

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

The Ultimate Beginner's Guide



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What is integrative Medicine?

Integrative medicine is an approach to healthcare that looks at the whole person and not just their symptoms.

It can help you achieve balance and optimum health by looking at your lifestyle, stress, environmental toxins, gut health, hormonal health and nutrition.

Why is it important?

Addressing diet, lifestyle factors and chronic stress has been scientifically proven to improve health outcomes in patients with obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, auto-immune diseases and many other conditions.

Also, did you know diet is the leading cause of chronic disease but doctors are not taught about nutrition at medical school? If they are, the information is limited.

Poor diet is responsible for more deaths globally than tobacco, high blood pressure, or any other health risk, according to a new scientific study. [\[1\]](#)

Lastly, did you know that 80% of GP consultations are related to chronic stress?

What's the mind-body connection?

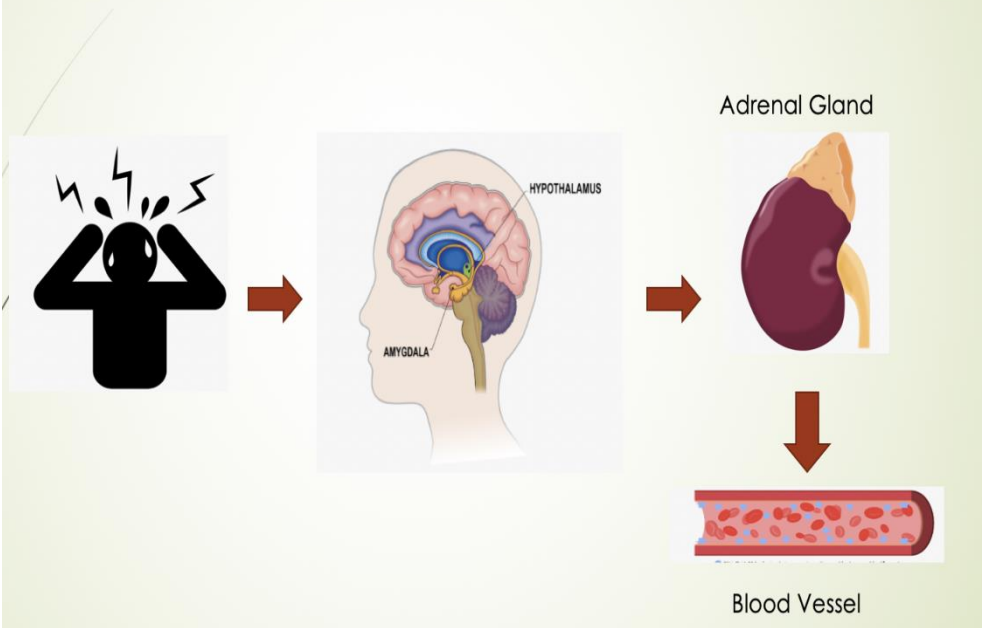
Deep breath. Let's take a moment and reflect on the past few years. What comes up for you? Many have experienced loneliness, fear, and tons and tons of change. And believe it or not, those three factors are major causes of stress and anxiety.

Let's take a step back. Stress can vary from individual to individual. Your reaction to stress is different from someone next to you. We're all unique. And so, the last few years can be a different experience for each one of you. Sometimes stress can be the feeling of overwhelm, pressure to get things done quickly, the mind never stopping or being always on the go. Imagine always having something to do or to be somewhere. Sounds familiar?

Yes, I hear you, some people thrive on this and when I chat to patients they go, "But I love it. I love being busy." Some feel they benefit from being in this state because they get things done and are constantly achieving their goals. Also, some feel like this is their normal and don't know anything different!

What's the Stress Reaction?

