



HPA Axis Questionnaire

Patient Name _____ Date _____

The hypothalamus, pituitary, adrenal (HPA) axis is the body's central stress response system. This questionnaire is designed to help assess and differentiate possible dysfunction within this system.

Instructions

Please score only the items you experience on a scale of 1 to 4, as follows:

1 = mild problem 2 = significant problem 3 = major problem 4 = severe problem

Section 1: Low Cortisol State

1. Lethargic depression
2. Excessive need for sleep
3. Chronic fatigue syndrome
4. Chronic pain
5. Fibromyalgia (musculoskeletal tender points)*
6. Dizziness when you stand or bend
7. Low blood pressure and/or drop of blood pressure on standing*
8. Craving salty foods (pretzels, pickles, etc.)
9. Poor wound healing*
10. Easy bruising
11. Fatigue
12. Inability to handle even slight stresses
13. Hypoglycemia: dizzy, irritable, or sleepy if you go without food for 4-5 hours; symptoms relieved by food
14. Scars, elbows, nipples, or skin near nails that are unusually dark*
15. Slow healing of cuts*
16. Unstable body temperatures (hot or cold)

Section 2: Elevated Cortisol State

17. Agitated depression
18. Weight gain around your abdomen, back of neck, and in the face and cheeks*
19. Stretch marks that are not from weight loss*
20. Adult-onset diabetes
21. Osteoporosis
22. Craving sweets
23. Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

Section 3: Adrenal Hyperplasia

24. Excessive dark male pattern hair growth (women)*
25. Irregular or no periods (not menopausal)
26. Eastern European heritage

Practitioner Interpretive Key

The goal of this intake sheet is to obtain and collate data that will give you an idea of the presence and type of HPA axis dysfunction in your patient. These symptoms and signs are primarily a compilation from the *Williams Textbook of Endocrinology* (11th edition), as well as recent literature, and lastly, clinical experience. The symptoms are divided into three sections, as follows:

- Section 1 is correlated with **low cortisol** states
- Section 2 is correlated with **high cortisol** states
- Section 3 is correlated with **adrenal hyperplasia**

The items on the questionnaire marked with an asterisk (*) should be assessed by physical examination.

Practitioner Instructions for Scoring

Add up the patient's totals for each section. Enter them below over the highest possible score for each section and divide. The results will indicate which areas to focus on. There is no absolute cutoff to use; rather, there is a continuum between normal and dysfunction. Use this information in conjunction with blood testing and salivary cortisol testing.

- **Section 1 — Low cortisol state:** _____ /64 = _____
- **Section 2 — Elevated cortisol state:** _____ /28 = _____
- **Section 3 — Adrenal hyperplasia:** _____ /12 = _____