

## ADRENAL AWARENESS INITIATIVE

*Adrenal disease can be life-threatening and is rarely tested for. This information was written to explain how to be properly tested for adrenal disease. This is not to be used to diagnose or treat condition. Contact your doctor before starting or stopping any medication or treatment.*

***Do you know  
YOUR cortisol  
levels??***

## Adrenal Alternatives Foundation

Adrenalalternatives.com  
adrenalalternatives@gmail.com  
Facebook.com/hopeforadrenaldisease  
Instagram: @AdrenalAlternatives  
Twitter: @AdrenalAdvocate

## Could You Have Adrenal Disease?



Adrenal Awareness Initiative

# What is Adrenal Insufficiency?

Disease which results in the lack of adequate cortisol production by the adrenal glands. It can also result in the lack of DHEA, aldosterone and disrupt the balance of endocrine hormones and electrolyte balances. Adrenal insufficiency is cortisol deficiency that requires steroid medications in order to sustain life in patients with this disease.

There are many forms of adrenal disease but all require steroid replacement medications such as prednisone, hydrocortisone or dexamethasone.

In a normal person, during situations of emotional or physical stress their body releases more cortisol. The excitement from a happy event, the sadness from a death of a loved one or the strain from exercising are examples of things that would cause the body to release more cortisol.

In an adrenal insufficient person, this does not happen. They have to artificially manage their cortisol. Their personal cortisol needs may differ from day to day.

## SYMPTOMS

This disease is sometimes referred to as “Syndrome X” because it presents differently in everyone. The following symptoms are possible ailments that may be present in adrenal disease but are not all inclusive.

**Pain in muscles and/or joints, dehydration, dizziness, fainting, fatigue, lightheadedness, loss of appetite, low blood pressure, low blood sugar, electrolyte imbalances, sweating, nausea or vomiting, craving salty foods, darkening of the skin, excess urination, muscle weakness, reduced sex drive, or weight loss.**

In primary Addison’s disease, a common symptom is a tan-like appearance of the skin caused by an increase in ACTH levels. This is not present in all forms of adrenal insufficiency.

If you are craving sea salt or salty foods, please get tested. That is one of the most prominent signs of adrenal disease present in almost all cases.

## GETTING TESTED

**ACTH stimulation test-** Measures how well the adrenal glands respond to the release of the adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH). When this test is done, blood is drawn prior to injection of ACTH, then at 30 minute intervals for a few hours to test your adrenal response to the ACTH. If your cortisol levels do not rise properly, you are then diagnosed with adrenal insufficiency.

**8am Cortisol Blood Draw-** Your body’s natural cortisol levels should be the highest in the morning, according to your body’s circadian rhythm. If your AM levels are low, it indicates an adrenal issue.

(Saliva and urine tests are also performed, but are not as widely accepted for diagnostic criteria)

**ITT Test-** An insulin tolerance test (ITT) is a medical diagnostic procedure during which insulin is injected into a patient’s vein, after which blood glucose is measured at regular intervals. This procedure is performed to assess pituitary function and adrenal function.

**Warnings-** Use caution before starting any long term steroids before you have had an ACTH stimulation test.