Why Am I So Tired?
(And What to Do About It)
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Why You’re So Tired

Have you ever wondered how you got so tired?

You remember back to high school, when you felt alive and energetic. You remember being filled with passion and drive. You had plans for the future, and you felt like you could conquer the world.

Later you married and started having children. While you love being a wife and mom, somewhere you started feeling so tired. You just couldn’t handle everything anymore. Even worse, some days you just didn’t care.

As a mom, you’re especially vulnerable to fatigue. Getting weary is very common in mothers, especially in moms who have several children.

Several years ago, I found out that I had a disease called Addison’s Disease. It is characterized by extreme exhaustion because my adrenal glands stopped producing some of the hormones that help me function in everyday life. While you probably won’t be diagnosed with such a serious disease, your body could simply be worn out.

You have two adrenal glands, located in the back of your body, just below your rib cage and directly above your kidneys, one
on each side. Each adrenal gland is about the size of a lima bean. For being so small, they are designed to handle an awful lot!

Each adrenal gland is actually made of two separate glands, the medulla and the cortex. The **medulla** makes hormones that you probably recognize, such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, and dopamine. These hormones react very quickly in times of stress, helping your body systems (like your heart) work properly.

The adrenal **cortex** wraps all around the medulla. It produces hormones such as cortisol, aldosterone, and DHEA. These hormones react more slowly to stress but help normalize the body after something exciting has happened.

If your body has been exposed to repeated and frequent stress (or even just one very severe stress), your adrenal glands can become overworked. At first, they pump out too many hormones, but soon they become so fatigued that they just don’t work properly and consistently any more.

Now that they are fatigued, you can’t handle stress like you used to. You wear out quickly, need more naps, and feel foggy in your thinking. Over time, this feeling of fatigue and fogginess can get worse, until you can’t even remember what it feels like not to be tired.

Many types of stress can cause fatigue, but the following are the most common in moms:
• **A lack of sleep** – When you habitually get too little sleep, your circadian rhythms get messed up. Suddenly, you can’t sleep at night, and you can’t stay awake in the daytime. Maybe you started getting too little sleep in high school or college, with too many late nights with friends or homework. Maybe as a newlywed, you stayed up too late too often watching TV. As a new mom, your little baby kept you up at night for months on end. Even though your body was designed to sleep in the dark and be awake in the light, your normal rhythms have been messed up.

  Definition: “Circadian Rhythm” – *Your internal “clock” that regulates all the processes of your body over a 24-hour period. It affects your sleep-wake cycles, your body temperature, and all your hormone production.*

• **Too much exercise** – Some women exercise very little, but others exercise too much. This often starts in the late teen years or early 20s, as women feel pressure to have supermodel figures like the ones they see on TV. They may have the impression that exercise is healthy, but they don’t realize that it can be overdone. Exercise releases adrenaline, which temporarily gives an energy boost. Adrenaline can become addictive, and the adrenal glands can get worn out.

• **Poor nutrition** – It is difficult to know what good nutrition really is, since so many sources contradict each other.
Since the 1950s, with the increase of processed foods, our diet has included fewer nutrients than ever before. We have an abundance of food but a deficit of nutrition. Our glands and organs aren’t being fed properly, so they wear out sooner.

- **Repeated pregnancies** – Pregnancy is one of the most difficult things your body can do. Not only must you take care of yourself; you must also nourish a growing baby. Traditionally, couples prepared for parenthood by eating special diets before, during, and after a pregnancy, spacing their children out several years between. However, if you have had several pregnancies close together while running the modern “rat race,” your body is probably feeling quite fatigued.

- **Anger and worry** – Peaks of emotions can cause a large burst of hormones from the adrenal glands. If you struggle with outbursts of anger, feelings of panic, or you worry repeatedly, many times in each week, your body starts to feel the effects.

- **Driven and Busy** – Most women who have fatigue have Type-A Personalities. We watch clocks, try to multi-task too many things at once, drive ourselves with deadlines, and expect to accomplish an extraordinary number of things in one short lifetime. (Other women might comment that we look like “superwomen,” but we know deep down that we’re not.) Why do we do this? We are
passionate people! We want to make a difference in this world, but in our attempt to accomplish great things, we wear ourselves out.

- **Marriage and parenting** – You’re a wife and mom, and you’re passionate about both roles; however, you’ve discovered that marriage and motherhood aren’t as easy as they look. Because you’re a perfectionist, you’re frequently upset because your husband and kids aren’t perfect. You don’t blame them. You blame yourself. Meanwhile, your poor little adrenal glands are taking a beating.

- **Disorganization** – Because you do so much (and have even more on your “to do” list), you don’t have time to keep up with your surroundings. Laundry, meals, and cleaning chores are done sporadically, because there’s always something more important on your list. When you finally realize that you’re out of clean underwear, everyday tasks have now become an emergency. Because you’re putting out little housekeeping fires every day, you’re constantly running on adrenaline... and getting more and more tired.

- **Money problems** – Similar to the organizational problems above, moms with adrenal fatigue often have a lack of money. Sometimes we moms just don’t have much income because we’ve chosen to be stay-at-home moms rather than career women. Sometimes we have to work a second job or work from home in an attempt to make
ends meet, adding to our fatigue. Often, we don’t know remember to balance the checkbook, we lose receipts, and we forget to mail bills that are due, resulting in more stress and more fatigue.

- **Inherited weaknesses** – Some people are simply born with adrenal glands that aren’t as anatomically developed as others. No one knows for sure why this happens, but most likely, it’s a result of several generations of poor nutrition, toxic chemicals in the environment, and stresses on the body. These weaknesses can be passed down from mother to child, grandmother to grandchild. Even if you do everything right, you will never have the boundless energy of someone who possesses a normal set of adrenal glands.

Surgery, chronic infections, allergies, trauma (such as car accidents, severe burns, or violence against you), genetic disorders, and other extreme stresses can also cause adrenal fatigue. However, for most of us moms, adrenal fatigue develops slowly. We look just fine to others, and because we’re hard-working and creative, others won’t notice that anything is wrong.

Inside our hearts, though, we know something is terribly wrong. We feel a sense of panic. We wonder how to get off the
merry-go-round of life. We feel trapped and scared. We feel like escaping. We wish we could cry.

By the time we reach our mid-30s, we moms are at high risk for developing what some doctors are calling “adrenal fatigue.” At the time in our lives when we should feel the best, we feel as if we were eighty years old. We lose our love of life. We lose our drive. We love our dreams. We wish we could just sleep life away.

Next, we’ll examine some of the body organs that are affected by adrenal fatigue, discover what symptoms we’ll most likely experience, and understand why we feel the way we do.
Action Steps:

As you progress through this eCourse, I’ll be giving you “Action Steps” to work on each week. I recommend that you get a standard-size, 3-ring binder in which you can place all these lessons, as well as the information you’ll be completing during each action step. By the end of this course, your notebook will provide you with a history of your health, as well as a customized plan for overcoming fatigue.

- **What stressors have you encountered in your life?**

  Go through each of the possible causes for fatigue in this chapter. Circle any that seem as if they could have contributed to your current fatigue. Using a colored highlighter, mark with great emphasis any that you are still facing.

- **When did you start feeling so tired?**

  It would be wise to begin compiling a “life history” for your medical conditions, including your fatigue. In your notebook, start recording previous times in your life during which you felt similar fatigue to now. See if you can discover any common causes or patterns

- **Complete a “Health History” for your notebook.**

  Fill out the following “Health History” form and include it in your notebook.
Health History

Please fill out the following information, placing any comments in the columns or on the back of these sheets.

Name _______________________________________________   Date _____________
Age ____________  Date of Birth _____________  Sex:  M   F       Married? __________
Mailing Address ________________________________________________
Home Telephone _____________   Other Telephone ____________________
Email Address ________________________________________________
Occupation/Profession ________________________________________________
Employer ________________________________________________
Spouse’s Name _____________________ Spouse’s Work Number ________________
Doctor’s Name _________________________ Office Telephone __________________
Street Address ____________________________

Have you been diagnosed with any health condition(s)?
_______________________________________________________________________

List any accidents or falls and dates:
_______________________________________________________________________

List any broken bones (fractures) or dislocations:
_______________________________________________________________________

Do you smoke? ________ How many packs per day? _______________
Do you drink alcohol? ________ How many packs per day? _______________
Do you drink coffee? ________ How many cups per day? _______________
Do you drink soda? ________ What kinds? ___________ How often? _______________
Do you drink store-bought juice? ________ store-bought milk? ___________
Do you have any food cravings? __________________________ If so, please describe:

Are you following any particular diet? ________ If so, please describe:

Are you using any medications? ________ Please list type, amount, and frequency:

Are you using any nutritional supplements? __________
Please list type, amount, and frequency:

_______________________________________________________________________
# Family History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Diabetes?</th>
<th>Heart Disease?</th>
<th>Kidney Disease?</th>
<th>Cancer?</th>
<th>Other?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
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<td>Maternal grandparents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paternal grandparents</td>
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Have you ever had any operations?  ____________________________________________
Have you ever been hospitalized?  ____________________________________________

Have you ever had any of the following diseases?

