

— A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO —
Hormone Balance



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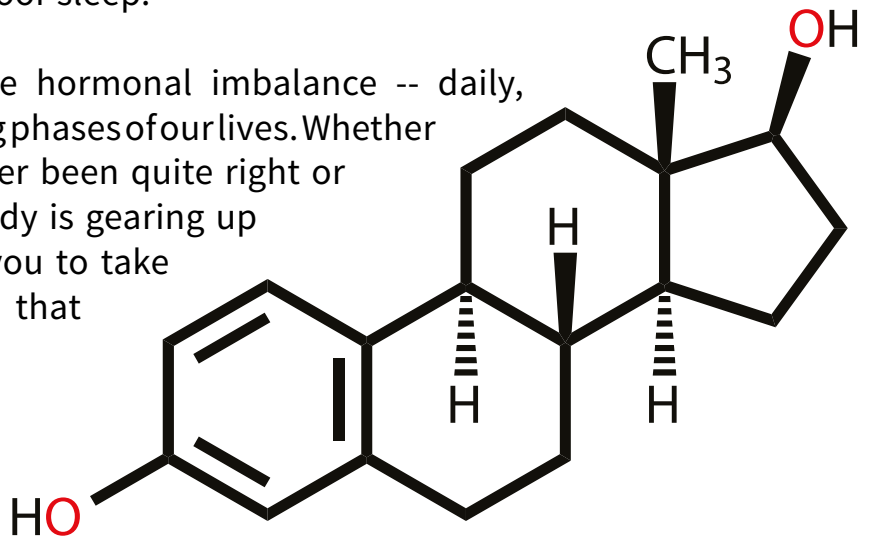
A Woman's Guide to Balancing Hormones

Many years ago, I embarked on my own journey of balancing my out-of-whack hormones. My first pregnancy was a healthy one; I delivered a nine-pound girl in less than five hours at home with the help of a midwife. I was in naturopathic medical school and knew a bit about how to take care of my health -- but not enough.

I now realize that my downfall began with minor imbalances even before pregnancy when I had low energy and chronic stress. I had become acclimated to not feeling optimal. The change in my hormones due to pregnancy and birth affected my immune system causing chronic mastitis, joint pain and exhaustion. I crashed and was forced to look for answers as to what was out of balance in my body and why.

I began to intensify my training, spending the last ten years and over 500 hours gathering and simplifying different perspectives on reaching optimal health. *A Healing Practice* is the result and is a program that I, a busy working mom, can actually accomplish. Your healing practice is a matter of fitting the different puzzle pieces together to create balance — no more PMS, no extra pounds, no feeling tired, moody, depressed or anxious, and no brain fog or poor sleep.

Yes, we will experience some hormonal imbalance -- daily, monthly, and with the changing phases of our lives. Whether your menstrual cycle has never been quite right or you've had a baby or your body is gearing up for menopause, it's time for you to take control of your hormones so that they are balanced, giving you the energy to focus on what you love doing in life.





The Language of Hormonal Balance

The language of hormones allows different parts of your body to communicate with one another; each hormone is a little messenger — a molecule of cholesterol wrapped with tiny receptors that bind to different locations in your body, providing all of your organs with a way of communicating. Hormones are choreographed in an intricate dance with one another — one hormone out of balance can throw off the entire system. The goal of hormonal balance is to have all hormones in direct and clear communication so that the whole system runs smoothly.

The Tools for Hormonal Balance

STEP 1. BALANCE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

If your blood sugar is out of balance, your hormones will continually be compensating to maintain a baseline. When you eat sugar or high carbohydrate foods, your pancreas releases insulin, which binds to cells and opens the door for glucose to move from your blood into your cells. High insulin increases your fat storage, affects your liver so that you can't process estrogen and toxins, and affects your thyroid hormone production.

Hypoglycemia, a drop in your blood sugar, is just as harmful as high glucose — your body will react in order to stay in balance. When your blood sugar drops, your brain sends messengers to your adrenal glands to release cortisol. Cortisol helps raise low blood sugar so that your brain has fuel.

Solutions: How to balance your blood sugar

- If you have a tendency to get hypoglycemic (shaky, irritable, light-headed when you skip a meal), eat a small bit of protein, perhaps just a

handful of organic almonds, every three hours. (Non-organic almonds might be sprayed with propylene oxide).

- Your meals should contain a balance of **fat** (avocado, coconut oil, olive oil, fish oil), **fiber** (beans, lentils, blackberries, apples), and **protein** (nuts, seeds, grass-fed organic meat).

STEP 2. CYCLE YOUR SEEDS

During the first phase of your menstrual cycle (day 1 of your period to day 14), estrogen is the main hormone, essential for a healthy cycle and for regulating ovulation. Too much estrogen can result in irregular cycles, fibrocystic breasts, acne, migraines and weight gain.

Solutions: Balance your hormones during the first half of your menstrual cycle

- Add fish oil capsules and 2 Tablespoons of ground flax seeds to your diet. Phyto-estrogens in flax seeds bind to estrogen receptors and stimulate them, blocking estrogen's stronger actions.