The Stress Reaction- Cortisol



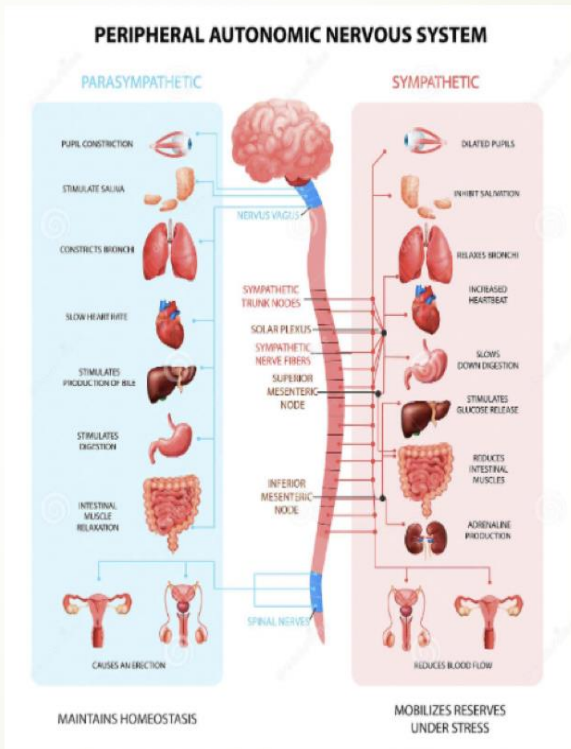
The series of events that take place during a stress reaction was actually designed to protect us, to alert us about danger so we could run or fight, hence why it's called the fight, flight or freeze response. However, in today's world, emotions trigger the stress response. And we're talking about guilt, fear, embarrassment, or even shame.

The stress reaction starts with a thought which is first detected by the amygdala. The amygdala, a small gland in the brain, is the centre for processing emotions. It relays those fear signals to the hypothalamus, another gland in the brain, at times of stress. The hypothalamus subsequently sends messages to the adrenal glands to kick start the fight or flight response. Adrenal glands sit on top of your kidneys and are designed to

release stress chemicals of cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenaline. Once released into the bloodstream, messages are sent to different parts of the body.

How does stress affect the body?

The Autonomic Nervous System



I now want to introduce you to the autonomic nervous system. This collection of nerves work automatically without much control needed by us, hence the word autonomic. It's literally divided into two areas, the parasympathetic and the sympathetic. Now, the sympathetic is all about speeding things

up in the body and the parasympathetic does the opposite. It slows things down. We have this amazing control mechanism trying to regulate function and always trying to achieve balance. But have we forgotten to switch on the parasympathetic, the brakes?

Now, the autonomic nervous system is connected to multiple organs. It makes sense because when we're feeling stressed, we may feel our heart race, our mouth may dry up and we may experience sweaty palms. **The nerves are communicating messages to all of these organs.**

What we may not be aware of is that the stress response is also connected to the liver. This triggers the release of sugar or glucose. And how can I forget that the nerves are also connected to the gut. Hence why stress affects digestion by affecting the flow of stomach acid, gut bacteria and also the movement of the gut. You may have heard of Irritable Bowel Syndrome where the bowel movements alternate between diarrhea and constipation? Yes, that's right, the stress response is an important player in this condition. Stress also affects the thyroid, adrenal and hypothalamus glands.

Imagine this, a single thought can trigger a series of reactions in our body which, over time, affects our organs. As a result, we can no longer ignore how our wonderful MIND is connected to our BODY and the impact it has on our health.

NUTRITION: 7 Common Mistakes most people make when trying to lose weight



Photo by Diana Polekhina on Unsplash

1. Calories in Vs Calories out

Ditch the old school saying “Calories in vs Calories Out”. It’s time to change the narrative to “Why is my body storing fat and not burning fat?”. Here is where we talk about insulin, our fat storage hormone. Insulin tells the body to store fat every time you eat. This is why fasting for 12 hours overnight can significantly help with weight loss.

2. Snacking

It goes back to insulin. If we stimulate the release of insulin less frequently, and have longer periods of fasting between meals, the body begins to burn fat rather than store fat. Avoid snacking and stick to just 3 meals a day can help with weight loss. And especially avoid those after-dinner snacks!

3. The Hidden Sugars

A great tip to know is 1 teaspoon= 4 grams of sugar. I checked out the following products in the supermarket and you will be surprised to hear that a bottle of tomato ketchup had 30 teaspoons of sugar while 1 litre of fresh orange juice had 34 teaspoons of sugar! It's often the hidden sugar in processed food products that is a culprit for weight gain.

4. Wheat in every meal

Wheat, a type of grain found in white bread, cereals, biscuits, noodles and pasta is notorious for causing a rapid rise in insulin due to the presence of the protein called amylopectin A. Wheat products have crept into our diets, featuring in breakfasts, snacks, lunches and dinners without us realising it. Cut back on wheat and the see the weight slide off.

