

Chaste Tree

(*Vitex agnus castus*)

By Steven Horne and Paula Perretty

Native to western Asia and southwestern Europe, chaste tree, also known as monk's pepper or vitex, has been used to treat hormonal imbalances for more than 2,500 years in Egypt, Greece and Rome. It gets its name from its use by monks during the middle ages to help reduce sexual desire. Also known as vitex, it helps to balance the output of reproductive hormones in both men and women.

The berries of chaste tree have been historically used for reproductive problems like cyclic breast discomfort (cyclic mastalgia), heavy menstrual bleeding, PMS and menopause. Modern research has documented many of these benefits resulting in chaste tree berries being approved by the German E Commission for these uses. As a result, it is widely used by family physicians and gynecologists in Germany.

The reproductive functions of the ovaries and testes, as well as numerous other metabolic functions, are regulated by the hormones of the anterior pituitary gland. Chaste tree's therapeutic effects are attributed to its indirect effects on various hormones secreted by the pituitary gland. It helps to regulate and balance levels of prolactin, estrogen and progesterone, making it primarily useful as a remedy for women.

Chaste tree does not actually contain hormones or even hormone-like substances. Its action is indirect, but does appear to be dose-dependent. Low doses of chaste tree result in decreased estrogen levels and an increase in levels of progesterone and prolactin. It appears to inhibit the release of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) while stimulating the production of luteinizing hormone (LH).

However, in some studies where women were given larger doses, FSH and LH levels remained unchanged, while prolactin levels were decreased. Prolactin stimulates breast milk produc-



Photo by Stephen Foster

tion, so this helps to explain why low doses of chaste tree can stimulate breast milk production, whereas higher doses seem to have the opposite effect. The ability to decrease mildly elevated prolactin levels may benefit some women with breast tenderness associated with PMS.

The bottom line is that chaste tree berries help restore a normal estrogen-to-progesterone balance, as well as keeping prolactin in check. Studies also show that vitex can stabilize the cycle after withdrawal from progesterone birth control pills. It is also a useful remedy for irregular menstrual cycles and teenage acne due to hormonal issues. Fourth generation herbalist Christopher Hobbs says he has cleared up many cases of teenage acne with chaste tree alone.

Chaste tree berries are found in the formula Wild Yam & Chaste Tree which is used for menstrual cramping, irregular menstrual cycles and balancing excess estrogen and deficient progesterone. Chaste tree berries are also part of Menstrual Reg, a formula for heavy menstrual bleeding and DHEA-F which supports female adrenal and reproductive hormones.

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The First Change of Life

Helping Teenagers Develop Into Responsible, Healthy Adults

by Steven H. Horne, RH (AHG)



When we talk about the “change of life,” we think of menopause, the transition that occurs in a woman’s life when her reproductive function ceases. Men also undergo a less dramatic change of life, called andropause, around the same age. However, we often forget that this is the second, not the first, change of life. The first change of life occurs at puberty.

Traditional wisdom has long recognized that there are three stages to life—childhood, adulthood and becoming an elder. The two major changes of life are the transitions between these stages. They can also be thought of as life passages. The first major life passage is puberty and the second is menopause for women and andropause for men.

These changes of life can be turbulent times because both involve physical and *psychological* shifts. Understanding what is happening during these changes helps make the transition easier because you realize what is happening is normal, so you don’t resist the change or feel badly about it.

Traditionally, young people were guided through the first life passage, puberty, by rituals or rites of passage that were conducted by the elders of the society. I have written elsewhere about rites of passage,* so we’re not going to talk about them here. For now, it is just important to note that teenagers need rites of passage to assist them in making the transition from childhood to adulthood.

The purpose of this article is to discuss how we can help teenagers successfully negotiate this life passage called puberty. As I often do, I’m going to approach this issue from both the physical and the psychological point of view. Normally, I start with the physical and move to the psychological, but in this case, I’m going to discuss the psychological aspect first, because you aren’t going to be able to help teenagers with the physical adjustments if you don’t understand the psychological adjustments they need to make.

