

Materia Medica for Endocrine disruption

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Thyroid gland:

Increase thyroid function:

Seaweeds (Kelp, bladderwrack, dulse, arame, kombu)

Natural source of highly bioavailable iodine and minerals. Can be taken as tablets / capsules (about 3-4 grams a day) or added to vegetable stocks and stir-fried vegetables. Must be taken daily at food-like doses to achieve results.

Improving adrenal function if it is deficient and/or balancing blood sugar levels can also have a positive impact on deficient thyroid function (cross-system feedback).

Guggul (*Commiphora mukul*) is a resin related to myrrh, useful in controlling excess cholesterol and high blood lipids, but also showing promise as a thyroid-enhancing botanical. It seems to help the thyroid use iodine effectively, as well as simply stimulating increased hormone production, so it is best taken along with seaweeds to ensure the nutritional building blocks are available. Some products are concentrated forms of the resin; generally, however, 1,500 to 2,000mg daily is a good dose.

Decrease thyroid overactivity:

Lycopus virginicus (Bugleweed) and **Melissa officinalis** (Lemon Balm)

Safe mint-family plants that have been shown to decrease thyroid hormone overproduction, even in autoimmune cases. Tea or liquid extracts most effective. 1 quart / day of tea brewed with 2TBS of each herb; or 3-5 droppers (milliliters) of each extract twice daily between meals.

Modulating the effects of chronic stress / adrenal overactivity can also have an impact on overactive thyroid function (cross-system feedback). Additionally, working directly on the systems (cardio / nervous) affected by thyroid overactivity is important.

Adrenal glands:

Reduce adrenal hyper-arousal:

Nervine herbs are generally indicated, because they help calm the system and reduce the likelihood that a stressor will trigger the fight-or-flight response. **Avena sativa** (Oats, milky stage), **Scutellaria lateriflora** (Scullcap), **Passiflora incarnata** (Passionflower) are all good options that are non-sedating. Safely taken as a tea, can be blended. About 4-6TBS total in 1 QT water, taken throughout the day.

Adaptogenic herbs help the body respond to stressors without over-taxing the adrenal system, improving recovery, increasing endurance, reducing adrenal hormone 'spikes' (and the consequences thereof). **Rhodiola rosea** (Rhodiola, 30-90 drops twice daily, esp. with fatigue and depression), **Panax quinquefolius** (American Ginseng, 90-120 drops twice daily), **Ocimum sanctum** (Holy basil / Tulsi, best as a tea esp. with inflammation / nervousness), **Crataegus species** (Hawthorn, tea, or tincture at 1 tsp. twice daily esp. with cardiovascular 'heat').

Tonify deficient / depleted adrenal function:

Adaptogenic herbs again as listed above, but especially the more restorative ones that lessen the burden or hormone production from the adrenal glands. **Glycyrrhiza glabra** (Licorice, ½ to 1

tsp. of tincture twice a day, or tea), **Eleutherococcus senticosus** (Eleuthero a.k.a. Siberian Ginseng, 1 tsp. twice a day of tincture).

Endocrine Pancreas:

Herbs to modulate blood sugar spikes / troughs:

Digestive bitters (Dandelion, Burdock, Gentian roots) are especially useful in hypoglycemic situations, but are indicated in all cases of blood sugar disruption, decreased insulin sensitivity, and diabetes, especially if coupled with gas and poor / underactive / sluggish digestion. Take 30-60 drops as needed, but at least three times a day 5-10 minutes before meals.

Soluble fiber sources bind sugars in the GI tract, slowing their speed of entry into the bloodstream and thereby reducing the blood-sugar spike. **Trigonella foenum-graecum** (Fenugreek, 1-2 capsules with meals) and **Cinnamomum** (Cinnamon, 1-2 caps with meals) have received the most attention for reducing high blood sugars after meals.

Gymnema sylvestre buffers blood sugar swings, and has the interesting side-effect of temporarily inhibiting the ability to taste the sweet flavor. Useful for those craving sugar; take 30-60 drops of tincture on the tongue before eating.

Momordica charantia (Bitter melon) reduces blood sugars markedly by affecting pancreatic hormone secretion and increasing sensitivity to insulin. Follow manufacturer's directions and use caution with this potent herb – especially if any blood-sugar-lowering medications are also present.

Stevia rebaudiana (Stevia) is not only a great herbal sweetener for tea blends and other uses, it also helps buffer excessive blood sugar swings when taken consistently over time.

Finally, do not neglect the thyroid and adrenal systems when attempting to address pancreatic / blood sugar dysfunction. Low thyroid will decrease insulin's effect because of the increased fat production and storage that accompany it. Overactive adrenals will promote high blood sugars – that's their job (useful in fight-or flight, but not chronically)! Underactive adrenals, conversely, will exacerbate hypoglycemic symptoms.