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# Healthy HORMONES

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
BALANCING YOUR  
HORMONES

EXPERT  
NATUROPATHIC  
ADVICE

50 EASY  
DELICIOUS  
RECIPES

TIPS FOR  
FERTILITY AND  
CONCEPTION





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# Hormonal Balance

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## LIFESTYLE CHANGES

**MAKE AS MUCH OF YOUR DIET ORGANIC AS POSSIBLE.** I recommend buying produce from an organic delivery service or checking out your local farmers' market, where the produce sold is usually grown organically or at least is grown locally. This will reduce your exposure to the hormone-disrupting chemicals that are sometimes sprayed on fruits and vegetables. Aim to eat organically produced meat, poultry, dairy foods and butter from animals that are preferably not treated with steroids and antibiotics<sup>[11]</sup>.

**ALWAYS WASH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.** It is a good idea to wash and peel your produce to remove any external chemical, organic and wax residues. A fruit and vegetable wash can be purchased from most health-food stores: a simple rinse under cold water often isn't enough to remove fat-soluble residues. You can also try washing your produce in a solution of three parts water to one part apple cider vinegar.

**USE FOOD TO BOOST YOUR LIVER FUNCTION AND PROTECT YOUR BODY.** Asparagus, spinach, watermelon, pears, pumpkin (squash), potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower and other cruciferous vegetables are rich in glutamine, which can help the liver remove waste and boost your brain and immune system. Increasing your intake of foods that contain allyl sulphide — such as garlic, shallots, onions and chives — also stimulates glutathione production, which further helps to protect the liver and reduce oxidative stress.



**AVOID TINNED FOODS OR FOODS PACKAGED IN PLASTIC.** Many plastics and the linings of tins contain bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical that was first identified as a synthetic oestrogen in the 1930s and was even considered for pharmaceutical use at that time. Since that time, BPA has been identified as an endocrine disruptor, and many countries are currently requiring its use to be phased out<sup>[12]</sup>. Endocrine disruptors may be linked to cancerous tumours, birth defects and developmental disorders<sup>[13]</sup>. BPA can leach from the lining of a tin into the food it contains. Many plastics also contain BPA and other chemicals, and the softer the plastic, the more likely the chemicals are to leach into food stored in the container. While there is current debate concerning



the effects of low-dose exposure to BPA on human health, try to avoid it where possible<sup>[14]</sup>. Try to have hot drinks in a ceramic mug and avoid using takeaway coffee cups, which have a plastic lid and a plastic lining. Instead of using plastic wrap, you can purchase biofilm from most health-food stores. Use glass cookware for microwave and oven cooking. Practically, most of us will use tinned foods and plastic containers for convenience from time to time, but we can minimise their use and look for alternatives where practical.



**INSTALL A WATER FILTER.** It is important that water is as fresh and pure as possible, as we drink so much of it! A filter can ensure that there are no unwanted contaminants from ageing household pipes as well as biological contaminants such as parasites<sup>[15]</sup>. I think it also tastes better.

**USE PLANTS FOR FILTERING THE AIR IN YOUR HOME.** Some common household plants can help clear the air<sup>[16]</sup>. The peace lily (*Spathyphillum* spp.) is a low-maintenance indoor plant that helps to reduce mould and clears chemicals such as formaldehyde, benzene and trichloroethylene from the air. The bamboo palm (*Chamaedorea seifrizii*) is also great at improving air quality and helps to put moisture into the air due to its high transpiration rate.

**ELIMINATE PESTICIDE, HERBICIDE AND INSECTICIDE** use on lawns and gardens. There are many effective organic products available, or you can learn to make your own pest-control formulas. Do an internet search for 'natural pesticides' or ask at your local garden centre. You may also find that planting your garden with species that are native to your country or region makes it easier to look after and requires few, if any, chemical solutions. It's easy to make your own compost as well, rather than relying on mass-produced fertilisers.