- ___ Appendicitis
- ___ Pneumonia
- ___ Rheumatic fever
- ___ Polio
- ___ Tuberculosis
- ___ Whooping Cough
- ___ Mental disorder
- ___ Lumbago
- ___ Eczema
- ___ Measles
- ___ Diabetes
- ___ Venereal Infection
- ___ Alcoholism
- ___ Pleurisy
- ___ Anemia

Please enter “2” for Previously, “3” for Presently, for each of the following signs and symptoms. Leave blank if it does not apply.

## General Symptoms

- ___ Headache
- ___ Fever
- ___ Chills
- ___ Night sweats
- ___ Fainting
- ___ Dizziness
- ___ Convulsions
- ___ Loss of sleep
- ___ Fatigue
- ___ Nervousness
- ___ Loss of weight
- ___ Allergy
- ___ Wheezing

## Muscles & Joints

- ___ Weakness
- ___ Twitching
- ___ Stiff neck
- ___ Backache
- ___ Swollen joints
- ___ Tremors
- ___ Foot trouble
- ___ Painful tail bone
- ___ Pain between shoulders

## Respiratory

- ___ Chronic cough
- ___ Spitting blood
- ___ Spitting phlegm
- ___ Chest Pain
- ___ Difficulty breathing

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<th><strong>Eye/Ear/Nose/Throat</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Poor appetite</td>
<td>___ Poor vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Poor digestion</td>
<td>___ Crossed eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Excessive hunger</td>
<td>___ Pain in eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Belching or gas</td>
<td>___ Deafness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Nausea</td>
<td>___ Earache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Vomiting</td>
<td>___ Ear noises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Vomiting blood</td>
<td>___ Ear discharges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Pain over stomach</td>
<td>___ Nasal obstruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Constipation</td>
<td>___ Nose bleeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Diarrhea</td>
<td>___ Sore throats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Colon trouble</td>
<td>___ Hoarseness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Hemorrhoids</td>
<td>___ Hay fever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Liver trouble</td>
<td>___ Asthma</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Jaundice</td>
<td>___ Frequent colds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Gall bladder trouble</td>
<td>___ Enlarged thyroid</td>
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<td></td>
<td>___ Tonsillitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Sinus trouble</td>
</tr>
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<td>___ Trouble swallowing</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Cardio-Vascular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Skin or Allergies</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Rapid heart</td>
<td>___ Skin eruptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Slow heart</td>
<td>___ Itching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ High blood pressure</td>
<td>___ Bruising easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Low blood pressure</td>
<td>___ Dryness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Boils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Pain over heart</td>
<td>___ Sensitive skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Previous heart trouble</td>
<td>___ Hives or allergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Swelling ankles</td>
<td>___ Eczema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Poor circulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Varicose veins</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Strokes</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Genito-Urinary</strong></th>
<th><strong>Women Only</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Frequent urination</td>
<td>___ Painful periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Painful urination</td>
<td>___ Excessive flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Blood in urine</td>
<td>___ Irregular cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Kidney infection</td>
<td>___ Hot flashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Bed wetting</td>
<td>___ Cramps or backache</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Inability to control urine</td>
<td>___ Miscarriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Prostrate trouble</td>
<td>___ Vaginal discharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>___ Pregnant at this time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>_____ Date of last period</td>
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<td></td>
<td>_____ Date of period</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>before that</td>
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Please try to list everything (food, drink, medication, supplements, etc.) that went into your mouth yesterday, including the times ingested:

**Before 8 a.m.**

**Between 8 a.m. and noon:**

**Between noon and 4 p.m.**

**Between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.**

**Between 8 p.m. and bedtime:**

Was this a normal day of eating for you? _______ If not, please explain (maybe on back?):

What time do you usually go to bed at night? ________________

What time do you usually wake up in the morning? ________________

Do you sleep soundly? ________________

Do you have difficulty falling asleep? ________________

Do you have difficulty staying asleep all night? ________________

At what times of the day do you feel most energetic? 

____________________________________________

At what times of the day do you feel most tired?

____________________________________________

Do you generally observe a “day of rest” each week? 

____________________________________________
How Your Body Reacts When You’re Tired

One theory for why so many moms are exhausted is that their adrenal glands have been overworked. The adrenal glands affect every other organ and function of your body. The hormones produced by your adrenal glands are essential for life. If you didn’t produce them, you would simply die.

The most important adrenal hormone is called cortisol. Cortisol is present in almost every cell of your body, and its job is to restore your equilibrium after you’ve secreted adrenaline. Cortisol is produced by your body in amounts that follow a daily pattern, depending on the amount of light your eyes take in and the amount of activity you do.

Normally, your adrenals make the most cortisol around 8:00 in the morning, with less cortisol being produced as the day goes on, until around midnight, when your adrenals manufacture almost none at all. In a normal, relaxing day, your adrenals might manufacture around 40 mg of cortisol total.

However, when you are under stress, such as the kinds mentioned in the last chapter, your adrenal glands might manufacture up to 200 mg of cortisol in a day. This extra
cortisol is designed to counteract the effects of adrenaline, such as jittery hands or a racing heart. The cortisol increases your blood pressure, helps keep your blood sugar up to give you energy, and helps your brain think more clearly.

Since your body is not designed to live on large amounts of cortisol long-term, your adrenal glands can only keep up this pace for a time. Eventually, if the stress continues, you won’t be able to make enough cortisol to keep pace with demand, and you’ll start to feel the effects.

The adrenal glands control four major parts of your body, and these in turn affect everything else.

**Your Liver**

One of the liver’s functions is to be sure that your blood has enough sugar in it. Your brain requires an exact amount of sugar (known as glucose). If you have too much sugar in the blood, your pancreas releases a hormone known as insulin that removes the excess sugar and stores it. A few hours later, when your blood sugar levels have begun to drop, the liver will release some of the stored sugar so that the brain is continuously fed. Cortisol is the hormone that signals the liver to make this release.
If you’re not making enough cortisol, your liver cannot replace blood sugar. Instead, your hormones will release adrenaline, in an effort to wake up your brain.

Symptoms of low blood sugar:

- Headache
- Slow, sluggish, lethargic movement
- Mental confusion, fogginess
- Sweating
- Inability to regulate temperature
- Nightmares
- Insomnia
- Weight gain around your mid-section

Definition: “Hypoglycemia” – low blood sugar. Hypo is a prefix that means low. Glycemia is a root word that comes from the word glucose, a type of sugar.

Most women notice the symptoms of hypoglycemia when they’re hungry in the late afternoon, but when the adrenal glands are more severely exhausted, women can also experience these symptoms in the middle of the night, as a burst of adrenaline wakes them from a sound sleep or scares them with a nightmare. Because their blood sugar is low, they can’t fall back to sleep easily.
The Stomach

Just as the liver needs cortisol to maintain a proper amount of glucose in the blood, so also the stomach needs cortisol for proper digestion of your food.

It’s difficult for us to understand how a bite of food on our fork turns into carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, not to mention how minerals and vitamins nourish our body. We have a difficult time understanding that food is made of molecules that are built up into that bite of mashed potatoes that is heading into our mouth.

The mashed potatoes must be broken down into molecules that the body can recognize and use. Enzymes are the critters that break down the molecules.

Enzymes are manufactured mostly by the pancreas, and they begin working their magic in the stomach. However, if your stomach contains no enzymes, then your food just sits there, unable to be broken down into useable molecules. As the food moves into the small intestine, it cannot be absorbed. Your large intestine then has a lot more work to do to eliminate it from your body. In effect, your food becomes a poison in your blood while you’re beginning to starve from a lack of nutrients.

Cortisol is the hormone that controls the production of enzymes in the pancreas. An excess of cortisol can cause too much stomach acid and other problems such as irritable bowel syndrome. Too little cortisol causes a
reduction in the production of digestive enzymes, causing incomplete digestion and malnourishment.

Symptoms of not making enough digestive enzymes:

- Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting
- Constipation
- Abdominal and flank pain
- Joint pain
- Weight gain or loss
- Appetite loss or food cravings

When I first learned about the role of digestive enzymes, I finally realized why I had suffered through so many painful and bloated nights after a stressful week or an argument with someone. Why was I any different than a starving and bloated Ethiopian child?

