



HAPPY HORMONES



orthoplex

Hormones are blamed for a plethora of different conditions and unpleasant symptoms, but do you know exactly what they are and what they do?

Often, we hear about hormones in the context of Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) and the menstrual cycle, but their impact goes far beyond that. Present in both men and women, hormones play a crucial role in many major processes in the body.

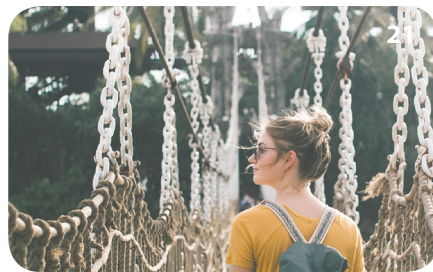
Created and regulated by the endocrine system, hormones are chemical messengers that communicate with our organs. Some of the key functions of hormones include growth, repair, sexual function and reproduction, digestion and homeostasis.

Given the huge role that the endocrine system and hormones play in overall wellbeing, it's not surprising that a hormone imbalance can cause some debilitating symptoms. From difficulty sleeping, to anxiety and fatigue, all the way to depression and fertility issues, so many elements of your health depend on maintaining a healthy hormonal balance.

Hormones are incredibly complicated, and it is always important to seek the advice of your healthcare practitioner to address hormonal issues. This booklet is here to support you on your journey and provide some information on how hormones work. The information in this booklet is generic in nature, so please consult your healthcare practitioner before making any dietary or lifestyle changes.



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THE USUAL SUSPECTS

While the body uses dozens of different hormones, there are three main ones that you might be familiar with. Oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone are three of the better-known hormones of the endocrine system, and we've explained them in more detail below.

Progesterone

Progesterone, often referred to as the "pregnancy hormone", is largely responsible for fertility. Much like oestrogen, progesterone levels fluctuate in line with the menstrual cycle, and are at their highest 5-7 days after ovulation.

As its alias implies, progesterone plays a critical role in conceiving and maintaining a pregnancy. Low progesterone levels can cause heartache for some as it can make conception more difficult. Low progesterone levels during pregnancy have also been linked to complications such as miscarriage and early labour.

Testosterone

While testosterone may conjure up images of muscly men at the gym, it may come as a surprise to learn that this hormone is present in both men and women. While men do produce far more testosterone than women, the role this hormone plays in women's bodies is still important. In men, testosterone affects sex drive, sperm production and hair

growth. In both men and women, testosterone is involved in bone and muscle mass and signals the body to produce new blood cells.

Oestrogen

Oestrogen is arguably the best-known sex hormone, and while it is present in both men and women, it plays a bigger role in women's bodies. There are three types of Oestrogen in women; all of them are present throughout a woman's life, but one will dominate depending on life stage. Oestradiol during childbearing years, oestriol during pregnancy and oestrone after menopause.

Oestrogen levels fluctuate in line with the menstrual cycle, being at their highest during the middle of the cycle (ovulation), and lowest during menstruation.

As a sex hormone, it isn't surprising to learn that oestrogen heavily influences puberty, the menstrual cycle and pregnancy. But it also plays an important role in bone strength and maintaining healthy cholesterol levels.

{ article }

HORMONES AND STRESS

Hormones and stress have a strong working relationship, as we've mentioned a couple of times. Here, we go into that relationship a little more and explain how hormones respond to stress.

What is stress?

Biologically, stress prepares the body to respond to a potential threat or danger. This response is commonly referred to as "fight or flight".

What happens when we experience stress?

During stressful times, you might experience headaches, an elevated heart rate, faster breathing, tense muscles and more.

All these symptoms are triggered by the release of stress hormones. This is controlled by part of your brain called the hypothalamus which connects the endocrine and nervous systems. When you experience stress, the hypothalamus sends a message to your adrenal glands to release two main stress hormones: adrenaline and cortisol.

Adrenaline

The immediate reactions felt when you encounter stress, such as elevated heart rate, tense muscles, fast breathing and sweating are all thanks to adrenaline. Adrenaline also provides a rush of energy which throughout our evolution, has been necessary to either fight, or flight!

Cortisol

During prolonged or chronic stress, the adrenal glands receive the signal to release cortisol.

The stress effects of cortisol can take longer to kick in than adrenaline, but it is just as important! Cortisol ensures there is enough glucose in the blood for energy production, and helps to suppress bodily functions that do not directly support the "fight or flight" reaction, such as digestion, reproduction and the immune system. If cortisol levels are raised long term though, it can lead to serious health problems.

