

Emerald City Clinic



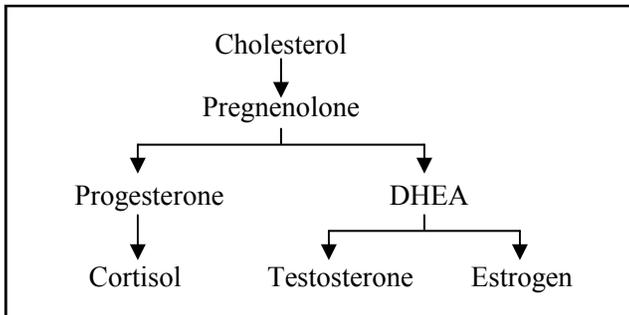
Newsletter

Fall 2006

Hormonal Balancing: Beyond the Adrenal Glands

by Molly Linton, ND, LM

In the last newsletter I wrote about the physiological effects of adrenal exhaustion. I would like to expand on exactly how adrenal exhaustion affects our hormones. Please refer to the simplified chart I have drawn below:



Cholesterol forms the basis for the manufacturing of hormones. The best dietary sources of physiologic cholesterol come from Omega 3 and Omega 6 oils. Good hormonal balance starts with adequate Omega 3 and 6 intake that is digested properly. I find that most individuals are Omega 3 oil deficient because they do not eat enough fish or flax seed oil. Therefore they need to take supplements. (As an aside, the other deficiency I commonly see is mineral deficiency. Minerals are found in vegetables and most people in America do not eat enough vegetables.)

The second portion of the hormone equation is being able to digest your fats. Because of adrenal exhaustion, often people do not have appropriate stomach acids. I would refer you to the last newsletter (Summer 2006) article for more detail about the physiological adaptation of adrenal exhaustion. In any case, it is not useful to pile lots of supplements on a digestive track that is weak.

The final concept that I really want to get across is the body's priority regarding the manufacture of hormones. The body will prioritize a person's adrenal needs over any other needs that hormones support. It will manufacture cortisol (adrenaline) first to stabilize one's blood pressure, alertness, etc. The second priority is estrogens and testosterone. When our adrenal glands are exhausted, our progesterone will down regulate to cortisol. So when you use up your adrenal glands, you are depriving yourself of needed progesterone. What this does is make many women estrogen dominant secondary to progesterone deficiency, causing "estrogen dominant" symptoms such as PMS, mood swings, menopausal disturbances. It is not that estrogen is bad, it is that it is out of balance with progesterone. This imbalance also interferes with a person's libido. Both men and women suffer from lack of libido in the environment of adrenal exhaustion.

There are many pieces to this puzzle and another one is that cholesterol is also involved in the health of the skin, production of immune response, and the protective sheaths around our nerves, to name a few of its roles. When the adrenal glands are not properly fed and/or are being exhausted, so goes the health of our skin, the ability to fight infections, and the ability to heal or have a calm nervous system.

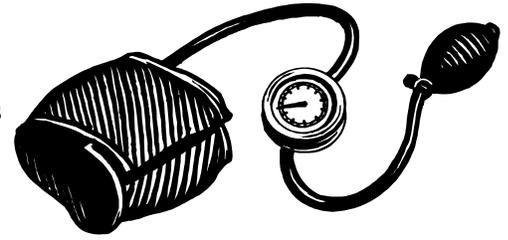
With this in mind, the logic is to feed the adrenal glands and stop the continuous "flight and fright" response so dominant in most of our lives. Once again, part of the prescription is "Dr. Molly's 5 Point Health Plan". At the same time, we take steps to down regulate estrogen levels, giving the progesterone a fighting chance to balance. We have many approaches to "quieting" the effects of estrogen. We help the liver process it faster. Often the allopathic (MD) community superimposes good hormonal balances by placing women on hormones, but this often exacerbates the problem by making the liver more congested. This is also true for keeping testosterone levels in proper balance for both men and women. Remember, the first thing to go in a stressful situation is our libidos.

The body has the ability to reach balance if we can feed the adrenals and not expend more adrenal than we give it, if we keep our elimination channels free of clutter so our hormones can be properly processed, and if we manage our stress levels to provide balance in our lives. For an individualized approach to hormonal balancing, any of the physicians at Emerald City Clinic would be happy to assist you. We have many diagnostic ways to assess adrenal health and hormonal balances. As we enter into the holiday season and the winter months it is important to take good care of our adrenal glands. One of my clients recently heard a news report on Link TV where the Dalai Lama was asked what we need to do for a healthy and happy life. His response: drink more water, sleep more, and have a routine. Then he laughed and said "Ask your doctor, not me." Sounds like "Dr. Molly's 5 Point Health Plan"! Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

What is My Blood Pressure?

by Loren Riccio, ND, LM, CPM

Blood pressure is a measurement of the force applied to the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps blood through the body. The pressure is determined by the force and amount of blood pumped, and the size and flexibility of the arteries. Blood pressure is continually changing depending on activity, temperature, diet, emotional state, posture, physical state, and medication use.