The Kidneys

Cortisol is not the only hormone produced in the adrenal glands. Aldosterone is another essential hormone (among many others).

Aldosterone controls the levels of sodium and potassium in the bloodstream. If the level of sodium in the blood falls too low, our kidneys cannot maintain the fluids in our body and our blood pressure will fall.
Symptoms of dysfunctional kidneys:

- Dehydration
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Low blood pressure (defined as lower than 120/80)
- Profound weakness and fatigue

Low blood pressure causes a host of other symptoms, such as “seeing stars” when you stand up too quickly or reach for something in the shower. Low blood pressure also contributes to the famous sense of fatigue that accompanies tired adrenal glands. Fainting is another indicator of adrenal fatigue because of low blood volume.

The Heart

Too much aldosterone has been shown to increase the risk of stroke and heart failure, but too little aldosterone is also bad for the heart. The heart needs aldosterone for a regular heartbeat and for the output of blood to be regular and firm. When aldosterone decreases, the heart struggles to regulate itself.
Symptoms:

- Rapid heart rate
- Rapid respiratory rate
- Shortness of breath

I’ve noticed that when my adrenal glands cannot produce enough aldosterone, I struggle to have enough energy to carry a basket of laundry. My heart will race, followed by sleepiness. I avoid flights of stairs. I begin to wonder how small children have the energy to run and tumble. I’d rather just take a nap.

Related Diseases

You should be aware that adrenal fatigue is implicated in several other diseases, such as

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Ovarian dysfunction and infertility
- Allergies
- Asthma
- Autoimmune disorders
- Irritable bowel syndrome and colitis
- Epstein Barr Syndrome
- Mononucleosis
- Frequent colds, viruses, and other infections
- Skin rashes
- Polymyalgia rheumatica
If you suffer from any of these conditions, you should certainly suspect adrenal fatigue.

**Exhausted adrenal glands aren’t the only cause of fatigue**, however. Many other parts of your body are involved.

### The Master Glands

Several glands in the brain control the adrenal glands. These “Master Glands” include the pineal, the hypothalamus and the pituitary.

Deep inside your brain is a gland called the pineal gland. This tiny gland, about the size of a pea, is responsible for producing a hormone called melatonin. Darkness stimulates the production of melatonin, and light tells it to stop. Melatonin is a powerful hormone that directs our circadian rhythms and even orchestrates our sexual development.

The retina of the eye receives light and transmits the signals from that light to the pineal gland. The patterns of daylight and darkness received by the pineal gland orchestrate the production of proper amounts of melatonin.
One of the purposes of melatonin is to regulate our days and nights. Halfway through the night, melatonin production peaks, gradually falling toward dawn. Depending on how close to the North Pole you live, you can experience up to 18 hours of darkness in the winter months. Now that we’ve become “civilized” with the invention of bright, artificial lights, we may only have eight or fewer hours of darkness a night.

- Bedroom “night lights,” bright alarm clocks, and yard lights have all been shown to diminish the production of melatonin in our brains at night.
- Exposure to bright light at night, enjoyed by those in careers where they work the night shift, has been implicated in disorders such as cancer.
- Sitting in front of flashing television or computer screens, turning on bright lights to use the bathroom at 2 a.m., sleeping with other lights on in the home – all of these things upset the production of melatonin in our pineal glands.

Melatonin has many uses, beginning with the oversight of our metabolism. Young children produce more melatonin than adults, making scientists think that it plays a role in postponing sexual development.
Melatonin...

- Is a powerful anti-oxidant.
- Has been shown helpful in reducing the damage caused by some types of Parkinson’s disease.
- Strengthens the immune system.
- Prevents migraine headaches.
- Helps the heart beat properly.
- Has even been shown to help mice live longer!
- Helps us dream properly, which has been shown to keep us from going insane.

The production of melatonin in the pineal gland goes on to affect the production of almost every other hormone in the human body. Melatonin travels to the hypothalamus, where numerous hormones are produced. The hypothalamus then controls the pituitary gland, and a chain-reaction of hormones and responses goes off in your body.

The pituitary produces stimulating hormones that travel through your body to various glands. For instance, the pituitary makes a hormone called ACTH that travels to the adrenal glands to make cortisol and some other hormones. ACTH is often made in response to stress. When the pituitary is notified that the stress is over, it sends less ACTH to the adrenals so that less cortisol will be made. On the other hand, when more stress is present, more ACTH is sent to the adrenal glands and more cortisol is produced.
The same process holds true for other glands in your body as well, such as the thyroid gland and your ovaries. Your body is an amazing creation of God, able to analyze your situation in a moment and respond accordingly.

The Nutritional System

Hormones are messengers, sent out from the “Master Glands” to various other parts of the body, with specific instructions that need to be carried out. However, hormones cannot be manufactured unless specific nutrients are present in your body.

Hormones are like the delivery drivers of your body. Imagine that they are carrying important boxes and parcels to cities (glands) far and wide. The delivery drivers need to be fed! If they never ate, they would never have the energy to carry their boxes.

What you eat, when you eat, and how well your body digests it are all critically important if your hormones are to work properly. Food has to be broken down into its most basic parts before it can be built back up again into hormones, tissues, and bones. Pieces of food that aren’t digested properly become toxins (poisons) in your bloodstream, damaging parts of your body and preventing hormones from being delivered properly.
So as you can see, you could be feeling tired for a multitude of reasons. When you feel great fatigue, the reason could come from a problem *anywhere* in your body.

- Maybe too much light is coming into your eyes at night, shutting off the production of melatonin in your brain.
- Maybe the pituitary isn’t responding correctly to the amount of hormones circulating in your blood.
- Maybe you have nutritional deficiencies and don’t have the proper materials needed to feed your cells.
- Maybe your glands have been overworked and just don’t have the energy to function any more.

No matter what the cause of your fatigue, the process of recovery is the same. However, before we learn how to conquer fatigue, we’ll talk about how to monitor our health, so that we can discover the cause of our fatigue.
Action Steps:

- Go back through the previous chapter and mark any symptoms you are currently experiencing.

Which body systems seem to be most affected in you?
  - Liver
  - Stomach
  - Kidneys
  - Heart

- Do you suffer from any of the diseases mentioned in this section? List them here:

- The “Hypoglycemia Association” lists the following as typical complaints for those suffering from fatigue. Which ones have you experienced?

  - The light hurts my eyes.
  - My mouth is so dry I feel as if I could spit cotton.
  - I feel drowsy after a sweet/starchy meal.
  - The pain in my neck is murder.
  - I feel best after the evening meal.
  - I frequently have nightmares.
☐ I wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep.
☐ My hands perspire when I have to make a speech in public, or take a test.
☐ Preparing for a trip is terribly exhausting, leaving me sick and distressed and sometimes I cry.
☐ I have to drink coffee or caffeinated soft drinks to keep going.
☐ I have frequent abdominal pain or gas.
☐ When I introduce people, I panic and forget their names.
☐ I was considered a good student, but I almost failed several subjects.
  Studying was a tremendous effort.
☐ I avoid social engagement with all sorts of excuses.
☐ Sometimes I wake up in a sweat at night.
☐ I think I am especially sensitive to color, sound, and odor.
☐ I insult people without meaning to. I regret it afterward, but it happens again and again.
☐ This itching and crawling of the skin is nerve racking.
☐ I just can't get organized.
☐ I either feel guilty or I blame others.
☐ I can't handle stress.
☐ I cry easily.
☐ I get angry easily, which may result in my yelling at the person. It takes a long time to recover.
☐ When I get up quickly from a reclining position, I get dizzy. Sometimes I black out or everything becomes dim.
☐ I sleep so hard, as if drugged, with a feeling of sinking, sinking; I try to wake myself up but can't.
☐ I have a history of constipation problems.
☐ I often feel tired or blue, but after eating ice cream or candy I feel well and happy for a short time.
☐ I have always had trouble with motion sickness.
☐ Often when I go to get something, I forget what I went for.
☐ I know I'm a doormat. I don't know how to stand up for myself.
☐ I can't get to the bottom of my breath.
☐ I get frequent colds.
☐ My insides feel weak and trembly.
☐ It was six months before I felt happy and really able to take care of my new baby.
☐ I have difficulty keeping a job. I get irritated with people I work with.
☐ My heart beats too fast sometimes.
☐ My heart beats too slow sometimes.
☐ The day I go shopping I just have no strength left for anything else.¹

¹ From http://www.fred.net/slowup/habul44.html
Are you exposed to too much light at night when you should be sleeping?