5. Not eating enough protein

Studies show that protein is by far the most filling macronutrient. It helps you feel fuller—with less food. This is partly because protein reduces your level of the hunger hormone called ghrelin. It also boosts the levels of peptide YY, a hormone that makes you feel full. One study in overweight men showed that increasing protein to 25% of calories reduced cravings by 60% and the desire to snack at night by half.

6. Sleep deprived

Imagine getting 7.5hrs of sleep, falling asleep easily and waking up refreshed. How would you feel? Good quality sleep is in fact a necessity when it comes to weight loss. The best time for fat burning is between midnight and 8 am. This is when the body has the lowest level of insulin. Interrupted or light sleep can be a major factor affecting weight loss.

7. Chronic Stress

Lastly, chronic stress. This means that the fight or flight response is frequently experienced in the day and night. Stress triggers the hormone called cortisol which stimulates your fat and carbohydrate metabolism. This gives your body energy as it prepares to fight off a threat. Cortisol also causes your body to raise insulin, which can drop blood glucose levels and cause you to crave sugary, fatty foods.

CALL TO ACTION: Which tip will you start using today?

Exercise: Tips for incorporating exercise into daily life

What does “exercise” mean for you?

What emotion do you feel when you hear the word “exercise”?

When I asked a patient this question last week, I had the most unexpected story. She said “Pain”. Everytime she thinks about exercise, she remembers her school days with the horrible Physical Education teacher and being bullied in that class by her peers. It triggered such awful memories!

So what do you feel?

I ask patients to exercise and here are the top 3 reasons why they don't

- I don't have energy
- I lack motivation
- I don't have time

So my first step towards our goal is ditch the word “exercise” and replace this with “movement”

Out of curiosity, I looked at the research about current habits when it comes to movement and here's what I found.

According to the The National Health Survey 2014-15: in Australia

- Nearly 60% of Australian adults are either sedentary or have low levels of physical activity.

- People in sedentary jobs spent 22 hours of the week sitting for work.
- Sedentary activity occupied on average 39 hours per week for adults.
- Watching TV was the most prevalent activity, at nearly 13 hours per week.

Here's the second step – what's your WHY to move?

Would like to be happy, calm, have lower stress levels, be stronger, have more energy, better memory, learn new things quickly, have deeper sleep, stronger will power and amazing immunity?

Yes, this is all that regular exercise can do.

And I cannot forget to tell you about what exercise can do for mental health.

Research has shown the following:

- 16 weeks of regular exercise is just as effective as anti-depressant medication in treating older people who were not exercising previously.
- both aerobic exercise (such as walking, cycling or running) and strength training (such as weight lifting) can help treat depression.
- moderate intensity exercise can be an effective treatment on its own for mild-to-moderate depression.

And here's the last step - Start with a tiny goal.

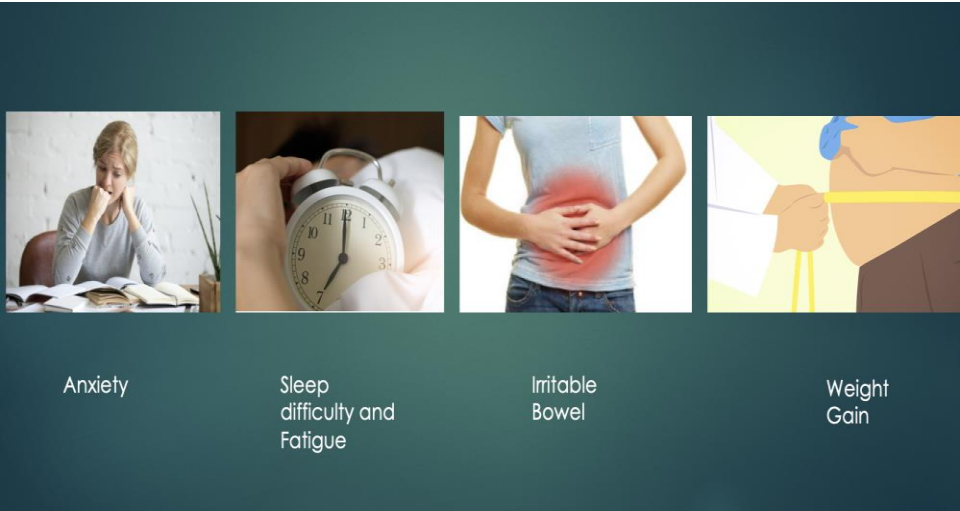
A 2010 analysis of ten different studies found that the biggest mood-boosting, stress-busting effects came from 5-minute doses of exercise, not hour-long sessions. It's almost hard to believe!

