Managing your post-viral fatigue after COVID-19 with Dr Mandé Scheepmaker

While recovery has been swift for some patients, many survivors report that they continue to feel unwell even after being declared “COVID-Free”. To help make sense of this, we invited Dr Mandé Scheepers, our in-house Homeopath at Off Nicol Health, Wellness and Rehab, to explain post-viral fatigue to our readers. And give us a bit more insight on what one can do post-COVID from a homeopathy perspective to make your approach to recovery more holistic.

Managing your post-viral fatigue after COVID-19

Guest Post by Dr Mandé Scheepmaker

Post-viral fatigue is when you have an extended period of feeling unwell and fatigued after a viral infection. Fatigue is a normal part of the body's response to fighting a viral infection such as COVID-19. Fatigue is likely to continue for some time after the infection has cleared. Some of the main symptoms of this include extreme fatigue, sensitivity to pain and light and sometimes depression. Other post viral fatigue symptoms can include headache, dizziness, poor concentration, impaired memory, irritability, and sleep disturbance.

Why do some people get post-viral fatigue? One theory is that post-viral fatigue syndrome may result from an overreaction of the body's immune system, inducing widespread inflammation. This is highlighted by elevated levels of immune messengers called cytokines, which can cross the blood-brain barrier and potentially cause long-term toxic brain changes affecting the whole nervous system.

Although the research on post-viral fatigue associated with Covid-19 is still limited, there are a number of areas you can focus on.

Lymphatic drainage

Post-viral syndrome is associated with a build-up of cytokines in the central nervous system as well as those that have crossed the blood brain barrier and impacted the hypothalamus. Weekly lymphatic drainage, self-massage routine and gentle exercises to improve thoracic spinal mobility has been shown to improve symptom severity in people suffering from post-viral fatigue.

Stress support

As Covid-19 can be extremely inflammatory in nature, these places a huge amount of stress on the body. It would seem to make sense to focus some form of supplemental support on managing feedback between the HPA (hypothalamic-pituitary-axis) and the adrenals to regulate the cortisol response. Supplementation would include herbs and

vitamins which support your adrenal glands. From a lifestyle perspective, stress management techniques like mindfulness meditation may be important.

Anti-inflammatory support

The real damage caused by Covid-19 is due to excessive inflammation. Whilst in recovery it makes sense to follow an anti-inflammatory diet and to take supplements, like omega-3 fish oil and sulforaphane, which are anti-inflammatory in nature.

Mitochondrial support

The excessive inflammation of Covid-19 will typically cause a high level of oxidative stress which may negatively impact mitochondrial function which would result in fatigue. To support mitochondrial function, dietary intake should focus on an extremely high intake of vegetables and some fruit (especially berries) for phytonutrient and antioxidant support. In addition to this, other important nutrients may include magnesium malate, Coenzyme Q10 and B vitamins.

Gastrointestinal support

The gut bacterial microbiome has been shown to be abnormal in chronic fatigue syndrome patients and this can sometimes lead to gastrointestinal and inflammatory symptoms. Here your diet must be a focus. Consider eliminating certain foods like gluten (found in wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt) and definitely sugar. Dairy, corn, and soy may also be problematic. The addition of a good probiotic will also decrease the gut inflammation.

Homeopathy is a beneficial adjunct when treating post-viral fatigue. It aids in stimulating the body to self-heal and each prescription tailor made to the patients' specific symptoms. This mode of treatment is safe, holistic, and devoid of unwanted drug interactions.

References

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