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Heavy Metal Toxicity

The use of heavy metals in medicine goes back to the 1800's when doctors used mercury for its drastic purging effects and arsenic was used by women for its blanching effect on the skin. Unfortunately patients often died from the toxic effects of these metals.

Since that time the industrial revolution has led to the release of increasing amounts of toxic heavy metals into the environment. They are now in our water, soil, food and air. Even newborn infants can have high levels of toxic compounds at birth. One study found an average of 200 industrial chemicals and pollutants in the umbilical cord blood of newborn infants in the U.S. Unfortunately, the placenta does not shield the fetus as we once thought it did.

What happens to heavy metals in your body?

Blood tests only reveal levels of recent acute exposure to heavy metals. To protect itself, the body sequesters heavy metals in safe tissues like fat and connective tissue to reduce toxic effects on vital organs. After those reservoirs are used the metals may be deposited in the heart, brain, nervous system or digestive tract creating health problems. In about 90% of neurological diseases heavy metals are a key aggravating factor: Parkinson's, Alzheimers, neuralgia, autism, ADD and ADHD.

The body rids itself of heavy metals chiefly through the liver and the kidneys. About 90% are excreted through the bile into the digestive tract where most are reabsorbed back into the bloodstream and back to the liver in a continuous loop.

About ten percent of heavy metals pass out through the kidneys placing significant stress on the kidneys. It is very important to support the kidneys through heavy metal detoxification or the metals may accumulate in the kidney damaging these vital organs.

Heavy Metal Testing

A urine test is used to measure the body burden of heavy metals. This is done in two steps. The first test is a regular urine test to check the creatinine clearance and the ability of the kidneys to eliminate heavy metals.

The second urine test is done before and after the ingestion of a heavy metal chelator. This compound dislodges heavy metals from tissues for elimination and the levels are checked in the urine. The before test gives an indication of current heavy metal exposure and the later test gives an indication of the body load of heavy metals.

