

Dr. Carri Drzyzga

Reclaiming Your Energy

PODCAST SHOWNOTES

Fatigue is an issue that so many people struggle with. Today we're going to explore the root causes of fatigue and how to reclaim your energy (without reaching for the caffeine and sugar) and feel normal again.

Today's guest, Dr. Carri Drzyzga – "The Functional Medicine Doc" – has been dealing with root causes of health problems for years. She has a functional medicine clinic in Ontario, Canada, is a chiropractor and naturopathic doctor, and is the host of the popular podcast, [The Functional Medicine Radio Show](#). Dr. Carri is also the author of the hit book, *Reclaim Your Energy and Feel Normal Again: Fixing the Root Cause of Your Fatigue with Natural Treatments*.

What are the main causes of fatigue?

My book outlines in very simple terms the eight basic root causes of fatigue. The top two root causes are anemia and thyroid issues. Some of the other causes of fatigue can be a cortisol imbalance, blood sugar imbalances, common nutrient deficiencies (for example, iron and magnesium deficiencies), chronic infections (such as bacterial overgrowth or even parasites, which are more common than people realize), food allergies and sensitivities, and an imbalance in the brain.

Testing for Anemia and Thyroid Issues:

The common test doctors run to determine anemia is a CBC, which indicates if you have enough red blood cells and hemoglobin. Many doctors do not test for a B12 deficiency or an iron deficiency that *hasn't yet created* an anemia. Thyroid and iron work together. Testing TSH levels is a generic screening test for thyroid problems, but it unfortunately doesn't tell the whole story. The best way to test for thyroid problems is to test TSH levels, plus free T4 and free T3 (thyroid hormones) to see what is happening.

What about cortisol?

Cortisol is part of your sleep-wake cycle. In the morning, when cortisol levels should be at their highest, you should theoretically be waking up before your alarm clock and jumping out of bed with the energy needed to get through your day. If you don't feel this way, chances are that your cortisol is out of balance. It should be at its lowest level in the deepest hours of the night when you're getting the deepest sleep. Cortisol also impacts a dozen different body systems, not just energy levels. During major stressful experiences, we put a lot of stress and strain on cortisol levels, and the body may never recover on its own, so it's important that we take control of our health.

Nutrient deficiencies: what do you see the most?

The most common deficiency is vitamin B12. When you look at blood work, the normal range is broad for this nutrient. I have found that most people are on the lower end of the normal range. People should be at a minimum level of 600, but people often come to my office with levels of around 200, which is not ideal.

Another common deficiency is vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin. These days a lot of people are indoors, a lot of us are desk jockeys, and we don't have great sources of vitamin D in our diets. The most common symptom of vitamin D deficiency is chronic pain. In the winter months when we don't get as much sunshine, we're a bit more tired, we gain a few pounds and want to be more sedentary. In the summer, however, when we are outside in the sunshine more often, we have more energy and weight comes off easily.

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Magnesium is the other common deficiency, and unfortunately there is no great blood test to measure this deficiency. Magnesium is required for over 350 chemical reactions in the body. The body is made of organs, which are made of tissues, which are made of cells. Within each cell, mitochondria take the food we eat, burn it up, and transform it into energy. If you have low levels of magnesium, you are throwing a wrench in this energy production process. I recommend patients take a daily magnesium supplement, which I dose to bowel tolerance (if you are taking too much magnesium, you'll have diarrhea). Slowly increase your intake by one more capsule every day until your bowels become softer, then stay at that level.

What is one simple change in diet that can help our energy?

Going gluten-free is really important. I advise patients to begin going gluten-free by working on one meal at a time: start with breakfast and master that one meal. Conventional breakfast foods are a nightmare! If any listeners have not been convinced to go gluten-free, they need to. There is a mountain of research on the detriments of gluten at this point.

Tell us more about Vitamin R:

Most health practitioners don't cover or test for Vitamin R, which is *Rest, Relaxation, and Recreation*. Give yourself permission to put more Vitamin R in your life. What can you do to create more fun in your life?

Learn more about Dr. Carri Drzyzga:

drcarri.com

Today's Listener Question:

Shelly in Montana says she tends to wake up a couple hours after she goes to sleep every night. The first thing I ask when someone is tired is: "How is your sleep?" Just one poor night of sleep increases your risk of obesity: you are hungrier, less energetic, and more prone to eating sugar. A couple things could be happening to cause you to wake up in the night: your cortisol levels or blood sugar could be imbalanced. Sometimes drinking more alcohol in the evening can cause sleep problems. Every single night, I take my [Sleep Candy](#) product, which is designed to help you fall asleep and stay asleep. It includes B6, which can help your body make neurotransmitters, as well as inositol, L-theanine, 5 HTP, and melatonin. I'd suggest you make sure you're eating a balanced evening meal, try having a glass of water before bed, try some Sleep Candy, and practice good sleep hygiene. It may also be worth it to check your blood sugar levels with your doctor.

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You are worthy. Dare to live a life that matters.

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