**AVOID PET PRODUCTS SUCH AS FLEA COLLARS** and commercial pet washes, which usually contain toxic substances that may be dangerous to both animals and pet owners. Remember that any product that can kill an insect is also potentially harmful to humans, so avoid using flysprays and other bug killers in the home. There are plenty of more natural options available that are safe for you and your family; try using cedarwood oil products, which can kill fleas and ticks<sup>[17]</sup>.



## MEDITATION *AND* mindfulness

Making time to slow down and be mindful is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle in the modern world. Meditation and mindfulness can help to reduce stress and the negative impact of cortisol on hormonal balance; they also promote healthy moods, good immunity and restful sleep. The great thing about incorporating mindfulness and meditation into your regular routine is that the practice doesn't have to take long, it can be done anywhere, it costs nothing and you can't get it wrong. Simply trying to be mindful and meditative slows down the body, increases parasympathetic nervous system activity, decreases excessive cortisol and reduces inflammation.

Studies have shown that mindfulness is linked to positive changes in the brain and the body's production of hormones. In addition to its physical effects, mindfulness may also reduce the emotional experience of pain, making it essential for those with chronic pain conditions such as endometriosis. There is a theory that high cortisol levels can decrease the production of progesterone and result in a relative progesterone deficiency or relative oestrogen excess. This may exacerbate negative menstrual symptoms and, in cases of severe or chronic stress, even delay ovulation.

Any type of meditation or mindfulness can help to reduce anxiety and reduce cortisol levels. Even taking a few slow deep breaths activates the vagus nerve to send a message within your nervous system to lower blood pressure, slow the heart rate and decrease cortisol. Try it right now: close your eyes and take 10 slow, deep breaths and feel the difference within yourself. I recommend that my clients get into the habit of destressing by listening to a meditation or mindfulness app on their smartphone for 10 minutes before bed each night.





# THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP AND REST



**Adequate sleep is essential for good health and happy hormones. Unfortunately, we often sacrifice sleep time for work, household chores and leisure time.**

Most experts agree that women need an average of seven to nine hours of sleep each night for optimal health. When the body does not spend enough time in REM sleep (a stage of sleep characterised by Rapid Eye Movement), many believe it can have a negative effect on general health, resulting in hormonal disruption, irregular menstrual cycles and delayed ovulation. Insufficient sleep can also affect weight loss or gain. When we have had enough to eat, a hormone called leptin signals to the brain that we are satisfied and suppresses our appetite. Regular sleep is needed to produce leptin and sleep loss is associated with an increase in appetite and weight gain<sup>[24]</sup>. Leptin levels can also affect ovulation, so disrupted leptin release due to lack of sleep can lead to irregular menstrual cycles.

The answer? Prioritise your sleep time. Try to create a sleep routine in which you go to bed at the same time each night and wake at the same time each morning.

## SOUND SLEEP TIPS

**Aim to exercise early in the day**

***Make your bedroom as dark as possible; dim bright lights in the evening***

**Reduce clutter and electronic devices from beside your bed**

***Avoid television, computers and smartphones for at least half an hour before bed***

**Drink a cup of chamomile or valerian tea just before bed**

***When you lie down to sleep, take 10 deep, slow breaths with your eyes closed  
(or use a mindfulness app on your smartphone)***

# Red chilli lentils AND haloumi

**This weekend breakfast is a great way to start the day with a nutrient-dense vegetarian meal filled with protein, iron and fibre. Try batch-cooking the lentil mixture and keeping the leftovers in the freezer ready for another meal.**

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PREPARATION 15 MINS

COOKING 20 MINS

SERVES 2

205 g (7¼ oz/1 cup) red lentils

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 small onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, chopped

2 tablespoons tomato paste (concentrated purée)

½ fresh red chilli, finely chopped

2 eggs

4 slices of haloumi

baby spinach leaves, to serve

Rinse the red lentils under cold water and discard any brown bits. Heat the olive oil in a medium frying pan and add the onion. Cook for a few minutes, then add the garlic and cook for a few more minutes to soften. Add the red lentils, 500 ml (17 fl oz/2 cups) of water, the tomato paste and chilli; season with pepper and stir to combine.

Bring to the boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 10–12 minutes, stirring occasionally.