Luteal Phase

During the luteal phase, assuming pregnancy does not occur, levels of oestrogen and progesterone will fall, triggering a period. During this phase, there may be some symptoms of premenstrual syndrome.

Follicular Phase

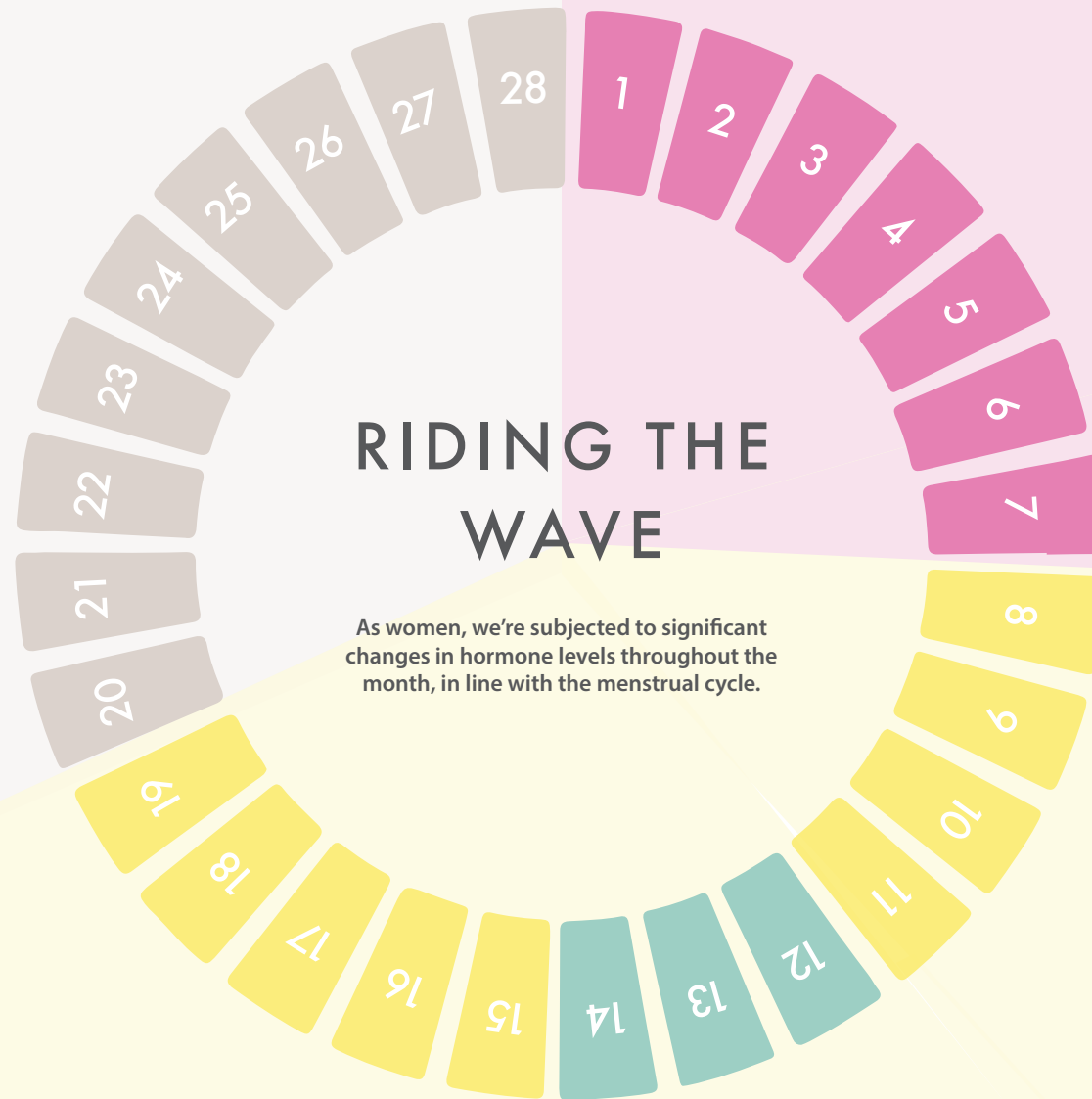
This phase overlaps with the menstrual phase. At this time, the hypothalamus signals to the pituitary gland to release a hormone called follicle-stimulating hormone which stimulates the ovaries to produce small sacs containing immature eggs. The maturing of one of these eggs triggers a surge in oestrogen. This phase lasts 16 days on average, however, can range from 11-27 days.

