



Heavy Metal Testing & Treatment

The modern world is filled with heavy metals that negatively impact human health. Arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury are in the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. As a result, on a daily basis, we are exposed to small amounts of heavy metals which can adversely affect our health and even accumulate in body tissues. Heavy metal exposure can cause problems with the immune system, hormones, and neurological function.

This low dose daily exposure to heavy metals, is different than heavy metal toxicity—which is a diagnosis of exposure to high levels of a particular heavy metal, such as lead. This could occur through occupational exposure or poisoning. “Body burden” on the other hand, is a term often used to describe an accumulation of heavy metals in the body from chronic, low-level exposure.

Contributing Factors

Simply living in the modern world means we’re exposed to heavy metals. Food can be a source of arsenic, cadmium, and mercury. Drinking water can have arsenic and lead. And, the air we breathe may contain lead and mercury. Add to this, exposure from cigarette smoke and cosmetics and it’s clear to see how many occasions we have every day to be exposed. The conditions that can result from exposure to these metals are numerous and include the following:

- Autoimmune disease
- Hormonal imbalance
- Women’s health conditions, such as endometriosis and infertility
- Hypothyroidism
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Prostate cancer

If you have any symptoms or conditions related to heavy metal exposure, your integrative healthcare practitioner may want to test you for the presence of heavy metal in your body. These tests can include analysis of the hair, blood, stool, or urine. Different tests will look for different metals, and some methods are better for current exposure versus past exposure.

Treatment Options

If your integrative practitioner determines that you are experiencing health symptoms or have a condition related to heavy metal exposure, s/he will tailor a treatment plan to reduce the amount of heavy metals in the body and to restore health. This program will start with identifying any current sources of exposure and helping you figure out how to remove them when possible. You may also be provided with therapies to chelate, or bind, heavy metals to allow your body to expel them. However, these chelating agents can deplete certain nutrients, so you may be given supplements to replace these nutrients. In addition, you may be advised to do other therapies that can help with detoxification and elimination such as colonics, nutrient intravenous therapies or saunas. You can also make several lifestyle choices that help reduce body burden, including eating organic foods, exercising, and managing stress. By avoiding exposures to heavy metals wherever possible and working with your integrative healthcare practitioner to address your body burden, you’ll be removing significant obstacles to your health.