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Root Health L.L.C.



**THE
SOLINGER METHOD**
by Root Health L.L.C.

Comprehensive Guide to Adrenal Dysfunction

An Educational Resource by Dr. Sarah Solinger, PhD, ND, MSc, FCN

Founder of Root Health L.L.C.

Why This Guide Matters

Adrenal dysfunction has become one of the most frequently overlooked and misunderstood conditions in modern healthcare. Many patients bounce between providers, told their fatigue is “just stress,” “normal aging,” or “all in their head.” Yet underlying adrenal imbalance can impact nearly every system in the body—energy, hormones, metabolism, mood, immune function, and resilience to stress.

At Root Health L.L.C., my focus is uncovering *why* the adrenals falter, what systems are involved, and how to rebuild them naturally. This guide is designed to educate you on what adrenal dysfunction is, why it develops, and the evidence-informed strategies I use to help people recover.

Adrenal Glands 101: Small but Mighty

Your adrenal glands are walnut-sized structures that sit atop each kidney. Despite their size, they orchestrate vital functions through hormone production:

- **Cortisol** – regulates circadian rhythm, blood sugar, inflammation, immune balance, and stress response.



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- **Aldosterone** – controls sodium and potassium balance, which influences hydration and blood pressure.
- **Adrenaline & Noradrenaline** – immediate “fight-or-flight” response hormones that increase alertness and mobilize energy.
- **DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone)** – precursor to sex hormones and critical for mood, metabolism, and immune resilience.

When these hormones fall out of balance, the entire “stress orchestra” plays off-key, leaving patients exhausted, anxious, inflamed, and hormonally imbalanced.

How Adrenal Dysfunction Develops

Unlike an acute illness, adrenal dysfunction develops insidiously, often over years. Common drivers include:

- **Chronic Stress Load** – relentless psychological stress, caregiving, high-pressure jobs, unresolved trauma.
- **Metabolic Stress** – blood sugar dysregulation, insulin resistance, poor diet, or skipped meals.
- **Inflammatory Stress** – chronic infections, autoimmune conditions, gut inflammation, food sensitivities.
- **Sleep Disruption** – poor sleep hygiene, night shifts, or sleep disorders.
- **Toxic Burden** – exposure to environmental toxins, heavy metals, or endocrine disruptors.
- **Hormonal Transitions** – perimenopause, post-partum shifts, or thyroid dysfunction.

The result: cortisol rhythm disruption, inadequate hormone reserve, and systemic ripple effects.

Recognizing the Symptom Patterns



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Adrenal dysfunction is best understood through patterns rather than isolated symptoms:

Energy & Rhythm Clues

- Fatigue unrelieved by sleep
- Morning “sluggishness” despite 8+ hours of rest
- Afternoon energy crash between 2–4 PM
- Nighttime “second wind” that delays sleep onset
- Reliance on stimulants (coffee, energy drinks)

Mood & Stress Signs

- Feeling overwhelmed by small tasks
- Irritability or low frustration tolerance
- Anxiety, panic, or depressive symptoms
- Difficulty “bouncing back” after stressors

Physical & Metabolic Indicators

- Cravings for salt, sugar, or stimulants
- Dizziness on standing (orthostatic hypotension)
- Unexplained weight gain (often abdominal)
- Brain fog and short-term memory issues
- Frequent illness or slow wound healing
- Muscle weakness or exercise intolerance



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The Holistic Approach

1. Clinical History & Timeline

lifestressors, medical history, and symptom development. This timeline often reveals a clear “burnout trajectory” leading to adrenal compromise.

2. Functional Testing (when appropriate):

- **Four-point salivary cortisol/DHEA mapping** – reveals your diurnal rhythm.
- **DUTCH Test** – dried urine assessment of cortisol metabolites, sex hormones, and melatonin.
- **Thyroid Panel** – because adrenal and thyroid systems work in tandem.
- **Sex Hormone Testing** – low progesterone, estrogen, or testosterone often co-exist with adrenal dysfunction.
- **Micronutrient Evaluation** – deficiencies in B-vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin D, magnesium, and zinc impair adrenal resilience.
- **Blood Chemistry Analysis** – subtle patterns in glucose, electrolytes, and inflammatory markers provide systemic insight.

3. Systemic Integration

Rather than supporting “adrenal fatigue” in isolation, evaluate how your digestive health, detoxification pathways, mitochondrial function, and hormone balance intersect. This “whole systems” lens is what sets holistic care apart.

Natural Protocols for Recovery

Adrenal recovery is both **science and art**—requiring individualized protocols, not one-size-fits-all fixes.

Nutritional Support

- **Stabilize Blood Sugar:** protein at each meal, balanced macronutrients, elimination of processed carbohydrates.
- **Supportive Nutrients:**



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- Vitamin C (2–4 g daily divided doses) – adrenal cortex concentrate.
- B5 (pantothenic acid, 250–500 mg daily) – “anti-stress vitamin.”
- Magnesium (400–600 mg daily) – calms the nervous system and aids cortisol metabolism.
- Trace minerals: zinc, selenium, manganese.

- **Dietary Foundations:** whole foods, high-quality proteins, colorful vegetables, hydration with mineralized water.

Herbal & Botanical Support

Adaptogens are cornerstones of adrenal support:

- **Ashwagandha** – calms anxiety, lowers cortisol when elevated.
- **Rhodiola** – improves resilience, mental clarity, and stamina.
- **Holy Basil (Tulsi)** – modulates stress response and mood.
- **Licorice Root (Glycyrrhiza glabra)** – prolongs cortisol half-life in depleted states.

Lifestyle Support

- **Sleep Hygiene:** consistent bedtime, screen curfew, dark environment.
- **Movement:** restorative practices like yoga, walking, or pilates; avoidance of overtraining.
- **Mind-Body:** prayer, meditation, deep breathing, gratitude practices.
- **Boundaries:** addressing lifestyle overload, toxic environments, and mental stress.

Phased Protocols

Healing occurs in stages:



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1. **Stabilization Phase** – improve sleep, reduce stressors, stabilize bloodsugar.
2. **Repletion Phase** – correct nutrient deficiencies, initiate adaptogens, restore circadian rhythm.
3. **Integration Phase** – introduce sustainable exercise, optimize hormones, reinforce resilience.
4. **Maintenance Phase** – transition to long-term health strategies and prevent relapse.

What to Expect on Your Journey

- **Timeline:** Most individuals improve over 3–9 months, with gradual restoration of stamina and mood.
- **Follow-Up:** Regular re-evaluations ensure protocols are adjusted as the body recovers.
- **Virtual Model:** Care is delivered 100% virtually, reducing travel stress while maintaining high-touch, individualized attention.

Final Thoughts

Adrenal dysfunction is not a life sentence. With a comprehensive naturopathic approach—addressing nutrition, hormones, stress management, and lifestyle—individuals consistently regain energy, clarity, and vitality.

At Root Health L.L.C., our mission is not only to restore adrenal health, but to educate and empower every person with the knowledge and tools to thrive long-term.

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