While the lentils are cooking, cook the eggs to your liking (soft- or hard-boiled) and heat a small frying pan over medium heat. Fry the haloumi slices for approximately 2 minutes each side until lightly golden on both sides.

To serve, divide the cooked lentils between two serving bowls and top each one with two slices of haloumi and a peeled egg. Add a good handful of spinach leaves. Season with salt.











## COMMON HORMONAL CONDITIONS

This section gives an explanation of common conditions that can affect hormonal balance and provides diet and lifestyle recommendations to help deal with them. If you think you might be experiencing any of the following conditions, it is advisable to see your GP as well as accessing complementary health care, such as seeing a naturopath.

### POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME (PCOS)

PCOS is a hormonal and metabolic condition in which the levels of a woman's sex hormones are out of balance, resulting in a failure to ovulate regularly. This can lead to excessive production of androgens (male hormones, such as testosterone); cysts in the ovaries (visible by ultrasound); and deficiencies of oestrogen and progesterone, which may result in difficulty conceiving. Symptoms may include: irregular or absent menstrual cycles, excess hair growth, acne, poor weight control and fertility issues.

There are several causes of PCOS, many of them overlapping. Insulin resistance — the most common cause of PCOS — is something that can often be corrected with diet and lifestyle changes. Treatment requires time, careful nutrition and may be assisted by naturopathic supplementation. Inflammatory (chronic immune activation) PCOS can also be resolved with proper nutrition and lifestyle changes as described below. Talk to a naturopath before embarking on these changes to make sure you know which ones are right for you.

- The fastest way to regulate your cycle and promote ovulation is by addressing insulin resistance in the ovaries. A low-sugar and low-carbohydrate diet is recommended for women with PCOS. Avoid grains and sugars if your cycle is irregular or missing.
- Focus on protein, 'good' fats and loads of veggies with every meal and for most snacks.

- Minimise your fruit intake: one to two serves per day of low-GI fruits such as berries and cherries.
- Reduce testosterone levels (which may contribute to acne and excess hair growth) with 2–3 cups of spearmint tea daily.
- Aim to exercise four or five times a week to reduce weight (if required) or reduce exercise to two or three times a week if your body weight is very low and exercise frequency or intensity is high. Exercise should include strength and resistance training to build muscle and improve insulin resistance.
- Reduce insulin resistance and stabilise blood-sugar levels by enjoying two to three cups of cinnamon tea daily.
- Increase your intake of magnesium-rich foods such as dark, leafy greens, nuts and seeds.
- Include foods containing chromium, such as broccoli, egg yolks and beans, to reduce sugar cravings.



### POLYCYSTIC (MULTIFOLLICULAR) OVARIES

The difference between PCOS and polycystic ovaries (PCO) is confusing for many women. PCOS refers to the syndrome described above, while a diagnosis of polycystic ovaries simply means that, in a pelvic ultrasound examination, the ovaries appear to be covered in multiple small follicles. I prefer to call these multifollicular ovaries to limit the confusion. Multifollicular ovaries have an increased number (more than 12) of small follicles that have been arrested during follicle development. They are generally caused by a lack of ovulation and are very commonly seen after prolonged oral contraceptive use, before the woman starts to ovulate and menstruate on her own again. Another cause may be hypothalamic amenorrhoea, which is when the brain stops sending the signals to the pituitary gland to release its hormones and thus overall hormone levels are suppressed and menstruation does not occur.

While most women with PCOS have multifollicular ovaries (due to a lack of regular ovulation), some women with PCOS have ovaries that appear normal. Around 20 per cent of all women having a pelvic ultrasound are found to have multifollicular ovaries and many of these women have regular cycles, ovulate regularly and have normal reproductive function. If the ultrasound was repeated months later, the ovaries would appear normal for many women.

AN ULTRASOUND DIAGNOSIS OF POLYCYSTIC OVARIES SIMPLY MEANS THAT THE OVARIES APPEAR TO BE COVERED IN MULTIPLE SMALL FOLLICLES.

## WHY AM I NOT PREGNANT YET?

There are many reasons why conception may be difficult or not immediate.