Menstrual Phase

This phase starts when the released egg is left unfertilised. Levels of oestrogen and progesterone drop because pregnancy has not occurred. Menstruation generally lasts for 3-7 days.

Ovulation Phase

Rising oestrogen levels during the follicular phase signals to the pituitary gland to release a hormone called luteinising hormone which starts the process of ovulation. This phase, occurring around day 12-14 of the cycle, is the only point in the cycle in which pregnancy can occur, and typically lasts about 24 hours.



{ facts }

IS THERE ANY SUCH THING AS A "NORMAL" PERIOD?

Periods are not a topic of everyday conversation, and so it can be difficult to determine what "normal" is. While everyone will have a slightly different experience, there are some red flags to look out for.

Remember that a lot of factors, including exercise, weight loss or gain, and stress can all affect menstruation. Everybody has a different experience and version of "normal", but it is worth speaking to your healthcare practitioner if these symptoms occur over a number of months.

Your period can tell a lot about your health and provide warning signs for conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), sexually transmitted diseases, cervical cancer and pregnancy.



Heavy bleeding

How much blood you lose during your period will vary from woman to woman, and can change slightly each month. Usually, your period will be heaviest in the first one to two days, but should never be so heavy that you're running to the bathroom every hour.



Unbearable cramps

Some women experience mild cramps at the onset of their period, however severe or prolonged cramping is not normal. If cramping is so painful it interrupts day-to-day activities, talk to your practitioner. Cramps also shouldn't ever feel like a stabbing pain.



Irregular length

Periods can last for 2-7 days, and usually there isn't much to worry about if they're on the shorter side. If your period lasts longer than 7 days, speak to your practitioner as you may have a hormone imbalance.



Irregularity

The first thing to look at is how regular your periods are. The length of your cycle may change slightly depending on a number of different lifestyle factors, however they should remain relatively consistent.



Clots

Small, wet clots in discharge can be normal, but large, dark coloured clots are not.

{ tips }

BALANCING ACT

PMS refers to the symptoms we experience in the lead up to, and during, your period. Symptoms of PMS can include bloating, acne, anxiety, fatigue, irritability, food cravings, an increased appetite and many more.

While the exact cause of PMS still isn't known, there are some factors that do appear to exacerbate the symptoms. These are some of the things you can do, to help balance your hormones and reduce the symptoms of PMS.



Maintain a healthy weight

As it is with so many aspects of health and wellbeing, maintaining a healthy weight is imperative to balancing hormones and reducing symptoms of PMS. Women with a BMI greater than 30 are three times more likely to have PMS!



Stay away from smoke

Smoking is terrible for your health, and PMS is no exception. Smokers are twice as likely to suffer PMS than non-smokers. Avoid smoking and be mindful of secondhand smoke from others.



Skip the stimulants

Reducing alcohol, caffeine and sugar intake is particularly important around that time of the month. For the two weeks before your period, be extra mindful about what stimulants you're consuming, and in what quantities.



Graze on greens

Vegetables are an important part of a balanced diet which supports healthy hormone levels. Add cruciferous vegetables to as many meals as possible.



Pump up the protein

Protein is an important part of any balanced diet, and during PMS, amino acids found in protein can help regulate the release of hormones controlling appetite. Fatty fish, such as salmon, can do amazing things for sufferers of PMS, delivering protein and omega-3s which both reduce symptoms of PMS.

{ diet }

HORMONE-NURTURING NUTRIENTS & HERBS

While there are many lifestyle factors that determine hormone regulation, there are some key nutrients and herbs that can support healthy hormones.



VITEX

Vitex is a herb that has long been used to provide relief from PMS and acne. It can balance out the ratio of progesterone to oestrogen by helping the body raise levels of progesterone.



B5 (PANTHOTHENIC ACID)

Vitamin B5 assists in lowering inflammation in the body and could be beneficial for reducing the frequency and severity of acne breakouts. B5 also supports the creation of the stress hormone cortisol.



MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is a super-nutrient that supports hundreds of different bodily functions. It is a calming mineral, helping to reduce levels of adrenaline and cortisol and allowing your body to recover from a stressful event. Magnesium also supports the production of serotonin, the "mood boosting" hormone, and melatonin, the "sleep" hormone.