Do You Remember?

My resolve to do this started one day during my own early teens. I was riding in the car with my mom and she accused me of doing something I knew I didn’t do. I don’t remember what the issue was, but I do remember that when I protested that I hadn’t done what she was accusing me of, she became angry and called me a liar. She also threatened to punish me when we got home. However, when we did get home, I was able to show her the evidence that she had done the very thing she had accused me of doing.

Two things stuck in my brain. One was that she was willing to punish me for doing something, but there was no punishment for her having done the same thing. This was significant to me because it communicated that young people deserve punishment if they make a mistake, but adults don’t deserve equal punishment for the same mistakes.

The second thing that stuck in my mind was that she didn’t even apologize to me for accusing me falsely. Since I knew that this was something she would have done with any adult, the message that I was a second-class citizen in the home was very clear.

That’s when I made my resolve. I promised myself that I would never forget what it was like to be a child or teenager and I would never treat my own children like second-class citizens. So, I ask you, can you remember what it was like when you were a child or a teenager? If so, and you can look upon yourself with compassion and understanding, then you’ve taken the first step to being effective in assisting teenagers through their change of life.

Fortunately, I was later able to learn some great parenting skills that backed up my resolve. A part of me instinctively understood what I’m about to tell you, but I lacked the ability to explain it until I read the book, *Children: The Challenge* by Rudolph Driekurs. I highly recommend this book. I have met other parents who have followed Driekurs’ principles and all of them have agreed with me that it made parenting much easier.

*See the article For Men Only in the March issue of Nature’s Field at www.treelite.com

Growing Up Isn't Just a Physical Process

One doesn't become an adult just because one gets physically larger and acquires adult sexual characteristics. The real change that makes a person an adult is psychological and rites of passage are designed to facilitate this psychological shift.

The key psychological shift is this: a child is dependant on another human being, usually on his or her parents. Being dependent means that the center of responsibility for meeting one's physical and emotional needs is outside of oneself. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children's needs are met and children naturally expect their parents to meet their needs.

An adult is independent. This means that the adult is now responsible for taking care of his or her own physical and emotional needs. So, psychologically, the life passage a teenager must successfully transition is to move from relying on parents, peers or others to guide their life, to developing their own internal guidance system. They must move from making others responsible for supplying their needs and caring for them physically and emotionally to being responsible for these things themselves.

Looking around me in the world today, I would say that many adults never successfully made this transition. They may be physically grown up, but they never grew up psychologically.

Freedom and responsibility go hand in hand. A small child cannot be allowed the freedom to cross the street by themselves because they cannot assume the responsibility for their own safety. Once they have the knowledge and ability to ensure their own safety, they can be allowed that freedom. To insist on freedom without assuming the responsibility that goes with it is both foolish and dangerous.

The teenager is subconsciously seeking freedom and independence. This is why teenagers often rebel against authority. If a parent is domineering and controlling, a rebellious teenager actually has a better chance of growing up, than a submissive one. They at least learn to make some decisions for themselves. To remain submissive to a controlling parent during the teenage years is to stay in dependency and thus psychologically remain a child.

If someone else is responsible for your well-being, you are psychologically a child and are dependent on those you have made responsible for you. For many people, government has become their surrogate parent. The attitude, "If bad things happen, the government should fix it," reveals that a person is still placing the responsibility for their physical and emotional "welfare" outside of themselves. This lack of psychological maturity is also revealed by people who constantly blame others (parents, spouses, ex-spouses, etc.) for their troubles. It also

reveals itself in our national attitude towards health care, as I'll explain in a moment. But first, I need to explain why it is impossible for a person to be an adult without taking responsibility for one's own life.

Choice and Consequence

There is a fundamental law in the universe which has been expressed in the simple phrase, "as you sow, so shall you reap." Each action we choose (cause) has a pre-determined consequence (effect). We can choose an action, but we cannot choose the reaction, because it is an inevitable and pre-determined result of the action.

