

Do You Have Chronic Low Energy?

A common complaint from many people in today's fast-paced world is chronic low energy. Often they have been to a variety of practitioners who have not been able to identify a cause, and thus have not been able to help them. While most West Marin residents are pretty health-conscious, there are many hidden causes of low energy that may not be related to lifestyle, such as genetic aberrations, that can prevent the body from absorbing specific vitamins or minerals that are so vital to powering the metabolic processes.

The systems of the body work together, so if one is off, others are likely to follow. In this instance, it is important to get at the root cause of the imbalance. New lab tests exist that can evaluate nutrient and digestive system abnormalities that can reveal causes of these problems that are unique to you. Essentially these tests take a biochemical snapshot of what is going on in your system by analyzing metabolites in the urine. By identifying just what the deficiencies are, one can utilize targeted changes in diet, vitamins, and minerals to balance the systems and improve energy more quickly than the old trial and error process.

I recently helped Bill, a client from Inverness who thought that by eating local organic food, taking regular hikes in the Park and meditating most days of the week, he would be healthy. But he still felt extreme fatigue, especially in the afternoon or upon exertion and had several other symptoms such as poor digestion. Bill had already been to a number of practitioners who were unable to help him. After taking a careful history of his lifestyle and diet, I had a few ideas about what could be at the root of his problems. I strongly suspected a cellular energy dysfunction along with food sensitivities and "leaky gut." But I decided to do a complete metabolic lab panel on him first, so that we could be certain of what was *really* going on in his system.

Many different aspects of imbalance can affect one's energy. The B vitamin group is involved in a lot of critical processes, such as energy production, digestion, and muscle and nerve function. Stress rapidly depletes B vitamins.

Brain chemicals called neurotransmitters can be thrown out of whack by poor diet or nutrient absorption and stress. Because these are responsible for communication between the brain and the body, the imbalance can have consequences all over the body. A good balance of essential fatty acids is crucial for brain and cellular energy production. Many people today are deficient in Omega 3 fats.

Toxins can be another cause of low energy. Though we live in a fairly clean environment in West Marin, many residents have not always lived here. We can harbor toxins in our tissues that we were exposed to many years ago. Sometimes the system becomes overloaded with these toxins and the detoxification pathways need to be opened up.

The common denominator in all of these markers is *low energy*.

Bill's test revealed a couple of surprises and some expected abnormalities. He did *not* have a cellular energy deficiency, but he did have a few severe food sensitivities and markers for inflammation and leaky gut, as well as extreme protein deficiency and imbalance in the neurotransmitters. He also tested very low in B vitamins, Omega 3 essential fatty acids, and ability to detoxify. I designed a diet for Bill that would give him lean protein throughout the day, was low in simple sugars, and provided plenty of healthy fats and many more vegetables than he had been eating before. By eliminating the foods he tested sensitive to, he was eliminating a major source of inflammation. We supplemented with a number of nutrients targeted specifically to his problems. After three months on this regimen Bill is feeling much better and does not have the crushing fatigue that he had before. Most of his digestive problems have

resolved as well. After a month or two we can start to reintroduce the foods on the elimination list one at a time to see if he is still sensitized to them. We can retest after six months and perhaps eliminate or lower some of the supplements. By testing, we did not waste time and money on supplements he did *not* need, and were able to use the ones he *did* need right away, with good results.

Metabolic lab testing can point the way to improvement of overall health and get you quickly on the way to more energy and vitality.

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