

HORMONES

Are yours balanced?

By Belinda Kirkpatrick -
Author of Healthy Hormones

Are you thinking about your hormonal health? You should be!

Hormones are kind of like hair ties – it's easy to forget how important they are, especially because they're hard to keep track of. But boy, when it comes to your health, hormones have a far-reaching and profound effect.

Hormones are responsible for so many factors that contribute to your overall wellbeing including your mood, energy, skin, weight, fertility and of course your periods. And if they're out of whack, you're likely to see symptoms such as irritability, weight gain, fatigue, acne, painful or irregular periods and fertility issues.

So how do you ensure your hormones are happy? Let's answer that by taking a closer look at three of the most important hormones.

1. PROGESTERONE

Why is it important?

Progesterone helps to keep your periods regular, supports early pregnancy, has a calming effect and helps to improve your mood. Low progesterone can result in moodiness, difficulty concentrating, fatigue and anxiety. Short menstrual cycles, breast tenderness, subfertility and PMS are often signs of poor progesterone production.

What can you do to ensure a happy balance?

Stress can affect progesterone production so support healthy progesterone levels by deep breathing, slowing down and learning to say no! Consider a supplement containing zinc, vitamin B6 and magnesium. Increase vitamin C rich foods such as broccoli, strawberries, capsicum, oranges and kiwi fruit.

2. OESTROGEN

Why is it important?

Oestrogen helps to regulate the menstrual cycle and is responsible for controlling the growth of the lining of the uterus in the first half of the menstrual cycle (women who are not menstruating will usually have low oestrogen). It also helps to reduce bone loss and keeps the vagina and bladder functioning properly (no vaginal dryness or leaky bladders!) At normal levels, oestrogen helps to support mood but if it becomes too low or too high then depression, anxiety and insomnia can result.

What can you do to ensure a happy balance?

If your oestrogen is too high (usually from too much exposure to environmental

oestrogens, poor liver clearance, obesity, poor diet or low progesterone), bump up your intake of brassica veggies such as broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, kale, spinach and brussel sprouts. Avoid using too much plastic, increase resistance exercise and add 1-2 tablespoons of ground linseeds to your food daily.

If oestrogen is too low, reduce exercise to 2-3 days per week (especially if you are nuts for intense cardio sessions); increase good fats such as avocado, tahini, olive oil, coconut oil and nuts. Enjoy lots of sesame seeds and tahini in your diet and ensure you are eating enough starchy veggies such as sweet potato and pumpkin.

3. TESTOSTERONE

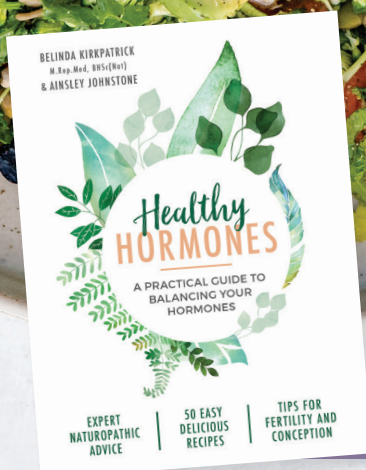
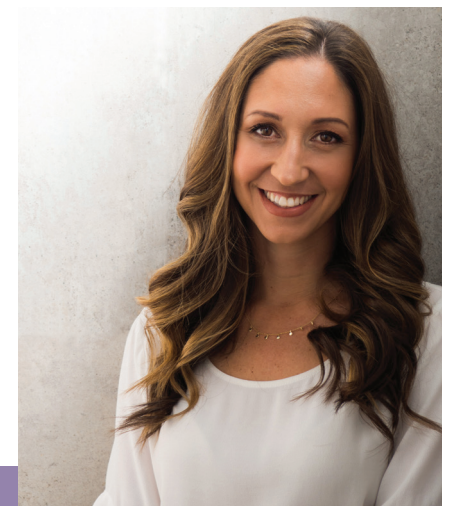
Why is it important?

Testosterone is essential for a healthy sex drive, bone strength, brain function and the development of lean muscle mass and strength. High testosterone however, can be an issue for many women (such as those with PCOS as high levels often result from a failure to ovulate) where it can contribute to acne, excess hair growth, menstrual irregularity and oily skin.

What can you do to ensure a happy balance?

Reduce high testosterone levels by drinking 2-3 cups of spearmint tea most days, consider a good quality fish oil supplement, increase exercise and try going grain and sugar free (high intake of sugar and refined carbs increases insulin levels which cause the ovaries to produce more testosterone).

Remember, it's all about small but consistent changes. When it comes to balancing your hormones, it won't happen overnight, but if you can make some changes you will start to see a difference. Check out my book 'Healthy Hormones' for naturopathic advice and lifestyle tips as well as 50 easy and super yummy recipes which are specially designed to balance your hormones and help you feel your very best.



FIND BELINDA'S BOOK IN STORE NOW