We can choose to step off a cliff, but we cannot choose to fall up, instead of down. We can choose to plant corn seeds, but we cannot choose to reap a crop of wheat from that action. We can choose to vent our anger at someone, but we cannot choose how they will respond to our anger. Each action we choose (cause) will reap a crop in our life (effect) which will result in happiness or unhappiness, sickness or health, pleasure or pain, good or evil, depending on the nature of the original action.

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Ideally, a child is partially shielded from the consequences of their choices by the love and protection of parents and other adults who care for him or her. As an adult, if we throw a ball and accidentally break a neighbor's window, we are legally and morally obligated to pay for it. As a child, our parents, assuming responsibility for us, will probably pay for it on our behalf, although they may require us to assist them in some way.

So, the psychological rite of passage we are supposed to undergo in our teenage years is moving from feeling that our parents and other adults should fix our mistakes, to becoming self-responsible for the consequences of our own choices and actions. Ideally, adults help teens recognize that their choices have consequences so they can start to consider the consequences of their choices and act like responsible adults.

Parents and other adults who have failed to grasp this simple concept will undermine this psychological transformation in one of two ways. First, they try to control all of the child's choices in order to try to "protect them." Thus, they will constantly lecture or "preach" to their kids and order them around as if they have no right to decide anything for themselves.

Second, they may seek to shield their children from the consequences of their choices. A parent who bails a kid out of a situation that the kid was at least partially responsible for creating, teaches a child that someone should "rescue" them from the consequences of their own actions.

Adults who try to control their children's choices and/or shield their children from the consequences (effects) of their choices will never be able to help a teenager make the transition from being a child to being an adult. This is where the parenting skills I talked about come into play.

My first wife was frustrated with some of my ideas about parenting. Once, she presented me with a scenario, in which we had a teenage son who was allowed to use the car as long as he refueled it and checked the oil. In this scenario I went to use the car and found out that the tank was nearly empty and the oil was a quart low.

"Wouldn't you lecture him about that?" she asked.

"No, he just wouldn't be able to use the car."

"But," she said, "The prom night is coming and he has a big date and won't be able to go now. He'll miss one of the most important events of his teenage years. You can't do that to him."

"You said," I replied, "that his use of the car was conditioned on keeping it filled with oil and gas. There is no need to be angry or lecture him about it. He didn't fulfill his end of the bargain so he can't use the car—end of discussion."

My first wife was frustrated with this "hard-nosed" attitude of mine, but after reading *Children: The Challenge* I came to

understand why this approach is the one that works. It is also the approach that parents must take if they want to help their children through the life passage of puberty to become responsible adults.

Consequences versus Rewards and Punishments

Most parents are addicted to the idea of trying to control children through rewards and punishments. If you do what I want, I'll reward you. If you don't, I'll punish you. Rewards and punishments are controlling and manipulative, even when used with little children. They do not work because it is impossible to control someone else's behavior (even a child's), and they ultimately result in frustration for the parent and the emotional alienation of the child.

What I'm about to say may offend some, but the older I become, the more tired I get of being "politically correct." So, if I offend your religious beliefs, I apologize in advance, but I hope you will carefully consider what I'm about to share with you.

I was raised with the notion of a rewarding and punishing God, an Old Testament God, who rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. As I have experienced the Divine in my own life, I have come to reject this idea. God is love. Love does not reward and punish. It teaches, supports, encourages and helps.

When you touch a hot stove, you get burned. It does not matter how many times you try it, the result will always be the same. Getting burned for touching a hot stove is not a punishment. (God isn't out to get you!) It's simply a natural consequence (effect) of the action (cause). The pain is a gift that tells us that touching hot things isn't good for the body. It's a lesson, not a punishment.

Because the natural world is set up with consistent consequences, God has made it possible for us to learn by our own experience to distinguish what is good (what will bring us pleasure and happiness) and what is evil (what will bring us suffering and misery). God isn't sitting on a throne somewhere meting out rewards and punishments. He doesn't have to, because the consequences of all choices are both natural and automatic.

