

## **ADRENAL FATIGUE**

Adrenal fatigue is a modern condition that is usually associated with high stress levels, and it is characterised by the adrenals not functioning properly.

- Adrenal fatigue is caused by high levels of prolonged stress, trauma or illness.
- The symptoms can include a lack of energy, fatigue and a feeling of being unwell, rundown and not coping with any part of life.
- Lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthy diet and exercise and supplementation for adrenal support are the best way to overcome the condition.

## **WHAT SYMPTOMS COULD I HAVE IF I AM IN ADRENAL STRESS, BURNOUT OR BREAKDOWN?**

Symptoms can include:

- Feeling generally unwell, drained, not yourself
- Tiredness, especially upon waking, needing to sleep often.
- Low energy and no stamina, unmotivated.
- Decreased sex drive.
- Muscle weakness, heavy arms, and legs
- Mild depression, crying, feeling detached from your body.
- Disassociation, feeling like 2 different people.
- Anxiety, panic attacks, can't control your emotions.
- Craving salty or sweet foods.
- Feeling rundown, overwhelmed, and unable to cope, overwhelmed.
- Noise sensitive, jumpy, and nervy.

- Racing heart, heart palpitations, feeling faint, feeling dizzy.
- Shaking and tremors, internal shaking or feeling jittery.
- Socially distancing yourself, not wanting to go out
- Fight or fright, emotionally very sensitive, Jekyll and Hyde behaviour.

### **SO WHAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A BURNOUT OR BREAKDOWN.....**

1. Excessive Stress: Prolonged exposure to high levels of stress, whether from work, personal relationships, or other life circumstances, can lead to a state of emotional and mental exhaustion. Often, one incident, stress or trauma isn't enough to tip someone to a breakdown but compounded stressful incidents all piled on top of each other can certainly catch up with you and trigger burnout.
2. Anxiety Disorders: Severe anxiety, panic attacks, or an untreated anxiety disorder can contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed, unable to cope, or experiencing a loss of control. It can hormonally put so much pressure on your system that it tips and shuts down and you have a breakdown. This does not mean that all anxious people will have a breakdown but can contribute coupled with other factors.
3. Major Depressive Episode: Intense and persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest or pleasure in activities can be associated with a depressive episode. This can severely impact one's ability to function and lead to a breakdown.
4. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Individuals who have experienced a traumatic event may develop PTSD, which can manifest as intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, nightmares, and severe emotional distress that can disrupt your even basic daily functioning.

5. Other Mental Health Conditions: Various mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, or psychotic disorders, can have episodes or periods of severe symptoms that may be described as a breakdown. Many people who go on bipolar highs and stay awake for days on end can stress their adrenals out so much by no rest that they have a breakdown. This can also be seen with some drug users who go on drug highs for days have no sleep with huge damaging effects on their adrenals.
6. Severe illness experienced over a long period of time. Having a long-term illness like chronic fatigue or fibromyalgia, cancer or a disease experiencing moderate to severe pain long term like severe bowel issues, migraines, arthritis, perhaps an injury that you haven't recovered from – an accident or surgery that has left you with pain. Enduring pain and suffering long term simply drains the adrenals the cortisol and the adrenalin; the fight and flight hormones that are continually released in response to pain or weakness signals. If you keep draining your adrenals and never support or replenish them there is going to be trouble.
7. Post pregnancy/ breastfeeding burnout. You may find this one an unusual one to see written here but it is real and many women experience post-partum burnout or breakdown. Not only the process of growing and nourishing a baby, then delivery and the loss of placenta, loss of blood and in many cases traumatic birth experience, followed by sleep deprivation, breastfeeding and a demanding baby some women simply either don't bounce back or they burn out and crash.
8. Sleep deprivation or sleep disorders. Sleep deprivation can literally be a form of torture, if you have ever gone without sleep for a period of time you will know what I am saying. We were designed to sleep, rest, let our body recover, heal, replenish and cleanse. On average most people require 8 hours consistently for all these things to

happen. If you continually have your sleep disturbed whether it's your hormones, a snoring partner, a sick child, a shift worker – the list could be endless; there is going to be an adrenal impact. It simply isn't sustainable to live on 3 hours a night long term and damage does not happen only to your body, but especially the adrenal glands.

9. Living in daily trauma. Existing in a daily environment of trauma or stress where you remain on high alert, hypervigilant or in danger is a sure bet if not managed will end in burnout. Circumstances like living in a domestic violence situation, working in a jail or dangerous facility, being an emergency responder like police officer, ambulance officer or fire fighter where you are always waiting for the next call; over time can contribute to burnout. Shift workers who work high stress environments are some of the highest careers to experience breakdowns and burnouts.
10. A single trauma a life changing incident. A situation that you would never expect to have found yourself in; an extreme trauma like a shooting, witnessing a murder, a rape, a terror attack or a natural disaster or incident that has catastrophic effects on you or your family like a car accident death or suicide. These extreme traumas can have physical and emotional repercussions.

## **THE TEAM FOR RECOVERY**

In the case of burnout or nervous breakdown trying to heal yourself is no mean feat, to be honest you will need a team of professionals to help you make a complete recovery.

1. A General Practitioner who is caring, gives you time, listens and gives support and understands the necessity of having a team help you get well. Who understands physically what has happened to you and

can appropriately blood test necessary hormones and glands whilst you recover.

2. A Nutritionist or Naturopath who is trained in burnout and breakdown and mental health and understands the role of supplementation and herbals to help support, refill and repair the adrenals and other systems that have been affected by the health issue.
3. A supportive family who will support you through the healing process that understands you need sleep, balance, repair, quiet, personal space, time off work, less pressure and can sustain that support over a long period of time – remember this is going to take time.
4. Mental health workers whether they be psychiatrists, psychologists or counsellors who can appropriately support with counselling, medication and behavioral therapy to support this whole process.