

ADRENAL FUNCTION TEST

The adrenal glands are two almond shaped glands that sit above the kidneys. The adrenal glands are the stress glands of the body. When the environment is hostile to the body the reaction is fight or fly. Both of these reactions cause the secretion of adrenal gland hormones being the most noted adrenaline but they also secrete numerous other hormones including norepinephrine, cortisol and DHEA.

These glands, designed to prepare the body for a temporary emergency, can become exhausted and over reactive with prolonged stress. Then you can have a condition known as adrenal fatigue, when these glands become unable to meet your body's needs.

These hormones cause the following reactions to prepare you to fight or run:

- Adrenaline makes blood flow towards your muscles, heart and brain away from your skin and digestive tract.
- The connection between stress and heart disease is that prolonged stress causes the adrenal glands to continue secreting adrenaline. The long term rapid and forceful heart rate lead to heart disease and the extra blood sent to the heart has also been found to be destructive.
- You don't need to digest when you are being attacked so the secretion of norepinephrine shuts down the digestive track. The result of long-term stress can include constipation, diarrhea and many other digestive problems. Further, more than 50% of your protein, B and C vitamins are not absorbed if you are under stress.
- When the body is under stress it secretes cortisol that suppresses the immune system. It also alters sleep behavior because your hormonal rhythm is affected.
- Finally, these glands secrete DHEA, which is used to create estrogen, progesterone and testosterone. When long-term stress causes problems with the adrenals it can lead to hormonal imbalances.

Periods of intense or prolonged stress can lead to a condition known as adrenal fatigue. There's a method to test adrenal gland function and for all this reason is obviously very important to get tested and take remedial action if necessary.

