

## Is Stress, or Menopause Getting the Best of You? Lose Weight, Beat Fatigue, Think Clearer, Feel Better by Testing and Balancing Your Hormones!

Now let's be honest. How many of you out there really feel better than you did 5 or 10 years ago? "Oh it's just part of getting older", most people say as an excuse for that extra 10-15 pounds, or the mid-day drowsiness that never used to happen. What about your new irritability or impatience over almost everything? Do you really think that is normal? Take our little quiz below and see how many symptoms you have. Now remember, be truthful....

Mark all symptoms that apply to you. Put two checks next to symptoms that are new in the last two years....

**DIFFICULTY FALLING ASLEEP**  
**HEAVY/UNPREDICTABLE PERIODS**  
**CARB CRAVINGS**  
**LOW SEX DRIVE**  
**FEELING COLD**  
**BREAST TENDERNESS**

**DIFFICULTY STAYING ASLEEP**  
**PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME**  
**ABDOMINAL FAT GAIN**  
**LOW ENERGY LEVEL**  
**AFTERNOON FATIGUE**  
**ENERGY ONLY AFTER SUPPER**

**IRRITABILITY**  
**MOODY**  
**FORGETFUL**  
**HAIR LOSS**  
**HOT FLASHES**

Any checkmark, especially if the symptom is new, is a potential sign that you may have a hormone balance involving the Thyroid, Adrenal System, Reproductive Hormones, or ALL 3! If you consider any of these symptoms just a side effect of a prescription medication you may take, or just part of "growing older" then think again. None of these are universal symptoms of aging. Plus, many medications, even if they are working well, can cause subtle alterations in hormone balance in unrelated systems that over time can result in you feeling WORSE than before you started the medication!

## What About Stress?

We all have stress in our daily lives. We have known about the stress response for decades in basic medical textbooks. The effects of stress on the body are universally agreed upon by both doctors and scientists. Stress results in immediate stimulation of our adrenal glands to produce epinephrine and cortisol. These hormones work to increase our heart rate, blood pressure, and circulating blood sugar. Our brain chemistry and even our vision changes in response to a sudden stress. Our bodies are made to run or fight in response to stress. Once the fight is over, our bodies naturally revert back to hormone balance. Now when stress becomes an issue most of the day, the body's functions begin to deteriorate under the chronic stress response. These changes can be seen very vividly in hormone testing. Yet for some reason, medicine has ignored stress as a treatable cause of deteriorating health...UNTIL NOW!

Modern Integrative Medicine Physicians like Dr. Zengo, use accurate saliva hormone testing as a window to how our body deals with our life stress. These results can reveal stress-related excess or deficiencies in Adrenal hormones. This alone can cause subsequent imbalances of our Thyroid and Reproductive Hormones as well. Medications, especially if there are significant side effects, can also serve as a stress to the body. Synthetic Hormones like the ones found in

birth control pills and in hormone replacement often **overpower** the body's own natural hormones. Conversely, **restoring hormone balance can also have the same positive effects as many of the drugs we take nowadays.** For instance, restoring Progesterone to normal levels has the same benefits to the brain as Prozac or Zoloft. Restoring the expected Adrenal Hormone response **aids sleep even better than most sleeping pills.** Stress and many medications inhibit the conversion of weak thyroid hormone into the stronger form that the body needs to support metabolism. The bottom line is that if we can't just quit our jobs and run away from our stress, we at least need to quantify the effects of stress on our bodies and do everything possible to prepare our body's chemistry to handle the effects of the stress well!

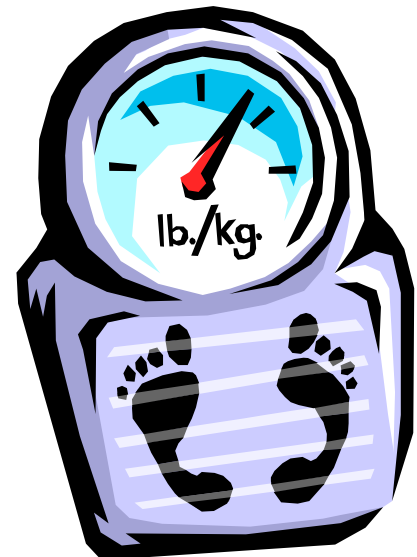
Now, as a medical doctor, I know that medications are one of the prime reasons why we as a species are living longer than ever. Some medications, like some antibiotics, are truly essential. However, some medications are good drugs that are being **overprescribed** to treat symptoms rather than true, proven disease states. We even have a whole new industry of creating "diseases" with names that just restate the symptoms! (chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, premenstrual syndrome, or the newer premenstrual dysphoric disorder, restless leg syndrome) Drug companies are lining up to sell their drugs to the people diagnosed with these new symptom-based diseases. We prefer to replace these meaningless names with the true, hormone imbalances that actually cause the symptoms (hypothyroid, adrenal stress, adrenal fatigue, progesterone deficiency, and estrogen dominance to name a few). Then, by addressing simple lifestyle, nutritional, and hormonal adjustments, we can make progress and track our improvement in subsequent hormone testing until balance is achieved.

