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A L L I A N C E
H O N E S T M E D I C I N E [™]

Guide to Women's Hormones & Health

Discover Easy Diet and Lifestyle
Adjustments for Maintaining
Health and Wellbeing



The Foundation of Women's Health



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EATING FOR HORMONE HEALTH



Eat Organic

Conventional produce is grown with harmful pesticides such as glyphosate. These chemicals are endocrine disruptors and throw off your hormone balance. So eat organic as much as possible. If eating all organic is out of your budget, follow the EWG's 'Dirty Dozen' & 'Clean Fifteen' guidelines.



Eat Enough Healthy Fats

Your body uses fats as the building blocks for hormones. Without enough, your hormone production will suffer. Healthy fats like:

- Avocados
- Nuts & seeds
- Fatty fish (such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, & anchovies)
- Coconut oil
- Extra virgin olive oil
- MCT oil
- Kefir



Keep your Blood Sugar Balanced

Sugar and refined carbohydrates can lead to increased insulin resistance and decreased levels of leptin, the hormone responsible for signaling fullness.

- Prioritize consuming protein and vegetables first on your plate.
- Opt for well-rounded meals with a mix of protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrates.
- Limit snacking as much as possible.



Eat Protein at Every Meal

Protein consists of amino acids, essential for hormone production in your body. Additionally, protein reduces the hunger hormone ghrelin levels and aids in stabilizing blood sugar. It is recommended to consume 20-30 g of protein per meal.

Incorporate high-protein foods such as chicken, grass-fed beef, turkey, eggs, sardines, beans, salmon, lentils, and edamame into your diet.

Key Nutrients

Here's a broad overview of key nutrients, vitamins, and supplements that are important for women's health:



Calcium:

- Essential for bone health, especially in women, as they are more prone to osteoporosis due to hormonal changes during menopause. Calcium also supports nerve function, muscle contraction, and blood clotting.
- Sources: Dairy products, leafy greens, fortified plant milks, and supplements (if needed).



Vitamin D:

- Works alongside calcium to support bone health. It also plays a critical role in immune function, mood regulation, and hormone balance.
- Sources: Sunlight, fortified foods, fatty fish, and vitamin D supplements.



Magnesium:

- Supports muscle and nerve function, heart health, blood sugar control, and bone density. Magnesium is also important for sleep quality and stress management, making it crucial for overall wellness.
- Sources: Leafy greens, nuts, seeds, legumes, and whole grains.

Iron:

- Critical for producing hemoglobin, which carries oxygen in the blood. Women, especially those of childbearing age, are at higher risk of iron deficiency due to menstruation.
- Sources: Red meat, poultry, fish, lentils, beans, and iron supplements (especially for those with heavy periods).





Vitamin B12:

- Supports energy production, nerve function, and red blood cell formation. It's especially important for women following a vegetarian or vegan diet, as B12 is primarily found in animal products.
- Sources: Meat, fish, dairy, eggs, fortified plant milks, and B12 supplements.



Zinc:

- Plays a role in immune function, wound healing, hormone balance, and skin health. Zinc is also essential for reproductive health and the regulation of the menstrual cycle.
- Sources: Meat, shellfish, legumes, seeds, and zinc supplements.



Vitamin C:

- A powerful antioxidant that supports immune function, skin health, and the absorption of iron. It also aids in collagen production, which is essential for skin elasticity and joint health.
- Sources: Citrus fruits, bell peppers, berries, and vitamin C supplements.



Probiotics:

- Support gut health, which is directly linked to immune function, digestion, and hormone regulation. Probiotics can also support vaginal health and prevent infections.
- Sources: Fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, and probiotic supplements.



Iodine:

- Essential for thyroid health, which regulates metabolism, energy, and hormone balance. Iodine is especially important for women during pregnancy and breastfeeding for fetal brain development.
- Sources: Iodized salt, seaweed, dairy products, and iodine supplements.



Folate:

- Essential for DNA synthesis and cell growth. Folate is particularly important for women of childbearing age to prevent neural tube defects in pregnancy.
- Sources: Leafy greens, legumes, fortified grains, and folate supplements (especially during pregnancy).



Omega-3 Fatty Acids:

- Omega-3s are anti-inflammatory and support brain health, heart health, and hormonal balance. They are particularly beneficial for reducing menstrual cramps and supporting pregnancy.
- Sources: Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), flaxseeds, chia seeds, and fish oil supplements.



Vitamin K:

- Plays a crucial role in bone health and blood clotting. It works synergistically with vitamin D and calcium to support bone density.
- Sources: Leafy greens, broccoli, brussels sprouts, and vitamin K supplements (often paired with D3).

