



Boulder Holistic

Functional Medicine

What are 7 Treatable Causes of Fatigue?



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What are 7 Treatable Causes of Fatigue?

1 Low Thyroid

One of the most common causes of fatigue is low-functioning thyroid or thyroid dysfunction.

Common signs and symptoms of thyroid dysfunction include:

- Fatigue
- Brain fog
- Sensitivity to cold
- Constipation
- Dry skin and hair
- Hair loss
- Headaches
- Middle of the night wake-up (sleep dysfunction)
- Edema (puffiness around the eyes, feet and hands)
- Cold hands and feet

If you are experiencing symptoms of hypothyroidism, we recommend getting a full thyroid panel including a TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), Free T3, Free T4, Reverse T3, and thyroid antibodies. Thyroid dysfunction is commonly missed by traditional doctors because their process calls to check only the TSH (the messenger hormone that comes from the brain) and never look at the thyroid gland itself!

If we find your thyroid function to be low or suboptimal, we'll tailor a treatment plan specific to your needs. If testing shows high thyroid antibodies, this is a condition otherwise known as "autoimmune thyroiditis" or "Hashimoto's". Hashimoto's requires its own unique treatment approach that we will help guide you through.

If you're asking yourself, "what is hypothyroidism, what causes hypothyroidism, and how can I treat hypothyroidism?", do not worry! Boulder Holistic has over 25 years of functional medicine experience specializing in patients with low thyroid. It is a confusing topic for many, but with the help of an experienced functional medicine doctor, it is treatable!



2 Adrenal Dysfunction



Adrenal dysfunction or low cortisol levels are known to contribute to fatigue.

Common signs and symptoms of adrenal fatigue:

- Feeling tired & wired
- Difficulty maintaining energy throughout the day
- Difficulty sleeping
- Too much or too little of sleep
- Energy dips through the day
- Desire to nap
- Feeling unrested regardless of the number of hours of sleep you get
- Waking in the middle of the night
- Craving sugary or salty foods

Adrenal Dysfunction comes from the term, “burning the candle on both ends”, for a sustained period of time. Your adrenals will compensate for a lack of natural energy, putting you into a state of sympathetic overdrive. This is when you feel both “wired and tired.”

If this persists, your adrenals will no longer compensate for the lack of natural energy which results in a drop of cortisol levels. When your body stops being able to adapt appropriately, you may feel chronically fatigued.

The amount of stress this process puts on your body may reduce or increase key hormones.

Our recommendation: check your salivary cortisol levels with an adrenal stress index so we can uncover the root of your symptom.

3 Insomnia / Sleep Dysfunction

Studies suggest the average adult needs 7-9 hours of sleep each night to function at their best. If you are always tired and have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, you are experiencing a few of the many symptoms of sleep dysfunction (insomnia).

- Poor sleep hygiene & sleep habits
- Going to bed too late and not getting enough hours of sleep
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Difficulty staying asleep
- Frequent urination
- Waking up too late
- Waking too early
- Unable to return to sleep
- Feeling unrested despite getting an adequate amount of sleep

Up to 50% of adult Americans experience chronic insomnia. Underlying causes include adrenal dysfunction (your cortisol spiking at night), anxiety, depression, when your brain chemistries feel off, and hypothyroidism. Functional medicine provides the tools for both testing and treating insomnia, naturally. Meditation, breathwork, relaxation techniques, and avoiding screens before bed are some of the basic sleep maintenance techniques we recommend as natural remedies for insomnia.



4 Nutrient Deficiencies

Nutrition is essential for our physical and mental well being. Did you know - the vitamins and minerals present in our foods fuel over 37 billion chemical reactions a second in each of our cells? Nutritional deficiencies have a profound effect on mitochondrial function, the cell's main source of energy production. What are some of the common signs of nutritional deficiencies?