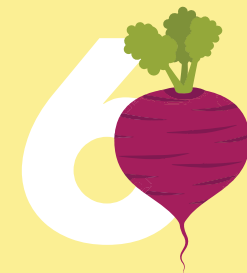
MELISSA

Melissa is an essential oil with antibacterial and antifungal properties, and is also thought to be anti-inflammatory. This oil has been used for years to effectively reduce the symptoms of PMS, and when applied topically, can help to reduce the severity of acne.



B6 (PYRIDOXINE)

Vitamin B6 is a fantastic mood-booster, supporting the production of serotonin, a hormone which helps to improve some of the symptoms of PMS. Vitamin B6 also plays an important role in detoxifying excess amounts of oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone.



ZINC

Zinc is an everyday nutrient that has a big impact on hormone regulation. Your body uses Zinc to produce hormones and to promote hormone balance in the body. Zinc also supports the production of progesterone and oestrogen.

{ tips }

FEEDING FRENZY

During the week before, and week of your period, it's common to experience cravings for various kinds of food. Whether the craving is for salty or sweet, giving in to these cravings for a week every month and indulging in high-sugar, high-salt packaged foods, can wreak havoc on your body.

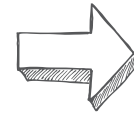
These are some simple swaps that can satisfy any craving, without destroying a well-disciplined diet.

We have included some chocolatey recipes later in the book that might help with the cravings.

SWAP OUT



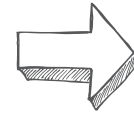
Chocolate



80% Dark Chocolate



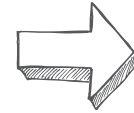
Pasta



Spelt or Gluten Free Pasta



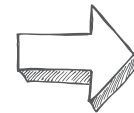
Cake



Sweet Potato Brownies



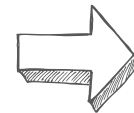
Soft Drinks



Kombucha



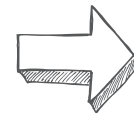
Ice Cream



Coconut Yoghurt



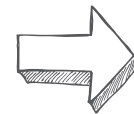
Potato Chips



Homemade Popcorn



Lollies



Dates with Cashew Butter

SWAP IN



Try dipping banana into the melted chocolate!



Remember that sweeteners like maple syrup are still sugar, so don't over-do these



Try freezing into coconut yoghurt pops!



Or a nut butter of your choice!



ACNE UNCOVERED

Whether you have flawless skin, or frequently suffer from blackheads or pimples, it is not unusual to experience acne flare-ups in line with your menstrual cycle.

Premenstrual acne is very common: for some, it will be the only time they break out, and for others, it can cause existing acne to worsen. In any case, it's not fun to deal with. While acne is more common among teenagers going through puberty, premenstrual acne can affect women at any age.

Throughout adolescence, premenstrual acne usually occurs in the T-zone – across the forehead and down through the nose to the chin. Adult premenstrual acne is worse around the bottom of the cheeks, jawline and chin. The cause is the same: hormone fluctuations. Specifically, an increase in the relative level of testosterone to oestrogen. Higher levels of testosterone stimulate the sebaceous glands as a precursor to the development of acne.

Your sebaceous glands are located within your skin and produce sebum, which helps to

lubricate and waterproof skin. Too much sebum can make our skin oily, causing acne flare-ups.

While there are many things you can do to improve your skin's appearance, remember that premenstrual acne is predominantly caused by fluctuations in hormone levels. To decrease the severity of not only premenstrual acne, but other symptoms of PMS, it's important to maintain a lifestyle that supports healthy hormone levels.

Maintain a healthy weight, don't smoke, eat loads of vegetables, and exercise regularly to support hormone regulation.

Remember too, that these hormone fluctuations are completely natural and biologically important. For some, acne can be debilitating and greatly impact mental health, so always be kind to yourself and others suffering acne. Health practitioners can often help with strategies to cope with acne if it starts affecting your mental health.



HEALTHY SKINCARE HABITS

Despite what TV and magazines would have us believe, there is no miracle cream that will instantly stop breakouts and leave you with soft, glowing skin. A healthy lifestyle, plenty of exercise and water, and a few good habits can make a bigger difference to your skin than any serum ever will.

These are just a few habits we can adopt that can help improve acne and reduce serious breakouts.

Stop touching your face

Every time you touch your face, you're transmitting whatever is on your hands directly onto your skin. You might be surprised, once you start paying attention, just how often you touch your face. When sitting at a computer all day, it's easy to rest your face in your hands, transmitting bacteria from the keyboard, and anything else you've touched, right onto the problem area. Your phone is another thing you put onto your face, without much thought for the bacteria that could be on it. Make the most of the loudspeaker function, or invest in a good pair of headphones with an in-built mic to keep your phone off your face and remember to wipe it down often.

