

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL DIAGNOSTIC NUTRITION?

An "emerging field and growing body of work that bridges the gap between clinical nutrition and functional medicine", this type of detective work seeks to identify and correct the underlying causes and conditions that lead to health complaints.

Any time there is a symptom, of any kind, there's a problem somewhere under the surface. That's something you want to know. The symptom helps to tell you that so you can take action to fix it or correct behaviour to make sure it doesn't happen again.

The problem is, we're so conditioned to want immediate relief from symptoms that we often go straight to an allopathic approach. We have a headache, we take a pain killer. We have indigestion, we take an antacid. We're not listening to our body's feedback, and we certainly aren't attempting to find out why the body's message has been sent in the first place.

Simply masking the symptoms (often like conventional medicine aims to do) may make them seem less noticeable in the short term, but ultimately, the problem can still exist below the surface (what we call, subclinically.) Ignoring those little communiques and others like them effectively sends a signal to your body that you aren't listening. And while the root problem is still there, bubbling and building, your body will tenaciously try and find a way to get the message through. This can present as an intensification of symptoms, or simply by more symptoms popping up in different areas. While some symptoms may seem unrelated on the surface, we generally find if we dig deep enough, there's a root cause for all of them.

Instead of continually putting out spot fires of disease on the surface by treating each individual symptom, if you truly wanted optimum health, it would make logical sense to go after that root cause and rectify it, right?

Functional diagnostic nutrition aims to find those underlying causes of disease, and take action to rectify them to restore the body back to optimal health.

Joelle Collard is our resident FDN at B32, one of only a dozen practitioners in Australia.

How does it work?

First, we look at the top layer, collecting the symptoms and looking at your main health complaints. From there, using a series of laboratory tests we start to dig, layer by layer, till we can come up with that underlying root cause. Then, through a combination of intelligent nutrition, supplementation and training protocols, we work to rectify the root cause and each of the layers of dysfunction it has created further up the chain until we no longer see symptoms, and main health complaints disappear. Till the body is seemingly quiet, calm and functioning how it should be once again.

What kind of tests do we do?

Salivary, urine or stool tests are used to give us information into what is going on for you, under the hood. Testing includes some or all* of the following:

- **Functional adrenal stress profile:** tests 11 hormone levels including cortisol raw totals and daily rhythms, DHEA, estrogens, progesterone, testosterone and melatonin. This test gives us an insight into adrenal function & fatigue levels, steroid hormone balance and an indication of gut function.
- **Metabolic assessment profile:** assesses ability to breakdown dietary proteins, liver function, detoxification capacity and oxidative damage in the system.
- **Intestinal barrier function screen:** assesses enteric immune system function, bacterial and yeast levels, reactions to dietary proteins, levels of infection in the gut and leaky gut syndrome.
- **GI Pathogen test:** tests for the presence and type of pathogens in the gut and GI tract, including parasite, invasive yeast and bacterial infections.

*the series and degree of testing used depends on your main health complaints and presenting symptoms. Your integrative health coach will guide you on what needs to be done to investigate appropriately.

What are the costs?

Each iteration of lab testing costs \$115 including:

- Lab test kit (additional kits @ \$25 each)
- 45min consult for discussion, interpretation of results and recommendations to move forward

It is your responsibility to collect your own lab samples (an easy to follow process) and send them off. Just like a regular blood test check up, you are required to pay the testing fees directly to the lab.

*Please note that an initial integrative health consultation is required before pursuing laboratory testing.

Make no mistake, the process of seeking optimal balance and function for the human body is an unending, evolving journey. There are many, many things in life that serve to knock our systems out of homeostasis. But by listening and acting on the sophisticated feedback and messages originating from the body, you maximise your chances of achieving that balance. It is from this place that optimum health and true athletic performance can be sought.

Joelle Collard is the Integrative Health Coach and Functional Diagnostic Nutritionist at B32 Athletics. For more details on the IHC or FDN service, or to book an appointment, contact her by email at joelle@b32athletics.com.au.