I vividly remember sticking my finger into an empty light socket on a string of Christmas tree lights when I was little. I was afraid to tell my parents what I'd done (and never did) because I was afraid they'd be angry with me and punish me. However, the fact is that if I had told them and they had punished me, it would have been less effective in teaching me than experiencing the natural consequence of being shocked.

Natural Consequences

I've read that Native Americans never tried to stop their children from crawling towards the fire, because they only did it once. This is an example of parenting by allowing children to experience a natural consequence. You tell them what the consequence of a particular choice will be, but you cannot control what they choose.

Of course, you can't allow young children to make certain choices and experience the consequences of those choices, because some choices (such as playing with knives or running in the street) could get them maimed or even killed. However, it's wise to allow even young children to make some calculated mistakes that won't do any serious harm, so they can start assimilating the idea that choices have consequence.

A simple example of this is that if a child doesn't eat dinner, then they go hungry until the next meal. If they break a favorite toy because they were careless with it, then they suffer the loss of that toy and it isn't replaced. It's called life. It doesn't mean that you have to be heartless. You can be as kind and caring as you want, but you cannot control all their choices or shield them from the consequences of them.

Logical Consequences

Now, when it comes to social interaction and family dynamics and rules, not every situation has a natural consequence that a child can experience. Sometimes, you have to establish a logical consequence. A logical consequence is something you decide you will do as a logical response to choices your child or teenager makes.

I'll explain the concept of logical consequences further in just a moment, but for now I must stress the importance of establishing logical consequences that you're actually willing and able to carry out. Most parents don't establish consequences, they just threaten. Then, when their threats don't work, they lose their temper and punish. My personal rule is, "Say it once, then do it."

To understand how dysfunctional threatening and not following through are to a child's psychological development, just think how hard it would be if you touched a hot stove one day and it didn't burn you and the next day it did. Just imagine what would happen if God played "dice" in the universe and consequences were randomly dispensed at His whim. Such randomness would drive you crazy, wouldn't it?

In fact, enough randomness in rewarding and punishing someone will drive a person insane. Fortunately, most adults aren't random enough in their threats, rewards and punishments to drive their kids insane. However, kids rapidly learn that what adults say to kids cannot be trusted and that the real trick is

to gauge their parent's emotional ups and downs to determine when they actually have to "toe the line" or when they can get away with not following through on their responsibilities.

That's why rewards and punishments don't work. Children start thinking that the consequences (effects) of their choices (cause) are random (and based on the whim of some authority figure) and try to figure out how to control and manipulate the authority figure. Young children always test to see whether a particular consequence is real or it's just an arbitrary whim of an adult. If follow-through is inconsistent, then they know it's just an arbitrary adult whim and ignore it.

Besides, if adults can randomly reward and punish them according to their own self-centered interests, then why shouldn't kids play the same game and reward or punish their parents in a similar manner. An inevitable power struggle occurs, especially during the teenage years.

Start by Taking Control of Yourself

So, if you really want to help teenagers develop into responsible adults, the first thing you need to do is be responsible for yourself. That is, recognize that there is only one person you can control and that is yourself. If your family life is in chaos it is because you are not in control of you. Kids learn first and foremost from who we are, not what we say.

Taking control of yourself means that you decide what you will and will not do and become consistent in doing what you say you will do. This frees you from trying to control the other person and puts you in control of your self, instead. Several times, when I've tried to teach this to someone, they've come back and told me, "It isn't working."

"What do you mean it isn't working?"

I ask this because the only way this can't work is if you are thinking it will control someone else's behavior, which means you're not taking control of your own behavior. Just as I suspect, they then tell me how the child or other person's behavior hasn't changed. Whenever they tell me this, I know what the problem is. They're still caught in the trap of thinking of this as a way of changing the other person's behavior. So, when the other person's behavior doesn't change, this doesn't work.

So, let me stress this again. You cannot control anyone else's behavior, not even a young child's. Stop trying. It's not your responsibility. It's your responsibility to control your own behavior and follow through consistently on what you say you will do. How the other person responds to it is their choice and they have a perfect right to make their own choices. What they do not have the right to control is how you choose to respond to their choices.