CoQ10 (Coenzyme Q10):

- An antioxidant that supports energy production and heart health. It is also beneficial for fertility and reducing oxidative stress, which can impact hormone health.
- Sources: Meat, fish, whole grains, and CoQ10 supplements.



Choline:

- Essential for brain health and fetal development during pregnancy. Choline supports cognitive function and liver health.
- Sources: Eggs, liver, peanuts, and choline supplements.



LIFESTYLE TIPS

For healthy hormones



Manage Stress

Stress elevates the cortisol stress hormone levels, leading to a cascade of other hormonal imbalances. To counter this, allocate time each day for stress relief activities. Practices such as meditation, yoga, breathing exercises, and spending time in nature have been shown to alleviate stress.



Go Non-Toxic

Personal care items such as shampoo, deodorant, lotion, toothpaste, and cosmetics often contain harmful chemicals like BPA, phthalates, parabens, and dioxins, which can interfere with your hormone levels. Opt for clean, non-toxic alternatives to protect your health. For recommendations, refer to the EWG's 'Skin Deep Database'.



Clean up Your Cookware

Non-stick cookware contains xenoestrogens, which imitate estrogen in the body and can disrupt hormone levels. To avoid this, opt for stainless steel or ceramic cookware. Additionally, plastics can release endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Replace plastic food containers and water bottles with glass or stainless steel alternatives.



Get a Good Night's Sleep

Insufficient sleep can significantly impact your hormones. To maintain healthy hormone levels, focus on optimizing your circadian rhythm.

- Limit exposure to blue light from cell phones and computer screens 1-2 hours before bedtime.
- Maintain a consistent sleep routine.
- Seek exposure to morning light (even a brief 5-10 minutes can be beneficial).

HEALTHY ELIMINATION

For hormone balance



Eat Enough Fiber

Fiber keeps you pooping so you can flush out excess hormones. If you're not pooping regularly, these hormones can get reabsorbed and throw off your hormone balance. So how much fiber is enough? Women should aim for at least 25 g of fiber a day, while men should aim for 38 g. High-fiber foods include raspberries, pears, apples, sweet potatoes, legumes, and avocados.



Stay Hydrated

Drinking plenty of water helps your body get rid of excess hormones. Without enough water, all that fiber will just sit inside you. So aim to drink approximately half your body weight in water every day. For example, if you weigh 160 pounds, your water goal would be 80 ounces a day.



Sweat It Out

Sweating helps your body remove toxins via your skin. This lightens the load on your liver, which helps your body detox hormones. You can sweat it out via exercise or even take in a sauna session. Nowadays there are even portable saunas that can turn your bedroom into an at-home spa.



Dry Brush

Dry brushing not only exfoliates the skin and diminishes cellulite but also boosts the lymphatic system, aiding the body in eliminating waste and toxins. A slow lymphatic system can result in estrogen accumulation. If you're new to dry brushing, this guide will take you through the process.

HORMONAL AWARENESS

Women's health encompasses a broad range of issues that affect the physical, emotional, and social well-being of women throughout their lifespan. It includes the study, diagnosis, and treatment of conditions and diseases unique to women, as well as those that may affect women differently or disproportionately compared to men. Key areas of focus in women's health include reproductive health, hormonal health, pregnancy and childbirth, menopause, gynecological health, breast health, cardiovascular health, mental health, and preventive care.

Puberty and Menstruation

- **Estrogen:** Primary female sex hormone responsible for the development of secondary sexual characteristics (breasts, pubic hair), regulation of the menstrual cycle, and maintenance of reproductive tissues. Estrogen levels rise during puberty, initiating the menstrual cycle.
- **Progesterone:** Works with estrogen to regulate the menstrual cycle and prepare the uterus for pregnancy. Progesterone levels increase after ovulation and drop if pregnancy does not occur, leading to menstruation.
- **Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH):** Stimulates the growth of ovarian follicles and the production of estrogen.
- **Luteinizing Hormone (LH):** Triggers ovulation and the release of an egg from the ovary.

Fertility and Reproductive Years

- **Estrogen and Progesterone:** Continue to regulate the menstrual cycle, with fluctuations occurring monthly. These hormones prepare the body for potential pregnancy.
- **Testosterone:** Although present in lower levels compared to men, it contributes to libido, bone density, and muscle strength in women.
- **Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH):** Indicates the remaining egg supply and is often used to assess ovarian reserve and fertility potential.



Pregnancy and Postpartum

- Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (hCG): Produced by the placenta shortly after implantation, hCG supports the corpus luteum, which maintains the production of progesterone necessary for pregnancy.
- Estrogen and Progesterone: Levels rise significantly during pregnancy to support fetal development and prepare the body for childbirth.
- Prolactin: Stimulates milk production in the mammary glands. Levels increase during pregnancy and peak postpartum.
- Oxytocin: Known as the "love hormone," it plays a crucial role in labor by stimulating uterine contractions and promoting bonding with the baby postpartum.