List the sources of night-time light in your home.

What steps could you take to reduce this light?
Just how tired are you, anyway? Did you know that your body goes through stages of fatigue?

In a body that is functioning correctly, scientists have observed that your cortisol levels are highest in the morning and lowest at midnight. Another hormone, DHEA, must also be maintained at a sufficient level, since hormones such as cortisol are made from DHEA.

Image Source: http://www.chronicfatigue.org/ASI%20Normal.html
In the 1950s, a physician named Hans Selye identified seven stages of reaction to stress. Doctors still refer to his classic book, *The Stress of Life*, when evaluating lab work and making recommendations for their patients.

**The Alarm Stage – Stage One**

When your body reacts to stress, it does so by increasing your cortisol levels. You can handle this increase in cortisol production only as long as you have enough DHEA to support it. This is known as **Stage One** of fatigue, the alarm stage.

**The Resistance Stage – Stages Two through Four**

These high levels of cortisol will tend to make you gain weight. To conserve energy, your body will also begin to down-regulate your metabolism and body temperature. Your DHEA levels will also quietly begin to go down. This is **Stage Two** of fatigue, the resistance stage. Your body’s mechanisms are designed to protect you. If you were to rest at this stage, your body would be able to heal. But if not, your body will have to resist the effects of high cortisol.

As stress continues, with high levels of cortisol but without DHEA from which to manufacture it, you’ll begin to feel
increased anxiety and panic, combined with exhaustion. This is **Stage Three** of fatigue.

Soon, your body realizes it cannot continue the high levels of cortisol. Your morning cortisol levels will fall. You’ll notice that you have a very hard time waking up in the morning. By late afternoon and evening, though, you may feel a burst of adrenaline that makes it very difficult to fall asleep. You might dismiss this by saying, “I’m just not a morning person,” but in reality, your hormone levels are mixed up. What’s worse, the higher levels of cortisol in the evening will tend to either make it difficult for you to fall asleep at bedtime or will wake you up between 3 and 5 a.m. This is **Stage Four** of fatigue.

**The Exhaustion Stage – Stages Five through Seven**

If you have no reserves of DHEA yet continuously ask your body for cortisol that it cannot make, you’ll eventually hit a stage of exhaustion at all hours of the day and night. Women at this stage of fatigue are often bedridden. This is **Stage Five** of fatigue.

There are two more stages of fatigue, often known to medical doctors as Addison’s disease, a life-threatening condition that is often discovered when sufferers simply collapse in an emergency room or even die.
You can see an example of these stages of fatigue if you think about your metabolism. When your body puts up a resistance to stress, it will do so by slowing down the various parts of your body, in an attempt to conserve energy. To conserve energy, your body will cool down your body temperature, store fat for a future emergency, slow down your fertility, and send resources away from “unnecessary” things such as hair and skin (resulting in dry hair and skin). You’ll feel tired and will require caffeine or other stimulants to keep going. You’ll have food cravings, as your body tries to build up its resources.

If you enter the exhaustion stage, your body will not be able to even keep your vital organs running. You might lose weight because of an inability to digest food, a loss of appetite, or diarrhea. Your kidneys can lose function, and your blood pressure will drop. Your emotional state will weaken, and you’ll panic in a crowd or if you hear a loud noise. You may start crying for no apparent reason, and you might not be able to stop. You’ll probably feel depressed.
The Importance of Monitoring Your Level of Fatigue

By taking note of specific symptoms you’re experiencing, you can often determine which level of fatigue you’re in. In addition, if you choose to seek help from a healthcare provider, having a record of your symptoms will certainly aid him or her in making a diagnosis.

Source: http://www.chronicfatigue.org/Selye%20large.html
However, the best reason for figuring out your level of fatigue is so that you’ll know if you’re improving. Most of us expect to make small changes (maybe in lifestyle, medications or supplements) and to immediately see large improvement. If we don’t see something dramatic happen right away, we decide that our efforts were of no use – and we quit!

Dr. Selye found that we often have to go back through the levels of fatigue in the process of healing. For instance, a woman in stage 5 of fatigue will “heal” by spending time in stage 4, then stage 3, etc. – all before reaching the point where her body can respond to stress in a healthy way. Each stage has its own symptoms and frustrations, and if this woman quits too soon, she’ll relapse. However, if she realistically understands that healing is a process (and that her symptoms are normal), she’ll persevere.

Some women heal faster than others! Don’t compare yourself to others; rather, let me show you how to compare yourself to how you felt last week, last month, and last year.

What are some symptoms you might experience as a normal part of healing?

- Gaining weight
- Feeling cold
- Sleeping more
- Foggy thinking
• Getting headaches
• Enduring painful joints
• Crying more easily

I’m going to show you how to be objective rather than emotional about your healing – at a time in your life when your emotions are very powerful.

To monitor your levels of fatigue, you’ll be setting up a notebook that will act as your scientific workshop. This is your “control central,” a place to test ideas, perform experiments, and make discoveries that will help you customize your own healing process.

You won’t need any fancy equipment. In fact, almost everything you’ll need to monitor your fatigue can be found around your home or at your local pharmacy.

Monitoring your health is much like performing a science experiment. Previously, you made some observations about your health as you wrote down symptoms you’re currently experiencing and as you thought through your health history.

Now you’ll add some measurements, such as body temperature and blood pressure. I’ll show you some standard measurements that are true for all women, then you can experiment with variables, the things that might be different in your unique situation yet are affecting how you heal.
Along the way, week by week, you’ll change one variable at a time. Maybe you’ll change one thing in your diet, or maybe you’ll change something about your sleeping patterns, or maybe you’ll add a supplement to your diet.

As you observe, measure, and record changes and symptoms, you’ll see a definite picture emerging. You’ll be able to see objectively that you’re getting better, even when an occasional bad day would otherwise convince you that you’re a complete failure.

Scientists always conduct “fair tests.” This means that they change only one thing at a time when they conduct an experiment. This is how they can tell if changes helped or made things worse. It’s never wise to make many changes at once.

It takes time to heal! Healing always begins at the cellular level, where you can’t see it. Cells have to change, regrow, and eventually build new tissues and structures. Inner cells heal first, and only later will changes be reflected in your skin, hair, moods, etc. For this reason, I’ll be showing you how to observe how you’re doing at a cellular level, not just at the outward, symptomatic level.

“Thomas Edison performed fifty thousand experiments before he discovered the right elements that enabled him to develop a new storage battery. When asked if he was frustrated that so little had resulted from so much work, the inventor replied,
‘Results? Why, I have gotten a lot of results. I know fifty thousand things that won’t work.’”

I would like you to begin monitoring both cellular changes (that will show in your body temperature, blood pressure, pupil dilation, and medical testing) and your outward symptoms. You may even have some rare symptom that I’ve never heard of. That’s okay! Just begin to write it all down.

I should note that those who only make a half-hearted effort to monitor their fatigue, choosing to simply read about it rather than do it, won’t get better. It takes a lot of work on your part to overcome fatigue! I’ll certainly provide all the help I can, but it is up to you to make changes. The first and most important change you’ll need to make is learning to observe, record, and monitor your health.

Your doctor won’t – and can’t – do this for you! Your spouse probably can’t do this for you. Your brain won’t remember all the details of changes you’ve made. You need to learn to monitor your own health, writing things down, so that you can make important decisions, feel a sense of control over your health, and be encouraged as you really do see improvement. If you don’t monitor your health, you’re likely to end up disappointed, disgruntled – and too tired!

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So let’s look at some simple things you can begin monitoring this week:

**Body Temperature**

Body temperature is an accurate reflection of metabolic activity in your body. The more your metabolism is functioning, the higher your temperature will be. Best of all, body temperature can give you a snapshot of what is happening *today* at your body’s cellular level!

It took me a long time to realize that **98.6 degrees Fahrenheit is the optimal body temperature**. At this exact temperature, the enzymes in your body are able to function at their optimal ability, meaning that you will metabolize your food most efficiently. If your temperature is higher or lower than this, your body must work harder to metabolize food, to build new cells, and to repair damage.

Optimal is not the same thing as *normal*. Normal is simply the average of several people’s body temperatures. If some of the people in a sample group tend to have low body temperature, “normal” will be lower than “optimal.” This is why it seems “normal” for you and your friends to all have typical body temperatures in the 96s or 97s. Normal or not, your bodies cannot function optimally at these low temperatures.
You should also realize that body temperatures normally fluctuate throughout a day. Body temperature is lowest first thing in the morning, after you’ve been quietly sleeping for at least four hours, and body temperature is highest in the late afternoon, after you’ve been active, after you’ve eaten warm food, or if you’re fighting an infection. This makes sense, doesn’t it? Therefore, we want to know what your average body temperature is over the course of an entire day.

