

# How to Know If Stress is Responsible for Numbness and Tingling in Your Arms and Legs

Stress is an epidemic that leads to what seems as endless possibilities of problems for a person. These problems have been seen in the immune system, neurological disorders, fatigue, inflammation, hormone dysregulation, and malabsorption to name a few. Often people with long-term stress can begin to exhibit numbness and tingling in their hands or feet. There are mechanisms that appear to be related to the stress cycles in the body (HPA Axis). These mechanisms have a negative impact on nerves. Most common is seen with multiple sclerosis, where individuals experience numbness and tingling in different areas of the body usually due to altered expression of their immune system leading to antibody production.

When discussing stress, many think of jobs, family, and finances. However, there are many others types to discuss such as physical (over training), inflammation, blood sugar (increase and decrease), chemicals (internal and external), pollutions, pathogens (bugs), heavy metals, food allergies, and lack of sleep. They all seem to have a common mechanism in which Cortisol levels are altered. In my office when working with an individual, they will often have an increase or flare up with their previous symptoms of numbness and tingling under stressful situations. In this case, the stressor can be physical or emotion. The opposite is seen when a person undergoes a detoxification protocol, they may notice a dramatic decrease in burning, tingling, or even pain. This example demonstrates inflammatory and possible immune types of mechanisms.

When dealing with stress (Cortisol), it is important to journal your symptoms. As you can see, there are many types of stress and therefore many types of triggers. When asking patients questions, often they state, "I haven't thought about it." It can be difficult to know which treatment plan and direction to take when there could be several factors involved. Whichever path one decides to take, supplementation could be supportive.

Adrenals are the stress gland responsible to regulating certain body functions. It is a necessary organ but to be use when needed, not all the time. It seems as the case for most people. No matter of the stressor, the adrenal glands usually need to be supported and given a vacation. Often people complain of being over worked and underpaid. This can be the case with the adrenals. Take pathogens for example. Maybe an individual has an amoeba infection that has never been tested. Everyday, the pathogen is allowed to cause inflammation and digestion issues. In addition, everyday, your body has to deal with activation of the immune system, malabsorption, digestive distress, and possible fatigue. If multiplied by everyday, this can result in a myriad of problems; one possibility could be numbness, tingling, burning, or pain. Therefore, a nutritional protocol may be indicated.

Other nutrients are found to be beneficial when dealing with nerves and stress. Phosphatidylserine (PS) is a natural nutrient found as part of the cell membrane that aids in allowing nutrient to enter. Another nutrient that is considered omega fatty acids found in fish oils. Mentioned in the following article, *Diabetes & Metabolism*, 2003 Jun;29(3):289-95, supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids inhibits the adrenal activation elicited by a mental stress, presumably through effects exerted at the level of the central nervous system. In addition, omega-3 fatty acids beneficial in other areas such as reducing inflammation and modulating the immune system. Nutrients such as these have been used in dealing with different types of neuropathy, especially when stress is involved.

It is crucial to understand the root cause of your problem in order to create a successful treatment plan. It is also important that you find a qualified practitioner to evaluate all aspect of your health and not to just focus on how to cover up the symptoms that you are experiencing. Many tests can help you understand if nutrition would be beneficial in your case. By understanding your body and writing down all the events during the day, it not only helps you but practitioners that are involved.

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