## How Does Balancing Hormones Help Me Lose Weight?

Weight gain and water retention, especially in the abdomen is under the control of hormones like the Adrenal Hormones, in addition to some of the reproductive hormones like Progesterone. Thyroid dysfunction, even when subtle deficiencies exist, can contribute to a weight problem as well. Now, if you are eating large fast food meals most nights you can't expect to lose weight. But, if you are one of the millions of Americans who have to diet almost constantly to lose weight, or gain the weight back faster than you can lose it, then you likely have a **stress-related hormone imbalance** that is holding you back. In fact, all of that constant dieting, or skipping meals is probably a good part of your daily stress in itself!

Adrenal Hormone imbalances make it almost impossible to lose weight, even if you have the most willpower in the world! Your gut slows, absorption increases. You are constantly trying to produce blood sugar and continue to crave it in your diet. Fat is stored in the abdomen to make it readily available for the next stress response. If the stress goes on long enough, you then even lack the energy to get off the couch to answer the phone, let alone start an exercise program!

Patients who have had their Adrenal, Thyroid, and Reproductive hormone imbalances tested and treated often state that they feel like they can **eat more and still lose weight**, especially in the abdomen. They have more energy and a more positive outlook and are better equipped to deal with the other stresses life throws their way. You can't get these kinds of results from any of the "fad" or "crash" diets out there today. Sure, it's not a quick fix, but hormone testing and treatment is a rewarding because it can finally give that explanation of why you are different from your skinnier friends. Most of the time, drugs are not necessary, and the weight is lost without dramatic changes in your diet.



This Brings Us To Our...  
**Hormone Health, Stress Management,  
and Weight Loss Program**

### Step 1 – Initial Visit and Testing

At your first visit, we will take a detailed medical history. We will also discuss all medications you currently take, including herbals and vitamins. A physical exam is not necessary if you are up to date. By discussing your symptoms in depth, we will recommend changes that you can do immediately to manage the effects of stress on the body, and help restore hormone balance. We may also recommend saliva testing of a number of hormones. Saliva testing is superior to blood testing since it measures free or unbound hormones that are present in the body tissues. (For more information on the volume of evidence supporting saliva testing, go to [www.salivatest.com](http://www.salivatest.com)). If you are already on synthetic hormones and want to discontinue them, we will give you an initial prescription of natural Bio-identical hormone and instructions on the transition.

We test multiple hormones because the symptoms such as hot flashes, fatigue, weight gain, and foggy thinking can result from Menopause, hypothyroid, or adrenal deficiency or excess. ***We will NOT jump to conclusions and give you drugs that may hurt more than help. We will use your symptoms and saliva hormone levels to prove what your body really needs.***

### Step 2 – Test Results and Prescriptions

About 2-3 weeks later, we will review your test results in person. **Reproductive hormone imbalances** are corrected with Bio-Identical Hormones. These are identical to the body's hormones in both dose and structure. They are dosed judiciously to just replace what is missing unlike synthetic hormones that completely overpower your system and often cause another imbalance somewhere else. These hormones are usually poorly absorbed in pill form, so for the most accurate replacement, we prescribe it in cream form. You simply measure out the day's dose of cream and rub it into your arm a few strokes until absorbed.

Abnormal **Thyroid** testing is treated with prescription medication or nutritional supplementation. There are no creams that replace thyroid hormones effectively. In the case of severely elevated Thyroid hormones, referral to a specialist for further treatment may be necessary.

**Adrenal Hormone** results are a little more complicated since they can be high or low at different times of the day. The normal adrenal curve starts with a high Cortisol level that declines sharply as the day goes on. If the Cortisol curve is depressed, or reversed, the treatment can change. Treatment involves lifestyle adjustments, nutritional supplementation, and/or prescription Cortisol which can be taken orally.



### Step 3 – Follow-Up

This is the fun part! A few weeks later we meet again to **discuss your success**. Most patients by this point are beginning to sleep better, lose their cravings, and begin to see the weight finally melt off. Others are noticing more consistent moods. At this point, hormones may be re-tested and recommendations slightly changed to help yield the best possible results. This repeat testing is crucial to ensure that our interventions are not creating new hormonal imbalances or excesses. We will also discuss a strategy to begin to taper off some of your supplements as you incorporate the long-term lifestyle adjustments that will best ensure your hormone health for years to come.