



STRESS-RELAX[®] SERENITY FORMULA

Helps relieve symptoms of chronic stress and anxiety

THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF CHRONIC STRESS

Depression, brain fog, inability to focus, anxiety, fatigue, insomnia, listlessness, frequent illness – all can be manifestations of chronic stress. Eventually unrelenting daily stress will cause damaging mental, physical and emotional “burnout”. The adrenals become totally exhausted, followed by some degree of nervous or emotional breakdown.

When under stress the human body responds by activating the “fight or flight” response. Immediately, the anterior pituitary releases the adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH), which activates the adrenals. The adrenal hormones that get turned “on” when we prepare for fight or flight are the glucocorticoids (including cortisol or corticosterone), which increase sugar in the blood for energy for brain and muscle activity, and adrenalin, known for giving almost superhuman strength. Since most stressful situations are usually short-term, once the stress has diminished, cortisol and adrenalin are supposed to turn “off” again, allowing other hormones to turn back on.

However, chronic long-term stress prevents the stress hormones from turning “off,” thus depriving the body of sufficient recovery time. Having these stress hormones continually “on” causes cellular damage, blood sugar problems, and eventually adrenal exhaustion. The nervous system suffers too. Other neurotransmitters (nerve hormones) get turned off. Not only do these imbalances affect emotional well-being, but the nerves themselves cannot adapt properly. Most people experiencing chronic stress eventually seek help for pain and related health problems.

DAMAGE CONTROL FOR BURNOUT

Aside from trying to minimize stress in our daily life, what can be done to restore and rejuvenate the body’s stress-coping systems? While there is no “quick-fix,” the Stress-Relax Serenity Formula provides natural herbal help to calm down those persistent stress hormones and bring the body back into balance. Through the formula’s adaptogenic properties, adrenal gland function is restored, harmonizing the body systems. Addressing adrenal exhaustion is a principal step in promoting vigour, vitality and strength of the mind and body. Ideally, the Serenity Formula should be combined with a proactive approach that includes attention to nutrition, sleep, exercise, and improved lifestyle habits.

WHAT IS AN ADAPTOGEN?

According to Dr. Michael Murray, ND, in his book *The Pill Book Guide to Natural Medicines*, “An adaptogen is defined as a substance that (1) must be innocuous and cause minimal disorders in the physiological functions of an organism, (2) must have a

non-specific action (i.e. it should increase resistance to adverse influences by a wide range of physical, chemical, and biochemical factors), and (3) usually has a normalizing action on body functions.” The term adaptogen refers to any herb that increases the body’s resistance to emotional trauma, anxiety and fatigue – in other words, to “adapt.” Adaptogens promote vigour, vitality and well-being.

ASHWAGANDHA, THE SUPREME ADAPTOGEN

The primary ingredient in the Serenity Formula is Sensoril™, a patented proprietary extract derived from freshly harvested roots and leaves of the botanical ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), historically known for its anti-stress and adaptogenic qualities. Due to having both of these properties, ashwagandha increases the body’s resistance to stress, actually “shutting off” the stress response and shielding against further increased cortisol production. Sensoril helps the body normalize circulating ACTH and the concurrent increase in blood cortisol and adrenalin levels. In double-blind, placebo-controlled human clinical trials, Sensoril reduced serum cortisol levels by up to 26%.

SENSORIL AND BLOOD SUGAR BALANCE

Unrelenting stress has been shown to play havoc with blood sugar levels. The relationship between long-term psychological stress and elevated blood sugar levels is largely due to increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Sensoril can significantly enhance blood sugar balance by reducing overall stress levels. In double-blind, placebo-controlled human clinical trials Sensoril was shown to reduce fasting blood sugar by up to 9% due to its ability to reduce serum cortisol levels. The Sensoril treatment group results were considered highly statistically significant when compared to the placebo group.

SENSORIL SUPPORTS CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH AND HELPS REDUCE CELLULAR DAMAGE

Excessive levels of cortisol and glucose in the blood also impacts cardiovascular health, damaging both the blood vessels and the heart. As Sensoril reduces cortisol levels, human trials have shown it to have a very positive effect in supporting healthy cardiovascular function.

