

# "20 years of fatigue — gone!"

**80% OF WOMEN**  
suffer from  
**free copper overload**

**Samantha Gilbert, 39, was tired, foggy and anxious. Then she discovered the often-missed culprit and the simple fix**

**P**lease forgive me, Jennifer, but I can't make it. I'm not feeling well." Samantha sighed as she clutched the phone, fearing her friend's reaction. "Jennifer and I had planned a girls' weekend months earlier to celebrate her birthday. Yet the day before our trip, I backed out because I was so exhausted. I felt awful letting her down, and though she said she understood, I could tell she was disappointed. She wanted to know what was really going on, but I was too embarrassed to tell her I was just very sleepy.

out with friends. And eventually, they grew tired of me declining invites, so they stopped calling. "The exhaustion affected my work too. I was a fashion designer and on my lunch hour, I often snuck out to a secluded area in my office to lay on the couch and sleep. But sometimes I overslept, only to be woken by my boss. It was mortifying. "It wasn't just that I was tired either. I also suffered from brain fog, depression and anxiety, digestive problems, joint issues, skin rashes, headaches, insomnia and mood swings.

"I decided to become a vegetarian and later a raw vegan in hopes that I'd feel better. I lost 50 pounds and even left the fashion industry to become a nutritional therapist. I felt good for a while, but then my symptoms came back with a vengeance. Even if I slept 10 or 11 hours, I was still tired. For a year, I scaled back my work hours, lived off my savings and stayed in bed most of the day. I gained back 18 pounds.

"I saw more than 35 practitioners and spent about \$40,000 to get to the bottom of my ailments. It was a long and frustrating journey and I was

Samantha Gilbert, Belvedere, CA

## One-minute QUIZ

### IS A SNEAKY MINERAL OVERLOAD MAKING YOU TIRED?

**If you suffer from frequent fatigue and two or more of the symptoms below, a copper buildup that your body can't process may be to blame:**

- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Brain fog
- ✓ Skin breakouts
- ✓ Anxiety
- ✓ Mood swings
- ✓ Sleep problems
- ✓ Thinning/shedding hair
- ✓ Frequent infections



devastated that no one could give me an answer.

## Energy at last!

"My turning point came when I found an old medical journal buried under a stack of papers in my office. I flipped through it and read an article about the research of Dr. William Walsh, a leader in brain health and nutritional medicine. I read about fatigue, hormonal imbalances in women and something called copper overload. I learned that copper affects dopamine and norepinephrine, neurotransmitters linked to depression and anxiety. A lightbulb went off and I thought, *That's me.*

"I looked on Dr. Walsh's website and found two doctors who specialized in the condition. I immediately called them, and a few days later I flew out to Chicago for an appointment. I was nervous and skeptical since I had tried everything and nothing had worked. As I sat there, I asked myself, *Why should this time be any different?*

"But it was. After taking a health history and running tests, the doctors told me they suspected I had copper overload. They ordered a hair and blood plasma test to confirm it, but I had to wait a month for the results.

"When the results arrived in the mail, I ripped open the envelope and

read the words 'elevated copper.' I fell into my chair. I was relieved to have an answer but I cried for days thinking about how long it took me to find it.

"I went on a copper elimination diet and took out all nuts, seeds, seafood, avocado, dried fruit, chocolate and mineral water. I also started taking supplements, including molybdenum, selenium, vitamins C, E and B<sub>12</sub>, biotin and zinc. I added B<sub>6</sub>-rich foods like grass-fed red meat and I quit taking my multivitamin, which had a lot of copper in it.

"Within two to three months, I was feeling better. Within a year, my symptoms completely disappeared. I had more energy than I'd ever had in my life. And those extra 18 pounds? They melted right off.

"I was amazed at how just a few small changes could have such a profound impact on my life. In fact, as a result of my experience, I've expanded my business (SamanthaGilbert.com) to help other women with copper overload.

"Now I wake up at 5 AM and exercise 5 or 6 days a week. When my friends want to meet, I'm all in! In fact, Jennifer and I recently spent a weekend in San Jose shopping, eating out and spending time with friends. I'm energetic, happy and relaxed. I'm the person I was meant to be!" —as told to Julie Revelant

**Up to 8 in 10 women who come to see me are suffering from an overload of 'free copper' that's draining their energy,"** says copper authority Ann Louise Gittleman, Ph.D. "Since most mainstream physicians don't recognize the condition, it goes undiagnosed in at least 90 percent of cases." Gittleman explains that copper is critical to energy production, but the body can only use it after it's transformed in the liver from 'free' copper into a bioavailable form. "When the liver's ability to produce bioavailable copper falters, the body suffers from copper deficiency *and* excess: Cells don't get usable copper while free copper builds up to impair function of energy-regulating glands." The result? Fatigue, fog, anxiety and mood swings.

**Top culprits: diets high in copper and low in zinc** (which converts free copper into its bioavailable form). "Stress can also be a major cause," adds copper expert Michael Lesser, M.D. "It depletes levels of zinc, and can increase copper in the body."

**Overload can be identified via blood tests**, but insurance coverage varies. Home hair testing can also spot copper excess, says Gittleman. She suggests the Uni Key Tissue Mineral Analysis test (\$152, UniKeyHealth.com). When you send in a hair sample, you receive a detailed report and phone assistance for interpreting results.

**Upping zinc intake is key.** Gittleman advises eating 3 daily servings of zinc-rich foods (like beef, fish and poultry) and supplementing with 30 mg of zinc. Also critical: limiting crab, lobster, oysters, beans, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, soy, avocados, black tea and other foods high in copper. And if you take a multivitamin, make sure it's copper-free. One to try: Life Extension One-Per-Day, \$22 for 60 tablets, LifeExtension.com.

## News This mineral cuts depression risk by 76%

Getting healthy amounts of zinc in your diet can do more than help rebalance copper levels and restore high energy—zinc also protects against depression. Researchers reporting in the *Journal of Affective Disorders* found that women with low intakes of zinc were up to 76 percent more likely to suffer from depressive symptoms than those who got the highest amounts of zinc. Though the scientists have yet to determine exactly how zinc protects against blue moods, previous studies indicate that the mineral boosts brain levels of the feel-good brain chemical serotonin.