

A POTPOURRI OF HEALTH ISSUES – ALLERGIES, FIBROMYALGIA, AND OBESITY
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ALLERGIES FROM A FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE PERSPECTIVE

Look for food allergies, do elimination diet. Check for gluten sensitivity.

Look for dysbiosis causing immune up-regulation

If symptoms of yeast (Candida) overgrowth such as fatigue, g.i. disturbance, yeast infections in vagina, skin and nails, supplements to decrease yeast:

Garlic, oregano, caprylic acid, Goldenseal or Berberine, Wormwood, Uva Ursi, Plant Tannins, with probiotics to restore more normal microbial balance in the gut.

For oxidative stress, take high dose antioxidants:

High potency multivitamin-mineral

Green tea, Grape Seed Extract, Pomegranate, Mangosteen, berry extracts, highly colored vegetables and fruit Vitamin C to bowel tolerance .Bioflavonoids, Quercetin, Hesperidin, Rutin, citrus peel (organic). These also stabilize connective tissue around blood vessel walls and gut lining to limit mast cells from leaking through to release histamine. Ginger and Turmeric

Immune system modulation:

Anti-inflammatory diet high on veggies, low on saturated fats, sugars, refined starches, and omega 6 oils, and no hydrogenated oils (trans fats) Eliminate junk food.

Supplement with omega 3 oils, Echinacea, Albizzia, Perilla, Stinging Nettles, astragalus

Check Vitamin D blood level. Supplement if low.

Adrenal support if low BP, hypoglycemia, fatigue:

Pantothenic acid, Vitamin C, Licorice root

Detoxification:

Clean up diet, organic foods, avoid toxins, sugar, white flour, caffeine, alcohol

Milk thistle, Schisandra, fruit & veg. extracts, berries, pomegranate, green tea, grape seed, turmeric

Sulfur-containing foods – Cauliflower, Broccoli, cabbage, etc., onions, garlic, eggs

Optimize mineral intake. Adequate minerals decrease absorption of toxic metals.

Other herbs used to decrease allergic response: Ginkgo, Feverfew, Butterbur (not in pregnancy),

Chinese skullcap, Reishi mushrooms (Ganoderma), and the plants in the Apiaciae family such as celery, fennel, dill, caraway, coriander, cilantro, khella, and angelica.

FIBROMYALGIA

Fibromyalgia is a complex condition often overlapping with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and Interstitial Cystitis. Although the main symptoms may be muscle pain and insomnia, dysfunction in many systems may contribute to the problem.

These areas may be nutritional imbalances, intestinal dysfunction, endocrine imbalances, oxidative stress, impaired detoxification, and immune imbalances.

Candida or yeast overgrowth in the bowel is common, as well as other imbalances in the intestinal tract. Digestive disturbances can lead to impaired detoxification and immune imbalances. A comprehensive stool exam can detect many of these problems.

Impaired detoxification can be detected by a detoxification test.

Oxidative stress (excess free radicals) diminishes energy production and can cause muscle pain. This can be caused by digestive and detoxification abnormalities. A blood test can check for the severity of oxidative stress

Thyroid and other blood tests can check for hypothyroidism and other endocrine problems. Often the adrenal glands are exhausted, and it is difficult to pinpoint how much adrenal dysfunction there is with laboratory tests, but symptoms are fatigue, hypoglycemia, and dizziness.

Impaired immune function can result in under-activity in some areas, with increased infections, such as colds, and chronic viral infections such as Epstein-Barr. It also can cause over-reactivity manifested by allergies and autoimmune conditions. Food intolerances are interrelated with digestive disturbances and are difficult to test for or to recognize. The only currently reliable test is the elimination diet.

A symptom questionnaire can help to determine areas of dysfunction on which to focus.

Many of these areas of dysfunction can be improved with dietary measures and with supplements of vitamins, minerals, herbs.

If none of the above tests are done, a long list of supplements can be used to target all of the above systems.

Paramount to treating Fibromyalgia is getting good sleep, aiming for 9-10 hrs/night.

Regular physical activity is also vital – vigorous, but not strenuous enough to cause fatigue or weakness on the following day.

Some books that are helpful to read are: [From Fatigued to Fantastic](#), by Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D., who has a website www.endfatigue.com, and [What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Fibromyalgia](#), by R. Paul St. Amand, M.D.

MULTIFACTORAL CAUSES OF OVERWEIGHT CONDITIONS

BMI DOES NOT EQUAL EXCESS FAT

Weight vs. height (BMI) does not tell body composition (%fat, %muscle, etc.). The health risks are in the fat or adipose tissue, especially around the waist, and especially intra-abdominal fat. Waist circumference to hips circumference ratio greater than 1.0 for males and 0.8 for females spells trouble, risks for cardiovascular events, cancer, and other inflammatory conditions.

