

Help, My body is Killing Me!

Solving the connections of autoimmune disease to thyroid problems, fibromyalgia, infertility, anxiety, depression, ADD/ADHD and more

By Dr. Kevin Connors

Section 2

The neurotransmitters that are typically involved here are epinephrine and norepinephrine but the secondary effects of Frontal Lobe function ultimately involves a more complex down-regulation of other neurotransmitter production centers and the patient slides downhill. Not only is there a decreased production but there is a decrease in the systemic function through a loss of sensitivity. It's also a part of the reason that some hypothyroid patients have difficulty losing weight and why ADD, ADHD, anxiety and depression patients can't control their moods. Epinephrine and norepinephrine stimulate lipolysis, the breakdown of fats and aid in Frontal Lobe expression. When one loses the responsiveness of these neurotransmitters, they have a very hard time burning body fat despite the fact they may work out and exercise and consume far less calories than their workout partner. Discouragement sets in, combined with sloppy neurotransmitter receptivity in the frontal lobes, the patient often ends up on anti-depressants, chasing more symptoms and never addressing the cause. Again, never stop asking, "Why?"

Stress and Autoimmune Disorders

Normal stress relies on two key hormones: *adrenaline* (*epinephrine*) and *cortisol*. Very simply stated, adrenaline works in the short term, while cortisol has large momentum and works in the long term. I say 'normal' because the 'stress response' IS normal; it is a necessary physiologic response to a stimulus, either real or perceived. Yes, the stress response can also be activated if your brain *perceives* danger or any kind of threat, whether real or imagined.

Normally, a stressor triggers the release of adrenaline from your adrenal glands into the bloodstream to prepare the body for action. As a result, your heart beats faster, you begin to sweat, your breath becomes shallower, you shunt blood from your organs to your extremities, and your senses become more acute, all to prepare to run or flee. This is the so-called *fight or flight* response to the stressor, and they are wonderful, necessary and **short-term**.

This is the key point: stress responses are supposed to be short term responses to immediate danger as a protective measure to avoid calamity. The problem lies in that we live in a world where lions and bears are attacking us constantly! The lion of getting the kids to school, completing a project, pleasing the boss, and meeting ever-pressing deadlines coupled with the bears of financial pressures and keeping up with the Joneses have never been more apparent than today's modern society. What was created to be an infrequent response to life-or-death situations has become daily survival in the concrete jungle of life. In the chronic stress response, the Sympathetic nervous system is hyper-triggered causing blood pressures to rise, and all bodily functions deemed unnecessary for imminent survival to suppress. Brain function is impaired, inflammation increases; there is no need for a sex-drive, detoxification, or bowel function if a bear is chasing you, you just need enough blood to your legs to outrun your friend.

The effect of the stress hormones on the brain is survival oriented. The initial surge of adrenaline can make you feel good, hence, why some Type One individuals are addicted to stress. Just as your levels of adrenaline start coming down, so rises the amount of cortisol flowing through your veins. Moreover, cortisol has a much larger momentum and enduring response than adrenaline, which means that even though it builds up slowly, it also takes a long time to go back to normal. Worse, should you continually engage adrenaline stimulation; your levels of cortisol also increase.

The combination of the rise of cortisol and the decrease of adrenaline, come the nasty side-effects of the stress hormones. It is during this time in the cycle you can feel worse, energy tumbles, anxious, and you may begin to have negative thoughts. You only feel the negative effects of stress as your body is *stressing down* and progressing towards a more relaxed state. When you are building up on adrenaline, in effect *stressing up*, you might even be feeling good – this can be addictive (the *adrenaline rush* and the consequent *adrenaline crash*).

Cortisol then, gets the bad reputation as being the stress hormone with all the negative effects. In reality, cortisol plays some very important parts in homeostasis, energy production and blood sugar regulation. Prolonged cortisol production is the problem as it throws the glucose balance off in the brain (its primary food source) and leads to inflammation through a pathway called a TH17 response.

