Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Also known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis or ME, the exact pathophysiology of this condition is still largely unknown. The onset of symptoms is usually accompanied by a ‘flu-like’ illness, often beginning within several months of severe adverse stress. Symptoms may include impaired memory, muscle pain, headaches, joint pains and tender lymph nodes, with persistent fatigue that is not relieved by rest.

Sufferers can find this condition disabling; feeling frustrated by the lack of understanding and treatment options available. In natural medicine, successful treatment will be different for each individual often involving attention to the nervous and digestive systems.

Nutrition for the Nervous System
To ensure a healthy nervous system, include essential fatty acids in your diet by eating two servings per week of oily fish such as salmon and mackerel. Alternatively, cold pressed flax or hemp seed oils are beneficial; also crucial to the health of the nervous system are the B vitamins which are found in nuts, pulses, brown rice, broccoli, meat and fish.

The Role of Digestion
You make the effort to select a variety of whole and natural foods, you take the time to prepare a nourishing meal, but what happens once it enters your digestive system? If the digestive organs are not functioning effectively then all that goodness can become poisonous!

Antibiotics, refined sugar and long term stress (which creates an acidic environment within the body) can disrupt the delicate balance of beneficial intestinal bacteria, allowing pathogenic bacteria to proliferate. The resultant inflammation and deterioration of the gut wall allows partially digested food particles to enter the bloodstream causing symptoms such as fibromyalgia, food intolerances and poor brain function.

Tips for Healthy Digestion
- Only eat when you are calm and have an appetite - never when you are anxious, hurried or stressed.
- Take time to chew each mouthful thoroughly.
- Stop eating when you feel satisfied, not full.
- Consult a practitioner to establish which foods are right for your constitution.

Herbal Synergy
Herbal medicines play a valuable role in facilitating the healing of the digestive and nervous systems. Whether via nourishment, restoration, stimulation or relaxation, a balance can be established and the natural state of wellbeing restored.

For example, Eleutherococcus senticosus (Siberian ginseng) is an adaptogenic herb - one that has the ability to help the body cope more effectively with an overactive nervous and stress response. Specifically, adaptogens recharge the adrenal glands, which are the body's mechanism for responding to stress and emotional changes. Eleutherococcus senticosus also acts as a cardiovascular stimulant and increases resistance to illness and infection (though it is not suitable to take during an infection).

Iridology
Signs of low energy are often apparent in the eyes. An appearance of dullness and lack of sparkle, with a sclera that is greyish or cream coloured rather than white will often be visible. Markings in the iris, observed by a professional iridologist at The Herbal Clinic, can help to determine which organs are not functioning effectively, providing a valuable diagnostic tool.

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