Cellular damage observed with prolonged stress is associated with neuron loss in the hippocampus (the area of the brain known as the seat of learning and memory) and other brain areas. Stress hormones such as cortisol are associated with age-related loss of neurons in the hippocampus, and increase the generation of free radicals in the brain. Regions of the brain such as the frontal cortex and striatum are very vulnerable to stress-induced oxidative damage. Enzymes, including

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superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT), and glutathione peroxidase (GPX), are needed to mop up free radical damage. Sensoril not only reduces cortisol secretion, it also stimulates the concentration of these important antioxidant enzymes in the brain (Bhattacharya, *et al*).

SIBERIAN GINSENG, THE NOBLE ADAPTOGEN

Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*, often called Eleuthero) is a popular medicinal plant that grows abundantly in parts of the Russian Far East, Korea, China, and Japan. It was one of the first herbs to meet all the criteria for an adaptogen. Donald Brown, author of *Herbal Prescriptions for Better Health*, writes "Eleuthero is notable for its ability to support and enhance adrenal function. Optimal adrenal function is associated with greater energy and better reaction to stress. Eleuthero also supports and strengthens the immune system."

Siberian ginseng extract has been administered to more than 2,100 healthy human subjects in clinical trials for the purpose of evaluating its adaptogenic effects. These studies indicate that Siberian ginseng extract (1) increases the ability of humans to withstand many adverse physical conditions (i.e. heat, noise, motion, work load increase, exercise, and decompression), (2) increases mental alertness and work output, (3) improves the quality of work produced under stressful conditions, and (4) improves athletic performance (Farnsworth, *et al*).

LAVENDER

Long used by herbalists to treat anxiety, nervous exhaustion and depression, recent studies show that lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) can reduce feelings of depression, anxiety and helplessness. In one double-blind clinical study, 45 adults with depression were assigned to one of three groups. The groups received either lavender extract plus a placebo tablet; a placebo extract plus 100 mg per day of the antidepressant drug imipramine; or lavender extract and 100 mg per day of imipramine. The study lasted for four weeks and scores from the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D), a questionnaire used to evaluate the severity of depression (higher scores suggest more severe depression), were evaluated initially and then weekly after

the start of treatment. The results indicated that the lavender extract was just as effective as the drug without the side effects common to drug treatment for depression (dry mouth, weight loss or weight gain, low blood pressure, arrhythmia, and decreased sexual function) (Akhondzadeh, *et al*).

RHODIOLA

Rhodiola (*Rhodiola rosea*) is an adaptogen that exerts significant effects on restoring the proper balance of brain neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine, thereby improving memory, learning, attention, and sleep, while reducing fatigue and stress.

Students under stress respond extremely well to rhodiola as demonstrated in one double-blind, placebo-controlled trial where the extract of the herb improved physical and mental performance and a sense of well-being. Studies also show that rhodiola has a positive influence on the cardiopulmonary system, apparently by increasing the chemicals that provide energy to the muscles of the heart, improving strength and endurance while increasing the metabolism of fats and preventing stress-induced cardiac damage. As an adaptogen, rhodiola has neuro-endocrine effects that improve sexual function in males, normalize menstrual cycles, and enhance thyroid function without causing hyperthyroidism. It is an antioxidant and anticarcinogenic, and may inhibit tumour growth and decrease metastasis. Rhodiola also has few side effects and most people feel that their mood improves, they can think more clearly, and they have higher energy levels (Spasov, *et al*).

DOSAGE

1 to 2 capsules, two times daily or as directed by a health care practitioner; due to the mildly stimulating effect of rhodiola, do not take the Serenity Formula just before bedtime.

SAFETY

Although each ingredient is very safe and this formula can be taken long-term, it is advisable for those with major depression and mood/anxiety disorders to work closely with their health care practitioner.

Pregnancy and lactation: Due to lack of studies, it should not be taken by women during pregnancy and lactation.

Children: Suitable for children over 6 at one-half the adult dose.

Drug interactions: None known at this time.

Contraindications: Rhodiola may have an additive effect with other stimulants, so not recommended for use by persons with bipolar disorder who are vulnerable to manic episodes when given stimulants.

The unique combination of superior adaptogens and antioxidants in the Stress-Relax Serenity Formula can give you a head start toward emotional well-being. This formula is ideal for anyone coping with adrenal and nervous exhaustion; providing damage control that gradually and progressively brings the stress hormones back into balance, putting you back on the road to physical, mental, and emotional health.

KEY REFERENCES

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