And this will shock you, within the first 5 minutes of any physical activity in nature, people report major shifts in mood and outlook, gain perspective in life, feel connected to life itself. Wonder, awe, curiosity, awe, hope – natural antidotes to worry, distraction and depression.

CALL TO ACTION: What fun ways are you going to move today?

Stress: The impact of stress on overall health

How does chronic stress affect our body?

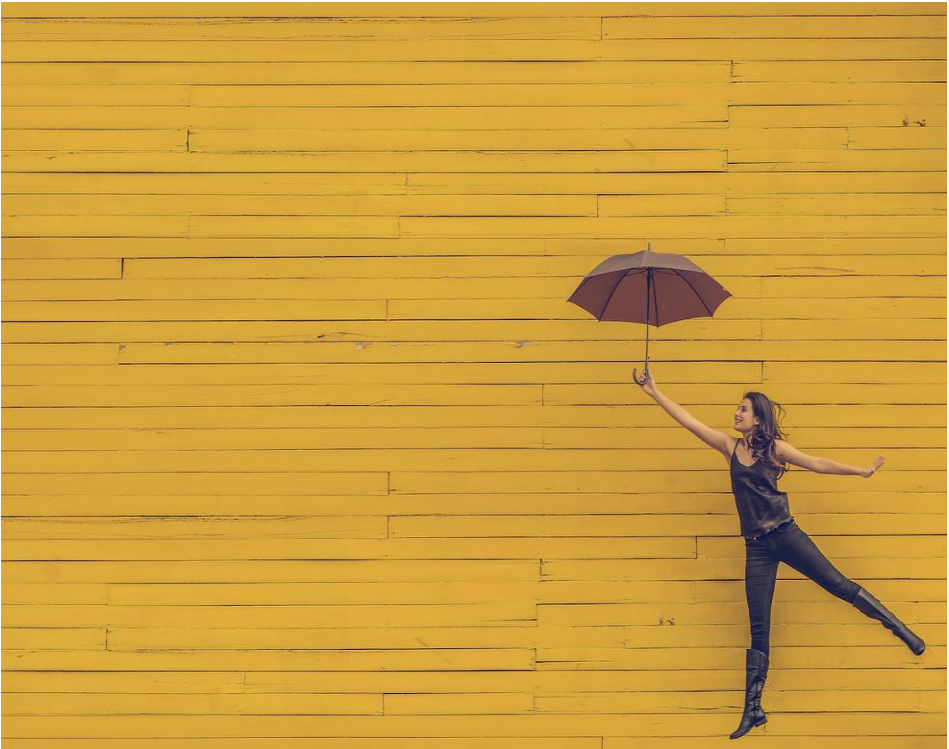


So, what's our ultimate goal when we're thinking about the stress reaction? **BALANCE**. We're trying to seek balance between sympathetic and the parasympathetic. Now, often, and we don't realize that we could be in a state of chronic stress. Remember the stress reaction is there to protect us. We need to be alerted to danger, for example, when we're crossing the road, so we save ourselves. **But in today's world, we may be going through chronic stress. We are spending more time in the sympathetic response compared to the parasympathetic response.** And that causes the body to be in a constant state of imbalance.

Imagine the impact of chronic stress on our organs over time, be it weeks, months or even years. Overtime, chronic stress can lead to symptoms **anxiety, sleep difficulties, fatigue, bloating and the irritable bowel symptoms.**

So how do we deal with the stress response? Firstly, we may not even realize we're in the sympathetic response throughout the day. It may have become our normal. So, take a moment to pause and do a check in. How are you feeling? Do you have symptoms that could be related to stress?

How do I switch from feeling stressed to calm? Here are 3 quick tips.



From Unsplash by Edu Lauton

The feeling of stress is unique to each and every one of you. It depends on your interpretation of your environment or reality I should say. How you react may be the result of habits or behaviours that you have adopted from all your influences in life and now they seem stuck with you. But you guessed right, if you have learnt a behaviour, you can also unlearn it.

I mentioned the stress reaction in my previous blog and how it all starts with a thought detected by the small gland in the brain called the amygdala.

