



A LITTLE ABOUT OUR

Menstrual Cycles



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For the first half of the menstrual cycle, estrogen is the dominant hormone, laying down the lining of the uterus. After ovulation takes place around day 14 of the cycle, progesterone is designed to be the dominant hormone and oestrogen also has a slow rise and then decline. However, with the challenges and pace of many of our lives, the balance between oestrogen and progesterone is easily disturbed. We make progesterone from our adrenal glands, kidneys, as well as from the corpus luteum - a product of ovulation. If we fail to ovulate, or have chronic stress, oestrogen may dominate in the days leading up to our periods which can affect how we feel and function.

As we transition through menopause, the ovarian production of hormones slows down, and eventually ceases. It's then predominantly up to the adrenal glands to meet our body's need for progesterone. These hormone levels can begin to change in our 40s and this is what we call perimenopause. Hormones may be going up and down and all over the place during this time.

Easing menopause often lies in supporting the adrenals, so they can effectively produce progesterone, and by enhancing liver detoxification pathways and gut function to help the body eliminate older hormones.

THE MOST COMMON SCENARIOS I SEE IN PRACTICE ARE:

- 1 LOW PROGESTERONE.** Low progesterone will make us cranky, tired, reduce libido, change our cycle length, make us feel bloated.
- 2 RAISED OR FLUCTUATING OESTROGEN** and the inability to metabolise it correctly. This can lead to bloating, fluid retention, sore and swollen breasts and mood swings.
- 3 WOMEN THAT ARE STRESSED** out of their brains and who may be struggling with overwhelm or anxiety, and their adrenal health is compromised and thus they end up tired, and their hormone balance is affected.

Stress directly reduces our brains pituitary gland signalling to our ovaries which leads to fewer ovulation cycles. As we know, we need ovulation to make healthy hormones

Stress increases cortisol. Whilst this is a good thing short term, for example to get us through danger or infection, it can be damaging to our systems when we have large amounts of cortisol day in, and day out with chronic stress. This can contribute to a reduction in ovulation and lead to dysregulation of the adrenal system.

What can I do for my hormones?



HOW CAN I RAISE/OPTIMISE PROGESTERONE?

In a women who is still menstruating we raise or optimise by optimising ovulation. We can use nutrients such as b6, magnesium, zinc, selenium. Good news is magnesium can reduce sugar cravings.

Please do not exceed 4 drinks of alcohol pre week as alcohol can interfere with progesterone's soothing effect.

Herbal medicines

Reduce stress- adrenaline directly blocks progesterone receptors and depletes GABA - a calming brain neurotransmitter. It does not have to be hard- take 30 mins a few times a week to destress- reading a book, a walk, or a massage, yoga etc.

HOW CAN I IMPROVE OESTROGEN AND AID ITS CLEARANCE FROM MY BODY?

There are two ways we move oestrogen from our bodies. The first step occurs in the liver and the second step occurs in our bowel. So the health of both of these organs is vital to healthy oestrogen clearance.

OUR AIM HERE IS:

To ensure we are making adequate oestrogen, that it is balanced with progesterone and that it is clearing correctly from the body.

Reduce alcohol. Just two drinks a day can double your exposure to oestrogen.

Ensure gut bacteria is balanced. Perhaps consider a probiotic and eat fermented foods.

Maintain a healthy body weight as body fat can make oestrogen

Ensure iodine levels are adequate (tested using urine)

Eating phytoestrogens- see diet hints below

Avoiding excessive plastics, heating in plastic, pesticides.



HOW CAN I LOOK AFTER MY ADRENALS?

Support the body with adequate protein, complex carbs, and the right balance of exercise.

Ensure blood sugar is regulated correctly

Control inflammation in the body- inflammatory foods include sugar, wheat and cow's dairy.

Schedule time out
Herbal medicines

Ensure your thyroid is tested with a full thyroid profile also. Thyroid health and our adrenal health often work together.

Consider a vitamin C, B6, B5 supplement

What can I do with my diet or lifestyle to help my hormones?

FIBRE binds to excess oestrogens in the bowel and aids elimination. Feeds healthy gut flora. Ideal sources are vegetables, wholegrains (in moderation), chia, psyllium husk.

PHYTO oestrogens. These have a gentle protective oestrogenic effect. This means they bind to an oestrogen receptor site balancing out hormones. These are found in linseeds (ground), sprouting seeds, non GMO fermented soy products, legumes and some green leafy vegies

LIGNANS 2 teaspoons of linseed meal daily aids healthy hormones. Add to muffins, smoothies, breakfast cereal.

TEAS Dandelion tea, chamomile tea, spearmint tea (especially for PCOS)

LOW GLYCAEMIC INDEX DIET please ask for a handout on this if you would like it. Ideally we want to keep blood sugar stable and avoid excess insulin load, and reduce insulin resistance. Insulin resistance is linked to reduced SHBG (sex-hormone binding globulin) which increases free circulating testosterone. Ensure protein with each meal.

ZINC RICH FOODS pepitas, raw or dry roasted nuts, oysters, meats, wholegrains

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS turmeric, red wine (moderate amount), ginger, garlic, oily fish, brightly coloured fruit and vegie, berries.

CRUCIFEROUS VEGIES- broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts, cauliflower. White mushrooms are not a cruciferous vegetable but they also block excess oestrogens.

**WANT MORE SUPPORT
OR TESTING?**

**Book in for an appointment by
calling the clinic on 02 5713 5585.**



The information provided in this information post is intended to be general information only and not specific health advice or treatment. Always seek the advice of your registered health care provider with any questions or before beginning supplements.

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