Get it? Establishing logical consequences isn't just another manipulative game of rewarding and punishing. It comes from an entirely different psychological perspective.

A Practical Example

Let's give a practical example of how this works. Let's say that a mother has a teenage son who is leaving his dirty clothes all over the floor of his room. Mom goes in and picks up all these dirty clothes and washes them, but she hates doing so. She tells him to put his clothes in the laundry hamper, and sometimes he grudgingly does it, but mom still finds dirty clothes on the floor. She lectures him, gets mad at him, threatens to punish him and so forth, but she knows he needs clean clothes for school, so she continues to pick up the clothes and wash them.

What's wrong with this picture? Simple. There is no consequence here, so there is nothing to learn. The only consistent consequence is that mom nags him, which makes him resent mom for trying to control him.

What if mom simply says, "I'm only going to wash clothes that are put into the laundry hamper," and then does exactly that? Mom is no longer trying to control her teenager's behavior. She is taking control of her own behavior.

Now, her son has a choice. He can put his clothes in the laundry hamper for mom to wash, or he can continue to leave his dirty clothes on the floor. The critical junction comes when he runs out of clean clothes to wear and complains to mom, "I don't have any clean clothes to wear to school."

If mom is still trying to control her son's behavior, she will not be able to resist this opportunity to "lecture." Her son might even apologize and put the clothes in the laundry hamper and ask mom to wash them right now. Lots of things could happen, but there is only one thing that should happen.

Mom should say in a very kind and loving way, "I'm sorry you don't have any clean clothes. If you put them in the laundry hamper I'll wash them the next time I do laundry." End of discussion.

The key thing to remember here is that the son chose this consequence. Mom isn't choosing for her son not to have clean clothes. If he wants clean clothes all he has to do is put them in the laundry hamper.

My experience is that once kids learn they can depend on you to follow through on what you say and to act consistently, it helps them learn to be responsible, to follow through and act consistently themselves. Again, kids learn more from what you are than from what you say. So, stop saying so many things (nagging, complaining, threatening, lecturing, etc.) and start acting instead.

What Has This Got to Do with Health?

By now, you might be wondering what all this has to do with health. Well, it has everything to do with natural health, because part of becoming an adult is to become responsible for your own welfare, that is, your own mental, physical and emotional well-being or health.

Unfortunately, few people in this society have done this. For most people, health care is going to the doctor and taking whatever they are prescribed or undergoing some type of surgery. This isn't health care, it's disease care!

Care of your health can only come from one person—yourself. No one else can ensure you eat healthy, exercise, get the rest you need, drink enough water and otherwise care for your body. Other people can teach you basic concepts, but you have to become aware of your own body and pay attention to the signals it gives you.

The body tells us when it needs nourishment. It tells us when we need rest. It tells us when we've done things that cause injury (remember the hot stove). If we want to be healthy, we must learn to internalize the responsibility for our health and learn to make wise choices so that we will experience the consequence we want (good health).

I'm amazed at how many people say to me, "But I'm eating healthy and living a healthy life, so I can't understand why I'm sick." I always assume when I'm sick that there is something I'm doing or have done that is unhealthy. You can't have an effect without a cause. Reality tells us whether our ideas are accurate or not. Our ideas don't determine reality.

Making the life passage to becoming a self-responsible adult is essential to maintaining health, especially in modern society, because the social and peer pressure to eat poorly is unbelievably great. We are bombarded with it everywhere. I'm amazed at how hard it can be to find something reasonably healthy to eat when traveling, for instance. School lunches are often loaded with simple carbs, unhealthy fats and various additives. Vending machines and convenience stores offer easy access to junk food. TV ads encourage consumption of these foods.

When children are little, you can control what they eat because you control what you feed them. However, some parents actually seem willing to allow their children to be in charge. For example, a mother once told me, "my four-year-old won't eat anything but junk food, how do I get her to eat healthy foods?" The question itself amazes me because a four-year-old can't eat anything you don't give them. If you have no junk food in the house and you don't buy it or eat it yourself, how are they going to eat it?

