

# I Think it is Zinc Deficiency

## Zinc and Why it is Important

Zinc is very important to support immune function and prevent cancer as zinc is a powerful antioxidant. It also important for your heart, muscle growth and repair, as well as balanced female/male hormones, and fertility.

- **Fertility and Reproductive Health:** Zinc deficiency in males decreases sperm motility and increases sperm viscosity where sperm cannot move as freely as it should. Zinc deficiency also decreases testosterone levels in men. With zinc supplementation, the fertility of men and the quality of sperm significantly increased in [this meta-analysis](#) of the most recent studies: “...the results revealed that zinc supplementation could significantly increase the sperm volume, sperm motility and percentage of normal sperm morphology of infertile men.”
- **Blood Sugar Regulation:** [Zinc is needed to maintain normal blood sugar](#) and helps to balance insulin. Zinc is important for the synthesis, storage, and secretion of insulin. Zinc also preserves the shape and form of insulin and prevents its' destruction. The deficiency of zinc may promote the development or exacerbation of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus.
- **Eye Sight:** Zinc promotes healthy eyesight! Apparently, zinc promotes the conversion of Vitamin A into its' active form and promotes the formation of melanin in the retina of the eyes. Moreover, the concentration of zinc in the retina is very high and the supplementation with zinc may improve the symptoms of [age-related macular](#)

[degeneration.](#)

- **Healthy Immune Function:** Zinc promotes healthy immune response and is present in a number of different types of zinc supplements, such as Cold Eeze lozenges, Zycam tablets, Umka immune boosting syrups. These are my go-to when I feel symptoms of cold starting to bother me. Interestingly enough, [WebMD states here](#) that zinc deficiency in the U.S. is rare as we are a developed first-world country. Nevertheless, I see a frank zinc deficiency in at least every 3rd patient during the physical exam and in every 2nd patient during the blood lab exam of the zinc and copper levels, as well as their ratio.
- **Anxiety and Panic Disorders, as well as Post-Partum Depression.** It is important to check blood for adequate levels of zinc in serum, as well as zinc/copper ratio in cases of mood disorders. Zinc deficiency is common in women with post-partum depression as the levels of copper and estrogen are increased during pregnancy, but the level of estrogen drops significantly after the birth, while the copper may still be hanging around causing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Birth control pills are another reason that copper can be accumulated in the body, while zinc is getting lower and lower as it is displaced by copper.

These are just a few benefits of having zinc levels checked during the physical and lab exams. Ask your doctor to check your levels if you have any of the above-mentioned symptoms, or just not sure what is going on with your levels of energy and your immune system.

### **Signs of Zinc Deficiency**

Please, look at your fingernails and toenails. Sometimes, you can omit to go to the doctor if you can diagnose yourself based on the physical symptoms. As I explain in the video below, the white spots on your fingernails signify zinc

deficiency. Fancy Latin medical name for the white spots is Leukonychia.

Other signs of Zinc Deficiency:

- Weak immune system, frequent colds, and hand warts
- Loss of taste or smell
- Hair loss
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to focus or concentrate
- Growth retardation or delayed sexual maturation in children
- Diarrhea
- Delayed wound healing
- Poor night vision
- Digestive problems
- Nutrient malabsorption
- Skin rash
- Hypothyroidism

### **Foods Rich in Zinc**

I always encourage everyone to obtain deficient minerals and vitamins from food sources. The richest source of zinc, as well as iron, is oysters. It is my go-to recommendations for people who present with zinc deficiency on the physical examination. I am not a fan of raw oysters, especially as they are a known source of Hepatitis A virus. I prefer eating cooked and smoked oysters, such as the ones you can find at Trader Joe's in the canned aisle. Look for BPA-free cans too to limit your exposure to BPAs.

Other sources of zinc are beef, lamb, liver, pumpkin seeds, pork, dark chocolate, lobster, dark chicken meat, and beans. Include these foods into your daily diet and optimize your digestion by addressing possible high intestinal permeability (aka "leaky gut"), gut dysbiosis, SIBO (Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth), and SIFO (Small Intestinal Fungal

Overgrowth) to improve the absorption of zinc in your small intestine.

Ask your medical provider, if you may benefit from zinc supplementation and what are the best (highly absorbed) forms of supplemental zinc.

**Should you need more help with getting to the underlying cause of your fatigue, insomnia, thyroid and hormonal problems, schedule a consultation with Zhanna Tarjeft, FNP [Here](#).**

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