Perimenopause and Menopause

- Estrogen and Progesterone: Levels begin to decline during perimenopause, leading to irregular menstrual cycles and various symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and mood changes. Menopause is defined as the cessation of menstruation for 12 consecutive months.
- FSH and LH: Levels increase as the body attempts to stimulate the ovaries, which become less responsive. Elevated FSH is often used as an indicator of menopause.
- Testosterone: May also decline during this period, affecting libido, muscle mass, and overall energy levels.

Aging Gracefully

- As women age, hormonal balance plays a crucial role in maintaining health and well-being. Estrogen and progesterone naturally decline during perimenopause and menopause, impacting everything from skin elasticity to bone health and cardiovascular function. The decline in collagen production contributes to visible signs of aging, while testosterone levels, though lower in women, also decline, affecting muscle mass and libido.
- Supporting optimal levels of key hormones through diet, lifestyle, and targeted therapies can help women age gracefully, preserving vitality, mental clarity, and physical health throughout their lives.

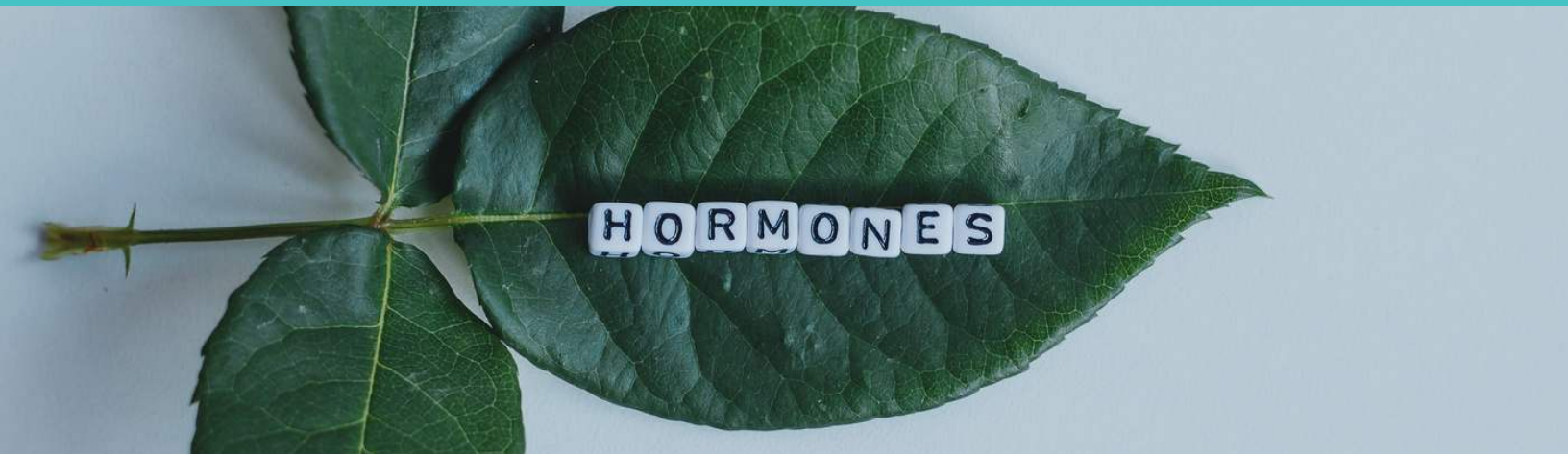
Complex Conditions – PCOS, Endometriosis, Menstrual Issues

- Conditions like Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and other menstrual irregularities are often linked to hormonal imbalances. Insulin resistance plays a central role in PCOS, contributing to elevated levels of androgens (such as testosterone), which can lead to irregular periods, acne, and hirsutism. In endometriosis, elevated levels of estrogen and inflammatory markers lead to the painful growth of endometrial tissue outside the uterus.
- Addressing these conditions requires a deep understanding of hormone regulation and how factors like inflammation, insulin resistance, and stress can exacerbate symptoms. A holistic approach to balancing hormones can often alleviate the complexity of these conditions

Thyroid, Cortisol, and Adrenals

- The thyroid gland and adrenal glands play a central role in regulating energy, metabolism, and stress response throughout a woman's life. Thyroid hormones (T3 and T4) are essential for regulating metabolism and energy production. Thyroid imbalances, such as hypothyroidism or Hashimoto's thyroiditis, can lead to symptoms like fatigue, weight gain, and mood changes, often misattributed to aging.
- Cortisol, the primary stress hormone produced by the adrenal glands, can significantly impact overall hormone balance. Chronic stress can lead to adrenal fatigue, disrupting cortisol production and depleting other hormones, such as progesterone, leading to further imbalances in estrogen and testosterone levels.