To track body temperature, purchase an inexpensive digital thermometer, preferably one with a memory. These usually cost around $5 at a pharmacy.

Place the thermometer next to your bed. If you’ve been sleeping for four hours or more before waking in the morning, then before you sit up or stand up, place the thermometer in your mouth. If your temperature is below 97.5 degrees, this is a sign that your metabolism is being turned down. You are at least in the resistance stage (#2) of fatigue.

If so, you should then track your daytime temperatures for at least three days. You will take your temperature at 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. for three days. Average the three daily temperatures. Are they steady and low? If so, your metabolism has started to go down, but your adrenal glands are able to handle the stress (stage #2). You should be able to heal quickly.
Do your temperatures jump all over? If they are varying more than 2/10s of a degree throughout the day, your adrenal glands show signs of damage. You will need to be very consistent in your efforts to heal, and you will also need to be realistic in how long it will take you to heal (stages #3-7).

Taking your temperature will continue to be a reliable way to see if the methods you use to heal are actually helping you. For this reason, I want to encourage you to start the habit of taking your temperature and recording it. I keep thermometers handy throughout my home (in the bathroom, in the kitchen, in my purse, and even in my apron pocket), so that I will more easily remember to take my temperature three times a day. Ideally, you will want to record the average of these temperatures on a graph in your notebook at least weekly.

**Blood Pressure**

Your blood pressure is another clue as to how well your body is handling stress. In the alarm and beginning resistance stages, your blood pressure often increases. However, as your adrenal glands become more damaged, your body struggles to maintain proper fluid balance in your cells, resulting in low blood pressure. Many women have low blood pressure, yet they’ve been told that it’s normal and even good.
This simply isn’t true. The optimal blood pressure is 120/80. If your blood pressure is normally lower than this, such as 95/65, your adrenal glands are fatigued.

A sign of entering the exhaustion stage (#5-7) is that your blood pressure drops when you stand up. Low blood pressure often causes symptoms such as feeling light-headed or dizzy when you stand up quickly. Normally, your adrenal glands are instrumental in helping your blood pump efficiently, especially when you change positions quickly. However, if your adrenal glands are tired, your heart simply can’t pump blood to your brain quickly enough, leaving you seeing stars.

You can purchase your own blood pressure cuff at a pharmacy. I prefer a wrist cuff, because it’s easy to use. Mine has a memory in case I don’t have time to write down the measurements immediately. Ideally, you will want to record your blood pressure in your notebook at least weekly.

**Pupil Dilation**

Another hormone that your adrenal glands manufacture is called aldosterone. In a healthy person, aldosterone helps your body maintain proper levels of sodium and potassium. If those levels become unbalanced, the muscles in your eyes cannot properly dilate your pupils.
To test your eye muscles, go into a darkened room at home and ask a friend to shine a flashlight toward your pupils and hold it for a minute or so. Have your friend watch your pupils. The pupils should constrict and stay small as the light is shined from the side of your face. However, if your adrenal glands are exhausted, the pupils will get small at first but soon get larger again or flutter back and forth as the muscles fail in their attempt to hold the pupils steady.

>> You can see a video of what this looks like at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAkftY6BZS0.

As your levels of fatigue improve, you’ll be able to see a much more consistent pupil response. Write down your observations weekly in your notebook.

Testing Your Hormone Levels

If you suspect an adrenal problem, you would be very wise to have your hormone levels tested. Knowing exactly what is happening in your body is essential! Especially if you suspect your levels of fatigue are more severe, I strongly advise against “guessing;” rather, bite the bullet and pay some money to get your hormone levels tested.

Many women are fearful of spending $150 or so to get testing done. They guess what stage of fatigue they’re in, based on symptoms alone, and start making changes to
their lifestyle. Often these changes include herbal supplements or hormones. Sadly, they often make their problems worse because they’re supplementing with the wrong things. By this time, they decide maybe they should get their hormone levels tested, but it’s too late. The supplements they’re taking are in their bloodstream, confusing the test results.

Don’t let this happen to you! Get your hormone levels tested now, before you begin making any changes.

I recommend saliva testing, having used it myself and having studied about the accuracy of various types of hormone testing (blood, urine, and saliva).

>> Read more about the accuracy of saliva testing at http://www.diagnostechs.com/Pages/WhySaliva.aspx

The “gold standard” in adrenal saliva testing is offered by Diagno-Techs Laboratory and is called the “Adrenal Stress Index” (ASI). It measures cortisol levels at four different times during the day, as well as progesterone, DHEA, insulin, secretory IgA, and certain antibodies. These test results will give you a very good idea of your stage of adrenal fatigue.

>> You can search for a healthcare provider who can administer this saliva test by going to Diagnos-Tech’s website at http://www.diagnostechs.com.
One source of saliva testing is available online, at http://www.canaryclub.org, if you have difficulty finding a doctor to order the testing for you. Be sure to choose a test that is comparable to the ASI test described above.

You may also want to get a complete physical from a medical doctor or from a local laboratory such as http://privatemdlabs.com. Tests to ask for include:

- Thyroid function tests, such as TSH, free-T3, free-T4, reverse T3, thyroid antibodies (anti-TPO and TgAb), and ferritin.
- **Vitamin D (25-hydroxyvitamin D) levels.** Vitamin D testing can be obtained from http://www.virginiahopkinstestkits.com/vitamindtest.html.
- Complete blood count.
When you receive your test results, compare your levels to these “optimal” ranges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Optimal Range</th>
<th>Your Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free cortisol (7-8 am)</td>
<td>13-24 nM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free cortisol (11 am – noon)</td>
<td>5-10 nM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free cortisol (4-5 pm)</td>
<td>3-8 nM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free cortisol (11 pm – midnight)</td>
<td>1-4 nM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHEA</td>
<td>3-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Salivary SigA</td>
<td>25-60 mg/dl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gliadin Ab, SigA</td>
<td>13-15 U/ml</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood Glucose</td>
<td>80-100 mg/dl (85 mg/dl is best)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insulin (fasting)</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSH</td>
<td>0.5-2 uU/ml</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free T3</td>
<td>230-619 pg/d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free T4</td>
<td>0.7-1.9 ng/dl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse T3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-TPO</td>
<td>Varies with method</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TgAb</td>
<td>Varies with method</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin D (25-hydroxyvitamin D)</td>
<td>50-80 ng/ml</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next week, we’ll begin discussing some steps you can take to begin healing and to beat that fatigue!
Action Steps:

- If you haven’t done so already, **add all your observations on symptoms (see chapters 1-2) to your notebook.** Be sure to also include a detailed health history. Finally, be sure your notebook has a good supply of lined paper or graph paper, on which you record your observations and measurements each week. Include a “diary section,” where you can journal any feelings, emotions, or noted responses to stress. Be sure to write the date and time next to everything!

- Simply based on what you’ve read so far, **which stage of fatigue** most fits your symptoms?

- As soon as possible, measure and record your **body temperature.** Which stage of fatigue most fits your body temperature?

- As soon as possible, observe the **reaction of your pupils to light.** Which stage of fatigue most fits your pupils’ reaction?
If you can, measure and record your blood pressure. Which stage of fatigue most fits your blood pressure?

If possible, order appropriate saliva and blood tests right away, to get an accurate diagnosis of your stage of adrenal fatigue.

Do you need to schedule a visit with your healthcare provider, to discuss your observations, measurements, and recordings?

Choose a day and time each week when you can measure and record both symptoms and changes at the cellular level, such as body temperature, blood pressure, and pupil reaction. How will you be reminded to do this each week?

>> You can download a form for recording your symptoms at http://www.drginahoneyman.com/forms/SymptomsSeverityScales.pdf

>> You can download graphs for recording your body temperature at http://www.drrind.com/therapies/metabolic-temperature-graph
In conclusion, I’m first going to give you an overview of the recovery process, so that you can then decide which areas you might need to study more about, to fine-tune your own recovery plan.

If you can remember one thing, you’ll do just fine:

**Spend less energy than you make.**

That’s it! Simply spend less energy each day than you recuperate in each night’s sleep.

Easy, huh?

No. If it were easy, you could close this book now and feel better. Unfortunately, there are as many variations of drains on your energy as there are variations of women reading this book.

