

## Nutrition and Stress

The word adrenals are hard to picture as doctors do not discuss adrenal fatigue or adrenal support, in fact, stress seems to be the reason for all unwanted symptoms. If we have too much stress than our body can manage, then we are out of homeostasis/balance and unwanted symptoms slowly appear. This could be disturbed sleep, headaches, eczema, acne, foggy head, anxiety, excess urination fat around the middle, irritable bowel and more. If this is left unchecked it can cause serious ailments including high blood pressure, low blood sugar, fainting, palpitations and can lead to a disease state of Diabetes Type 2, auto immune disorder, or cardiovascular disease.

Our body is clever and is built for stress, though if we do not recognise these subtle signs, the symptoms may become more pronounced and frequent. Only until we start to address the cause, rather than just treat the symptom, will the body be back in balance.

Sometimes, just to acknowledge the cause and start to address supporting our cortisol levels through nutrition and lifestyle is a highly effective start to calm down the “fight or flight” response to enable the body to restore into rest and digest, otherwise known as “parasympathetic mode.”

### Key nutrients your adrenals need especially in times of stress

**Complex B vitamins** as you may be depleted in these key nutrients essential for energy and the nervous system as the adrenals will take precedent at utilising these key nutrients. Therefore, supplement with a b complex vitamin and make sure you are eating plenty of organic fish, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

**Vitamin C** is found in high concentrations in the adrenal glands and is an essential vitamin to produce cortisol. Vitamin C is one of the most utilised vitamins in the body and is the most vitamin that is shown as deficient in my clients. Excess vitamin C is excreted through urination and excess stress can exacerbate this. Foods high in vitamin C are kiwi, peppers, citrus fruits berries and dark green vegetables. Rosehip tea is an excellent source of vitamin C

Pink Himalayan salt a ¼ tsp 1 x day may help to restore sodium balance, as people who are adrenally fatigue often crave salt. Think about the crisps or salty foods craving in times of stress, this is due to our adrenals not being able to regulate sodium levels, due to deficiency in aldosterone, which is also produced in the adrenal glands. This is known as hyponatremia and is often seen with patients with adrenal insufficiency

If you are not interested in science, then you can ignore the next paragraph and skip straight to the recipe. Though, I like to breakdown the understanding steps of science to make me more compliant with my diet and explain to my clients exactly why they are feeling the way they are feeling. In other words, it is so much more than imagination, it is a biochemical cascade of signalling.

Adrenal failure results in an initial decrease in cortisol levels followed by a subsequent reduction in aldosterone levels, which helps control the balance of water and salts and therefore releases too much sodium through urination. Low sodium levels show symptoms of low cognition, dizziness, nausea, and loss of appetite. It is important to mention the body tightly controls sodium levels in the blood as it is an essential electrolyte for heart health and the nervous system. Only when the body cannot overcompensate anymore, as a consequence of low cortisol. Cortisol releasing hormone is triggered through the hypothalamus in the brain, in turn stimulates the pituitary gland to release adrenocorticoid hormone (ACTH) to be released from the pituitary gland in the adrenals to stimulate the adrenals even more. Chronic elevation of these hormones can lead to an increase

melanocyte-stimulating hormone (MSH) which produces melanin and increase pigmentation in the skin to produce a darker colour or patches of pigmentation changes.

An adrenal tonic can help restore vitamin C, electrolytes including sodium and blood sugar balance through adding an adaptogenic herb.



### **My Adrenal tonic recipe**

Ingredients for 2 mugs:

- 1 whole lemon squeezed
- ½ tsp cinnamon or 1 cinnamon stick
- Hot water
- ½ tsp manuka honey
- ¼ tsp pink Himalayan salt

Method:

Place all ingredients into a mug of hot water and then add the used quartered lemons to the drink as well as the juice. Options: to add ½ teaspoon of ashwagandha for extra calm or Hemp seed. Repeat the drink in the same mug by adding hot water.