

Cancer Answers

Volume 3 Number 8
April 2010
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Spring Tune-up Time?

adapted from "Do Your Adrenals Need a Tune-up?" by Jen Albritton, CN

I know...you are asking, spring "tune-up" - don't you mean spring "clean-up"? No, spring is a great time to think about tuning up our bodies both internally and externally. This is especially true during cancer treatment. One of the most important ways to tune-up internally is addressing our adrenals. These two little glands that sit atop our kidneys and they help us sleep better, have more energy and increase our immunity when they are working optimally. They have been nicknamed "stress-regulators" and rightfully so. The stress response mechanism we are genetically equipped with is often called "fight or flight" meaning when faced with life-threatening stressors we either fight or we try to get away from the stressor. Unfortunately, this response is quite inefficient for the kinds of multiple, nagging, and continual pressures we endure in today's world...to say nothing of the additional stressors our minds, bodies and spirits experience when journeying through cancer. The adrenal glands produce 30 to 60 different hormones. The two most important are adrenaline and cortisol. Adrenaline alerts our bodies to imminent danger and prepares them to fight or flee. It is meant to be a short-lived response such as if you were approached by a mugger. Following the initial shot of adrenaline, the adrenals pump out cortisol which helps subdue the adrenaline and provide strength and stamina. This hormone will help you persevere and conquer adversity, such as with the flu, a job change or a cancer diagnosis. When the levels of these hormones exceed a certain amount for a significant length of time, problems occur. When it is constant, our bodies start to break down. One symptom may be feeling chronically wired and strained. Others are depressed moods, insomnia or memory loss. Immune function is compromised also due to the extra stress. If our adrenals continue in this state, we can function but are constantly tired. There is a limit to what the adrenals can endure. Eventually, chronic stress will begin to wear out the adrenals and diminish their ability to produce ANY stress-coping hormones.

*Tuning up your adrenals requires eating a diet full of simple, natural, whole foods like nuts and seeds, wild cold-water fish, whole grains, brightly-colored vegetables, organic eggs and grass-fed meats. During your cancer journey it is extremely important to get ample amounts of protein, quality fats (coconut oil, butter, avocados and olive oil) and fiber. Salt can actually support adrenal recovery - but change over to sea salt which has a higher mineral content and is less processed.

These nutrients are also very supportive to your adrenals. **Vitamin C** - between 1,000 and 4,000 mg daily; **B vitamins** - try a B complex with 25 mg of each B vitamin along with a multiple; **Omega-3 fatty acids** capsules from fresh cold-water fish; the amino acid **GABA** - start with 100 mg daily and increase it up to 500 mg if needed to sleep; **Licorice** tablets - 10 to 40 mg during the evening; the amino acid **Theanine** - effective with doses ranging from 50 to 200 mg; and **Adrenal cell extract/glandulars** that support, fortify and restore normal adrenal function.

What Cancer Cannot Do

author unknown

Cancer is so limited. . .
It cannot cripple love,
It cannot shatter hope,
It cannot corrode faith,
It cannot destroy peace,
It cannot kill friendship,
It cannot suppress memories,
It cannot silence courage,
It cannot invade the soul,
It cannot steal eternal life,
It cannot conquer the Spirit.

I have shared this poem before but feel I the need to share it again because, not only is it so true, but it also holds a special place in my heart. In January of 1995, just five months following my cancer diagnosis, my husband's paternal grandparents sent this to me. At the time they were in their late eighties. Grandma lost both her mother and father to cancer when she was just thirteen. Grandma and Grandpa had watched other friends and family struggle with cancer over the years. However, my battle seemed to hit them both very hard.

They had given money faithfully to a particular cancer organization from the time they were married in 1920 in hope of seeing a cure for cancer. Having their grandson's wife diagnosed with cancer nearly eighty years later was almost more than they could bear. I believe the poem brought as much hope to them as me.

May it offer hope to every generation - until a cure is found.

*Check with your doctor or nutritionist prior to implementing any dietary changes or beginning any supplements. Every one is an individual and what may work for someone else might not be the best for you based on your particular health issues and/or treatment