- 1 TRYING AT THE WRONG TIME** If you know when you are ovulating (use our ovulation chart on page 22), start trying every second day from four days before ovulation to one day after.
- 2 AUTIMUNE CONDITIONS** See page 62 for details. Lifestyle and dietary aims are to reduce inflammation, support digestive health and the immune system.
- 3 STRESS** Excessive cortisol production due to long-term or acute stress can affect fertility. This includes people who are always on the go and have very little downtime. Make time to slow down and relax. See our tips on page 81.
- 4 SPERM QUALITY** Sperm quality can be improved by making diet and lifestyle changes. If the male partner is over 35 or you have suffered miscarriages, ask your specialist to test DNA fragmentation of the sperm in addition to semen analysis.
- 5 THYROID DYSFUNCTIONING** Good thyroid health and function is essential for good hormonal health (especially when it comes to conception and pregnancy maintenance). See page 64 for more information.
- 6 NUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES** Load up on plenty of protein, 'good' fats and vegetables and minimise grains, sugar and processed foods. Follow the Conception Health Diet tips on page 74.
- 7 LOW BODY WEIGHT** Studies have shown that many women with a BMI of 18–19 may still have periods but not be ovulating<sup>46</sup>. Reduce exercise and increase intake of 'good' fats such as avocado, salmon, olive oil and full fat dairy foods.
- 8 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH** Conditions such as endometriosis, PCOS, fibroids, adhesions and ovulation disorders may be improved with a combination of diet, lifestyle, supplementation and medical treatment (including surgery if required).
- 9 INSUFFICIENT PROGESTERONE** Low progesterone might be an issue if you experience spotting before your period, tender and swollen breasts, PMS or short cycles. Progesterone levels peak a week after ovulation and can be tested with a blood test at this time.
- 10 MITOCHONDRIAL MUTATIONS** There are several types of MTHFR mutations and the more severe forms may contribute to a range of negative health effects including miscarriage and difficulty conceiving. See page 65 for more information.
- 11 LOW OVARIAN RESERVE** This will happen naturally as women age, but some women have low reserves at a younger age. A diet rich in antioxidants, in addition to specific supplementation, can be helpful. You only need one good egg (and one good sperm) but it may take a little longer to find it.







**START TO MAKE THE SWITCH TO ORGANIC PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS.** such as deodorants, shampoos, sunscreens, skin care, body care and baby products. It is easy and cheap to make any personal care products using items from your kitchen cabinet. My all-time favourite eye make-up remover is coconut oil, which is nontoxic, cheap and works brilliantly. Be aware of synthetic fragrances in products, which can be hormone disruptors<sup>16</sup>.

**AVOID ANTI-BACTERIAL ANYTHING.** The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently banned the use of several key chemicals in antibacterial hand soap, including triclosan and triclosan, due to their potentially damaging effects on the immune system. The FDA states that antibacterial washes may not only do more harm than good, but there is also no scientific evidence that they are any better than simple soap and water. I believe that certain ingredients in these products may also contribute to bacterial resistance to antibiotics and have unwanted hormonal effects.

**CHECK YOUR SUNSCREEN.** Look for sunscreens with natural ingredients and preservatives and use a physical barrier such as zinc oxide to protect your skin from the sun's harmful rays. It is also a good idea to always wear a hat and stay out of the sun in the middle of the day. Unfortunately, even sunscreen (which protects us from harmful UV radiation) may contain potential endocrine disruptors<sup>16</sup>. Some 'natural' sunscreens also have unnatural preservatives, so be sure to read the ingredient list carefully.

**MAKE-UP.** Products you are using on your body and even your lips (where small amounts can be ingested) may contain potentially harmful ingredients. Luckily for us, natural and nontoxic make-up is available, so it is worth doing your research and aligning yourself with brands you can trust. It is important to note that a tiny bit of any of these chemicals is unlikely to cause harm in isolation but when you are using these products on a regular basis, you may end up with levels that are not considered healthy. Check the labels on your make-up and skin-care products and see the table on the opposite page for common ingredients you may want to avoid.