“I have to get all my tasks done today. It has to be perfect. I have to get it right. I feel I’m running out of time. I don’t know how they will react. I’m predicting the worst possible outcome”. Does this sound familiar to you?

Writing those sentences has just triggered my stress response!

Did you know the amygdala which detects fear and then activates the stress response, always goes back to your baseline? And your baseline is whatever is familiar to you. That’s the important piece of information. Let’s pause and think what this means.

It means, if you are familiar with worry and have been most of your life, it becomes your default emotion, and that’s your baseline. This means we need to ask ourselves this question. **“Do I know what calm feels like?”**. Does calm actually feel uncomfortable for you? As we start switching from the sympathetic (stress) response to parasympathetic (calm) response, we may feel uncomfortable and almost crave being busy and stressed. I know, how strange but ever so true.

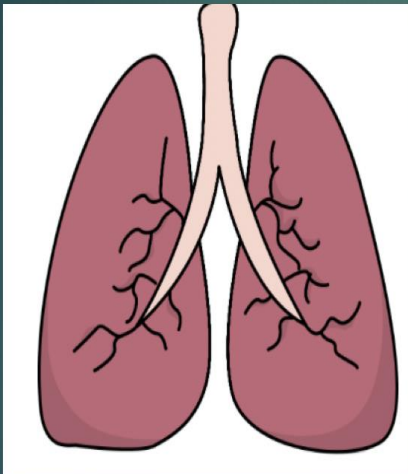
Here’s where the following tips can help you on your journey towards being more in the parasympathetic (calm) state. Here’s a quick recap, the sympathetic nervous system speeds things up and the parasympathetic counterpart, does the opposite, slows things down.

Tips for incorporating stress management into daily life

3 TIPS TO FEEL CALM

1. Breathe

BREATHE



Shallow or Deep?

I can't emphasise how the simple act of taking a deep breath can transform the way you feel in minutes. Let's take a moment to check if you are breathing shallow or deeply. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your tummy. Take a deep breath in and see which part of the body rises first. We would like to see the tummy rise first. This means we are inflating our lungs fully, activating the diaphragm which in turn activates the vagus nerve, the main nerve of the

parasympathetic nervous system. Now it's your turn. Take a lovely long deep breath and see how you feel.

Now I always say to patients, practise deep breathing throughout the day. Each time you pick your phone, check an email or about to walk into a meeting, take some lovely long deep breaths and observe how you feel. Over time, you will automatically breathe deeply.

2. Move

How sedentary have our lives become? There are 168 hours in the week. We are sitting or being sedentary for sleep, meal times, work and travel. Add in social media or TV usage and we are left with a mere 19 hours in the week for movement. Does this shock you? This is not much time at all.

A 2010 analysis of ten different studies found that the biggest mood-boosting, stress-busting effects came from **5-minute doses of exercise**, not hour-long sessions. So I say move for mental health!

Don't have time? Play your favourite music and have a dance for 5 minutes, do some squats or jumping jacks, skip or even go for a quick walk in nature. You will be surprised how quickly your stress levels transform.

How about creating a work environment that forces you to be active? Here are a few examples; have walk and talk meetings, place your printer on the other side of the room and even stand every time you use the phone.

3. Sleep

Good ole sleep. Here are 3 questions to ask yourself about your sleep quality.

1. Do you fall asleep easily?
2. Do you stay asleep or wake up several times in the night?
3. Do you wake up feeling tired?

We are looking for yes, no and no answers. Imagine having wonderful deep sleep each night. Research is saying 40% of Americans are chronically sleep deprived. This means they are getting less than 6 hours of sleep per night and this is equivalent to be being drunk!

So how can you improve your sleep? Here are a few tips. Avoid screen time before bed, reduce caffeine intake and try journalling to help externalise all those racing thoughts before bed.

Environmental health: The impact of the environment on health

Endocrine disruptors are found in many everyday products, including some plastic bottles and containers, liners of metal food cans, detergents, flame retardants, food, toys, cosmetics, and pesticides.

The worrying aspect is that many chemicals, both natural and man-made, may mimic or interfere with the body's hormones, known as the endocrine system.

The endocrine system, made up of all the body's different hormones, regulates all biological processes in the body from conception through adulthood and into old age. This includes the:

- development of the brain and nervous system
- growth and function of the reproductive system
- function of metabolism and blood sugar levels

Major components of the endocrine system include:

- female ovaries
- male testes
- pituitary gland
- thyroid gland
- adrenal glands

Other components include the:

- pineal gland
- thymus
- hypothalamus
- parathyroid glands
- pancreas

Here is a list of common endocrine disruptors in our environment that we need to know about.