Blood pressure readings are usually given as 2 numbers: for example, 110 over 70 (written as 110/70). The first number is the systolic blood pressure reading, and it represents the maximum pressure exerted when the heart contracts. The second number is the diastolic blood pressure reading, and it represents the pressure in the arteries when the heart is at rest.

To take your blood pressure, a cuff is applied to your arm and inflated, temporarily cutting off the flow of blood into that arm. The doctor then listens for the return of blood flow through a stethoscope as they slowly releases air from the cuff. It is kind of like putting a dam in a raging river to stop the flow of water. When the dam is lowered the level at which pressure from the heart's contraction upstream is first able to force the water over the dam is recorded. This is the systolic or top number of your blood pressure. This reflects the pressure on the artery walls or river banks from the heart muscle contraction. As the heart rests the pressure is measured reflecting what is happening in all the tributaries or smaller rivers down stream. If there are restrictions in the arteries further away from your heart, the blood will not be able to flow as easily through them, thus increasing the diastolic pressure, the bottom number of your blood pressure reading.

Most people cannot sense if their blood pressure is high (hypertension) because there are usually no symptoms. High blood pressure increases the risk of heart failure, heart attack, stroke, and kidney failure. For people who have high blood pressure, this test is a way of monitoring the effectiveness of medications and dietary modifications. Low blood pressure may be a sign of a variety of illnesses, including heart failure, infection, gland disorders, and dehydration.

In adults, the systolic pressure should be less than 120, and the diastolic pressure should be less than 80, or 120/80.

Immediate Care for Injuries

Laura Eastman, ND, LMP

At Emerald City Naturopathic Clinic, we have seen many people through acute injuries from car accidents to falling off ladders to dog bites to broken arms and sprained knees. The one thing all of these injuries have in common is that the sooner patients were treated, the quicker they recovered. Many people call our clinic right after they call the car insurance company if they had a car accident, or call us from the ER to make sure they are getting naturopathic treatment also. Getting care within the first 24 hours of any trauma will significantly reduce pain and recovery time. If that isn't great enough, getting early treatment means that an acute trauma is less likely to become a chronic pain.

All acute musculoskeletal injuries require a multi-pronged approach to treatment. Usually, the first treatment is covered by the mnemonic RICE:

REST ICE COMPRESSION ELEVATION

Along with this, an herbal/ nutritional anti-inflammatory is indicated to keep inflammation down. We like the supplement *Bio-Inflammatory Plus* by Biogenesis because we have seen it work over and over again to reduce pain and swelling. Topical and internal homeopathic *Arnica* is often indicated for traumas where there will be bruising. Homeopathic *Aconite* is used for a particularly scary trauma, where *Hypericum* can be used when there is a trauma involving shooting nerve pain. Castor oil packs over the traumatized area can be used to decrease inflammation to a particular joint or area of the body. Peat baths and packs are used at the end of the acute phase to decrease pain, whereas Epsom salt baths are used in the sub-acute phase to reduce aches, pains, and inflammation. Chronic pains might best respond to ultrasound, massage, or other manual therapies. So, when you have a pain, think of both external and internal treatment, as well as what stage of healing your body is in: acute to sub-acute to chronic.

Call us before any surgery and we can make sure you have our surgery protocol. We have had many a surgeon call our office saying "What did you give her?" when they see how fast our patients heal from their surgeries.

Remember, too, about Fractionated Pectin before any biopsies. Call the clinic to get dosage and treatment information.

Notes from the Front Desk

Urgent health issues: In general, urgent health issues should not be a subject for email, as doctors may be unable to respond in a timely fashion. If you email one of the doctors and receive a return message that the doctor is out of town, please call the office so your health issue can be addressed. There is always a doctor on call to deal with urgent matters.

Dr. Linton's cell phone: If you have been given Dr. Linton's cell number any time in the past, it was intended as a one-time only emergency contact number. Please do not use Dr. Linton's cell number in the future, as she reserves it for her family.

Special request fees: A fee is charged for special paperwork requests from the doctors, proportionate to the time required to review your records, make required medical decisions, and generate the requested letter or follow up action. This applies in cases such as: determining what lab tests to order, at your request, outside of an office visit; preparing paperwork to discuss your lab results with you by phone; generating a letter for your employer, school, etc. about your health issues, etc.

Superbills: Superbills will be given to you at your request at the time of your visit. Requests for superbills at any other time will incur a \$3.00 charge. Please be sure to ask your doctor for this paperwork at the end of your visit as the front desk is unable to fill in the necessary information.

