

COMPREHENSIVE ADRENAL STRESS INDEX (ASI)

The Comprehensive Adrenal Stress Index profile consists of an Adrenal Stress Index and a Secretory IgA test. The combination of these two tests allows the influence of chronic stress on the immune function to be assessed.

Stress can have a profound effect on our emotional and physical well-being, affecting everyone at some point and causing a wide range of symptoms including weight gain, depression and digestive problems. Continued imbalance of stress hormones can wear the body down, triggering chronic fatigue and immune suppression. The adrenal glands are responsible for the secretion of the major stress hormones, cortisol and DHEA. These are not released constantly throughout the day, but are secreted in a cycle called the circadian rhythm.

Secretory IgA (SIgA) is found in saliva in the mouth, throughout the gastrointestinal tract and in mucous secretions throughout the body. SIgA, working with our immune system, provides our first line of defence against bacteria, food toxins, fungus, parasites and viruses. A deficiency of SIgA is the most common cause of immunodeficiency. Low levels increase our susceptibility to infection and may be a fundamental cause of many health conditions. Very high levels are found in people who have chronic infections and whose immune system is overloaded. Lifestyle and nutritional factors can influence SIgA levels.

What causes stress?

Factors that may contribute to stress include: negative dietary and lifestyle habits, (including over-consumption of stimulants such as sugar and caffeine), excessive exercise, injury, bereavement, marriage, divorce, debt, attitudes such as perfectionism, obsessive - compulsive behaviours, shyness, insecurity and also, perhaps, isolation and loneliness.

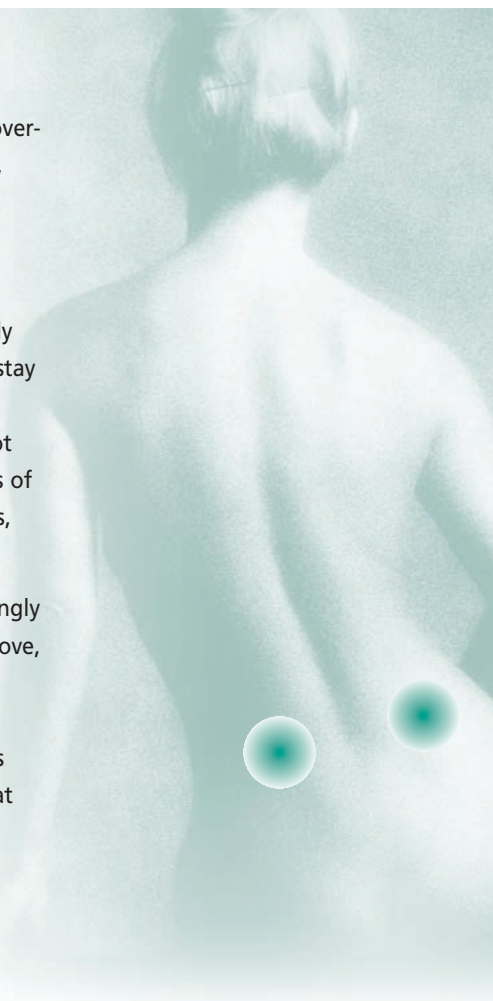
There are three stages of stress. These are commonly referred to as adaptation, resistance and exhaustion. Any physical or mental trauma will trigger an immediate set of reactions. The body releases adrenaline and a variety of other physiological mechanisms to combat the stress and stay in control. This is called the 'fight or flight' response and is an inherent survival mechanism.

Once the cause of stress is removed, this process should normalize; but if the stress factor is not removed, over time, the adaptation stage will begin. When this phase persists without periods of relaxation and rest, sufferers become prone to such conditions as fatigue, concentration lapses, irritability, lethargy, increased infections, reduced libido and loss of vitality.

The third stage occurs when the body is depleted of its 'adrenal reserve' and is fittingly termed adrenal exhaustion. Symptoms of this stage include many of the above, with worsening severity leading to progressive mental and physical exhaustion, depression, illness and collapse. In this way, instead of a stress-causing event being the problem in our health, it is the body's inappropriate stress reaction itself, persisting beyond the event, that becomes more harmful.

Symptoms associated with stress

- PMS, cravings, weight gain, inexplicable hunger
- Increased number of minor infections and viruses (e.g. thrush, cystitis, colds, flu)
- Poor concentration and memory, low energy, insomnia, depression, loss of libido
- Headaches, mood swings, anxiety, panic attacks, nervousness and/ or irritability
- Digestive disturbances (e.g. diarrhoea, constipation, bloating, stomach aches/ pains)
- Increased sensitivities to food, and alcohol intolerance
- Skin problems (e.g. eczema, psoriasis)
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol levels



What causes imbalanced Secretory IgA levels?

- High stress levels
- Anti-inflammatory drugs
- Antibiotics
- Intestinal infections (e.g. bacterial or yeast overgrowth)
- Ageing
- High alcohol intake
- Maldigestion and malabsorption
- Gastroenteritis
- Chemotherapy
- Food poisoning
- Poor diet

Conditions associated with imbalanced SIgA

- Asthma
- Autoimmune conditions including Coeliac Disease, Ulcerative colitis and Crohns Disease.
- Candidiasis and other pathogens in the G.I. tract
- Food intolerances and allergies
- Autism and other behavioural problems
- Upper respiratory tract infections
- Periodontal disease
- Chronic dermatological conditions
- Chronic and persistent infections

Sample requirements

4 saliva samples taken throughout a 24-hour period

How does the test work?

A powerful, precise and non-invasive assay, the Comprehensive Adrenal Stress Index test, serves as a reliable marker of the stress response and an accurate measure of SIgA immune function, therefore providing a critical tool for revealing imbalances that may be subtly or dramatically influencing your health. The test simply requires 4 saliva samples. This accurately reflects the levels of hormones by detecting the free fraction (bioactive) component which functions at a cellular level.

Please note the adrenal stress index and Secretory IgA tests can be purchased separately.

Nationwide Test Kit Service

Most of the tests involve simple kits that can be used in your own home. Some may require the help of a nurse or GP. If you cannot visit the laboratory, you can phone and arrange for your kit to be sent in the post. Once samples have been taken, you simply post the test kit back to the laboratory. We would encourage you to use guaranteed delivery and not to send kits over the weekend.

For further information consult your practitioner, or call us today on 020 7730 7010

ADRENAL STRESS