STRESS

Compulsive overeating in response to stressful or “depressing” situations.

“Stop, breathe, reflect, choose.” – a meditative technique.

Lack of awareness of true hunger and of fullness due to distracting circumstances

Lack of awareness of thirst, creating false hunger

Stress hormones cause insulin resistance, overactive adrenals (Cushingoid) and food cravings.

Lack of quality sleep, creating false hunger, maybe due to leptin deficiency

More likely to consume addictive substances – caffeine, sugar, alcohol

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Activity burns calories and increases metabolic rate.

Increased muscle mass improves insulin sensitivity.

SLEEP

Melatonin and Leptin secreted at night, for regulating appetite

Lack of melatonin can reduce serotonin, resulting in food cravings and depression .

DEHYDRATION

Inadequate water signals hunger mistaken for thirst.

Caffeine in soft drinks dehydrate through diuretic action.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Sweet taste triggers brain signal for liver to turn sugar into fat.

CANDIDA (YEAST) SYNDROME

Overgrowth of yeast in gut signals craving for sugars and starches.

FOOD ALLERGIES OR SENSITIVITIES

Addictions to the offending food due to immune complex actions – immediate symptom relief followed by delayed onset of recurrence of symptoms.

Inflammation in gut may trigger cell signal messengers that inhibit leptin and insulin

UNRECOGNIZED HYPOTHYROIDISM AND LOW METABOLIC RATE

Laboratory tests may be normal and many symptoms of hypothyroidism may be present.

Functional hypothyroidism with low metabolic rate can occur with very low calorie diets and prolonged fasts.

INSULIN RESISTANCE

Also known as metabolic syndrome, Syndrome X, associated with central adiposity.

Poor uptake of sugar into muscle; sugar goes to fat, results in craving sugar and starch. Insulin resistance leads to inflammation, which causes leptin resistance. This can result in heart disease and diabetes.

NUTRIENT DEFICIENCY

Deficiency in omega – 3 fatty acids leads to insulin resistance and inflammation. Mineral and vitamin deficits can result in food cravings to satisfy deficiencies.

INFLAMMATION

Inflammation promotes leptin resistance. Inflammatory foods include saturated fats, sugar, white flour, omega 6 vegetable oils (soy, corn, safflower). Trans-fats in hydrogenated oils (in many processed foods) is a non-food that promotes inflammation, and environmental chemicals and other toxins also promote inflammation. Dr. Leo Galland, M.D. discusses inflammation and leptin in his book, The Fat Resistance Diet. GMO's can create any number of known and unknown effects on gut bacteria and inflammation.

IMBALANCED GUT BACTERIA

Some types of gut bacteria promote fat deposition and some others promote fat loss. Keeping a healthy balance involves eating good food, avoiding junk, avoiding antibiotics unless absolutely necessary, and it may involve eating fermented foods such as raw sauerkraut, uncooked pickled vegetables, yogurt, miso, tempeh, kefir, etc. Eating a variety of vegetables provides food for a variety of bacteria. The more diversity in the gut bacteria, the healthier they are, and the more likely they are to promote weight loss. Vegetables grown in non-toxic soil with no cow or pig manure can be eaten without washing excessively. Soil bacteria promote a healthy bacterial flora. Probiotic supplements containing Lactobacillus and Bifidobacter and other bacteria can be helpful. Prebiotic supplements containing inulin and fructo-oligosaccharides can feed the beneficial bacteria and also influence messenger molecules favorably for weight loss.

LEPTIN RESISTANCE

A brain hormone, leptin is secreted to decrease appetite after eating. Poor sleep, obesity, insulin resistance, and inflammation can cause leptin resistance. L-Carnitine and melatonin can improve leptin sensitivity.

MACRONUTRIENT BALANCE

Too many refined carbohydrates (sugars, starches, alcohol) can contribute to insulin resistance, diabetes, increased food cravings, inflammation, and dementia.

TOXICITY

Trans fats from hydrogenated oils (a toxic non-food) causes insulin resistance. Toxins cause inflammation, cause oxidative stress (which interferes with mitochondrial energy production), cause fatty liver, can interfere with leptin, can disrupt the endocrine system including thyroid, adrenals, can alter the autonomic nervous system to produce more stress hormones which cause food cravings.

“The solution to pollution is dilution.” Fluid retention may be the body's response to dilute toxins, and because toxins are stored in fat, that is a means of spreading out the toxins over a larger area, thus protecting vital organs from toxic overload. That is a reason to lose weight slowly, not to release too many stored toxins at once, and to give nutritional and other support to the detoxification systems.

Dr. Walter Crinnion, N.D. has had success by detoxifying overweight people who are loaded with toxins, especially PCB's, dioxins, and other fat-soluble persistent pollutants that stay in the body for years, with significant weight loss. His book, Clean, Green and Lean explains clean living and improved body composition.