My job is to help you understand how to use energy efficiently, with a little left over each day to aid the healing process, so that you really will be able to close this book and feel confident about getting better. Just remember that you’re a unique person, so your unique process of healing may look different than mine did.
One of my own frustrations has been watching other women who are able to do so much more than I can, without any fatigue or exhaustion. For instance, the summer I was diagnosed with Addison’s Disease, I went with my family to the Pittsburgh Zoo. Yes, Pittsburgh is full of hills. Yes, we did a lot of walking. Yes, I carried my two-year-old daughter for much of the day. Yes, it was a hot summer day. However, it was frustrating to me that my small children, my husband, their grandparents, and a host of other mothers and families that day could do what I did without feeling tired. (I, on the other hand, completely crashed that evening and suffered diarrhea, pain, and brain-numbing exhaustion for days after.)

One doctor explained to me that one woman might have a salary of $100 in her energy bank account. Another woman, for no fault of her own, only have a weekly energy salary of $75. As long as each doesn’t overspend, she will be fine. Our frustration comes because our “salaries” aren’t as high as others.

So how much is in your energy checking account? The results of your saliva testing will give you a good idea where your account stands. Even more importantly, you must determine how you’re spending your energy. Most assuredly, if you’re suffering from chronic fatigue, you are overspending.
Another doctor explains it this way:

_Normally the adrenal glands regenerate during a night's sleep the vitality they expended during the previous day. They are then ready the following morning to go through another day of equal rigor. In hypoadrenalism, the glands are exhausted. They have expended more vitality than they can make up for in a single night's sleep. Thus, if they are going to return to normal, they must regenerate more than the body expends. If the glands can't do this, they won't recover. They may not get worse, but they won't get better. For this extra regeneration, rest is required--much more than the usual eight hours a night._

_The example I usually give my patients compares them to their bank accounts. The reserve of the adrenal glands is like money in a bank account held for emergencies. Let's say you have a thousand dollars in the bank, and every night you deposit a hundred dollars. If during that day, you spend a hundred dollars, the reserve fund is still intact._

_In the same way, the adrenal glands have a considerable reserve held for emergencies, and they are able to regenerate (deposit money) at night while they rest. During the day, if we expend no more energy (money) than the adrenals are able to build up at night, we still have our adrenal reserve (the thousand dollars). If an emergency arises and we_
must use some of the thousand dollars, we must do one of two things. We must either make more money or spend less so we can deposit more into the bank account to build it up to its reserve level. This same philosophy works with the adrenal glands.

When the adrenals are exhausted, to produce regeneration it is necessary to expend less energy during the day than the adrenals build up during rest. In this way, some of the energy the adrenals build during this rest can go toward building their reserve.\(^3\)

There are many variations of this important point, but the key is that you’ll never feel better if you don’t STOP doing the things that got you exhausted in the first place.

I can easily get frustrated with myself, wishing I were stronger, had more endurance, or as much energy as So-And-So has. But this is the grace God has given me at this point in my life (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). I have to accept my limitations.

“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly

[^3]: [http://chronicfatigue.org/Life%20Mastery.html](http://chronicfatigue.org/Life%20Mastery.html)
about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Let’s talk about some kinds of stress that draw from our adrenal bank accounts. To simplify things, I like to think of three kinds of stress: physical, mental, and emotional. I assign one point to each physical stress, two points to each mental stress, and three points to each emotional stress.

When I sleep each night, my body deposits “points” back into my adrenal bank account. At first, my body deposits very few points because so much energy is needed to heal. After a while, I find that more points are deposited, and I can “spend” more points the next day. But in my opinion, I’ll probably have to be aware of “points” and how much I’m “spending” for the rest of my life, if I wish to maintain my health.

Let’s talk about some common causes of stress and some ways to overcome them.

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4 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, NIV.
Physical Stress

1. Diet

Eating food that must be digested = 1 point

Eating food is probably the largest strain on your body. One of your body’s main jobs is to digest your food! You can’t obviously just stop eating (although lack of appetite is common with fatigue).

However, your body uses enzymes to both digest your food and to heal. Therefore, your body can manufacture two types of enzymes: digestive and metabolic.

  Digestive enzymes – digest your food

  Metabolic enzymes – repair your body

Unfortunately for you, adrenal hormones are necessary for the manufacture of both types of enzymes. This is why you would immediately die if you didn’t produce any adrenal hormones! This is also the largest reason you feel so terrible right now.

You can supplement with adrenal hormones, or any other hormones you might be lacking (so we’ll discuss this further in chapter 8), but if you use up all of the supplemented hormones to simply digest your food, you will have nothing left with which to heal your body.
A better plan is to eat food that already contains some digestive enzymes, so that your food is simple for your body to digest and requires fewer resources. Now you’ll have more energy left to heal!

In addition, the food you eat must be very high in nutritional content so that it supplies the building blocks needed for your body to repair itself. If you don’t have much of an appetite, then you cannot waste a single bite. Each bite has to count! Each bite has to supply what you need to fill your energy bank account back up, especially if you might not have the energy to come back to the kitchen for a few hours.

There are also some foods to avoid, because they are such a drain on your body, as well as foods that you should seek out, because they will help rebuild your body and give you energy.\(^5\)

2. Rest

**Not getting enough rest = 1 point**

Your hormones affect your circadian rhythms, or the rhythms of sleep and wakefulness that you go through each day. For this reason, it’s often hard for people with fatigue to sleep. Others have trouble waking up!

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\(^5\) These topics are covered in more detail in my book, *What to Eat to Beat Fatigue.*
Circadian rhythms are controlled by the amount of light received by your eyes, which in turn regulates the production of the hormone called melatonin. As we’ve already learned, this hormone goes on to affect all glands of your body, including your adrenal and thyroid glands. In a nutshell, you should...

- **Sleep in as close to complete darkness as possible.** If you must get up in the night (to use the restroom, etc.), try to stay in the dark.
- **Get as much sleep as you can.** Go to bed early. Sleep late. Take naps.
- As you start to recover, **rise in the morning with the sun.** This will help you reset your circadian rhythms.
- **When you’re tired, rest.** Learn to pay attention to how you feel and rest before you crash. Your emotions are good indicators of how much rest you need. If you feel angry, anxious, or ready to cry, you have probably overdone it and should try to take a nap.
- **Take one day out of every seven to completely rest.** I personally rest from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. *By rest, I mean that I do no cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening, heavy thinking, shopping, or any other work.* Instead, I read fun things, put my feet up, play games with my children, nap, laugh, and enjoy my family. I cook ahead for that day so that I have an entire 24 hours off from my responsibilities.
I discuss further the rationale behind these recommendations, as well as share ways to make this practical, in my book, *What to Eat to Beat Fatigue*.

3. Replace lacking hormones

   Requiring my fatigued glands to produce hormones = 1 point

In addition to sleep, you need other ways to rest your body. In my book, *Help Me with My Hormones*, I discuss supplements, adrenal extracts, and common prescriptions that are available to help your body rest, as well as specific ways to use them.

4. Exercise

   Too much physical exertion = 1 point

You just aren’t going to be able to exercise much at this point in your life. You probably already know this! However, fatigue adversely affects your circulation, so you need to move at least a little bit. (Contraction of the muscles in your legs, by exercise, for instance, helps your blood circulate through your veins.) A short, slow walk is best. Don’t walk on hot or very cold days. Don’t overdo it! Don’t walk too far before realizing that you
have to walk the same distance back! It’s best to walk with someone else at first, in case you get too tired.

Remember that laundry, cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, farm chores, gardening, shopping, and going to church are also forms of exercise. Pay attention to how you feel and stop before you get too tired. Learn to delegate household chores to others so that you can get well.

I discuss exercise more in my book, *To Exercise or Not*.

5. Scheduling

*Over committing = 1 point*

Most people who have adrenal fatigue often have “driven” personalities. I’ve noticed that we tend to be passionate people who want to make a difference in the world. We tend to be perfectionists, at least with ourselves. We love to be busy, and we thrive on helping others. These are great characteristics, but it’s difficult to heal when we over commit.

Quite simply, are you doing too much?

Sometimes it’s hard to adjust to the fact that adrenal fatigue affects every area of my life. However, I have learned that as soon as I overdo it, I fall right back into feeling sick.
In my book, *Time Management for Tired Women*, I discuss ways to manage our times, our homes, and our goals, so that we can feel productive while also giving our bodies a needed break.

6. Injuries, Sickness, Travel, etc.

All forms of physical stress = 1 point

Your adrenal hormones handle *all* types of physical stress. If you are not manufacturing enough hormones (because your glands are too fatigued), then you will simply not handle stress well.

