



14 Mar 2018  
 Author: Alexandra Laskie  
 Article type: Publication  
 Page: 44  
 Weekly Times, The  
 Readership: 163000  
 AVE: \$510.45  
 Circulation: 53771

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# Bodies in balance

## HEALTHY HORMONES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO BALANCING YOUR HORMONES

**Belinda Kirkpatrick**  
**Murdoch Books**  
**RRP \$35**

**T**HERE'S been a groundswell of interest in women's hormones. Maybe it's an offshoot of the "wellness movement", that concept that sees physical and mental health as being linked.

Or perhaps because we're living in a time when equality of the sexes isn't swept under the rug but spoken about at the Oscars, not to mention on every social media platform, and manifests itself as the #metoo movement.

We're now also hearing about things like the microbiome, the ecosystem of organisms living in our digestive tract that is thought to influence everything from our weight and immune system to inflammation, metabolism and appetite.

It would seem we're open to new ways of thinking about our bodies, particularly women's bodies, so a shift from being "hormonal" to normal seems well timed.

This book, by Sydney naturopath Belinda Kirkpatrick, is for women between adolescence and menopause who want to balance their hormones naturally. That is, without help from things like the oral contraceptive pill, which is usually a mix of oestrogen and progesterone.

That said, *Healthy Hormones* is geared more towards women who



want to optimise their fertility.

For the record, it's the endocrine glands that secrete hormones into the bloodstream, and they in turn help control a variety of bodily functions such as growth, repair, digestion and reproduction, as well as many others that are still being investigated.

Belinda explains things like potential endocrine disrupters that can affect hormone balance, such as household and personal care products. She covers the effects caffeine, alcohol, sugar, stress and poor food choices have on our

hormones and provides tips for dealing with period pain, acne, bloating and back aches, to name a few.

Almost half of the book is dedicated to hormone balancing recipes. Expect to find a vitamin B6 and magnesium rich slice, a chicken coleslaw Belinda says is "a must" for anyone with symptoms of oestrogen excess, and red curry pea puree ideal for those trying to conceive.

— Alexandra Laskie

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