Nutritional ABCs: Strategies for Optimizing Your Energy by Balancing Your Vitamin Intake – Assessment

Transcript

We are going to finish up with a little bit about testing for vitamin status. Some people will say we will just run a blood test and see how much Vitamin B12 you have and see how much zinc you have and all that. Now with certain nutrients you can do that; you can look at the blood levels, and it is reflective.

Like Vitamin D for example, you can look at the blood levels of D and get a good assessment. You can look at the blood levels of A and K; they are fat soluble. For Vitamin E, I am not sure; I will have to look into that. But for the B's, it is just not accurate; they come and go. They are volatile enough that you don't catch them.

There are a number of ways you can do it. There is a lab called Spectra Cell which actually looks inside the leucocytes which are the white blood cells to see the levels of these nutrients inside the cells, not just in the serum floating around but actually in the cells. The other way is in the red blood cells, for example: magnesium. Red blood cell magnesium is the most accurate way to measure magnesium.

There are also functional tests. For example for B12 there are a number of things you can look at that give you a functional idea of how well your B12 status is. So you can look at MCV, the cheapest way to do it. You run a CBC; a CBC costs $25. One of the parameters is MCV; you look to see. If your blood cells tend to be high, it might be you have a B12 or foliate deficiency. The problem is you can't isolate whether it's B12 or foliate Deficiency. The problem also is that there are other confounding factors. You can have perfectly normal blood cell sizes because you've got a deficiency in B12 and a deficiency of iron - because iron makes them smaller and they average out to the right size.

So that is not the tried and true way; it is not like the gold standard of functional testing, but it gives you a clue. The other way is to look at something called MMA, Methylmalonic Acid, and you can look in urine or in blood. That is a metabolic waste that accumulates when you don't have enough B12. If you have enough B12, it takes the MMA and moves it downstream.

The other thing you can look at is Homocysteine because without adequate B6, B12, and foliate your Homocysteine levels build up. Again it is not specific, but you can get an idea if one or more of those may be out of balance.

If you are a good health detective, which is what I teach my practitioners in my program, we will look at the composite of the signs and symptoms and say 'this is high, this is low. I'm really considering this a B12 deficiency, and I have ruled out the B6 because everything B6 related looks good.'

The other functional test is called organic acids, and you can run that through a number of labs like Great Smokies Diagnostic Lab or Genova Diagnostics. You can probably find them on www.directlabs.com. There's another lab called Great Planes Laboratory that you can order through.

I think you can order from them without being a licensed practitioner. It's gotten so much easier for you, as the general public, to be able to test yourself because the testing is available. Years ago, the only way you could get this stuff done is to go through a practitioner and then keep going to the practitioner to get retests.