SUBSTANCE	WHY IT'S HARMFUL	COMMONLY FOUND IN
Parabens	Parabens can mimic oestrogen and have been shown to disrupt hormones, in addition to being linked to skin and breast cancers.	Shampoo, conditioner, deodorants, shower gels and facial scrubs.
Phthalates	Two decades of research on phthalates have shown hormonal disruption and potential harm to the unborn baby during pregnancy. Also linked to infertility and reduced levels of sex hormones.	Cosmetics, lotion, nail polish, body wash and hair-care products.
Lead	Neurotoxin linked to hormonal disruption, miscarriage and fertility problems.	Very tiny amounts may be found in lipstick, eyeshadow and foundation.
Quaternium-15	A known skin irritant and allergen that is a special concern for hairdressers and cleaners who may be exposed for long periods of time.	Hair conditioner, hair styling products, shaving products, household cleaning products and some contact lens solutions.
Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA) and butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)	These preservatives have been shown to impair blood clotting and promote tumour growth; they are banned in many countries.	Lipstick, eyeliner, blusher, foundation, moisturiser, skin cleanser.
Fragrances derived from petrochemicals	Many products list 'fragrance' or 'perfume' on their label but few disclose exactly which chemicals are used to create the fragrance. Many of them contain phthalates and ingredients that may be hormone disruptors. It's better to be safe than sorry.	Found in nearly every personal-care product: perfume, deodorant, body lotion, soap, shampoo, foundation, sunscreen and also household products such as scented candles, air freshener, detergents and cleaning products.



## UNDERSTANDING SUPPLEMENTS

While most of us would prefer to obtain all our nutrients from the food we eat, the reality is that sometimes our needs are greater than what we can eat or absorb from our diet. This may be due to poor nutrient quality in food, too many processed foods, a lack of vital nutrients in our soil or an increased need for certain nutrients due to stress or health conditions. Nutritional supplements can be used to correct nutrient deficiencies or can be used in therapeutic doses to manage and treat certain conditions.

It is advisable to have a naturopath prescribe supplements specifically for you to ensure you are taking everything you need (and nothing you don't), to indicate how long you should take the supplement for; and also to ensure that there are no contraindications. Always mention any supplements you are taking to your doctor to make sure there are no conflicts with prescription medicines.

Some common supplements that your naturopath might prescribe are listed here. For more detailed information, see page 232.

SUPPLEMENT	EFFECT	WHO MIGHT NEED IT?
FISH OILS	anti-inflammatory	people who do not eat fish, those suffering from inflammation, pain or auto-immune diseases
ZINC	regulates and supports cycles, blocks excess androgens	women with PCOS and women wanting to conceive, women taking the contraceptive pill
CoQ10 (Coenzyme Q)	energy production, antioxidant	women wanting to conceive, especially over the age of 35 and those undergoing IVF treatment
NAC (N-acetyl cysteine)	antioxidant, anti-inflammatory	women with endometriosis or PCOS and those wanting to conceive
LIPIC ACID	antioxidant	women with PCOS and/or those wanting to conceive
IODINE	used to make thyroid hormones	requirements are increased during pregnancy

