



Adrenal Glands

What are the adrenal glands?

Your adrenal glands, also known as suprarenal glands, are triangular endocrine glands that sit at the top of both kidneys. The adrenal gland is made of two parts: the outer region called the adrenal cortex and the inner region called the adrenal medulla. Their responsibilities include releasing hormones to help your response to stress.

How?

They work interactively with the hypothalamus and pituitary gland in the brain. The hypothalamus produces CRH, corticotropin-releasing hormone, that then stimulates the pituitary gland to produce ACTH, adrenocorticotropic hormone. The ACTH stimulates the adrenal glands to make and release hormones into the blood.

The adrenal cortex and the adrenal medulla both have separate functions and release different hormones. The adrenal cortex secretes hormones that affect the body's metabolism. These hormones are cortisol, aldosterone, and androgenic steroids known as androgen hormones. The adrenal medulla, the inner part of the gland, helps you cope with psychical and emotional stress and secretes the following hormones: epinephrine also known as adrenaline and norepinephrine known as noradrenaline.

Essentially, these glands are involved in manufacturing numerous hormones that regulate the body's blood sugar, mineral supply, and thus the body's energy levels. Therefore, they are extremely important!

When your adrenals aren't working properly.

Adrenal fatigue is a collection of signs and symptoms that result when the adrenal glands function below the needed level. This is nothing to take lightly. Adrenal fatigue does not necessarily mean the adrenals are at fault, as they are probably not. The dysfunction of adrenals are triggered usually by an underlying problem. Usually this symptom is

produced when your glands cannot adequately meet the demands of stress. Getting to the root of this problem is key!

The main symptom is fatigue that is not relieved by sleep. Other symptoms include low sex drive, weight gain (particularly in the midsection), digestive and fertility problems, respiratory infections, low energy, poor muscular and mental health and the list goes on and on...

People with adrenal fatigue may appear to be fine, but are living with a general sense of tiredness or lack of energy and may resort to coffee, sugar and/or other stimulants to get going. In some extreme cases, if the adrenal glands are so diminished, it may cause difficulty getting out of bed for more than a few hours per day. Never let it get to this point!

If the adrenals are not functioning correctly, the cause can be an outside gland like the hypothalamus or pituitary gland. Major problems can come up when the adrenal glands produce too many or too few hormones. Other syndromes include: Cushing's Syndrome (excess cortisol in the body), Pheochromocytoma (usually benign – it's a rare tumor of the medulla), Hyperaldosteronism (defined by the body's overproduction of the hormone that controls sodium and potassium levels in the blood – aldosterone).

Care for your adrenals

Nurture your adrenals to ensure optimal health! Here are some tips to nourish your adrenals:

Commit to regular deep breathing exercises

Learn to love restorative exercise

Spend a few minutes a day in solitude

Sleep

Eat wholesome foods

Eat within an hour of waking up

Avoid fried and processed foods, caffeine, and sugar

Take a daily probiotic

Meditate

Learn to say NO

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