Or do you feel like the plug is pulled on your energy?

Could You Be High Thyroid?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:
• Bulging eyes? Or do people comment that you're looking at them too intently?
• Excessively fast heart rate, or runs of skipped beats, or bothersome palpitations? Mild or coarse shaking of fingers or hands (tremor)?
• Swelling or tenderness of thyroid gland (goiter)?
• Panic attacks or breathlessness for no reason? Unusual irritability or hyped-up behavior change without clear cause? General anxiety or nervousness for no apparent reason?

Could You Be Low Adrenal?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:
• Easily frazzled? Fly off the handle frequently? Or do you startle easily or have a low tolerance for loud noises?
• Poor resistance to respiratory infections or asthma? Do you have a longer than normal recovery time from routine illness? Difficulty recuperating from unusual stress such as jet lag? Are you "thrown for a loop" by small things?
• Dizziness upon standing up? Low blood pressure? Susceptible to fainting?
• Low stamina for stress? Do you prefer to avoid any confrontations?

Could You Be High Adrenal?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:
• Normal thinking becomes easily confused and frazzled when rushed or under pressure?
• Swelling of fingers, ankles, limbs, or puffy face?
• Heart palpitations? High blood pressure?
• Unhealthy thinning skin? Easily injured or bruised? Or excessively oily skin?

Women: Could You Be Low Estrogen?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:
• Foggy thinking, or inability to think clearly through a dilemma?
• Hot flashes during the day? Excessive sweating at night?

Could You Be High Estrogen?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:
• Exceptionally fine, smooth, "glowing" skin, hardly needing creams and extra care?
• Heavy bleeding or uterine fibroids? Endometriosis diagnosed, or extremely uncomfortable uterine symptoms?
• Tender breasts, at times a sense of being bruised, or of excess fullness?
• Has PMS time been the most difficult time of month?

Men: Could You Be Low Testosterone?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:
• Decreased mental ability or decreased memory? Or noticeable foggy thinking?
• Decreased erection or sexual performance? Or decreased sex drive?
• Do you have a noticeable decrease in muscle mass?
• Apathy or low motivation for life?

Men: Could You Be High Testosterone?
Do you have any of the following symptoms:
• Constant pressured feeling? Or almost constant irritability or increased anxiousness for little reason?
• Increased aggressive behavior? Or excessive, near violent responses to provocation, with little interest in conciliation?
• Excessive body and/or facial hair (not scalp)?
• Foggy thinking, unable to focus or think clearly?

In the Quick Quiz you just read, the questions pertaining to the hormone that has the most YES responses is your apparent endo-type. We recommend that you get a copy of our book, Feeling Fat, Fuzzy, or Frazzled? and take the full self-evaluation tests in Chapter 3, to help determine your endo-type more accurately. (To determine your actual endo-type, we highly recommend saliva testing.)

Action Steps to Balance Your Hormones
1. Start at www.CanaryClub.org, a free consumer advocacy group. Join for free. You can order your own hormone testing of thyroid, adrenal, and sex glands, via saliva kits sent to your home. In our view, saliva provides more accurate results for hormone challenges than does blood testing.

—continued on page 74
2. Be sure you are using very high quality nutraceutical products, including multivitamins with minerals, antioxidants, and mixed omega fatty acids to help restore your glands to full function. If you are able to determine that thyroid is your immediate problem (via canary club testing or self-evaluations provided in our book, *Feeling Fat, Fuzzy or Frazzled*?) we recommend adding 200 mcg. Selenium daily to your regimen. If you are adrenal challenged, you may benefit enormously from 500 mg. Pantothenic acid (B5). If your sex glands are causing chaos, your best first step would be to simply add 1000 mg. Omega 3 Fatty Acids. These are quick and easy boosts for longstanding problems.

3. After you are sure you have a high quality multiple vitamin, antioxidants, and essential oils, you can proceed to explore more in-depth care for each of your affected glands, addressing your specific problem with natural remedies.

4. Make sure you are eating and exercising right for your endocrine type. (Each of us metabolizes differently, so one diet doesn’t fit all.)

5. Some people benefit from taking prescription medicines to address the gland problems directly. These must be prescribed by a knowledgeable practitioner, whether MD, NP, DO, ND, DC, certified nutritionist, or other skilled professional. Our suggestion is to start with natural remedies and progress to more medicinal or pharmaceutical solutions if you do not get results using only natural products.

It is a miracle that we are so complex in our biochemistry, yet we can fix these minor problems so readily using natural remedies, before we become ill—if we just can determine which gland is the culprit. At times the symptoms can look like multiple gland problems, and for these more complex challenges you may wish to work with a specialist on natural hormone balancing. You might also repeat these evaluations over time as hormones are continually changing.

Richard Shames, M.D. founded one of the first U.S. holistic medical centers in 1973. Karilee Shames PhD, RN is a Certified Advance Practice Holistic Nurse who practices collaboratively with Dr. Rich. Together they have written numerous books (including *Thyroid Power and Feeling Fat, Fuzzy Or Frazzled*), where their program is explored in greater depth. They now practice in Cotati as well as at the Preventive Medical Center of Marin. For more information or personalized hormone coaching, go to www.FeelingFFF.com or call (415) 388-0456. Please see the ad on page 48.