Of course, if you can't control your own junk food binges, then why would you expect someone else to do something you

can't do yourself. I never make rules for children that I won't obey myself. In fact, when my children were younger and there was a rule with a consequence, I told my kids that if they caught me breaking the rule, they could enforce the consequence on me. It goes back to my resolve as a teenager not to treat my children like second-class citizens.

Three Steps to Helping Teens Develop a Healthy Diet and Lifestyle

So, if you want to influence your teenagers to be healthy, focus first on being a good example for them. When you see them eating unhealthy, not getting enough sleep, not exercising, ask yourself if you are being a good example for them, and if not, focus on making changes in yourself, first. This is more instructive to your kids than anything else you can do.

My kids have watched me politely turning down junk food many times when everyone else was eating it. I was gracious and polite about it, but I stayed in control of myself. They have also watched me indulge in special treats on occasion, too, and heard me say, "It's not what you do once in a while, but everyday that counts." I recognize that first and foremost, I teach what I am.

Second, get all the junk food out of your house, learn to cook and teach your kids to cook if they are willing. I sincerely believe that the loss of eating breakfast and dinner together as family time is seriously undermining both our health and our family closeness. You simply can't be healthy eating convenience foods, even those from the health food store.

Homemade food is not only healthier, it tastes better, especially when made with wholesome ingredients. Cookies and other treats made with whole grains and natural sweeteners taste better than their commercial counterparts. Garden-fresh vegetables, organic, grass-fed meat, whole grains and other healthy foods taste better than weeks old commercial vegetables, commercially-raised meat and simple carbohydrates. When your kids are used to eating the good stuff, they'll be at least partially inoculated against the junk.

I've posted some recipes on my personal website www.steven-horne.com and plan to post more, because I want to encourage people to cook healthy food. There are also tips for preparing healthy food at RaisingChildrenNaturally.com.

Third, teach instead of preach. Teaching is informing someone of the facts and letting them make their choices and learn from them. Preaching is trying to make them feel guilty or ashamed and trying to control the choices they make.

When parents bring teenage children to me with health problems, I teach the kids. I try to spend 20% of the time

talking to the parents and 80% of the time talking directly to the teenager. I don't lecture, I simply inform.

If I know that a kid needs to severely reduce their intake of a particular food such as sugar, wheat or dairy, I explain why this will help to the kid and not to the parents. Since I know that psychologically the thought of giving up some of these foods completely is stressful, I always propose the idea of giving up the bad food for just a week or two. I ask the kid if they can commit to me that they will do so. I tell them that if they give it up for the agreed upon period of time that they can (and should) eat as much of it as they want when the period is over. (I use this tactic with adults, too.)

What usually happens is that when the person gives up the "offending" food (sugar, wheat, dairy) for the agreed upon period of time, while taking supplements that balance out the system, they start to gradually feel better. At the end of the period, if they "pig out" on the offending food, they will immediately feel worse. This helps them directly experience how the choice to continue eating the wrong food will result in them feeling bad, which helps them to make the choice to change. As long as parents don't lecture and nag, they are discovering that choices have consequences, which means I am helping to mentor them in their change of life towards adulthood.

There is so much more that I want to say about parenting, feeding kids right, etc., but I'm out of space. For more specific information about helping kids eat right, herbs and supplements that can be helpful for teenage health problems and other tips check out this month's Herbal Hour DVD, *Terrific Teens*.

You can also check out the website K.P. Khalsa and I are developing—RaisingChildrenNaturally.com. K.P. has posted some great articles on family nutrition. I plan to write more articles about parenting and post them to that site, too. If there is enough interest, I would like to hold a teleseminar on the topic of effective parenting at a future date. If such a teleseminar would be of interest to you, please drop me a note expressing your interest to steven@treelite.com.