In the very early stages, a chronic stress response will not produce many noticeable brain symptoms. Functional Medicine testing reveals an adrenal stress response that is “out of whack”, a Neurological Exam will show obvious signs, a “Brain Map” with a functional EEG will reveal asymmetry, and a Kinesiology Exam may reveal hormone imbalances long before symptoms drive a patient to see a physician.

Subjectively, you will eventually begin to feel a bit down and tired, especially during those periods when you are *crashing down* from the adrenaline, but most people would still not say that they feel depressed. Also, you would start sleeping a bit less than usual, having difficulty sleeping and possible waking at night and having a harder time getting back to sleep or just not feeling quite as fresh when you wake up.

Over time, more damage to neurons continues. Stress starts to take its toll as the amount of stress hormones increase. This is largely person-dependent, but most people start having problems with their digestive system, headaches, toxicity issues due to suppressed pathways, sexual dysfunction, poor sleep and having more frequent dreams. Since stress

depresses the immune system, people also tend to fall sick with infections more often.

The bottom line is that prolonged stress damages neuronal pathways that may lead to depression and anxiety disorders; but it is a problem in the brain. Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, hyperventilation, bouts of psychosis, etc. are frontal lobe issues. As the insidious buildup of inflammation disables the communication between the prefrontal cortex deeper brain centers, the deeper centers lose their CEO. The prefrontal cortex is the parent, the boss, the executive that is supposed to calm the instinctual centers lying in the archeocortex. Raw emotions stored in the amygdala, hormone balance supplied by the hippocampus and impulsive behavior from the midbrain left on their own without the parenting of the prefrontal cortex can be disastrous.

Physiology of Depression, Anxiety, OCD, Panic Attacks...

- Neuron death in the hippocampus has been implicated
- Neurogenesis (the birth of new neurons) may be necessary for recovery
- Neurogenesis happens continuously in the healthy adult brain with proper stimulation and fuel
- Most antidepressants require about 2-3 weeks to have an effect and do nothing for neurogenesis (re-growth of damaged pathways)
- Stress may diminish neurogenesis
- People under stress may sleep less than usual, produce less IGF (growth factors for healing), increase brain inflammation, and increase rate of neuronal degeneration
- Stress and brain inflammation speeds aging

At least certain parts of the brain continuously renew themselves; this is what is called neuroplasticity. Sleep seems to be fundamental for this renewal process---perhaps the greatest amount of neurogenesis happens during sleep.

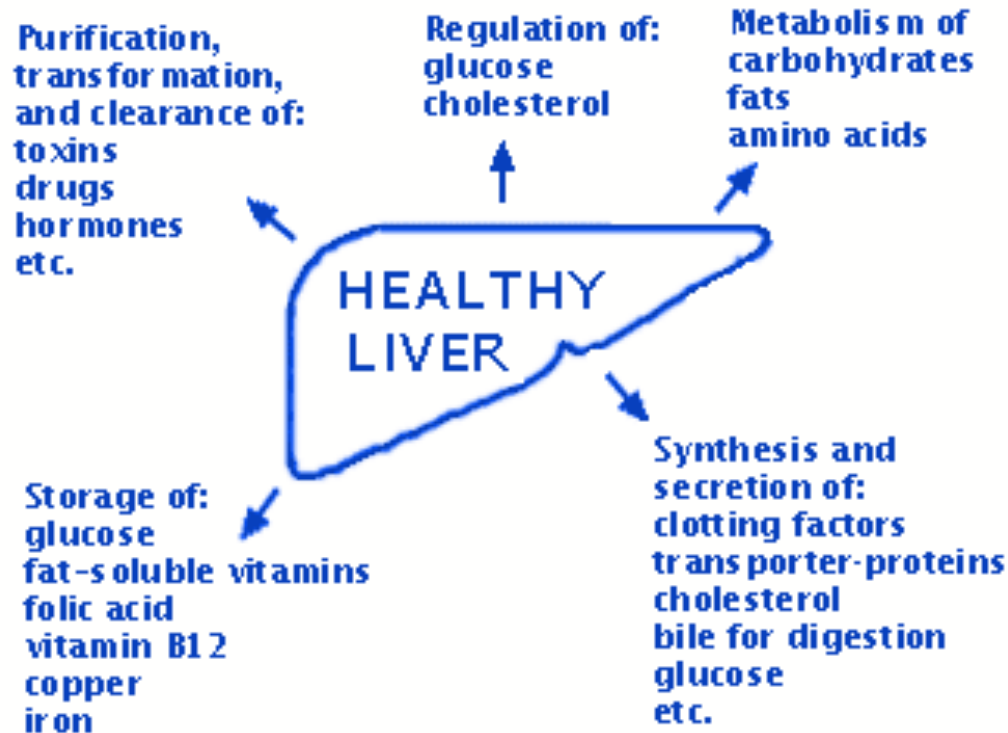
I know it all can get very confusing so I'll try to summarize the information as best as possible.

