



## From the News this month:

### Vitamin A safer than you think:

Researchers at Roche Vitamins in Switzerland gave non-pregnant women 30,000 IU of Vitamin A per day for 3 weeks. No toxicity was observed. Because blood levels in the study remained less than what has been shown to be safe for pregnant women, the researchers believe that doses higher than 30,000 are safe.

**Comment:** *I am surprised by the fear about vitamin A in Australia. The concern about birth defects is based on synthetic vitamin A analogues such as acne drugs, not on natural vitamin A. Vitamin A is now a neglected essential nutrient, necessary for healthy reproduction and immunity. (See [Sensible News 30](#) to learn how UNICEF is saving lives with vitamin A.)*

*The 3000 IU found in a cod liver oil capsule is nearly 10x less than the amount used in the Roche study. Pregnant women should use caution (max 8000 IU), but not avoid vitamin A entirely. Non-pregnant people should consider supplements if they suffer from low immunity or reproductive problems. Good sources are egg yolks, fish and organ meats. An egg yolk contains about 250 IU.*

Appointments at Sensible-Alternative Naturopathic Clinic are available weekdays 8am to 6pm. 12 Ridge St., North Sydney.  
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## Thyroid Update:

### Iodine deficiency on the rise in Australia:

In Australia, 50% of pregnant women do not get enough iodine (2). This has authorities concerned because it causes lowered intelligence and thyroid disease in children.

Australian soil is low in iodine, and goiter was common here until the 1960's. At that time, dairy producers began to use iodine to clean their equipment. Average intake improved to the point of being excessive. Now, dairy producers have switched to using **chlorine-containing** cleaning products (see below), and iodine intake has fallen. People have also stopped using iodised salt.

**Comment:** *Most cases of thyroid disease are due to autoimmunity or toxic damage (see below) rather than iodine deficiency, but we should still ensure adequate iodine intake. You need about 100ug of iodine per day (200ug if you're pregnant). This is not very much, and too much iodine can damage the thyroid, especially in people with thyroid disease. Multivitamins contain 20-50ug. Good food sources are seafood, seaweed, cod liver oil and iodised salt (not sea salt). Salt in processed food is generally not iodised.*

- **Tip:** Seaweed is easy to cook with. Put a little dulse or Nori into your rice pot or stir fries to add a mild saltiness. I recommend this over iodine supplements.

### Iodine improves fibrocystic breast disease:

A Canadian study from the mid-1990's found that organic iodine supplements (from seaweed) made breast tissue less sensitive to oestrogen, and improved painful breast cysts (3). The organic iodine may also prevent breast cancer. Potassium *iodide* supplements did **not** provide the same benefit.

### Chlorinated compounds and pyrethroids disrupt thyroid function:

In the US, researchers are investigating claims that traces of the chlorinated compound, perchlorate, found in drinking water may damage thyroid function (4). In another story, the American Environmental Protection Agency has recognised that pyrethroid insecticides, common in household sprays, cause thyroid cysts (5).

**Comment:** *The study of hormone-disruption emerged only in the 1990's. We are just starting to learn how vulnerable the thyroid is to hormone disrupting chemicals. Avoid pesticides and chlorinated compounds. (Example: I am concerned about the chlorinated cleaning products used to clean the equipment of dairy production mentioned above.)*

### Low blood pressure syndrome:

Are you a thin woman prone to feeling fatigued, light-headed, dizzy and panicked? Do you have low blood pressure, cold hands and feet, large pupils and very flexible joints? Then you may have instability in your sympathetic nervous system.

The sympathetic nervous system is the part of the autonomic (unconscious) nervous system that releases adrenalin. When the sympathetic system is unstable, adrenalin is released too easily. This causes panic and brain fog, as well as cold hands, and low blood pressure because the blood moves away from the extremities. Because adrenalin causes salt to be lost through the kidneys, there is also low blood volume. People with this nervous system disorder have 20% less blood volume than normal.

The syndrome affects about 10% of the population, mostly women. It has been called many other things including **anxiety neurosis, hypoglycaemia, fibromyalgia and mitral valve prolapse**. (There is commonly a benign floppy heart valve associated with the syndrome.)

Adrenalin is produced by the adrenal glands, which are part of the sympathetic nervous system **and** the hormone system. Over time, the adrenal glands will become fatigued, and they will lose the ability to produce hormones such as testosterone, cortisol and DHEA. **Hormone disorders** may develop.

Women with an instable sympathetic nervous system may also develop **acne** (because the nervous system is closely tied to skin) and **weight gain on the stomach** due to depleted testosterone.

The syndrome is also associated with **migraine headaches, candida** overgrowth, and interestingly, the formation of **thyroid antibodies** (as in Hashimoto's disease).

### **Quick Test for Low Blood Pressure Syndrome:**

Get your blood pressure taken lying and then standing. If it drops, you probably have the syndrome.

**Conventional treatment:** Regular fluids and salt intake, beta-blockers and drugs to conserve body fluid.

### **Natural treatment:**

- Get adequate salt. When the syndrome is severe, salt cravings develop, but even milder symptoms benefit from regular salt intake.
- Get enough rest. The nervous system in these women likes routine and rest. One weekend away is not enough. You need to be less busy.
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid artificial sweeteners, which damage the nervous system
- Eat regularly. Women with this syndrome experience adrenalin when their blood sugar drops. Have small regular meals and avoid refined sugar.
- Legs up the wall meditation. This is a yoga pose that will restore blood pressure the brain. Talk to your yoga instructor. You need to do it every day.
- Magnesium to stabilise the nervous system.
- Licorice root to increase blood sugar and conserve adrenal hormones
- Homoeopathic medicine to stabilise the nervous system.
- Organo-therapy to support the adrenal glands
- Acupuncture
- Bowen therapy

**Consult our Naturopaths for individualised treatment:**



### **Sensible-Alternative closed Dec 22-Jan 9**

Suzie and Lara will both be overseas. If you need something, please try to contact us before we go.

#### References:

- (1) Hartmann S et al. Exposure to Retinyl Esters, and Retinoic Acids in Non-Pregnant Women following Increasing Single and Oral Doses of Vitamin A. *Ann Nutr Metab.* 2005. 49(3): 155-164.
- (2) Eastman C. Iodine supplementation: the benefits for pregnant and lactating women in Australia and New Zealand. *Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 2005. 7 (1):65-66.
- (3) Ghent, WR et al. Iodine replacement in fibrocystic disease of the breast. *Can J Surg* 1993. 36:453-460.
- (4) Hershman, JM. Perchlorate and Thyroid Function: What are the Environmental Issues? *Thyroid.* 2005. 15(5): 427-431
- (5) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Dec. 1988. Pesticide Fact Sheet Number 193: Resmethrin. US EPA, Office of Pesticide Programs, Registration Div., Washington, DC..

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