Here are some examples of physical stress:

- A sore throat, runny nose, or achiness – you’re getting a cold or the flu! Be especially careful! Dehydration is your biggest enemy here.
- A cut, burn, or other injury
- Other sickness
- Traveling
- Holidays
- Pregnancy, Childbirth, Breastfeeding

In my book, *Sick and Tired*, I’ll talk about what to do when your body comes under special physical stress.
Mental and Emotional Stress

All forms of mental stress = 2 points

All forms of emotional stress = 3 points

Sometimes I have trouble deciding if something is a mental or emotional stress.

Mental stress would include making shopping lists, planning menus, trying to remember things, doing a lot of reading, balancing a checkbook, writing a letter, or talking on the phone. These are each 2 points.

If my emotions are included in these things, I must count them as emotional stresses instead. For instance, if money is tight and I’m worried about finances as I balance my checkbook, it’s 3 points. If I’m talking on the phone with someone and our relationship is strained, it’s 3 points.

Other types of emotional stress include being in crowds of people, fear, worry, fighting with people, anger, etc. Simply worrying about being sick or dying is an incredible emotional strain.

While I might know in my mind that things are outside of my control and that therefore I shouldn’t worry about them, when my adrenal glands are fatigued, anxiety is very difficult to control. This is because the adrenal hormones regulate my feelings to some extent. It can be a vicious
cycle. I feel depressed or anxious or angry, then I react poorly, then I’m more depressed or anxious or angry, straining my adrenal glands and making me feel even worse. The guilt over my emotions can further add to the problem.

Learning to handle relationships is a major part of our emotional stress. We’ll discuss relationships more in my book, *Sick and Tired*. We’ll also discuss money and its effect on fatigue in my book, *Financial Fatigue*.

Can you see how *everything* in your life contributes either to greater fatigue or to improved health?

- Some things are in your control, and those are the things for which we’ll develop a plan for success.
- Some things are not in your control, but you can control you – your reactions.

Dr. Gerald Poesnecker, an acclaimed physician who successfully treated chronic fatigue for 45 years until his death in 2003, wisely wrote,

“The nature of the serious CFS patient is such that anything that requires an adaptation by the body may initiate a stress on the adrenal glands and make the patient worse.”

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6 *Mastering Your Life*, Dr. Gerald E. Poesnecker (Quakertown, PA: Clymer Healing Research Center), p. 3.
In other words, anything that requires you to react – in any way – equals a stress to your body.

This fact is what makes treating fatigue so difficult. Every person is different, and each woman has unique circumstances. However, if you can remember that you must simply spend less energy than you make, then you have the basic information you need to start getting well.
Previously, you made a list of stressors you felt have contributed to your current level of fatigue. If you were to assign point values to those stressors, would you say that most of them are physical, mental, or emotional?

I have personally found that it takes from 2 days to a week for my body to respond to current stress I’m facing. For instance, if I spend an entire shopping on Monday, I might not feel the full effects of it until Wednesday or Thursday.

What stressors have you faced during the last week? Can you assign point values to them?

- Physical stress – 1 point each
- Mental stress – 3 points each
- Emotional stress – 2 points each
Now let’s compare our stressors with our body temperature, as we learned previously. Use the chart on the following page to begin monitoring the correlation between your unique stressors, symptoms, and physical reactions. Be sure to keep copies of these in your notebook.

Note: Why should you always write your name on your notebook entries? Because someday you might want to make a quick trip to your local doctor or emergency room. They will often make photocopies of your journal entries, so having your name on each paper will ensure that your entries end up in your medical records.
Body Monitoring Charts

Name _______________________________________
Date _________________ to ____________________

Temperature by Time:

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Temperature by Symptoms Experienced:

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<td>After symptoms:</td>
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Weight this week: ______________________

Stressors experienced that affected symptoms and/or body temperature:

Other Notes:
In conclusion, I’d like to address the question I’ve received most from readers.

*How long will it take to get better? Is it even possible to “get better” from adrenal fatigue?*

In fact, one reader asked me a question that had been rumbling around in my own brain for quite some time, yet I’d been too afraid to speak it out loud:

*Is it true that once the adrenals are “used up” that they are gone and your body can’t replenish?*

She put her finger exactly on my greatest fear, which was that I would have to take hormone replacements and supplements for the rest of my life. I would always have to meticulously watch my diet. I would never be able to stay up all night again. I would always struggle with pregnancy and mothering. I would always be just one stressful crisis away from bone-chilling fatigue.

**Can I Get Better?**

I’ve got to be honest with you. A good diet has been helpful to me, but it hasn’t completely *healed* me. In fact, I
began making excellent changes to my diet at least six years before I finally spiraled into such a severe stage of fatigue that I was diagnosed with Addison’s disease.

So why didn’t my “good diet” prevent such a disease?

Because the key to recovery, as you know very well by now, is that I must spend less energy than I make. For me, my diet was good, but I was still spending massive amounts of energy with repeated pregnancies, too little sleep, and a schedule that was too full. In addition, my body was already severely fatigued before I changed my diet, since I was battling autoimmune thyroid issues and a systemic, chronic virus.

The very definition of Addison’s disease is that at least 90% of adrenal function is gone. Most medical professionals would state that it is impossible to recover adrenal function, although a full and happy life can supposedly be lived through prescription hormone replacement.

Meanwhile, other doctors have helped their patients recover by teaching them the principles you have learned in this book. As long as these women continue to spend less energy than they make, they continue to feel better.

But all would admit that if patients stop doing the things that helped them feel better – stop eating right, stop
getting proper rest, stop handling stress properly, or stop hormone replacement – their symptoms quickly return, often worse than they were the first time.

Is this “healing”? Is this “getting better”?  

Deep down, I wish that I could just live a “normal” life, without having to worry about all my actions and their consequences. At the grocery store, I look enviously at other women’s carts and wish I could eat the food they do without feeling so sick. I long for a day that I wouldn’t have to take pills every few hours or have to carry an emergency shot in my purse at all times. I wish that I could occasionally overdo without the days or weeks of sickness that follow my indiscretions.

Sometimes I cannot avoid the stresses in my life that make me feel sick. The late Dr. Gerald Poesnecker, a doctor who specialized in the treatment of chronic fatigue, wrote:

One of our [chronic fatigue syndrome] patients is a Mennonite mother with two mentally challenged children. Since this couple does not have the funds to hire full-time outside help, the mother of these children must care for them even when the only thing she feels like doing is sleeping. This is another example of a stress that cannot be easily set aside. However, I am pleased to report that even though this mother was nearly in Stage Seven when she first came
to us, she is now much improved with our remedies and passive therapies. While there was nothing we could do to relieve the stress of her children, we were able to put this and her other stresses into proper perspective so that she was able to conquer those stresses which were reducible and learn to adapt to those that were not.⁷

So in my opinion, yes, I can overcome fatigue and regain my energy and health. Yes, I can learn to “conquer” some of the stresses in my life. No, I will probably never have a day when my body is so much better that I can stop acting responsibly.

**How long will it take?**

Dr. Poesnecker also writes that the timeframe of each person’s healing depends completely upon their own “adrenal adaptive ability.” In other words, one woman could be at a severe stage of fatigue, but her adrenal glands adapt to her treatment plan quickly and she recovers fully in a short time. Another woman might have only minor fatigue, but it seems that no matter what she does, she neither improves nor worsens. These women each have unique “adrenal adaptive ability.” Their bodies are different from anyone else’s, so the length of time it takes them to heal is different as well.⁸

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⁸ Ibid, pp. 4-5.
It is extremely important that you learn not to compare yourself to any else. Some women heal faster than others! Don’t compare yourself to others. Rather, compare yourself to how you felt last week, last month, and last year, by referring to your journal.

It takes time to heal! Healing always begins at the cellular level, where you can’t see it. Cells have to change, regrow, and eventually build new tissues and structures. Inner cells heal first, and only later will changes be reflected in your skin, hair, moods, etc. This is why you have been learning how to observe how you’re doing at a cellular level, by tracking your body temperature.

Ramiel Nagel, author of *Cure Tooth Decay: Heal and Prevent Cavities with Nutrition*, estimates that it takes about 6 weeks of excellent nutrition to begin to see healing of cavities. I have heard that you can figure that it will take 2 months for every year you have been sick, so if you’ve been fighting extreme fatigue for 6 years, you should expect it to take about 12 months before you have fully recovered your energy.

Sometimes it is difficult to maintain your motivation for that long. Set up systems to remind yourself of what you need to do to heal and why. Continue to read books that will support your motivation, and interact with others in person and online.
Continue to monitor your symptoms on a regular basis so you’ll know if you’re improving. Most of us expect to make small changes (maybe in lifestyle, medications or supplements) and to immediately see large improvement. If we don’t see something dramatic happen right away, we decide that our efforts were of no use – and we quit!