VITAMIN D	essential for progesterone production, immunity, bone health and healthy mood	people who spend little time in the sun and those who cover exposed skin with sunscreen or clothing; people with dark skin may also require vitamin D supplementation
IRON	essential for energy and immune function and important in pregnancy	women who experience heavy menstrual blood loss, vegetarians and vegans many benefit from iron supplementation
PROBIOTICS	maintain healthy intestinal bacteria	people with a low intake of fibre, those who have been on antibiotics and those with chronic low immunity or digestive issues
VITAMIN E	antioxidant and anti-inflammatory	women with oestrogen deficiency, thin uterine lining or scanty bleeds in addition to older women trying to conceive and those undergoing IVF
VITAMIN C	antioxidant, immune stimulant	people with low immune function (recurrent colds and flu), those who consume minimal fresh fruit and vegetables, those experiencing stress or with low progesterone
CALCIUM	essential for healthy bones	increase at menopause to prevent osteoporosis; also those with hypothyroidism/amenorrhoea
MAGNESIUM	relax muscles and calm the nervous system	those experiencing muscle cramps, poor sleep, fatigue and relative progesterone deficiency
VITAMIN B6	progesterone production, healthy mood, PMS	women with symptoms of PMS such as fluid retention, cramping, anxiety, depression, insomnia
VITAMIN B12	energy production, healthy mood, helps to make DNA, essential for healthy ovulation and fertility	vegetarians and vegans, women with heavy periods and those trying to conceive
FOLATE	essential during pregnancy and for at least three months prior to conception	those with a genetic defect in folate metabolism may require folate supplementation in addition to women wanting to conceive
CHROMIUM	helps control blood-sugar levels as well as the metabolism of protein and fat	those with insulin resistance and sugar cravings or those who consume high amounts of carbohydrate foods
INOSITOL	promotes ovulation and helps with insulin resistance	those with PCOS, hypothyroidism, experiencing stress, low mood or anxiety
SELENIUM	supports thyroid health	selenium is very low in Australian soil, which means that deficiency is common
DIINOLYMETHANE (DIM) / INDOLE-3-CARBINOL (I-3-C)	may reduce the risk of breast and cervical cancer	women with endometriosis and oestrogen excess, women with family history of breast or cervical cancer may also benefit



## Lunch

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## Roasted cauliflower soup

The cauliflower in this hearty soup makes it really creamy and even people who don't love cauliflower will probably enjoy this dish. Cauliflower is a member of the brassica family of vegetables, known for their hormone-balancing and oestrogen-clearing effects. If you use fresh chicken bone broth, you will also get the extra digestive health and nutritional benefits. The feta, parsley and hazelnut toppings really make this dish special, but you could also use the Creamy tahini dressing (see page 200).

PREPARATION 20 MINS  
COOKING 1 HOUR 20 MINS  
SERVES 4

1 whole cauliflower  
2 large onions or 4 small ones, cut into wedges  
1 fennel bulb, cut into wedges  
6 garlic cloves  
olive oil spray  
1 potato, chopped  
2 tablespoons thyme leaves  
2 teaspoons ground cardamom  
2 teaspoons ground cumin  
1 teaspoon paprika  
1 litre (35 fl oz/4 cups) chicken bone broth or stock  
milk (optional)  
parsley, feta cheese and roasted hazelnuts, for topping

Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F). Line 2 large baking trays with baking paper.

Chop cauliflower into small chunks, about 4 cm (1½ inches). Spread the cauliflower chunks, onion and fennel wedges and whole garlic cloves on the prepared trays and season with salt and pepper.

Spray with olive oil and roast for 40 minutes or until vegetables are lightly golden.

Put the roasted vegetables in a large saucepan, removing the soft roasted garlic from the skin. Add the potato, thyme, cardamom, cumin, paprika and the chicken broth. You may have to add a little extra water to cover the vegetables.

Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 30 minutes. Blitz with a handheld blender until very smooth. Add a little milk for a creamier soup. Serve with chopped parsley, crumbled feta and chopped hazelnuts.



👉 THIS SOUP CAN BE FROZEN IN SMALL BATCHES FOR MULTIPLE MEALS.





## Big frittata

With so much focus on protein, it can be a nice change to have a vegetarian meal that still contains protein (thanks to the eggs and cheese). The mushrooms in this recipe are a source of selenium, which helps to support optimal fertility and a healthy thyroid. This recipe is particularly recommended for those with autoimmune thyroid issues. This is a perfect dish to slice and freeze and use for lunches or a quick dinner. Serve with a simple salad.

PREPARATION 10 MINS  
COOKING 1 HOUR 5 MINS  
SERVES 8

1 sweet potato, chopped  
olive oil, for roasting and frying  
1 brown onion, thinly sliced  
200 g (7 oz) Swiss brown mushrooms (about 10), coarsely chopped  
12 eggs  
185 g (6 fl oz/½ cup) milk  
50 g (1 ½ oz/½ cup) grated cheddar cheese (or cheese of your choice)  
1 zucchini (courgette), grated  
45 g (1 ½ oz/½ cup) baby spinach leaves  
1 tablespoon thyme leaves  
100 g (3 ½ oz) cherry tomatoes, halved  
60 g (2 ¼ oz) goat's cheese

Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F). Line a baking tray with baking paper.