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Kimberly Balas' Clinician's Corner

Clinical Tips for Fibromyalgia

Editor's Note: *Although we were unable to put this information in last month's Nature's Field, it still useful. So we've included in this month's issue even if it is a little off-topic.*

Fibromyalgia (FMS) manifests with an array of symptoms that could be related to many causes. The main symptom is pain associated with trigger points, but there are many other symptoms that appear with this pain. The pain can affect many different body parts but is associated with connective tissue for the most part. It is usually described as a deep, aching, throbbing, twitching, shooting, stabbing pain that consumes all actions and thoughts.

In addition, there can be neurological symptoms present as well, such as numbness, tingling and burning. Lack of sleep, cool, wet weather, over-exertion in physical activities, anxiety and stress can intensify the pain levels. Stress, poor food choices, mineral and enzyme deficiencies and heavy metal toxicity all aggravate the pain and other symptoms of FMS.

Changes in diet are a must. Eating a whole foods diet and eliminating processed foods will help to manage symptoms, boost energy levels and strengthen the immune system. Another key is to reduce your intake of bad fats (not good fats) and foods containing a lot of sugar.

It can be difficult to take the time and energy necessary to prepare fresh, wholesome meals when you are dealing with the pain of FMS, so a whole-food based supplement like Ultimate Green Zone can be the answer to this. Artificial sweeteners like aspartame and Sucralose® are extremely detrimental and will aggravate FMS.

Minerals and Mineral Transport

One important underlying factor to consider is minerals. Minerals are needed to calm the nerves and support relaxed muscles. Low levels of minerals can cause the muscles to be fatigued and tense or tight. The body balances ratios of various minerals and transports minerals to the different areas where they are needed.

The problem may not just be a mineral deficiency. If there is something blocking or impairing mineral transport, then the minerals either sit in solutions, get flushed to the kidneys or they deposit in tissues in abnormal ways. When this happens, the uptake of the minerals into the cell for processing does not happen.

If minerals are not properly bound and transported, they will simply congest the system. So, solving mineral problems isn't as

simple as just taking more calcium or magnesium. It is about a balance of minerals and the proper assimilation, delivery and uptake of minerals by the cells. Vitamin B-12 and essential fatty acids are the co-catalysts for this to happen. HSN-W can be helpful for transport mechanisms, too.

When there is a high phosphorus level and a low creatinine in the blood serum (and possibly a low albumin level, too) this is an indication that there may be a problem with leaky gut syndrome. This is where chronic inflammation in the intestinal tract has made the intestinal membrane lose tone and become excessively porous. This is going to interfere with the proper binding and absorption of minerals and other nutrients.

Some beneficial remedies for leaky gut include Kudzu/St. John's wort, L-glutamine and Uña De Gato Combination. Fiber is also helpful for reducing intestinal irritation.

Oxidative Damage and Tissue Breakdown

Oxidative damage occurs in people with FMS. This leads to further tissue degeneration. Antioxidants to consider are xanthones (the strongest) beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E, zinc and selenium. Food sources of antioxidants include darkly colored fruits and vegetables, with blueberries being highest priority due to their overall high antioxidant capacity. All of the berries in the Thai-Go along with the xanthones present in that formula make it a good choice. Omega-3 fatty acids are also effective at reducing oxidation.

Another pattern to look at is high total protein, positive ANA and high inflammatory markers. This can indicate connective tissue breakdown. Symptoms like loose teeth, bleeding gums, weak back and a hiatal hernia can be signs of tissue breakdown. These symptoms should be considered even before a diagnosis of FMS is made as they can be pre-symptoms.

Stress and Sleep

Stress is involved in FMS because of how the adrenal glands manage inflammation via cortisol levels. When stress is high, cortisol levels are high. Inflammation is usually present when this happens. Getting enough rest helps to reduce cortisol levels, which relieves muscle tension, helps repair cellular damage and calms the nerves.

Stress alone can cause symptoms such as back and neck pain, trouble sleeping, hair loss, fatigue or upset stomach, in healthy people. Studies have also shown that stress can weaken the immune system or exacerbate existing conditions. In mice, stress had been shown to make symptoms of FMS worse.