Drink enough water

Maintaining hydration is essential for glowing skin, especially when trying to reduce acne. Increase water intake and you'll see an almost immediate improvement in skin health. Skin will appear fuller, brighter, and more elastic.

Work out, and wash your face

Exercising enough to sweat is great to flush out toxins in the skin. Always remove all makeup before a workout, and be sure to shower, or at least wash your face, as soon as possible after working up a sweat.

Take care of your pillows

Always remove all makeup, wash your face before bed, and wash your pillowcases at least once a week. Bacteria will build up on pillowcases over time, through hair, skin, sweat, environment and makeup.

{ exercise }

STRETCH IT OUT

Period pain might make you want to curl up into the foetal position and stay that way. However, multiple studies have now confirmed that yoga is more effective at relieving the symptoms of PMS and period pain than painkillers!

Go for a short walk and try a couple of these poses to see if they are effective at reducing the pain and discomfort. Remember to always consult your healthcare practitioner before engaging in a new exercise regime.



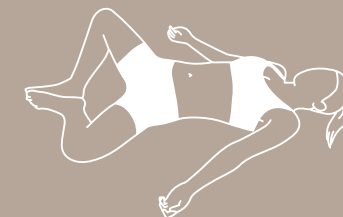
Child's pose

With toes together, part the knees, stretching arms out in front so that your forehead is on the ground or a block, and arms are above your head with hands resting on the ground. Buttocks will be on heels.



Wide-angle seated forward bend

Sitting on the floor with legs straight, draw your feet as far apart from each other as possible, opening the hips. Place hands on the ground in front and gradually slide them forward as far as is comfortable.



Reclining bound angle

Lie flat on the ground with legs outstretched. Slowly draw your knees up until feet are flat on the floor, and then allow the knees to fall to each side with the soles of your feet together, and relax into the pose.



Head to knee forward bend

In seated position, rest the sole of one foot against the inside of the opposite thigh, leaving that leg outstretched. Keeping your back straight, slowly lower your forehead towards the knee on the outstretched leg. Repeat on the other side.



Reclining spinal twist

Lying on your back, with legs outstretched, draw one knee up to a 90-degree angle, and stretch it across your body using the opposite hand. Lay the opposite arm to the side, with the head turned to that side, looking at the extended arm. Repeat on the other side.

{ tips }

MANAGING THE STRESS RESPONSE

Stress is an unavoidable part of life, but if stress continues long-term, it can cause issues for your health. Avoiding stress wherever possible is ideal, but arguably more important is learning to effectively deal with stress.

The first step is usually to deal directly with the cause of the stress, and once the situation is rectified, focus on recovering and returning your body to normal. While stress hormones are helpful when needed, elevated levels over the long term can lead to health conditions such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, weight gain and decreased fertility.

These are a couple of tips to help regulate your levels of adrenaline and cortisol, once the stressful situation has passed.



Stay social

During stressful periods, it can be tempting to become a recluse. But spending time with those you love can help! Just make sure not to overload the social calendar and create more stress.

Focus on sleep

Stress can greatly affect sleep, but it's important to maintain a consistent sleep-wake cycle as much as you can and to make bedtime a priority. If you're having trouble getting to sleep, try meditating or deep breathing to calm a busy mind.



Meditate

Set aside time each day to meditate, be present in the moment, set intentions, and acknowledge current feelings. Once it's part of your daily routine, it's easy to maintain!

Balance your diet

A balanced diet, low in sugar and filled to the brim with vegetables, fruits and healthy fats can help maintain normal cortisol levels.



Get active

A gentle walk or a short yoga routine can do wonders to lower cortisol levels and relax after a stressful incident. Be mindful not to over-do exercise after significant stress however, as straining too much can increase cortisol.

{ article }

FIGHTING FATIGUE

Feeling constantly tired or requiring an excessive amount of sleep to function properly can really impact your quality of life. Energy is a complicated area, but low energy could indicate that there is a hormone imbalance at play.

If you feel like you are constantly fighting fatigue, there are two hormones that could be out of whack. However, it's important to always speak to your practitioner about finding the exact cause of fatigue.

Melatonin

Appropriately nicknamed the “sleep hormone”, melatonin works together with your circadian rhythm to aid sleep onset. The circadian rhythm is your body's internal clock, or sleep-wake cycle.

