

For Immediate Release

Got Stress? Stress Hormone Levels Are as Important to Know As Blood Pressure & Cholesterol Levels

Adrenalfatigue.org supports National Stress Awareness Month
~ Simple salivary cortisol test offers accurate look at health under stress

April 1, 2010 ~ Tucson, AZ: Adrenalfatigue.org suggests Americans learn their stress hormone levels as part of April's Stress Awareness Month because they are as vital to health as blood pressure and cholesterol. However, testing for the primary stress hormone, cortisol, is often misunderstood by the medical community, with blood and urine tests being used that often do not accurately assess the impact of stress on a person's health.

People are experiencing unprecedented stress levels today due to global economic and environmental changes. Those stresses are an underlying factor in numerous health conditions. "Regardless of the source of stress, all stress affects the adrenal glands and the production of the 'stress hormone,' cortisol, responsible for stimulating the 'fight or flight' response," says Dr. James L. Wilson, creator of adrenalfatigue.org and author of *Adrenal fatigue: The 21st Century Stress Syndrome*. "Whether you're an athlete or single mother, an earthquake victim or crisis responder, stress is the same for people the world over, with the adrenals having to orchestrate a complex biochemical response.

Cortisol is called "the stress hormone" because it influences, regulates or modulates many of the changes that occur in the body in response to stress. According to Dr. Wilson, the most simple, accurate and reliable method to determine cortisol levels is through a salivary hormone test. The results are more indicative of the amount of cortisol and other hormones inside the cells where their reactions take place.

"Although blood and urine hormone tests have their uses, neither of them correlates with the hormone levels inside the cells. The level of a hormone circulating in the blood or excreted in the urine does not necessarily reveal how much of that hormone is getting into the cells," said Dr. Wilson. "None of the blood or urine tests typically give you as much useful information about adrenal function."

Research shows that cortisol has a distinct, rhythmic pattern in humans that rises and falls throughout a 24-hour cycle. By sampling saliva at four intervals throughout the day, this cortisol pattern can be measured and compared to norms, providing an excellent assessment of how the body is coping with stress. Taking multiple samples in a day is not easily done with blood or urine tests. Measuring the daily pattern of cortisol levels can reveal whether low cortisol levels are responsible for fatigue experienced during particular times of day.

Cortisol can be viewed as sustaining life through two opposite but related types of regulatory actions: releasing and activating existing defense mechanisms of the body, and shutting down and modifying the same mechanisms to prevent them from overshooting and causing damage or cell death. It has a profound effect on every organ and system in the body. Both low and high cortisol can negatively affect sleep, sex drive, mood, concentration, blood sugar metabolism, energy and immune function, among other things. Stress normally causes elevated cortisol levels, but in adrenal fatigue, the output of adrenal hormones, particularly cortisol, has been diminished by over-stimulation. The medical community could get a better picture of their patients' health simply by using a salivary hormone test, without which they risk missing the real effects of stress on the body.

"During stressful times, strong adrenals and the ability to maintain physiological and biochemical balance can not only help people protect their health and continue to do whatever they must, but also to stay positive – an essential element of survival and success," said Dr. Wilson.

Salivary hormone tests can be conducted without a doctor's prescription through specialty labs in the U.S., are non-invasive, have no adverse side effects and are easy to do in the privacy of a person's home. Results are usually available within a week and can be interpreted by the lab, lab referral physician or a qualified health care practitioner.

"Taking steps to support the adrenals and other endocrine glands affected by stress can result in improvements in energy, sleep, and the ability to focus and concentrate, as well as help avoid adrenal fatigue and other problems that can arise as stress maladaptations," Dr. Wilson stated.

A list of laboratories that do accurate and reliable saliva testing can be found online at <http://adrenalfatigue.org>.

A scientist as well as a physician, Dr. Wilson holds three doctorate degrees and two master's degrees, all from different health disciplines. Dr. Wilson is listed in The International Who's Who in Medicine (Cambridge, England), and was one of the founding fathers of the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM) in Toronto, Ontario.

Adrenal Fatigue: The 21st Century Stress Syndrome (Smart Publications, 2001), is a comprehensive, easy-to-use guide to uncovering, dealing with and preventing adrenal fatigue and the negative effects of stress on health. More information can be found at Dr. Wilson's website, www.adrenalfatigue.org.