- **Bisphenol A (BPA)** — used to make polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins, which are found in many plastic products including food storage containers.
- **Phthalates** — used to make plastics more flexible, they are also found in some food packaging, cosmetics, children’s toys, and medical devices.
- **Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB)** — used to make electrical equipment like transformers, and in hydraulic fluids, heat transfer fluids, lubricants, and plasticizers.
- **Triclosan** — may be found in some anti-microbial and personal care products, like liquid body wash.

The effects of BPA on our body

During the early 1990s, Dr. Feldman conducted studies on estrogen activity. In 1992, Feldman and his team discovered what looked like an estrogenic molecule when they were growing yeast in plastic flasks. **It turned out it was not the yeast**

synthesizing the estrogen, but rather it was leaching from the plastic. The team then performed an experiment without having the yeast in the flask, and they found there was still this estrogenic molecule in the medium, **which they then identified the estrogenic molecule as BPA. They found it was coming from the plastic flask and was not present when they did the experiment in glass flasks.**

“We realized that we had identified a molecule that was leaching out of the plastic that, due to its estrogenic hormone-like properties, **was potentially dangerous to people eating out of containers made of this type of plastic,**” he says.

Three ways BPA can affect our body

Oestrogen

BPA can **mimic estrogen to interact with estrogen receptors α and β ,** leading to changes in cell proliferation, apoptosis, or migration and thereby, contributing to cancer development and progression.

Although BPA is being phased out of plastics, an equally oestrogenic byproduct known as BPS is being used in place.

Commercially available BPA free ‘Tritan’ plastic, used to make plastic bottles, sippy cups and containers to store food and drinks. **In one study, these plastics actually leached more synthetic oestrogens than plastics containing BPA!**

Having too much estrogen [may cause:](#)

- weight gain, especially around the hips and waist
- heavy or light periods

- worse PMS than usual
- [fatigue](#)
- [fibroids](#) in the uterus
- fibrocystic lumps in the breasts
- low sex drive

Vitamin D

Exposure to bisphenol A (BPA) and other endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) **may reduce levels of vitamin D in the bloodstream**, according to a new study published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*. [2]

Sugar regulation

The [ground-breaking study](#), published in the Journal of the Endocrine Society, administered low doses of bisphenol A, or BPA, to 16 people, then tested their insulin production in response to glucose, commonly called blood sugar. When insulin and blood glucose levels were compared to the same measurements taken without exposure to BPA, researchers found that **BPA significantly changed how glucose affected insulin levels**.

Exposure to BPA has been reported also to modulate glucose utilization in muscles, as well as to interfere with adipose tissue (body fat) endocrine function.

Thus, exposure to BPA seems to be an important risk factor in the onset of obesity and metabolic syndrome. [3]

I talk about endocrine disruptors with my patients frequently and especially if they suffer from female hormone imbalances. However, as I dived into the research, I was shocked to learn about the impact of endocrine disruptors on Vitamin D absorption and sugar regulation. How else is it affecting us?

Over the years, I gradually made changes to my environment, from changing cosmetic products, discovering alternative cleaning products, choosing organic vegetables and filtering tap water. My last step is to find a non-toxic perfume which I'm close to solving! This journey can take time and I advice patients to make it a 12 to 24 month project otherwise it can feel overwhelming. After all, habits take time to shift!

Practical tips on Managing Anxiety

This is a great time to talk about coffee consumption and how it affects how we feel.

Are you one of four Australians who cannot survive the day without coffee?

Your brain is filled with keys which fit specific keyholes (receptors). Adenosine, a chemical that makes you drowsy, is one of those keys, but caffeine can fit in the same keyhole. When caffeine gets in there, it keeps adenosine from getting in. With caffeine stuck in the keyhole, adenosine can't calm you down and it can't make you drowsy. That feeling you get when you drink a lot of coffee is what it feels like when your brain can't turn itself off.

With caffeine blocking the adenosine, it also triggers the release of adrenaline from the adrenal glands triggering the fight or flight response.

This combination further stimulates the brain and promotes a state of arousal, alertness, and focus.

