

Nutritional Strategies in overcoming Chronic Fatigue



Nutritional therapy involves identification of physical imbalances in the individual that may be causing their symptoms and also providing the tools by which a person can overcome them.

Whilst strategies may need to be complex and certainly do need to be tailored to the individual, there are simple dietary changes that can be applied to many people who suffer from chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and related health concerns.

Firstly, it is very important that you help to balance your blood sugar levels as much as possible. Imbalances in blood sugar levels can lead to low energy levels, sweet cravings, mood changes, energy dips through the day, headaches, hormonal imbalance and poor appetite control. Blood sugar fluctuations put increased stress on the body, increasing the often already high burden on the adrenal glands, which in turn has a multitude of impacts on the body.

Simple strategies to begin supporting your blood sugar levels are as follows:

Eat regularly through the day, beginning with breakfast. This may sound simple but it is often overlooked, especially by those who do not have normal sleeping patterns. Try to establish a breakfast, lunch and dinner routine even if breakfast is light.

You may also need to snack through the day. Initially with people whose blood sugar levels are not steady, it is important to have a more regular intake of food (fuel) as the body is unable to maintain more constant fuel supplies. Aim to have two snacks through the day which may be between breakfast and lunch, lunch and dinner or dinner and bed-time. Be aware of spacing your meals/snacks out evenly throughout the day.

As well as eating regularly, it is also important to eat the right type of foods. Foods that are very sugary or more refined (sugar, white bread, pasta and flour) will lead to a surge in blood sugar levels as they require very little breaking down by the body after consumption. Potatoes also have a similar impact on blood sugar status. Try to avoid sugary foods and use brown pasta/rice and wholemeal bread.

Many people benefit from having some protein with their meals. Protein helps to steady the release of sugar into the blood stream so will help to maintain a better blood status.

Stimulants such as caffeinated drinks (tea, coffee and carbonated soft drinks) and nicotine have the same impact on blood sugar levels as having sugar. Try using herbal teas or red bush tea instead.

Many people require additional support for blood sugar balance, including assessing the underlying causes of poor blood sugar control. However, these are simple strategies that anyone can start to put into place. As well as blood sugar balance, many other factors may need to be addressed from a dietary perspective but this provides a great groundwork from which to build.