What to do if I've been diagnosed autoimmune OR think I might be:

(This list builds through this book)

1. Get proper testing. Antibody testing is essential to diagnose an autoimmune disorder but can be expensive. You do NOT need to test for antibodies to multiple organs of attack; having ANY antibodies to self-tissue is a diagnosis of autoimmune.
2. Identify other, correlated organ dysfunctions:
 - a. Anemia – a simple blood test
 - 1) B12 Anemia
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 - 3) Folate Anemia
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 - b. Brain and Neurotransmitters
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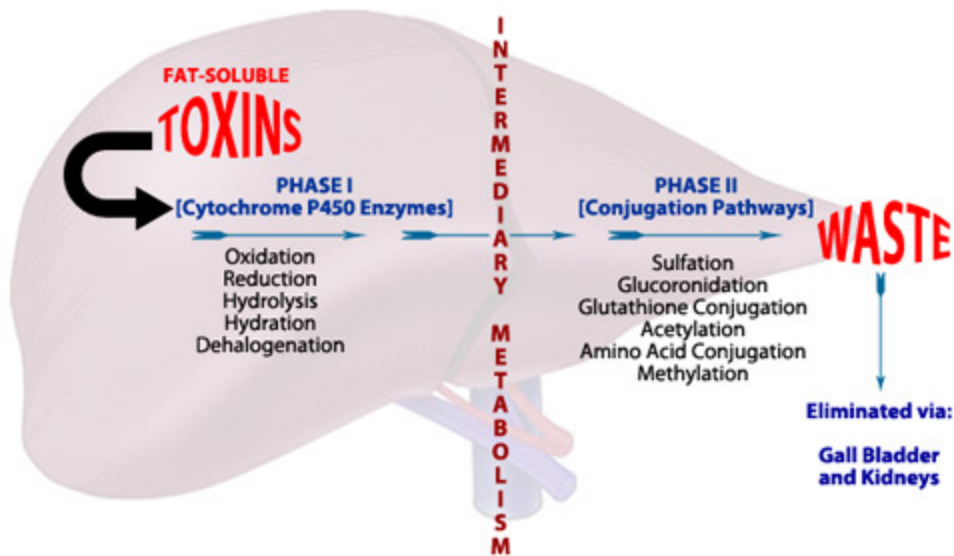
Other things that are found with autoimmune processes are decreased hepatic (liver) and biliary (gallbladder and bile ducts) clearance. When we look at the detoxification pathways of the body we understand there exists Phase I and Phase II pathway. Both these phases are highly nutrient dependant and the Gastro-Intestinal disturbances, decreased gut motility, and decreased absorption rates in the autoimmune patient decreases the ability for them to do the very thing they NEED to get better – Detoxify!



What to Expect When You Start DETOXING

Detoxification or cleansing is very misunderstood. Cleansing allows the body to eliminate used wastes and toxins and helps improve our health as it removes harmful substances we inhale, ingest and are exposed to every day.

