

Wellness REVIEW

Creating Hormonal Harmony

The Complexity of Female Hormones

From puberty, to periods, to menopause – hormones can pose a challenge for many women throughout their lives. You may be all too familiar with symptoms such as painful, heavy or irregular periods, premenstrual mood swings and bloating, hot flushes... and the list goes on. Female hormonal conditions are complex and frequently frustrating for women. While hormonal fluctuations have traditionally been blamed, there is more to this story - many other factors also affect the subtle balance required for optimal hormonal harmony.

Riding the Hormonal Roller Coaster?

Do you feel you have no control over the ups and downs of hormonal change you ride through each month? Your symptoms may be related to one of these conditions:

- **Premenstrual syndrome (PMS):** includes symptoms of breast tenderness, migraines and mood changes prior to your period. PMS may be linked to lowered progesterone levels and often made worse by stress.
- **Endometriosis and fibroids:** women with these conditions often experience heavy, painful periods, pain throughout the month, bloating, and sometimes weight gain.
- **Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS):** missing periods, facial hair growth, sugar cravings, weight gain and difficulty conceiving are commonly experienced, due to higher than normal testosterone and lower progesterone levels.
- **Menopause:** many women suffer from hot flushes, night sweats, and anxiety, as their periods come to a stop.

Musicians Distort the Melody

While different conditions are influenced by subtle changes in hormone levels, there are many other factors that also play a role. Likened to musicians in the orchestra playing out of tune, some of these come from your body - such as inflammation (e.g. from joint pain or digestive imbalance), being overweight, and feeling stressed. The environment you live in can also play havoc with hormones. Toxins are virtually unavoidable and many, such as bisphenyl-A or 'BPA' (found in plastics, the lining of tins, and even on shopping docket) have hormone-like effects and may negatively affect your hormonal balance.

A Fine Balancing Act

Your Practitioner can help restore balance by recommending herbs and nutrients to address these factors and harmonise your hormones:

- **Vitex:** also known as chaste tree, this traditional herb helps regulate the menstrual cycle, and is often used to help reduce the moodiness associated with PMS.
- **Liquorice and peony:** help normalise testosterone levels, reducing excess facial hair, weight gain and promoting fertility in women with PCOS.
- **Rehmannia and zizyphus:** have been used to reduce the length and duration of hot flushes in menopause.
- **Magnesium:** is beneficial for all women, particularly as many have insufficient dietary intakes of this key mineral. Magnesium also provides relief from mood symptoms, period pain and hot flushes, to name a few.
- **Soy:** supports healthy oestrogen metabolism and may assist with painful, heavy periods and breast tenderness. Enjoy those edamame!

Take Charge

The following tips can help you restore hormonal balance:

- Eat organic foods to reduce your consumption of added growth promoting hormones (in meats) and pesticides (on fruits and vegetables) that have been linked to hormonal imbalance.
- Avoid hormone-disrupting chemicals found in plastics by using glassware for storing and reheating food and drinks.
- Reduce feelings of stress and anxiety with simple breathing exercises. Try breathing in for a count of five, holding your breath for a count of five, and breathing out for a count of five. Repeat for three minutes, twice daily.

Embrace your health and wellbeing as a woman and be free from hormonal symptoms. With the help of your healthcare Practitioner, you can be the conductor of your own symphony orchestra - ensuring you create a rich and harmonic melody and optimise your hormonal health!



Talk to your Practitioner about enhancing your hormonal health today!