

Energy, Well-being and Thyroid Health

by Melissa Cohen

Nutritional Therapist BSc (Hons), mBANT, mIFM, NLP Practitioner



We all must be accountable for our wellbeing as nobody else is going to do it for us.

Ask yourself on a weekly basis, 3 simple questions

1. Am I happy more than I am not?
2. Do I feel refreshed after sleep
3. Am I eating a nutrient rich diet?

If we break these 3 questions down these could express themselves further into the following symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Decreased immunity
- Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep and waking up
- Mood swings
- Sugar and caffeine cravings
- Irritability or light-headedness between meals
- Eating to relieve fatigue
- Dizziness when moving from sitting or lying to standing
- Gastric ulcers

If any of the above keep reoccurring over a long term period, then this is a sign of sub-clinical ill health. Long term discomfort leads to long term stress. Don't wait until your blood tests are within an unhealthy range. Start now and create structured bedtime routines, keep hydrated, exercise and learn to meditate or have regular down time.

Stress creates a "fight or flight" response in the body and triggers a chemical cascade of inflammation, insomnia, imbalanced hormones, suppressed immune system, and imbalanced blood sugar levels.

Sometimes, we can't control the stress in our lives, though we can choose the way we respond. It is important to listen to what your body is telling you, as these are the first signs of being in an imbalanced state.

The Mental Health Foundation is the UK's leading charity for mental health and reported 74% of the UK felt overwhelmed or unable to cope in the last year. First signs of long term stress are palpitations,

shortness of breath, low energy, insomnia, dizziness, digestive issues, change in appetite/change of diet. If this is not addressed, then this may well lead to illness including auto immune diseases such as thyroiditis, irritable bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis and heart disease.

If we focus on Hashimoto's and Graves' disease as this is really what's of relevance here. Both diagnoses are autoimmune diseases, a condition in which the body's immune system mistakes its own healthy tissues as foreign entities and attacks them.

Hashimoto's disease is where the immune system attacks the thyroid tissue, leading to low levels of thyroxine and hypothyroidism. Graves' disease is slightly different, where the immune system binds to the thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) and stimulates the thyroid to produce excess thyroxine leading to hyperthyroidism.

To summarise this in layman terms, stress creates inflammation, inflammation can trigger an autoimmune disease, and this can lead to Hashimoto's disease or Graves' disease, otherwise known as thyroiditis.

That's why it really makes sense to check in with your symptoms, choose how you respond to stress, and to stop the cascade of signaling which may lead to ill health.

If you receive a "normal" result from your blood tests with your doctor, still ask to receive a copy of the test results. Whilst doctors are your first line of medical care and are essential at treating sudden or acute conditions, the slow burning chronic conditions are not easily picked up. This is because most, though not all medics, wait until your blood markers are out of range.

It's worth noting that "normal" isn't the same as **"optimal"** blood test results. Therefore, you may want to talk to a Nutritional Therapist who can evaluate the most appropriate supplements, diet and lifestyle advice to support you. We run a number of sensitive tests to check for optimal wellbeing.

Why wait for your blood markers to be out of range, here are some of the nutritional markers to keep an eye on:

Ferritin is the best indicator of iron deficiency as it's the storage of iron, and this tends to get depleted before haemoglobin. Symptoms are fatigue, eye

floaters, headaches, shortness of breath and, of course, fatigue.

Red Blood Cell B12 is essential to produce red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body. Low B12 is diagnosed as pernicious anaemia. Symptoms are similar to low ferritin

Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) range differs between laboratories. Keep an eye on rising TSH levels, this is a sign of low thyroxine output, and conversely declining TSH is a sign of elevated thyroxine production. TSH is a key marker to check for hypo or hyperthyroidism. Symptoms are vast, ranging from low mood, foggy head, nervousness, twitching, weight loss, weight gain, goiter, hair loss and fatigue.

Vitamin D is essential for hormone balance, mood, bone health, immunity, and inflammation balance.

HbA1C is an average blood glucose test, and this is a diagnostic tool for Diabetes Type II. This can be controlled through decreasing processed foods, sugars and white carbohydrates and swapping to a whole food diet. Symptoms are sugar cravings, fatigue, excessive thirst, excessive urination and mood swings.

Here are some key nutrients to help lower stress and support optimal thyroid health:

- Magnesium
- Beta-carotene
- Zinc
- Complex B Vitamins
- Omega 3 Fatty Acids
- Vitamin C

Example Menu Plan which includes the above nutrients are:

Breakfast Smoothie	Lunch
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 handfuls of spinach• 1 tbsp pumpkin seeds• 2 kiwi fruits chopped• 1 tsp Ashwagandha• 1 glass of coconut water <p>Method: Blend and Serve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 150g fillet of wild salmon• 50g steamed quinoa• ½ plate of roasted vegetables including peppers, carrots, and butternut squash

Dinner	
<p>Chickpea Curry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 tbsps. Water• 1 clove of garlic• ½ yellow onion chopped• Pinch of ginger chopped/grated• Pinch of fresh coriander• Pinch of grounded cumin• Pinch of grounded turmeric• Pinch of Pink Himalayan Salt• 1 cup of chickpeas precooked/ canned• ½ cup of chop tomatoes / fresh or canned	<p>Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add water to a pan over medium heat, then add garlic, onion, and ginger and cook for 3 – 5 minutes. Stir in coriander, cumin, turmeric, and salt and continue for 1 more minute.• Add chickpeas and tomatoes and stir. Bring curry to simmer and cook for 10 mins.• Stir in Garam Masala and serve

If you would like to take advantage of our promotional package for “Optimal Wellbeing” only for Thyroid UK members, including testing and personalised nutrition, then send us an email and we look forward to helping you.

In the meantime, follow us on Instagram @melissacohennutrition or drop us an email at melissa@melissa-cohen.com