Adaptagens help modulate the output of stress hormones from the adrenals and can balance immune function and reduce levels of inflammation. Two adaptagens to consider are Eleuthero root and Adaptamax. Other adaptagens that seem to make a difference in fatigue are hawthorn, schizandra, and rhodiola.

Melatonin is a hormone secreted in an area of the brain to assist us with sleep. It is primarily released in response to the darkening light, making us feel sleepy. Melatonin has been shown to be deficient in people with FMS. Studies incorporating melatonin as a sleep aid have shown better sleep and decreased need for pharmaceutical sleep aids. I also use 5-HTP not only for helping with sleep patterns, but for any leaky gut association with FMS.

Heavy Metals

Heavy metals get stuck in the connective tissue and can cause pain and inflammation. They contribute to congestion, preventing minerals from getting to the cells. Chemicals and heavy metals are not removed by fasting! And, there is no standard medical treatment for chemical toxicity.

Chelation therapy is a common protocol for heavy metals. Chelation therapy can take a long time depending on the source of the metals and the chelation protocol chosen. Synthetic chelators can have many side effects. Natural oral chelation using Mega Chel is one of the safest, and most effective methods with few if any side effects.

Cellular Energy Production

The fatigue factor in FMS is probably due to a disruption in ATP production. Bringing balance to the energy producing cycle in the mitochondria of the cell can help with low energy stores. Combination Potassium can help with cell detoxification and help the mitochondria work better. Cellular Energy can help with mitochondrial activity as well.

Magnesium contributes to over 300 enzymatic reactions in the body, including the formation of an ATP precursor, metabolism of protein and carbohydrates and movement of muscular electrical potentials. Magnesium has the effect of making tight muscles more relaxed and can help with sleep patterns. A lot of times, insomnia is associated with low magnesium levels. Magnesium is typically deficient in FMS sufferers. Magnesium Complex acts as a very gentle muscle relaxant by blocking the effects of calcium-directed muscle contractions.

Malic acid, when combined with magnesium, has been shown to decrease the pain and tenderness associated with FMS. Malic acid is known to be a critical component of the Krebs cycle production of cellular energy, and is useful due to the possible role that an inherent metabolic imbalance may play in FMS. Both magnesium and malic acid are present in the supplement Fibralgia.

B-6 works with magnesium and malic acid, boosting their effectiveness. Pyridoxine serves to "escort" magnesium into the

cells of the body, where it exerts its effects, and by assisting malate in producing ATP. Adrenal Support can also help with energy production.

Hormones

There is also a hormonal link in FMS. A salivary hormone test can help determine which hormones are imbalanced and help determine the proper replacement of natural forms of hormones, DHEA-F helps with this balance and can create a better sense of well being and less pain for people suffering from FMS. Imbalances in other hormones including estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, DHEA and cortisol may play roles as well. Maca feeds the endocrine system and may be helpful here.

Iodine plays a major role in helping with muscle metabolism. It also helps to displace halogens like fluoride, chlorine and bromide. FMS sufferers seem to have an issue with storing these toxic halogens, which displaces iodine in their body and reduces thyroid function. Iodine supplementation has created less pain in major sites (cervical, thoracic and lumber spine, arm, wrist), better cognition, better tolerance to aerobic exercise and fewer migraine headaches.

Black walnut is a good source of iodine and seems to be the best choice for FMS patients. It contains other helpful minerals, too. Iodoral® is another supplement FMS clients should consider.

Pain Relief

A good topical remedy for relief of muscle pain is Deep Relief oil mixed with massage oil or coconut oil. This is rubbed into the areas where there is muscle pain. The clove oil in this formula is strongly anti-viral and can help with chronic fatigue syndrome.

To further help reduce muscle pain, Fibralgia and Parsley can be taken internally along with sea salt. This will act as a buffer, reducing lactic acid buildup and reduce pain by getting the pH in the muscles to stabilize.

Increasing oxygen supply to muscles with supplements like Cordyceps, Chinese Lung Support and the xanthenes found in Thai go and IF Relief will also help. This will reduce inflammation and help to restore normal muscle metabolism.

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