Endometriosis

I have several clients that I have worked with over the years who have been diagnosed with endometriosis. Endometriosis is one of the most severe forms of hormone imbalance that I see. Endometriosis is often referred to as "fetal origin of adult disease" meaning that you have it from birth. Not only do these women often produce larger amounts of estrogen and less progesterone, but cells that are not usually responsive to estrogen throughout the body respond abnormally to estrogen. This often results in a great deal of pain and inflammation in addition to the more traditional symptoms of progesterone deficiency such as insomnia, mood swings, headaches, anxiety, and menstrual irregularities or heavy, painful cycles. I met with a mother (67) and daughter (33) today who were both diagnosed with endometriosis. They were both diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome, both suffered with memory issues, extreme fatigue, insomnia, migraines, anxiety, and some severe inflammatory issues including joint pain. The daughter is also suffering with infertility as the mother did and both have had several laproscopic procedures done to remove endometrial lesions.

I am so very excited to be working with both of these ladies to help relieve symptoms and decrease inflammation. With endometriosis, we typically take a 3 pronged approach—treating hormones, treating adrenal abnormalities, and normalizing the gut.

Women with endometriosis almost always have very low levels of progesterone (the calming and anti-inflammatory hormone). Progesterone is the key hormone to replace for these women and sometimes is the only hormone needed although we recommend a full panel including testosterone, estradiol, and DHEA.

Both of these women have been diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome. Progesterone is the hormone that protects the adrenal glands from stress. Adrenal fatigue is a common issue that often occurs in women with severe hormone abnormalities. Symptoms are often fatigue, memory and concentrating issues, salt/sugar cravings, weight gain, irritability, insomnia. More information can be found at www.adrenalfatigue.org.

The gut is often a source of inflammation. Many of these women suffer with constipation, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), heartburn, GERD. Repairing the gut with a regimen of digestive enzymes, probiotics, and chelated magnesium is key in minimizing the inflammatory cascade.

by Cindy Taliaferro Smith, PharmD, BCPS