

Adrenal hormone consent form

Name: _____

Conventional & CAM Diagnosis: _____

Rationale/Symptoms: _____

- Adrenal dysfunction occurs when the body's hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (**HPA axis**) is unable to support normal daily and day-to-day fluctuations in **cortisol** in response to **stress**.
- Adrenal dysfunction has been implicated in chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, insomnia, burnout, stress, PTSD, anxiety & depression, but changes in cortisol are not seen in all studies.
- Adrenal dysfunction is **not a currently accepted conventional diagnosis**, but is known by many integrative & complementary medicine providers. *Adrenal failure/insufficiency or "Addison's disease"* is a conventional medical diagnosis where the adrenal glands fail to produce enough cortisol & mineralocorticoids, leading to fatigue, weakness, low blood pressure & blood sugar, salt cravings, nausea/anorexia, abnormal blood electrolytes (low Na, high K & Ca), low blood cortisol. It is treated by endocrinologists with cortisol, mineralocorticoids +/-DHEA.

Signs & symptoms of adrenal dysfunction depend on the stage:

Adrenal arousal/adaptation Cortisol levels ~elevated~ HIGH. Stress, anxiety, irritability, insomnia.	Adrenal fatigue/depletion/exhaustion Cortisol levels ~depleted~ LOW. Depression, fatigue, low BP, salt/sugar craving.
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Testing: for adrenal dysfunction is recommended since it is hard to predict the type of adrenal dysfunction based solely on symptoms. Ways to assess adrenal dysfunction include:

- Blood morning cortisol & ACTH Blood & salivary DHEA (both conventional)
- 24 hour salivary cortisol curve (waking, noon, evening, midnight; not conventional, \$)
- Cortisol awakening response (3 samples 30min apart upon waking; not conventional, \$)

Treatment: Adrenal hormone (desiccated adrenal extract) is **not a conventional treatment**.

There are no conventional treatments specific to adrenal dysfunction, save possibly SSRIs.

Evidence for use of this treatment is based more on **clinical experience** than research trials.

Benefits/expectations: Reduction in symptoms associated with adrenal dysfunction.

Side Effects & Risks: Too much adrenal hormone could cause **insomnia, irritability, anxiety**.

Long term use of adrenal hormone could lead to **dependence** or **adrenal failure** where the body adapts to extra hormone and stops producing enough endogenous hormones.

- Use the **lowest effective dose** for the **shortest required time**.
- **Wean** your dose of adrenal hormone when finishing, avoid stopping abruptly.

Alternatives: No treatment (symptoms may persist). Stress reduction. Exercise.

Self care: deep breathing, yoga, HRV exercises. Qi gong / Tai Chi. Acupuncture.

Non-Hormonal: herbal adaptogens. Vitamin & mineral. Supplements.

Sleep assistance: bedtime routine, herbals/supplements/medications to help with sleep.

Conventional medication: anti-depressant, anti-anxiety, insomnia medications.

Use products approved for sale in Canada for quality assurance. Avoid purchasing online.

I have read & understand the above material. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I give my voluntary informed consent to treatment. I may request a paper copy anytime.

Signature: _____ Date: _____