Dr. Molly's Corner

Medical Insurance Reimbursements:

Group Health: Many of you have Group Health Options and are told that you can get some reimbursement for your care at your out of network Naturopaths. The specifics that I hear vary widely. The reality is that there is a list of disease codes that Group Health will pay for—and those codes are the ONLY ones they will cover. When you apply for reimbursement, they ask for chart notes and if your diagnosis is not on their list of codes, they will not reimburse you. Please let your physician know if you have Group Health and are planning to attempt reimbursement. We can tell you whether we have seen reimbursement for that condition.

Premera: At this point Premera will not reimburse out of network providers (eg Emerald City Clinic) for Preventive health care codes. This means they will not pay for well child visits or annual exams, only for visits when you are ill or have a health complaint.

Insurance information on file at ECN: Please make sure the office has a copy of your current insurance card. Even though we do not bill for your visits, we do bill all conventional labs through your insurance, saving you lots of money. Even if you have a high deductible, we bill your labs through your insurance, because your insurance will reduce the lab fee to their allowable fee, thus lowering what you actually have to pay the lab, and generally applying what you pay towards your deductible.

Provocative testing: If you have alternative lab tests performed, such as blood tests for food allergies, comprehensive stool analysis, adrenal stress index, etc., some insurance policies will reimburse you. In most cases you have 365 days to bill your insurance, from the date of submitting the test. Request a receipt from the lab and submit it, with a diagnostic code, to your insurance. (Email your doctor for the code if you are doing this retroactively.) We recommend that you do not have the lab bill your insurance for you, as you will be charged double the non-insurance fee if your insurance declines to pay.

Toxicity Alert: It was brought to my attention by one of my clients that garden hoses—both soaker hoses and regular hoses—contain toxic chemicals including lead. The State of California requires a disclaimer about this, and that is how we learned of the problem. Do not to drink from the hose, and wash your hands after using it. Also, the first water coming out of the hose, when the hose has been filled with water from previous use, especially when the hose is hot, is more filled with chemicals than the running water which comes through the hose later on. Therefore, in watering your organic garden, purge the hose first.

Preparing for the Holidays Got You Down?

Need a little extra protein to get through the busy holiday season? Are you guilty of running out the door without your breakfast? Is that mid-afternoon fatigue meeting a chocolate chip cookie? The holidays are a time of increased stress and lots of germ sharing. Don't let the sweets and treats get your immune system down. Consider having a protein shake for breakfast or lunch, rather than skipping a meal or reaching for that cookie to give you a boost. Protein shakes are quick and easy, just add some frozen fruit and rice milk or water and you are on your way to a better more balanced day. We are currently offering a special 20% discount on all of our protein powders through the holidays. Stop by Emerald City Clinic to stock up.



Introducing New Healthcare Professionals in Suite 1405

Avigail van den Hof L.Ac.

I am very excited to start my acupuncture practice next door to Emerald City Naturopathic Clinic. I specialize in women's health, pregnancy and pain management. I also treat many other disorders including gastrointestinal disorders, urogenital disorders, respiratory disorders, emotional and psychological disorders and general medicine issues. I graduated from the Northwest Institute of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in Seattle. I just moved back to Seattle after living in New Jersey for the past 2 years and now live in Wedgewood with my husband, 3-year-old son, and 8-month-old daughter. Please contact me at 206-491-7746.

Olivier D'hose

My passion for bodywork emerges from my studies of the history of various healing arts throughout the world. It struck me that touch, probably one the most ancient form of treatment, is common to all therapeutic traditions. I've started my journey learning traditional European massages and the science of myofascial, craniosacral, visceral and neuromuscular therapies. My travels through Asia opened my eyes on a different paradigm to understand health and the body. As your bodyworker, I will draw on my experience to tailor the session you need. Please contact me at 206-30-5768 or Olivier@4handsbodywork.com.

Goodbye to Tara

With much sadness to see her go, but abundant good wishes for her new season, we say goodbye to our matchless Tara, front desk wonder-worker extraordinaire. As Tara leaves us in January to embark on studies for her nursing degree, we send her forth with blessings, knowing she has so much to give to all whose lives she will grace. Tara, we will miss you so much! Nobody could have done it better! Return to see us whenever you can—you will always be in our hearts, and a part of Emerald City Clinic.



Thanks to all of you who have touched my life and enriched my journey over the past year. I am sad to say good-bye so soon, but I am called away to put my energy into other forms of learning. I look forward to a change of pace as I transition from my life in this beautiful city to a life nestled in the foggy fingers of South Puget Sound. No doubt I will be back to visit and hope to run into you here at Emerald City Clinic where this connection began.

Cheers to you all and thank you!!

- Tara Zuluaga