

Salivary Hormone Testing: A great tool in the hormone balancing act

Hormone testing is an important tool that can be used to measure and understand hormone imbalances. Salivary hormone testing uses saliva samples and is an easy way to measure hormone levels in the body. It can also allow health care practitioners to create a picture of how hormones change over time. This can be useful information to guide and focus treatment to re-balance hormones.

Hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, progesterone and cortisol, are our bodies messengers. They tell our organs and tissues what to do to maintain homeostasis or balance. When secreted appropriately in response to internal and external changes they keep our bodies and minds on track, happy and healthy. When out of balance they can cause physical and emotional havoc in both women and men. The good news is that these imbalances can be corrected once we know what they are. Hormone testing can pinpoint a problem.

Some hormone related health problems are obvious such as PMS, infertility and low libido. Because every tissue in the body is under the influence of hormone messaging there are many other symptoms that can be caused by hormone imbalances. For example, migraine headaches, gas and bloating, depression, anger and insomnia can all be caused by hormones out of whack. For women some symptoms may be related to certain times in their cycle. For men many hormonal problems can show up as part of the aging process.

There are three basic advantages of salivary hormone testing. The first one is that the hormones measured in saliva are in the free or active form. This is helpful to know because free hormones are the only ones that actually work to deliver their messages to the cells.

The second reason is that we can look at changing hormone levels over time with saliva tests. I often use a test kit which takes multiple saliva samples over the course of a woman's 28-30 day cycle. This information will let me see how a woman's hormones are changing over the course of her cycle so we can tailor our treatment accordingly.

I also use a test that requires 4 separate timed saliva collections in one day. This is a test for the stress hormone cortisol which should follow a specific pattern over the course of a day. The test results highlight specifically where cortisol levels are out of balance. With this information I can see when a problem is occurring and create a treatment plan that is very specific.

The last advantage of salivary testing is that it is easy to do. I give my patients the test kits in the office and they take them home to collect the samples and mail them to the lab.

If you are having health problems that could be related to hormone issues help is available. Information is power and salivary hormone testing can provide results that tell you what is going on inside your body and guide successful treatment. Find your own optimal level of health and live your life in balance!