**Try These Self-Tests To Check Your Health**

**By Dr. Ramona Warren**

Many times there are problems going on within our bodies that we are unaware of. Here are a few do-it-yourself tests you can perform at home which may indicate a potential underlying problem. If there are positive findings with any of these tests you should consult your doctor for further evaluation.

Lets start with your hands:

**Shaky Hand Test**: Simply put one hand out in front of you with your palm facing down. Place a piece of paper on the back of your hand and watch to see if the paper shakes. A little movement is normal, but if you notice a lot of motion in the paper or if it falls off, this is a positive finding. This indicates that you might have hyperthyroidism, which occurs when the thyroid is producing too much thyroid hormone. Some symptoms associated with this condition can include anxiety, a feeling of panic and unexplained weight loss.

**Finger-To-Nose Test**: Stand and hold one arm straight in front of you with your index finger pointing straight. Close your eyes and bring your index finger to your nose and then do the same with your other hand. Of course, you should do this when you have NOT been drinking! If you keep missing your nose, this could be a sign of Parkinson's, Alzheimer's or some other degenerative disease of the nervous system.

**Hand Test**: Place both hands together with palms facing each other in a prayer position. Press the palms and all fingers against each other. If your fingers won't lay flat this could be a sign of rheumatoid or osteoarthritis.

**Fingernails**: Check your nails. If they are white at the cuticle and reddish or brown near the tips of the nail, this could indicate kidney disease. Nails that are blue or clubbed could be a symptom of lung disease.

**Nail Bed Test**: Hold one hand up higher than your heart and press firmly on your nail bed. The nail bed will turn white. When you release the pressure on your nail bed the color should quickly return to pink. If it takes longer than two seconds for the color to return, you could possibly have iron deficiency anemia where the blood has low iron levels. This reduces the oxygen to the tissues and can result in symptoms of headaches, fatigue, being cold, dizziness and irritability.

**Palm Test**: Look at the palm of your hand and see if the deep creases have color or if they are pale. If they are pale, this could be an indication of low iron levels. This tends to be more common in women. Symptoms include feelings of fatigue, difficulty concentrating and lowered immunity.

**Pulse Test**: Find your pulse by lightly placing two fingers on your wrist or on the side of your neck. With your other hand, or with your foot, tap out the rhythm for about one minute. If the rhythm is irregular it is called arrhythmia. This could indicate plaque formation in the arteries or an electrical problem with the heart. Either of these problems is a sign of increased risk of heart disease or stroke.

Some other tests that can help you become aware of underlying health problems include:

**Stretch Test**: Sit on the floor with both legs straight out in front of you and your toes pointing up toward the ceiling. Bend at your waist and attempt to touch your toes. If you are not very flexible and are unable to get close to your toes, this could indicate that your arteries may be inflexible, which could put you at higher risk for heart attack, stroke and/or deep vein thrombosis.

**Eye Test**: Look at the iris of your eye (the colored part of your eye). If you see a white line on the outer edge it could indicate that you have high cholesterol levels and plaque is being deposited in the arteries. Next, pull down the lower eyelid and look at the inside lining. If there is a cobblestone appearance it can be an indication of an allergic reaction, particularly to dust, mold or animal dander.

**Mole Test**: Use a mirror or have someone help you count the moles on your body. If you have over 50 moles, you may be at an increased risk for melanoma.

**Reflex Test**: Sit on an edge of a table or chair where your feet can dangle freely. Tap sharply and firmly with your knuckle or the edge of your hand on the tendon right below your knee cap. If your lower leg doesn't move upward quickly or it doesn't return to the starting position quickly, then this could be an indication of a sluggish thyroid known as hypothyroid. Other symptoms include feeling cold, tired, dry skin, hair loss and weight gain.

**Barnes Test**: Take your temperature by placing a thermometer in your armpit when you first wake up in the morning *before* you get out of bed. Do this for at least 5 days in a row and get the average temperature of the readings. If it is consistently below 98.6, it could be a sign of low thyroid function.