

Understanding Your Stress Response: Beyond "Adrenal Fatigue"

What is the HPA Axis?

Think of your HPA axis as your body's **stress thermostat**. It is a communication highway between your brain and your adrenal glands. Its job is to tell your body how much energy to produce based on the stress you are facing. When you are under long-term stress, your brain "turns down the volume" on this signal to protect you from burning out. This is called **HPA Axis Dysregulation**, and it's the real reason you feel exhausted—not because your glands are "tired."

Why This Matters For You

- **Morning Energy:** When your stress thermostat is working correctly, you get a natural "energy jumpstart" (called the CAR) within 30 minutes of waking up.
- **Stable Moods:** Balancing this system helps eliminate that "wired but tired" feeling at night and the 3 PM energy crash.
- **Metabolism & Weight:** A healthy stress response helps your body manage blood sugar and can help reduce stubborn abdominal weight.
- **Immune Protection:** Keeping this system in check strengthens your gut health and helps you stay resilient against common colds and flus.

What You Can Do Today

1. **Seek the Sun:** Within 30 minutes of waking up, go outside for 10 minutes of direct sunlight without sunglasses. This sends a "start" signal to your brain to reset your energy rhythm for the day.
2. **Support with Vitamin C:** Your adrenal glands use more Vitamin C than almost any other part of your body. Focus on eating colorful bell peppers, citrus fruits, or talk to me about a high-quality supplement.
3. **The 3 PM Check-In:** If you feel a crash in the afternoon, try a 5-minute breathing exercise instead of reaching for caffeine. This helps tell your brain that you are safe and don't need to "shut down" for the day.
4. **Dim the Lights:** After sunset, lower the lights in your house. This helps prevent a "second wind" of stress hormones that can keep you awake at night.

Questions to Discuss with Your Practitioner

- Based on my symptoms, does my "stress thermostat" feel like it is set too high or too low?
 - How did my morning energy (CAR) look on my recent tests?
 - Are my digestive issues or thyroid symptoms linked to how my body handles stress?
 - What is the best time of day for me to exercise to support my rhythm?
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