Most people think of a cleansing program or detox as a way to purge their system of the poor food they have eaten and think of this as a way to lose weight. While it certainly helps with weight loss, cleansing or detoxing is also a valuable and healthy process for those who have undergone heavy pharmaceutical intravenous drugs, or who have been hospitalized. It's also a must for anyone who has (or suspects they have) any food intolerance's and always essential if you've been diagnosed with yeast overgrowth (Candida).



What actually happens when you detox:

Remember that the liver is not only the body's main detoxifying organ it also has a dual role in proper digestion of food. This is why so many people find it very difficult to lose unwanted weight – their livers are overloaded and fat loves to hold on to toxins! When we detoxify our body's liver must convert fat soluble substances to water-soluble (Phase I and Phase II) before they can be eliminated. It's a complicated process to convert these fat soluble toxins to water-soluble ones and involves a number of steps in the metabolic process. Frequently, when people move too quickly, or have problems with some part of this conversion process they end up with toxic metabolites that are far worse than those they were trying to eliminate in the first place. In effect they re-toxify themselves. This is why the Doctor wants you to understand that while **SOME** symptoms may be expected as **NORMAL**, having too many is undesirable and you must contact us immediately if this is the case.

What to Expect

Any reaction is an indication that the process of cleansing and detoxification is working and that your body is cleaning itself of

impurities, toxins and imbalances. All reactions are temporary and may occur immediately, within several days or even several weeks later.

But, depending on the levels of toxicity, other possible symptoms are:

- Some people feel ill (flu like complaints) during the first few days of a cleanse because your body is dumping toxins into the blood stream for elimination. The ill-affects usually pass within 1-3 days. On rare occasions, they may last several weeks.
- Sometimes, the discomfort during the healing crisis is of greater intensity than before starting the cleanse.
- Another crisis may come after you begin feeling your very best so remember, health is re-gained in cycles. There may be many small crises to go through before the final outcome is experienced.
- The healing crisis may bring about experiences of past conditions – this is sometimes called RETRACING – going through some of the things that brought you to where you are now. While people often forget the diseases or injuries they have had in the past, they may be reminded during the healing crisis.
- **It is important to note that many people experience little or no discomfort – at all.**

In any case, the cleansing and purifying process is underway, and stored wastes and toxins are in a free-flowing state. The severity and duration of the healing crisis is an indication of amount of toxins and wastes stored in your body. Better out than in!

There are a wide variety of reactions (ranging from none to severe) that may manifest during a healing crisis including:

- Increased joint or muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Fatigue and/or its opposite, restlessness
- Cramps
- Chills
- Frequent urination and/or urinary tract discharges
- Change in blood pressure
- Skin eruptions,