Spread the sweet potato on the tray, spray with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, cook the onion and mushrooms in a medium frying pan with 1 tablespoon of oil for about 10 minutes until soft.

Line a large baking dish with baking paper and spray with oil. Turn the oven down to 180°C (350°F).

Whisk the eggs in a bowl and add milk, grated cheese and grated zucchini. Stir until combined.

Spread the onion, mushrooms, baby spinach leaves and roasted sweet potatoes in the prepared baking dish and pour the egg mixture over. Top with thyme leaves, cherry tomatoes and crumble the goat's cheese over. Bake for about 50 minutes until the egg has set.

Slice and serve with a salad and a good-quality tomato chutney.



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## Fish with Asian salad AND RED CURRY PEA PURÉE

This is a great weekend meal as it's a little more fancy and great for entertaining. The red curry pea purée, bursting with a beautiful balance of flavours, makes the dish unique. With such a great range of herbs, it is full of antioxidants and perfect for those trying to conceive or undergoing IVF. Cutting the salad vegetables into matchsticks makes the dish look elegant.

PREPARATION 20 MINS  
COOKING 15 MINS  
SERVES 4

260 g (9 ¼ oz/2 cups) frozen baby peas  
1–2 teaspoons red curry paste  
1 tablespoon sesame oil  
1 garlic clove, chopped  
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger  
3 cm (1 ¼ inch) lemongrass stem, very finely sliced  
3 kaffir lime leaves, very finely sliced  
4 x 180 g (6 ¼ oz) pieces of firm white-fleshed fish  
Asian-style dressing (see page 200)

### SALAD

1 large handful of bean sprouts  
1 large handful of coriander (cilantro) leaves  
1 handful of mint  
6–8 snow peas (mangetout), blanched  
1 Lebanese (short) cucumber, julienned  
½ capsicum (pepper), julienned  
½ red chilli, finely sliced  
2 tablespoons toasted coconut  
40 g (1 ½ oz/¼ cup) cashews, toasted

Cook the peas in a saucepan of boiling water for about 2 minutes. Drain and transfer to a smoothie maker or blender to blitz until really smooth. Add the red curry paste a teaspoon at a time and mix together until blended. Taste as you add it: the purée shouldn't be too strong — just a nice hint of flavour. Add a tablespoon of water if the purée is too thick.

Heat a medium frying pan over medium heat and stir the sesame oil, garlic, ginger, lemongrass and lime leaves for a few minutes. Move the mixture to the side of the pan and add the fish. Spoon the herb mix onto the fish while it is cooking. Cook fish for about 5–8 minutes depending on the size, until it is just cooked through.

To make the salad, combine the bean sprouts, coriander, mint, snow peas, cucumber and capsicum in a bowl. Mix well, then top with chilli, toasted coconut, toasted cashews. Dress with some of the Asian-style dressing.

To serve, place a large spoonful of pea purée on each plate, top with a piece of fish and add some salad on the side.



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'As a woman and a medical doctor, I recommend all women read this delicious book to help them make practical and daily choices. It's a book that nicely balances scientific explanations with nourishing food truths.'

**DR NATASHA ANDREADIS,**

*Fertility and Hormone Specialist, Gynaecologist, Clinical Lecturer, University of Sydney*

Discover how to feel your best and balance your hormones, naturally. *Healthy Hormones* is about making small and realistic changes to help your body function at its optimum level.

Naturopath Belinda Kirkpatrick helps you understand your hormones and provides easy ways to manage symptoms, hormonal conditions and fertility through diet and lifestyle.

Expert nutritional advice and lifestyle tips are combined with answers to the many questions that women have asked Belinda during a decade of clinical practice.

*Healthy Hormones* features 50 deliciously healthy family recipes, specially created, styled and photographed by recipe developer Ainsley Johnstone. The dishes are tailored around hormone-balancing ingredients and nutrient-dense fertility foods.



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