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NOW is the Time for Political Action

Q: What are these tests that we are talking about?

A: One that we commonly order is a very comprehensive blood test. For example, thyroid conditions are common problems many female patients have and they take medications for it for the rest of their lives. Usually when blood tests are ordered by some physicians, they look at one marker (TSH) to assess a thyroid problem for a patient, which is not always enough. In our evaluation, we look at several markers and assess if the patient has a real thyroid problem or another condition that is causing the thyroid gland to be affected.

Q: Are there any other tests that are usually done?

A: Absolutely, based on the patient's needs and symptoms. A very important test we order is an Adrenal Stress Test. Adrenal glands are known as stress glands. They are located on top of your kidneys, and their job is to release proper levels of chemicals such as cortisol, testosterone and estrogen. These are the hormones our bodies use to manage stress, maintain libido and control our immune system.

For instance, cortisol is a hormone that should be high in the morning and low at night. When it is high you feel energetic; when it is low you feel relaxed or tired. One thing that affects cortisol production is stress. Chemical stress such as alcohol or tobacco use, emotional stress such as a bad relationship, and physical stress such as simply lack of exercise and being behind a computer or driving all day could cause "Adrenal Fatigue," a condition where the adrenal glands slow down. According to some literature, more than 80 percent of the population suffers from this

condition. The economic stress, 24/7 workweeks and popularity of sugar and caffeine are enabling this condition to be a potential epidemic.

Upon testing, we have found that for many individuals, cortisol levels drop in the afternoon, causing that post-lunch crash, and rise in the middle of the night, which is the reason that they cannot sleep.

If you suffer from feeling drained both mentally and physically, experience body aches, mental fogginess or blood sugar imbalances, there is a good chance that you are suffering from adrenal fatigue. Many of these patients report the use of coffee or other stimulants in order to be able to focus and get transient energy. But they can also cause digestive problems, autoimmune dysfunction, thyroid problems and blood sugar dysregulation.

Another factor that one must look at is whether a patient is suffering from a chronic infection in their gut which may have been overlooked for years. We have seen in many cases that patients have a parasitic infection that was overlooked for years. Once identified and eliminated from the body, the patients had a drastic improvement in their quality of life. As you may know, 80 percent of your immune system is related to your gut function. Many of us with our routine American diets do suffer from gut dysfunction, which is another topic.

Q: Wow, so how do you treat this?

A: The medical and patient model has been to take medication to force the body to sleep. You and I know this is not a cure, let alone taking into consideration the side effects. We need to help the

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