The good and the bad

The good

- Alert
- Energy
- Focus
- Bowel movements

- Appetite Suppressant

Knowing how caffeine works in the body, this means it can do the following:

- Anxious
- Palpitations
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Headache
- Dehydration
- Appetite Suppressant

How people react to coffee varies, because of your genes. Some are slow caffeine metabolisers, so caffeine has the potential to build up in the bloodstream and, as a result, may do more harm than good.

Slow metabolizers may experience negative side effects of caffeine consumption to a higher degree such as insomnia, anxiety, and upset stomach.

On the other hand, if you are a fast metabolizer, you process caffeine at a more rapid rate and hence, caffeine might not have as great or as lasting of an effect.

Practical tips on Managing Bloating

Here is where understanding how our digestive tract works can be most helpful.

So, how quickly do you eat your meals? Do you chew your food 32 times before swallowing?

If you are in an industry for example teaching or healthcare, where you are prone to eat lunch quickly, your answer will most likely be “fast” and “no”. I hear these answers numerous times from patients in both industries. “I just don’t have time for lunch”, they often tell me.

Does the speed of eating your meals really matter? How does it affect YOUR health?

Here’s quick reminder on the various steps involved in digesting your food. Chewing being the first step of digestion.

STEP 1

When you chew your food, your **teeth grind down** consumed food into **more manageable and smaller** bites, your **salivary glands secrete various enzymes** on the food to aid in absorption, and **your tongue manipulates the food** in your mouth to get it finely chewed before it enters the stomach.

Saliva contains enzymes like amylase and lipase, which break down carbs and fats, respectively. It also contains mucus, which helps bind the food particles together, and provides a lubricant to aid swallowing.

According to studies **food should be chewed about 32 times**, foods that are harder to chew, such as steak and nuts may need up to 40 chews per mouthful. For foods that are softer

such as mashed potato and watermelon you can get away with chewing just 5–10 times.

STEP 2

Your oesophagus pushes food into your stomach.

STEP 3

Your stomach holds food while it mixes with enzymes that continue breaking down the food.

STEP 4

When food is digested enough in your stomach, it moves into your small intestine where it mixes with more enzymes that continue to break it down. **Nutrients from the food are absorbed in the small intestine.**

STEP 5

Waste products are sent to the large intestine, known as your colon. The leftover waste is excreted through the rectum and anus.

So, what happens if you speed up this process?

Here are just few examples of symptoms you may experience when you eat quickly and chew less.

1. Bloating

Chewing **reduces the risk of bacterial overgrowth** — lumps of food that aren't broken down properly can cause bacterial overgrowth in the colon, which leads to **indigestion, bloating, flatulence and constipation.**

2. Weight Gain

In general, it takes about 20 minutes for your brain to signal to your stomach that it is full. **Therefore, if you are eating slower, it is less likely that you will over-eat.**

According to [one study](#), obese people tend to chew their food less than people who are leaner. But when researchers asked both obese and lean participants to chew each bite of food 40 times, both groups ate less and helped regulate their hunger and satiety hormones.

3. Smaller jaws

How much we chew, and what we chew substantially dictates the shape and growth of our jaws.

Here's where I need to mention about a Canadian dentist named Weston Price. As early as 1894, he became interested in the relationship between nutrition, dental health, and overall health. In the 1930's, he went on to **investigate his theories about diet and dental health by studying groups of people around the world who were still eating the traditional diets of their area.**

This was an epic undertaking in those days because his research covered areas as far afield as Switzerland, Australia, and Polynesia. He compiled over 15,000 photographs, 4,000 slides, and a large number of filmstrips, and in 1939, he published [*Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*](#), a book that outlined his findings.

One of the most interesting discoveries was how these groups of people had facial development that was far better than those who had adopted a "Westernized" diet made up of a higher

proportion of processed and refined (and soft) foods. They also had almost no cavities or gum disease!

“ Eating difficult to chew foods at an early age strengthens the jaw muscles and promotes bone growth by helping to lay down the bone matrix, allowing the jaw to develop to its full potential.” says Dr. Steven Lin in his excellent book, [*The Dental Diet*](#).

I see numerous patients with gastro-intestinal symptoms of bloating and constipation. A great place to start is to ask about digestion which begins in the mouth.

So, do you chew well and eat slowly? This simple and often lost habit can have multiple hidden health benefits. So, let's not forget to chew your food!

Practical tips on Managing Fatigue

What does tiredness or fatigue mean for you? There's a huge range and it's important to ask more questions.