Signs of nutritional deficiencies include:

- Numbness
- Tingling in hands & feet
- Frequent illness
- Tired appearance
- Hair loss
- Poor hair and nail growth
- Nail ridges
- Nail and hair breakage
- White spots on nails
- Acne and other skin lesions
- Weakness
- Pale
- Low energy
- Fatigue

Traditional lab testing tells us about some of the nutritional contributors to fatigue. For example, a deficiency in B vitamins (namely Vitamin B12) can adversely affect mitochondrial function and significantly lower energy levels. Remember - mitochondria are often referred to as the powerhouses of the cell!

Iron deficiency and low ferritin - also known as the storage form of iron - may also contribute to feelings of fatigue, hair loss, and immune dysfunction.

In functional medicine, we recommend micronutrient testing in order to get an in-depth view of the levels of multiple vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, omega 3,6 and 9 fatty acids that are present in your blood and urine. This specialized testing procedure also measures cellular oxidative stress, the presence of heavy metal markers, and provides insight into potential gut imbalances—all of which can contribute to symptoms of fatigue.

5 Mold Toxicity

What are some of the symptoms of mold toxicity? The most common symptoms of mold toxicity are fatigue, brain fog, and headaches.

Often, mold is not visible to the naked eye and most people are totally unaware of its presence in their homes and lives. Toxic mold can grow on drywall or paper, in your bathroom, in your basement or attic, on rugs and soft furniture, and on wooden surfaces. Mold requires only moisture to live and thrive in an environment.

Because of this, mold is a tricky diagnosis. Often, not everyone in a moldy house is affected by mold toxicity. Less than a quarter of the population is sensitive to mold, so it's common for only one person in a home to feel sick and tired in a moldy environment.

Most individuals that get sick from mold, have a hard time detoxing it well. Their genetics make it difficult for them to metabolize and excrete it. With that said, can you test for mold toxicity? Yes! Mold toxicity is completely treatable! A urinary mycotoxin test is recommended to see if your fatigue might be caused by mold exposure.



6 Lyme & Co-Infections



Lyme Disease & co-infections are known to cause extreme chronic fatigue.

Common signs and symptoms in these patients are:

- Chronic fatigue
- Body aches
- Joint pain that moves around to different parts of the bod
- Brain fog
- Flu-like symptoms that come and go

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a bacteria transmitted by ticks (known as *Borrelia Burgdorferi*). Most people who are exposed to Lyme disease never knew they were bitten by a tick. The vast majority of people who are bitten, do not get the telltale target rash because Lyme is a stealth infection that can evade your immune system.

Co-infections are other bacterias that can also be transmitted by a tick. Lyme (*Borrelia Burgdorferi*) has a way of suppressing your immune system, so in the presence of Lyme disease, these co-infections can wreak havoc in your internal system and last for years. Some common co-infections include *Bartonella* and *Babesia*. They each come with a different set of symptoms.

The root cause of excessive fatigue can also be caused by chronic viral infections like *Esteyn Barr*, *Cytomegalovirus*, and *COVID*. These viral infections are commonly seen in patients suffering with Lyme and mold illness because of their weakened immune system.

Since Lyme lives deep inside your body, it is often difficult to diagnose those who develop chronic symptoms due to Lyme. In functional medicine, we look for the reasons that Lyme and co-infections remain chronic and treat it at the root. We search for the “why” between people who clear Lyme on their own and those who end up chronically ill. Often, if you can heal the terrain and total body burden of toxins, the Lyme, co-infections, and viruses will move into dormancy.

7 Hormone Deficiencies

Low hormones, especially the androgenic hormones testosterone and DHEA, may contribute to fatigue. Other signs of hormone deficiencies include: exercise intolerance, lowered sexual dysfunction (including low libido), difficulty building muscle or losing muscle tone faster than in the past, and depression in both men and women.

A full hormone panel can often help identify whether low hormones are causing your fatigue. Replacing testosterone or DHEA is found to be very helpful for regaining your energy and vitality while we work on finding the root cause of WHY your hormones are low.

Are you experiencing symptoms of fatigue and want to learn more?

[Book a Consultation](#)



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