

While most conventional doctors recognize only extreme high and low cortisol production, doctors who are familiar with adrenal fatigue know that when adrenal hormones are out of balance, a patient's quality of life can be affected. In addition to symptoms, doctors can use serum (blood) and saliva testing to measure a patient's adrenal hormone levels at key points throughout the day.

Clinical Signs

Clinical symptoms are often the first sign that something isn't right with the adrenal glands. Patients may be experiencing difficulty getting up in the morning, all-day fatigue or exhaustion, increased energy at night, frequent infections, lightheadedness and hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar. Patients may also feel that they are "burned out," can't handle everyday stressors, or have difficulty recovering from stressful situations.

When a patient comes to our office with symptoms such as these, the doctor may suspect adrenal fatigue. Blood, saliva and urine tests can be used to confirm the diagnosis.

Saliva tests

Saliva tests can be used to measure the levels of key adrenal hormones such as cortisol and DHEA. A saliva test is more accurate for cortisol and DHEA testing, as it measures the free and circulating amount of each of these hormones, rather than the total bound amount as measured in the blood.

While DHEA can be measured at any time during the day, cortisol levels vary throughout the day, and are highest in the early morning and lowest at night before bedtime. A diurnal (4x) saliva cortisol test measures cortisol levels at four key points during the day, at approximately 8 am, Noon, 5 pm, and before bedtime. The test results will allow your doctor to map out the curve of your cortisol levels throughout the day, relative to DHEA levels. This will give a clearer picture of your adrenal function, and will help your doctor determine which treatment protocols will help you feel better.

Serum (blood) tests

Serum tests can be ordered to check the levels of Cortisol, DHEA-S, Aldosterone and Pregnenolone. DHEA and Pregnenolone are precursors to other adrenal hormones, so low levels can often signal adrenal fatigue. Aldosterone helps to regulate sodium, potassium, and fluid levels in the body, and also affects blood pressure. Patients with low aldosterone levels often experience excessive thirst, frequent urination, and dizziness upon standing.

Urine tests

Your doctor may also order a 24-hour urinary cortisol test, looking at multiple samples over a 24-hour period.

Getting a clear picture on your adrenal function and key hormone levels will allow your doctor to deter-



Adrenal Fatigue Testing

mine if you need prescription medication, supplements, or both, creating a customized plan of treatment to help you feel your best.