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ADRENAL FATIGUE

Feeling stressed, fatigued and having difficulty losing weight? You may be experiencing adrenal fatigue.

By Dr. Selene Wilkinson ND

BACKGROUND

A thirty-five year old female by the name Kate came to see me with the concern of feeling constantly stressed and fatigued. She was having difficulty getting up in the morning even though she slept eight hours every night. In addition, she was having difficulty with weight loss, especially around her midsection. This was extremely frustrating for her because other than the five coffees she needed daily to keep awake, her diet was quite balanced and she exercised for an hour five times weekly. Lately she had been feeling irritable and a little depressed which was something she had not felt in the past. She had recently gone through some difficult life transitions - a divorce, moving homes and a change in her job.

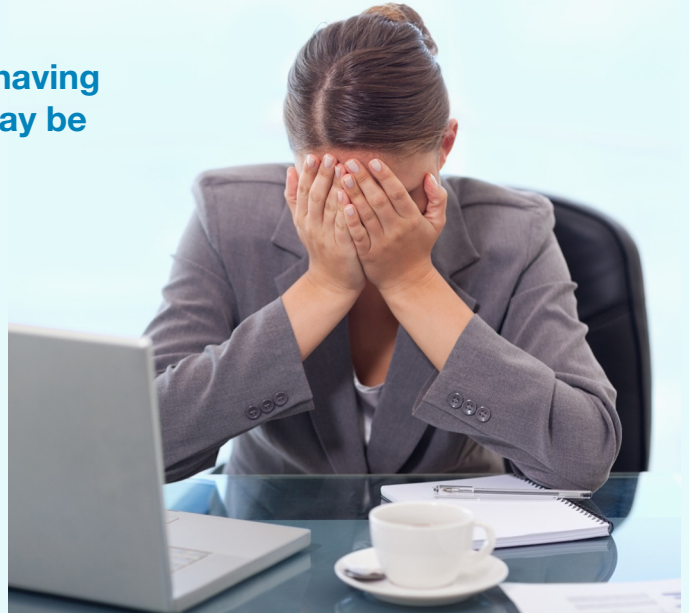
DIAGNOSIS

After taking Kate's health history, administering a physical exam, analyzing a questionnaire she had completed and taking a salivary cortisol sample, it was clear she was suffering from adrenal fatigue.

Adrenal fatigue (or hypoadrenia) is a state your body undergoes if you are exposed to constant amounts of high stress. When you are in this state your adrenal glands (two little glands that sit on your kidneys), release high amounts of the hormone cortisol. This can cause a variety of symptoms such as fatigue, difficulty losing weight, depression and a general lack of wellbeing. Testing cortisol levels through saliva is an excellent medium for measurement as blood and serum testing can cause an anticipatory rise in cortisol where saliva does not.

TREATMENT

I provided a plan for Kate that included adjusting her diet and including some trace minerals she was deficient in, such as zinc. I prescribed the adaptagen (a herb that acts as a rejuvenating tonic for stress, anxiety and fatigue) Ashwagandha and some simple stress reduction strategies. I also gave her several sessions of acupuncture to balance her "Qi" which in Chinese Medicine means "life energy."



OUTCOME

After a few weeks Kate felt like herself again. Her weight loss efforts were no longer in vain and she was able to get up in the morning without great difficulty. Overall she felt a sense of renewed energy and a brighter outlook on life.

If you would like more information on adrenal fatigue you can book an appointment with Dr. Selene Wilkinson at the Adelaide Health Clinic 416-367-5200.

Symptoms of adrenal fatigue:

- Excessive fatigue or exhaustion
- Difficulty getting up in the morning
- Insomnia
- Difficulty losing weight (especially around the midsection)
- Strong cravings for salty and/or sweet things
- Low blood pressure
- Low libido
- Excessive thirst and urination
- Caffeine dependency in the morning
- Excess hunger or lack of appetite
- Irritability