As we learned earlier, we often have to go back through the levels of fatigue in the process of healing. For instance, a woman in stage 5 of fatigue will “heal” by spending time in stage 4, then stage 3, etc. – all before reaching the point where her body can respond to stress in a healthy way. Each stage has its own symptoms and frustrations, and if this woman quits too soon, she’ll relapse. However, if she realistically understands that healing is a process (and that her symptoms are normal), she’ll persevere. Remind yourself of the characteristics of each stage so that you’ll know what to realistically expect.

Be meticulous with your diet until you have regained your strength and energy. At that point, you might be able to slowly stop using some of your nutritional supplements, providing your diet continues to be adequate. You can begin to experiment and discover how much energy is in your “energy bank account” on a more permanent basis, so you’ll know how much you can spend and exactly what it takes to replenish.
So, to summarize how long it will take for you to heal, it depends upon:
- How long you have been sick
- Your body’s unique ability to adapt and heal
- The stage of fatigue you’re in
- The stressors you face
- Your diet
- How much sleep and rest you get
- How you manage your time
- Your financial situation
- How you handle relationships with others
- Your levels of fear or anger
- Other health problems you have

What If I Never Get Better?

Like the Mennonite mother whose life is filled with stress she can’t avoid, you might not be able to do anything about some of the things that cause you fatigue. You might have to learn how to cope and live with fatigue, rather than completely eliminate it from your life.

It has helped me to think about my purpose for living, so that I can think long-term. If I only think about today or this week, I can get discouraged. However, if I realize that my life can still be productive and useful, even if I don’t have the energy others have, my outlook is a lot brighter.
The Bible says that, even with my best efforts at diet and stress management, I will still die someday. The causes of death are both genetic and environmental. We each receive our genetic predisposition to death from our parents, who received it from their parents, all the way back to Adam.\(^9\)

“For the wages of sin is death...”\(^{10}\)

Yet before we blame our parents, our distant ancestors, or even Adam for our health problems, we need to remember that some of our problems we’ve brought on ourselves. Each time we do something wrong, we bring death to our cells. Each angry word, each anxious thought, causes havoc within our body systems, slowly killing us from the inside out.

“...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”\(^{11}\)

The death rate is currently 100%. No matter what we do, we can only postpone death, not escape it. I often like to joke with my husband that I need to trade in my body for the new model.

Death really is the enemy that we’ve been discussing in this book. Dr. Edward Howell, in his landmark book *Enzyme Nutrition*, states that life ends when enzyme

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\(^9\) Genesis 3, Romans 5:14, 1 Corinthians 15:22  
\(^{10}\) Romans 6:23  
\(^{11}\) Romans 3:23
action is depleted beyond a certain point.  

12 We can make “deposits,” but we will eventually run out of energy.

The Bible says that the process of death is at work in all of us because each of us has sinned. In the Bible, God told Adam that if he ate of the fruit God told him not to eat, he would surely die. The Hebrew says that, “dying, he would surely die.”  

13 The moment he ate that fruit, the cells of his body began to die, finally culminating in the death of his entire body.

When my daughters see a new rose on my rose bush, they love to pick it and put it in a vase on the dining room table. We certainly enjoy its beauty and lovely fragrance. However, as pretty as it looks, is the rose alive? No, it has been disconnected from its source of energy, and it is dead. Dying, it will continue to die until it is wilted and brown and ugly.

When we choose to rebel against God, even in such “small” sins as anger or worry, our bodies are disconnected from God, our true energy source. We may still look alive and healthy, but “dying, we will surely die.” Just as I can extend the beauty of a rose by placing it in fresh water in a vase, I can extend my days by eating right, getting proper rest, and changing my lifestyle. However, I will still die.

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13 Genesis 2:17
Since death is inevitable for each of us, we need a solution! The miracle of Jesus’ life is not that He was just a good person, or that He healed the sick and was a wise teacher. The real miracle is that He conquered death by coming to life again after being dead for three days and three nights. When He appeared to hundreds of people after His resurrection, it dramatically changed their lives. Why? Because they realized what Jesus had been trying to tell them:

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”\(^{14}\)

Just like Jesus came back to life, in a physical body that was now “imperishable,”\(^{15}\) He offers to resurrect our physical bodies, and to give us new life. Instead of being weak and fatigued, we will have health, power, and eternal life.

“Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”\(^{16}\)

\(^{14}\) John 11:25-26, NIV.  
\(^{15}\) 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, NIV.  
\(^{16}\) 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, NIV
The Bible says that all will be resurrected, some to life and some to eternal death because of their refusal to put their trust and faith in Jesus. For those of us that have “called upon the name of the Lord,” 17 we will be saved from the death penalty under which we live.

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 18

At this point, death no longer becomes something to fear. We realize that our physical bodies are deteriorating, but we have confidence that we’ll get “the new model” someday, a body that will never get weak and sick.

Because we take eternity literally, we see others around us and wish to share our hope with them and to rescue them from certain death. The Bible says that we have been given unique gifts and abilities that we can use to serve

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17 Romans 10:9-13
18 1 Corinthians 15:54-57, NIV
others. In fact, our daily suffering and battles with poor health can be used to minister to the needs of others around us.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God... If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort.”

If I had never gotten sick with Addison’s disease, I would never have been motivated to research and write this book. If you had never struggled with chronic fatigue, you also would never have learned and studied.

Who else can you help?

You are alive because God has a plan for your life, ways in which you can serve others that are unique to only you. As you realize the grace and mercy that He has extended to you, even so far as to give you a resurrected body and eternal life, you can extend that same grace and mercy to others. Anger and bitterness will flee. Worry and fear of tomorrow will be gone. In their place, you’ll have new love, joy, and peace.

19 Ephesians 4:11-13
20 2 Corinthians 1:3-6, NIV
And you’ll use up less of your “energy bank account” in the process, which is like having fresh water each day in a rose vase, extending your beauty and usefulness into old age, if God should so will.

So what is your purpose in living? Having a reason to live gives you renewed energy and strength. Having hope of eternity helps you see life in an entirely new way. There may be days when fatigue gets the best of you, and on those days, you’ll just need to rest. However, in the long run, we can be “more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

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21 Romans 8:37, NIV.
22 1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV.
The “Too Tired” Series

Our “Too Tired” series is perfect for moms who struggle to keep up with homeschooling and everything else, too—because, frankly, they’re just worn out! The strategies are practical, so you’ll feel better fast. The price of each E-book is low enough that you can get help today!

Why Am I So Tired? (And What to Do About It)
Here is an honest look at why so many mothers are fatigued, the symptoms you’re experiencing, and why your body reacts so badly. Best of all, it includes a look at the “stages of fatigue,” with specific recommendations to monitor your health, as well as an action plan for recovery. The book concludes with a realistic discussion of whether lifelong healing is possible, including what the Bible says about this topic.

What to Eat to Beat Fatigue
You’ll discover the secrets to digesting your food better, so you can start to heal from fatigue, from the inside out. Best of all, it includes a realistic plan to help you eat better, even if you’re too tired to spend much time in the kitchen.

How to Get a Good Night’s Sleep
Restful, consistent sleep is the dream of any tired mother! In this book, I’ll share the importance of getting good sleep, as well as some practical solutions for you if you have trouble falling or staying asleep.

Help Me with My Hormones
In this book, I give honest answers to questions like, “Is it safe to supplement with hormones? Are supplements the only way to get better? Won’t my body become dependent, and if so, is it worth it? How can I use medication and supplements wisely?” This book covers common hormone problems such as adrenal fatigue, thyroid problems, PCOS, fibromyalgia, and more.

Time Management When You’re Tired
Know what the difference is between fatigue and clinical depression? The difference is simple. A medically “depressed” woman lacks a desire to do anything with her time. A fatigued woman lacks the energy to do all she wants to with her time. This book will help you set up realistic routines and schedules, even when your energy is lacking.
Sick and Tired
This book is set up to help you *stop* the downward spiral that comes with fatigue. The first part will help you recognize the physical, mental, and emotional symptoms that accompany fatigue – and will give you strategies to cope, before it gets worse. The second part will help you prepare for the inevitable day that you get sick anyway, as well as give you strategies for specific illnesses.

Financial Fatigue
Anxiety over money is a common denominator in the majority of cases of women who have debilitating fatigue. If money is tight for you and causing stress, then I hope to offer some solutions for you in this book.

To Exercise or Not (That Is the Question)
When women are tired, they feel guilty for not exercising. This book honestly looks at why exercise isn’t always wise — and when it is. It gives easy ideas that busy moms can try right away — no guilt required!