

Hormone Fatigue and Rhonda Y.

My medical problems began early, with pains in my pelvic area that would get so bad I would be doubled over. My first pregnancy was an ectopic pregnancy. That's a pregnancy in which the fetus develops in the fallopian tubes, and I had to have surgery for that. Later I had endometriosis and went through several operations for that. My two sons were conceived through the expensive and painful method of in vitro fertilization.

At age 31 my whole system started taking a dive. That was when the weight gain started. My weight had always been normal, but suddenly I started putting on pounds. Along with the weight came a host of new symptoms.

One was asthma. Another was acid reflux, which was very painful, and then came a third painful condition, irritable bowel syndrome. I developed high blood pressure and also had a kidney infection. These were all debilitating conditions, but the worst of it was a new level of fatigue that hit me, that made raising my children a kind of daily torment.

The fatigue went on all day, but it would hit me hard at about 7 or 8 o'clock at night, at which time I just couldn't do anything. I pretty much set my bedtime at 8 P.M. The fatigue made domestic chores impossible to complete. I needed to rest a lot during the day. The messes around the house began to seem like mountains I had to climb. The kids' demands were constant, and I lost my cheerfulness early in the day. I yelled a lot and felt constantly irritable.

Often I couldn't face putting a big meal on the table in the evening and cleaning up afterwards, so I'd take the kids out for fast food. (My husband didn't come home until 8 or 9 o'clock at night.) I was craving caffeine and sugar to give myself a lift, and I could get those at a fast food place. I felt guilty about not giving my kids whole foods, but by the time evening came around I often felt too tired to care. Luckily, I'm blessed with wonderful kids who were aware of my problem and learned how to take care of themselves.

I was just getting by as a mother, doing the bare minimum. The area where there was the most fallout was recreation and social activities. Once I'd taken care of the necessities, I just didn't have the energy for anything more. My husband would take the kids places on Sundays, but I never went with them; I was so relieved just to be able to rest and not have anyone asking me for anything. The kids got used to playing with their dad and not expecting mom to be there.

As far as socializing with other families went, I didn't have what it took to prepare meals and entertain. We were isolated. My husband compensated by socializing with his family, who live close by. I enjoy my husband's family but I rarely went with him and the kids. I just wanted to rest.

I went to a lot of doctors about the fatigue. They all said there was nothing they could do about it. Most of them were condescending and treated me like a child or some kind of mental case.

My husband was constantly concerned about my health and what was going on with me. Our sex life had come to a standstill. I had no sex drive. It could have been because of the 20 milligrams of Paxil that I was taking for my depression. Or it might have been the blood pressure medication, which I took in high doses. Or it could have been plain old fatigue. You don't feel much like having sex when all you want to do is lie down and rest.

What with all of my ailments and the depression and the fatigue, I started to think my life was coming to an end. Family life had become nothing but domestic tasks, and it seemed as though every week my body was failing in another way. I was on medication for depression but it didn't help because I had this sense of impending doom. I wondered what would happen next that would cause me to be put on even more medication. I was unsure and frightened.

One day I was talking with the therapist I saw for my depression, and she mentioned that she had some other clients who'd benefited from going to the compounding pharmacy in Palm Desert and getting natural hormone therapy. I went there, and they recommended I see Dr. Platt. Since I had consulted with at least 25 or 30 doctors, I was a little skeptical about seeing Dr. Platt. But I was desperate.

Soon after I went in for my intake interview, I started the meal plan and I got off caffeine and sugar. A week later I started taking DHEA, progesterone, testosterone, and a T3 thyroid preparation. Dr. Platt told me about the Synthroid I'd been taking for years, which previous doctors had prescribed for my low thyroid. He explained to me that my body was unable to convert Synthroid's T4 into T3, which is the actual thyroid hormone that does all the metabolic work of the thyroid gland. Apparently I'd been taking Synthroid all those years, and it hadn't been doing anything for me.

My energy level increased drastically. Between the hormones, the increase in protein, the diet in general, and the removal of medications that had been throwing my body off balance, I found a big difference in my ability to function.

Once I had more energy, I wasn't as grouchy or impatient as I used to be. I was able to deal with things better both emotionally and physically. The best part has been my ability to participate with my family more. Whereas I used to let my husband take the children out while I stayed home and rested, now I can participate in family outings. Our church has volleyball twice a month, and now I enjoy playing that with my family. We go walking and sightseeing. My children are so happy that mom can go places with them now; I think they feel comfortable that mommy will be there with them.

Also, before, we had no social life as a family. Now we try to have guests visit the house twice a month to eat with us. My husband and I go out with other couples more often. I also see his family more, which I enjoy.