

Sick and Tired: The Stress Connection

USING NATUROPATHIC PRINCIPLES TO RESTORE BALANCE AND PREVENT CHRONIC DISEASE

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Outline

- General Adaptation Syndrome
- The physiology of stress
 - Short term effects
 - Long term effects
 - Nervous system
 - Digestion
 - Hormonal balance
 - Immunity
- Stress related conditions
- Strategies to restore balance
 - Rhythm and Routine
 - Diet
 - Stress management
 - Interrupting the stress response
 - Changing how we relate to stress
 - Exercise
 - Vitamins
 - Herbs

News Flash: Stress is a Killer!



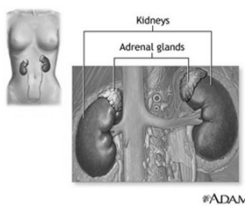

News Flash: Stress is good for you!




General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

- Hans Selye: Hungarian Endocrinologist
 - Alarm and Mobilization
 - Becoming aware of the stressor
 - Adaptation Stage
 - Preparation to fight the stressor
 - Exhaustion Stage
 - The negative consequences of unchecked stress begin to appear

Fuelling the Demand




- The Adrenals
 - Salt water balance
 - Aldosterone
 - Fuel the stress response
 - ADRENAL-ine
 - Cortisol
 - DHEA: The mother hormone
 - Precursor:
 - Estrogen
 - Progesterone
 - Cortisol
 - Influences more than 150 biochemical reactions

The Major Players


- **ADRENAL-ine**
 - Fuels the acute stress response
 - Raises blood pressure
 - Raises heart rate
 - Dilates pupils
 - Raise level of alertness
 - Lowers digestive secretions
- **Cortisol**
 - Fuels long term stress
 - Raises blood glucose levels
 - Stimulates breakdown of protein if needed
 - Anti-inflammatory action
 - Decreases calcium absorption
 - Depletes progesterone

Stress and Memory



- High levels of cortisol
 - Impact encoding and retrieval of memory
 - Working and explicit memory
 - Decreases circulation to critical structures
 - Diminishes potential for learning
 - Hippocampus
 - Amygdala
 - Prefrontal cortex

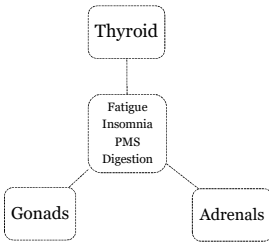
Stress and Digestion



- **Digestive system**
 - One of two systems in the body that have the greatest nerve supply
- **Stress decreases:**
 - Digestive juices (acid, enzymes)
 - Beneficial micro-flora
 - Secondary to changes in pH


Stress and Hormones

- **Hypothalamic-Pituitary-[adrenal/thyroid/gonad]**
 - Hypothalamus
 - Pituitary
 - Target glands
 - Hormones feed back to the brain to turn off their stimulation
- Long term stress reduces negative feedback
- Exhaustion is the end result
 - Glands cannot keep pace



Stress and Immunity

- **Stress decreases**
 - Salivary IgA (sIgA)
 - Lowered first line defense
 - Suppressed for hours, even after short upsets
 - Linked to:
 - Ulcers
 - GERD
 - Crohn's, IBS
 - Eczema, allergies, asthma
 - Cystitis, UTI's
 - Yeast infections
 - Frequent colds/flu




Stress Related Conditions

- Asthma & Eczema
- Autoimmune disorders
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular conditions
 - Hypertension
 - Angina
- Type II Diabetes
- Headaches
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Ulcerative Colitis/Ulcers
- Frequent infections
- PMS
- Infertility
- Depression
- Poor concentration
- Menstrual irregularities
- Functional Hypothyroidism
- Fatigue
- Insomnia

Adrenal Fatigue

- Signs:
 - Blood pressure will drop on standing
 - Pupils will remain dilated in bright light




- Symptoms:
 - Fatigue
 - Lack of motivation
 - Post exertion fatigue
 - Poor memory and concentration
 - Mood disturbances
 - Waking up tired
 - Paradoxical energy
 - Craving stimulants
 - Craving salt, carbohydrates
 - Abdominal fat deposition

So....What can we do about it?

- *Routine, routine, routine*
 - Same time to bed nightly
 - Sleep in a dark room
 - Same time awake daily
 - Exposure to light in the morning
 - Same meal times
 - No skipped meals
 - Helps establish circadian rhythm
 - Allows body to assign functions based on time of day
- Get enough sleep!
 - Between 8-9 hours
 - Take advantage of your 'window'
 - Peak melatonin production in the hours before midnight
- Exercise
 - Endorphin release
 - Preferably in fresh air
 - Yin yoga, tai chi or Qi gong for adrenal depletion

Supporting the Stress Response


- Balance blood sugar
 - Low glycemic index
- Adopt a 'Whole Foods Diet'
 - No flour
 - No sugar
 - 1/2 plate is vegetables
 - Clean, lean protein
 - Avoid stimulants
 - Avoid known food sensitivities
 - Drink plenty of water



Supporting the Stress Response

- B vitamins
 - B5
 - B6 – especially in women taking the birth control pill.
- Minerals
 - Sea vegetables
 - Sea Salt
- Anti-Oxidants
 - Vitamin C, E, Selenium
- Zinc and Copper
 - Pumpkin seeds
- Calming Herbs
 - Chamomile
 - Passion flower
 - Valerian
 - Skullcap
 - Wild Lettuce
 - Lowers excitability
 - Promotes relaxation
 - Decreases anxiety
 - Induces a state of rest

Supporting the Stress Response



- Adaptogenic Herbs
 - Holy Basil
 - Rhodiola
 - Siberian Ginseng
 - Licorice
 - Ashwaghandha
 - Improves ability to withstand stress
 - Supports blood sugar balance, immunity and nervous system
 - Increases stamina, memory and concentration

Supporting the Stress Response

- Ultimately, We are hardwired for stress
 - We learn how to adapt through struggle
 - The stresses in our lives are unlikely to change
 - It's our relationship to that struggle that shifts us to the kind of intrinsic stress that overwhelms our ability to thrive
 - We have more control over this than we realize

Supporting the Stress Response

- Taking a break from technology
 - Green time as an antidote to overstimulation
- Taking stock of relationships
 - Spend time with people you love and avoid those with confusing energy
- Mindfulness: interrupting the stress response
 - Know your emotional triggers
 - Know your physical cues
 - Tara Brach's 'sacred pause'
- Loose yourself: Play and Laugh!!
 - Norman Cousins's: Anatomy of an Illness

Putting It All Together

- Health recovery takes time
- Start with simple steps
 - Build on these
- Health gets easier
 - You'll have the energy for it!
- What seems hard now *WILL* pay off
- The result?
 - More energy
 - Better sleep
 - Improved mood and concentration
 - Ideal body weight
 - Optimal digestion
 - Increased immune function
 - Hormone balance
- **VITALITY!!**

!!Thank You!!



“A grand adventure is about to begin”
~Winnie the Pooh