Key Points to Remember

- Menstrual Cycle: Regulated by estrogen, progesterone, FSH, and LH.
- Reproductive Years: Fluctuating estrogen and progesterone levels maintain fertility.
- Pregnancy: High levels of hCG, estrogen, progesterone, prolactin, and oxytocin support fetal development and lactation.
- Perimenopause and Menopause: Decline in estrogen and progesterone, increased FSH and LH levels, leading to menopause symptoms.
- Aging: Hormonal changes affect skin, muscles, and bones. Lifestyle approaches support healthy aging.
- Complex Conditions: Hormonal imbalances contribute to conditions like PCOS and endometriosis.
- Thyroid and Adrenal Health: Crucial for metabolism, energy, and stress response. Imbalances can impact hormonal health.

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING



Journaling

Set aside time each day or week to journal your thoughts and feelings. This simple practice helps you process emotions and gain insight into your mental state. Try prompts like, "What am I feeling right now?" or "What is one thing I can do to nurture myself today?"

- Suggestion: Keep a journal by your bedside and use it to reflect on your day or process emotions when you feel overwhelmed.



Breathing Exercises

Deep breathing can instantly calm your mind and body. A simple technique like box breathing (inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4) can help regulate stress and anxiety.

- Suggestion: Practice deep breathing for 5 minutes in the morning or whenever you feel stressed. Make this a non-negotiable part of your day to ground yourself.



Mindfulness Meditation

Practicing mindfulness, even for just 10-15 minutes a day, can help you stay present and reduce anxiety. Techniques like focusing on your breath or performing a body scan can help shift your attention away from stress.

- Suggestion: Download a guided meditation app (like Calm or Headspace) and set a daily reminder to practice mindfulness.



Gratitude Practice

Practicing gratitude can shift your focus from challenges to the positives in your life. At the end of each day, write down three things you're grateful for. This helps improve mood and emotional well-being.

- Suggestion: Keep a gratitude journal by your bedside and write in it before bed to promote a positive outlook.

SELF-CARE AND BODY AWARENESS

For hormone balance



Tracking your cycle

Tracking your menstrual cycle helps you understand how hormonal fluctuations affect your mood, energy, and physical symptoms. Use a cycle-tracking app to monitor patterns and adjust your self-care routine accordingly.

- Suggestion: Try apps like Clue or Flo to track your cycle and symptoms. Use this information to plan for times when you might need extra rest or care.



Body Awareness Scans

Perform a body scan by focusing on different areas of your body, checking in for tension or discomfort. This practice can help you become more aware of your body's needs.

- Suggestion: Spend 5-10 minutes in a quiet place, seated or lying down, and mentally scan your body from head to toe, noticing any sensations or tension.



Hydration

Start your day with a hydration ritual, such as drinking a glass of warm lemon water. This simple act encourages mindfulness and hydration, helping your body start the day refreshed.

- Suggestion: Keep a water bottle with markers or reminders. Staying hydrated improves digestion, elimination, and energy.



Evening Rituals

Create a soothing evening ritual to signal to your body that it's time to wind down. Whether it's reading, gentle stretching, or using calming essential oils, these routines can promote better sleep and relaxation.

- Suggestion: Establish a consistent bedtime routine that incorporates low lighting, calming scents (like lavender), and reflection to support restful sleep.



Conclusion: Supporting Your Health and Wellbeing

Your health and wellbeing are deeply connected to how you nourish your body, balance your hormones, and take care of yourself at every stage of life. From your menstrual cycle and reproductive years to menopause and beyond, your body's needs change, and understanding how to support those changes is key to feeling your best.

By ensuring you're getting key nutrients like calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, iron, and omega-3 fatty acids, you're providing the foundation for strong bones, balanced hormones, and a healthy immune system. Supplements such as probiotics, vitamin B12, and folate can further support digestion, energy, and hormonal health, particularly during menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause.

Beyond nutrition, taking care of your lifestyle is just as important. Prioritizing sleep, incorporating regular exercise, managing stress, and practicing mindful self-care all contribute to your overall wellbeing. By being aware of how your body feels and functions, you can address hormonal imbalances, support your thyroid and adrenal health, and build emotional resilience—all of which are key to thriving through life's transitions.

Whether you're managing complex conditions like PCOS, endometriosis, or menstrual irregularities, or simply looking to age gracefully, it's essential to be proactive about your health. By supporting your body with the right nutrition, lifestyle practices, and emotional care, you can feel strong, balanced, and vibrant.

This journey is about understanding what your body needs and creating a personalized approach to health that allows you to feel empowered at every stage of life. By focusing on these core pillars—nutrition, self-care, and emotional wellbeing—you can take charge of your health and truly thrive.





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