

# Ask Leyla: Is the stress of moving affecting my health?



**Q:** I moved to California from New Jersey about two months ago. Since this move, I've been experiencing hair loss, dry skin, and chest congestion. The chest congestion is persistent. I saw a doctor who told me that I don't have asthma and prescribed a homeopathic expectorant. Otherwise, I don't feel ill. I'm female, 44 years old, and exercise regularly, but I have been under a great deal of stress with this move and new job.

**A:** It is not uncommon for symptoms and conditions to show up with big life changes such as moving to a new area or starting a new job. These antecedent events, stressful as they are, can be a catalyst for the development of metabolic abnormalities or even full-blown medical conditions.

Nutrient deficiencies may be the culprit of your symptoms. Deficiencies in essential fatty acids can cause very dry skin, and anemia or low ferritin levels can cause hair loss. Stress in itself is known to cause hair loss.

Dry skin and shedding hair are classic symptoms of hypothyroidism. Be sure to have your doctor check your thyroid. Ideally, thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) should be between 1.0 – 2.0. But a full thyroid panel will reveal if thyroid hormones are low or if conversion of T4 to T3 is sluggish.

Additionally, checking for anti-thyroid antibodies will rule out Hashimoto's thyroiditis (autoimmune). This condition can ultimately be managed with medical nutrition therapy but may require thyroid replacement for a period of time.

If you have any food allergies, it is best to eliminate those foods because they can aggravate symptoms. Eat a clean diet consisting of high biological value (HBV) protein such as grass-fed meats, poultry, fish, and eggs, plenty of fresh organic vegetables, low-glycemic fruits, and nuts and seeds.

I would encourage you to seek out a qualified nutritionist or a nutritionally oriented physician for a full workup to uncover the cause(s) of your complaints. Indeed, this is a tenet of *Intelligent Medicine*.

To your health!

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