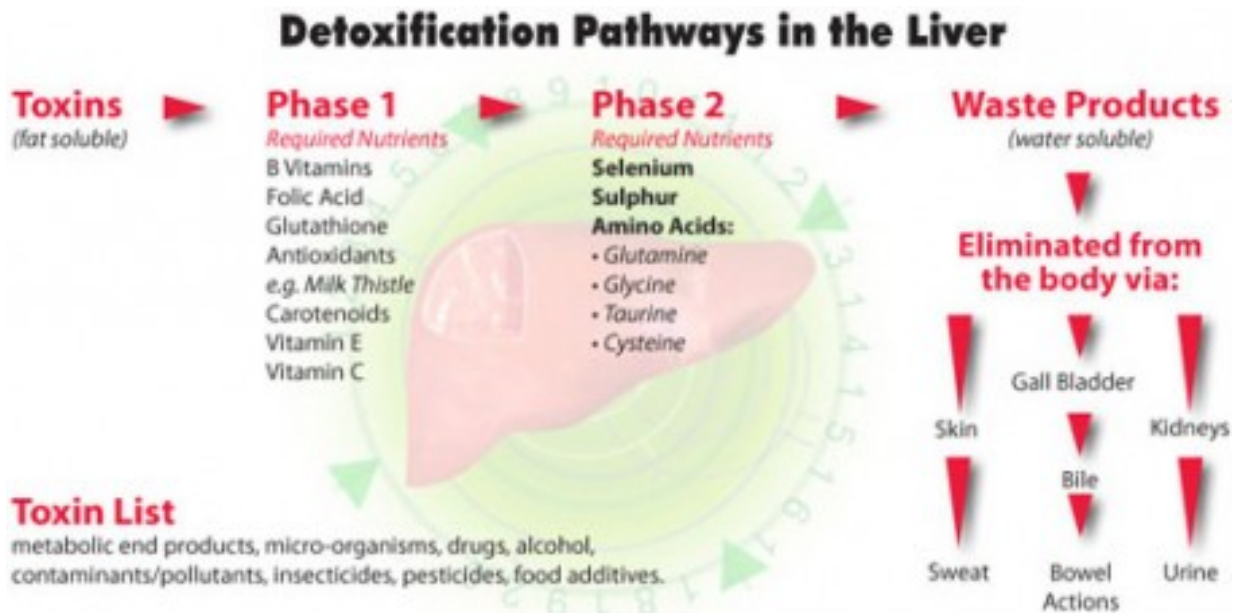
- Headache
 - Aches, Pains
 - Insomnia
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Sinus congestion
 - Fever (usually low grade)
- including: boils, hives,
and rashes
- Cold or flu-like symptoms
 - Strong emotions: anger, despair, sadness, fear
 - Suppressed memories
 - Anxiety
 - Mood swings
 - Phobias

Easing Your Way through the Healing Crisis:

1. Drink plenty of fresh water to flush the body of toxins from the detoxification cleanse. Drink from 1 to 4 quarts (or liters) per day. This will help flush the toxins out of your system and speed along the detoxification.
2. A headache may indicate insufficient water intake ... drink more water!
3. Avoid ALL “white” foods: White flour products (bread, pasta, etc.), milk and all dairy products, sugar and starches (white rice, potatoes).
4. Eat MANY lighter meals to keep your blood sugar balanced. Chicken and beef broths, vegetables and soups are especially beneficial.
5. Be kind to yourself, and get the rest that you need. If you are feeling fatigued or sleepy, your body is telling you to rest.
6. On occasion, a reduction of the dosage or temporary cessation may be required until the severity subsides. Call our office.
7. Symptoms frequently disappear immediately after a good bowel movement.
8. COFFEE ENEMAS – 1 – 5 per day!!!!
9. A good massage might be helpful to speed up the healing process and reduce the discomfort.

The benefits of a detoxified, pure body far outweigh any inconveniences that you might experience during the process. Many people describe experiencing *a feeling of lightness*, others are unable to describe what they experience other than to say they can't remember when they felt better.

Many have said, "You are what you eat." More appropriately, "you are what you absorb." Since one absorbs both nutrients and toxins through skin and through the lungs, diet is not the only way one might absorb vicious poisons. An even more appropriate statement might be, "You are what you do NOT detoxify!" Since the process of detoxification is taking place on a constant basis through these Phase I and Phase II pathways in the liver, it is what one CAN'T detoxify that becomes a part of us and makes us sick.



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 - 4) Neurotransmitter testing
 - c. Test for Liver Detoxification Health
 - 1) Detox metabolite testing
 - 2) MTHF defect testing
 - 3) Testing for methylation support



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Final Remarks

Regardless of what you choose about healthcare, I pray that you make wise, rational decisions based on facts (though often hidden) and not fear. You need to take responsibility and not hand it over to any practitioner, conventional or alternative. Get advice from many, weigh it all against their biases, and pray for peace about your decisions.

Kevin Conners, Pastoral Medical Association, Fellowship in Integrative Cancer Therapy and Fellowship in Anti-Aging, Regenerative and Functional Medicine, both through the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

CONTACT US:

Upper Room Wellness Centers, 651.739.1248

www.ConnersClinic.com

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