1. Do you feel tired at specific times in the day?
Afternoon ? In a meeting? After lunch?
2. Do you need regular naps in the day?
3. Do you wake up tired?
4. Or are you always tired to the point this is stopping you from doing the fun stuff in life?
5. Fatigue tiredness can also present as headaches, stress, depression, anxiety, ADHD, lack of motivation...

In functional medicine, we go deeper..

Yes, iron is important but there are so many factors we need to consider.

These are just 3 more areas to consider from the numerous causes of tiredness.

1. Diet
2. Sleep hygiene
3. Nutrient deficiencies e.g. Vitamin D, Vitamin B12, Folate, Magnesium

When it comes to fatigue, I always talk about Magnesium with my patients.

Fun Fact: Which mineral is required by over 600 chemical reactions in the body? Yes, that's right, it's **Magnesium**.

Magnesium plays an important role in assisting enzymes to carry out various chemical reactions in the body such as **building proteins and strong bones**, and **regulating blood sugar, blood pressure, and muscle and nerve functions**. Magnesium also acts as an electrical conductor that contracts muscles and makes the heart beat steadily.

If you find yourself curious to learn more about magnesium read Dr Carolyn Dean's book "[The Magnesium Miracle](#)". It will blow your mind. She dives into the depths of this mineral and how it is vital for multiple medical conditions.

Magnesium is a mineral that is hardly talked about in the medical circles even though it is required by every cell in your body!

Here are just 3 common signs and symptoms of Magnesium Deficiency which you may be familiar with.

1. Muscle twitching and cramps
2. Tiredness
3. Anxiety and Depression [\[4\]](#)

Magnesium is found in plant foods like legumes, dark green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and fortified cereals. It is also in fish, poultry, and beef. So why, in today's world, are people deficient in Magnesium?

Here are **5 reasons why you may be low in Magnesium** that we need to talk more about.

1. Caffeine

Drinking coffee can affect the levels of magnesium in your body. When you drink coffee, your intestinal absorption of magnesium decreases. The more coffee you drink, the less magnesium your intestines can absorb. **How many cups of coffees did you have this week?**

2. Alcohol

Alcohol increases the loss of magnesium from the kidneys. Also, with chronic intake of alcohol and development of alcoholism, the body stores of Mg become depleted. [5]

3. Sugar

The **high blood sugar and elevated insulin levels** associated with excess sugar intake decrease magnesium absorption and cause the kidneys to excrete magnesium faster.

The **pancreas needs magnesium in order to produce insulin**, and to release that insulin into the blood stream in response to high blood glucose levels. Sufficient magnesium is also necessary for cells to respond to insulin effectively, so it helps glucose get into our cells from the blood stream.

4. Phytates

Phytates, the natural substances found in **whole grains, seeds, legumes, some nuts** — can decrease the absorption of not only magnesium, but also [iron](#), [zinc](#) and [calcium](#). Anti-nutrients are naturally found in many plant-based foods. In plants, they are compounds designed to protect from bacterial infections and being eaten by insects. Check out a great article on anti-nutrients from the Harvard School of Public Health. Link [here](#).

5. Stress

[Research](#) suggests that stress could increase magnesium loss, causing a deficiency; and in turn, magnesium deficiency could enhance the body's susceptibility to stress, resulting in a magnesium and stress vicious circle.

I see patients in my clinic every day with signs of magnesium deficiency and it always amazes me how the above 5 daily diet and lifestyle factors may be contributing to bodily imbalances which can lead to chronic health conditions.

HOW TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Our integrative medicine therapies combine the best of both traditional and alternative medicine to promote harmony in all aspects of your health.

Potential benefits of integrative medicine include:

- improved overall health
- reduced stress
- increased energy
- improved mental health
- better sleep
- reduced dependency on medications.

However, our integrative approach isn't a 'quick fix'. It can take time to forge new habits that tackle the true causes behind your symptoms. But that time is rewarded with better health and new knowledge to stay healthy.

Integrative natural therapies may not be a fit for you if:

- you want an instant fix
- you aren't ready for change
- you can't commit to the process
- you're unwilling to work hard to achieve your health goals.

If you are ready for change, it's time to take action today!

Book your appointment by visiting www.mintclinic.com.au

Disclaimer: This is general advice only. Please see your healthcare professional if you are suffering from stress, anxiety or have any health issues.

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