Flax Power Bar Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups almonds (preferably soaked and toasted)
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/2 cup cacao butter
- 1/2 cup almond butter
- 1/4 cup shredded coconut
- 1/4 fresh ground flax seeds
- dashes of salt and vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup cacao nibs or raw cacao powder
- 6 drops liquid stevia (or to your liking)

Optional:

- 1/4 cup chia seeds and/or hemp seeds;
raw honey and/or applesauce to
sweeten

Instructions:

- Pulse dry ingredients in food processor. Melt butter and/or oil to soften and add to processor. Press mixture into an 8" x 8" glass baking dish and chill in refrigerator for one hour or until mixture hardens. Cut and store in fridge.



The second half of your menstrual cycle (day 14 of your period to day 28) is dominated by progesterone. Adequate levels of progesterone are necessary for a healthy menstrual cycle and pregnancy. Low levels lead to an irregular cycle and/or heavy bleeding while high levels have been associated with anxiety, bloating, depression, fatigue and loss of libido.

Solution: Balance your hormones during the second half of your menstrual cycle

- Add evening primrose oil capsules and 2 Tablespoons of sesame or sunflower seeds to your diet. Sesame and sunflower seeds contain high levels of zinc and selenium, the building blocks for progesterone production. They also contain ligands, which help your hormones act efficiently. Evening primrose oil helps balance progesterone.



Sticky Sesame Seed Bars with Chocolate Drizzle

Ingredients:

- 2 cups raw nuts (cashew, peanuts, almonds...)
- 1 cup raw sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup chia seeds
- 1/2 cup raw honey
- 1/3 cup natural, unsweetened raw nut or seed butter
- 2 Tbl virgin coconut oil, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp fine sea salt
- Raw Chocolate Drizzle
- 2 Tbl virgin coconut oil, melted
- 2 Tbl raw honey
- 2 Tbl raw, unsweetened natural cocoa powder



Instructions:

Process until finely chopped, nuts, sesame and chia seeds in a food processor. Add honey, nut butter, oil, vanilla and salt. Process until mixture clumps to sides. Transfer mixture to an 8 inch pan lined with parchment paper and greased. Place greased parchment paper on top of mixture and press. Place in freezer for 30 minutes. Prepare chocolate drizzle by mixing oil, honey and chocolate. Drizzle or spread on bars and place back in freezer for 1 hour. Enjoy these protein packed snacks!

Both flax seeds and sesame seeds act as adaptogens, meaning they stabilize your physiological processes. So whether you need to increase or decrease a particular hormone, rotating the seeds brings your hormones into equilibrium.

STEP 3. LOVE YOUR LIVER

Your liver is the processing factory for hormones and for the proteins that carry hormones. When there are too many hormones in the body, either from imbalances, hormone replacement or external sources such as plastics, the liver backs up in its ability to process certain toxins and excess estrogen. This back-up leads to symptoms of irritability, PMS and menstrual irregularities.

Solutions: How to love your liver

- Start replacing your plastic food storage containers and plastic water bottles with glass or steel containers and avoid pesticides. Exogenous estrogen comes in the form of plastics and pesticides.
- Introduce foods that feed your liver, including turmeric, walnuts, avocados, green tea, and cruciferous veggies, such as kale and broccoli. These foods can be your daily vitamins.



STEP 4. GET ENOUGH SLEEP

During the last fifty years, the average person has dropped 1½ to 2 hours of sleep a night. How does lack of sleep affect your body?

- Recent studies associate sleep restriction with decreased leptin (a hormone that suppresses the appetite) and increased ghrelin (a hormone that stimulates the appetite).
- Cravings for high carbohydrate foods are brought about by a lack of sleep.
- When you sleep, your body releases an anti-aging growth hormone. Skipping a few hours of sleep a night can affect your body's ability to heal and repair tissue, including wrinkles.

Solution: How to get enough sleep

The goal is to get seven to eight hours of sleep a night. I was only able to accomplish this by turning off the TV, computer and phone and getting in bed with a good book before 11:00 PM. Artificial light affects the release of hormones. This is a difficult solution for you night owls, but even a small step toward this goal can help.

STEP 5. MACA MADNESS

This Peruvian root has so many benefits, it's difficult not to recommend it. Not only is maca good at balancing hormones that are out of whack, it also helps your thyroid gland (metabolism), adrenal glands (energy and stress), and pancreas (blood sugar). This superfood is high in minerals (calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium, phosphorous, zinc), sterols, essential fatty acids and protein. Maca is a one-stop shop for women's health.



Solution: How to enjoy maca

Maca Madness Green Smoothie Recipe

Ingredients:

- 2 frozen bananas
- 2 cups unsweetened almond milk
- 2 Tablespoons almond butter
- 1 Tablespoon maca powder
- 1 Tablespoon freshly ground flax seeds
- 1 cup spinach or other greens
- 2 Tablespoons maple syrup (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

Instructions:

- Mix in a high-speed blender; enjoy!





These are the first steps I give my patients ~ balance your blood sugar by eating fat, fiber and protein every three hours, alternate seeds with your menstrual cycle, love your liver with nutrients, sleep seven hours a night, and add maca superfood to your diet. I promise that if you make a commitment to trying these steps for six days, you will feel a difference.

If you have already made these changes and have still not reached the level of health that you seek, make an appointment with me to delve deeper into creating lasting changes in your health. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or feedback.

In health,

Dr. Liz, ND, LAc



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