Melatonin is produced in the pineal gland, deep in the centre of the brain, and is responsible for signalling to our body that it's time to go to sleep.

This hormone induces physiological changes that promote sleep such as reduced body temperature and respiration rate. When we're exposed to darkness, melatonin levels typically rise, while light suppresses the production of this hormone, so during the day, melatonin levels will decrease.

Too much light (particularly blue light) before bed, a lack of sunshine during the day, shift work, smoking, alcohol, and of course stress, can all cause lower levels of melatonin.

Cortisol

Cortisol is another hormone that can be to blame for sleeping difficulties and constant tiredness.

Cortisol is produced by the adrenal glands and regulated by the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland. Released during times of stress, cortisol is the trigger for your body's “fight or flight” response to stressors.

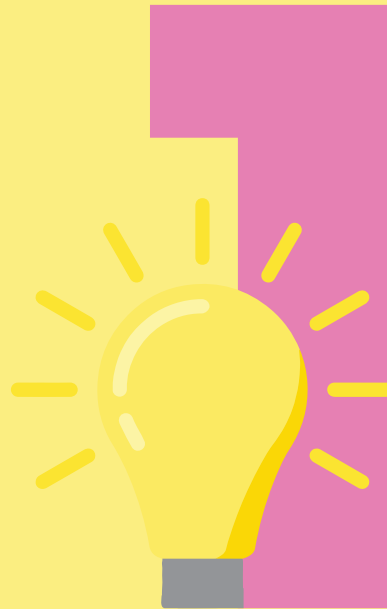
However, cortisol does far more than that. It is also used to increase the metabolism of glucose, control blood pressure and reduce inflammation. Synthetic forms of cortisol are often used to treat inflammatory conditions and skin conditions.

If you are suffering from a hormonal imbalance restricting the release of cortisol, you might feel constant tiredness, nausea, unexplained weight loss and muscle weakness.

{ tips }

SEEKING SLEEP

Now you know that in order to get enough sleep, you need to keep your hormones in check. These are our top 5 tips to help support sleep hormones.



LOWER THE LIGHTS

Melatonin levels increase in darkness and can be greatly affected by artificial light, including phones, TV's, computers and the like. To help regulate your sleep-wake cycle, it's best to coordinate light exposure to that cycle as much as possible. Dim the lights in the hour or so before bedtime, and don't turn on more lights than necessary.

Another way to leverage light when it comes to sleep is to enjoy the sunshine more during the day. Go for a short lunchtime stroll, or eat lunch outside to double up on daylight and help regulate Melatonin production.



SWITCH OFF

Blue light can greatly affect the production of melatonin, so if you're struggling to get to sleep after hopping into bed, your devices could be to blame. Switch off all light-emitting devices, including the TV and mobile phone, at least 30 minutes before bedtime. If you struggle going cold-turkey, ease into switching off completely by changing the backlight on these devices to a warmer tone once the sun goes down.



RESET, AND RELAX

Now that your devices are switched off, enjoy some relaxation time! Whether it's taking a bath, reading a book, doing a crossword or some cathartic chores, it's important to take the time to unwind before bed. Soaking in a warm bath can help to promote sleep, especially with the addition of lavender or other sleep-promoting essential oils.



SET THE SCENE

There are many factors contributing to creating the ideal environment for sleep. Temperature, air flow, light, noise and bedding are all a part of our sleep environment and must be carefully considered to optimise sleep. Too much clutter in the bedroom can make you feel anxious or stressed, both of which can negatively affect sleep.



SKIP THE SNACKS

Eating late at night, or too close to bedtime can lead to hormone disruption and make sleeping a struggle. Limit your after-dinner snacking as much as possible, but if the night-time hunger pangs kick in, be mindful about snack choice, avoiding anything high in sugar, carbs or caffeine.

{ tips }

LOOK AFTER YOUR LIVER

The liver is the largest internal organ, and its job is to filter blood from the digestive system before it travels around the body. Your liver is one of the organs responsible for detoxification, removing toxins from the blood and processing nutrients. While the liver is best known for filtering out toxins such as alcohol, it also helps the body to clean out excess hormones. By looking after your liver, you can help to improve the elimination of excess hormones and support healthy hormone balance.

It's important to look after your liver, and these are some simple habits that may help do this and maintain a healthy hormone balance.



CUT BACK ON THE BOOZE

Alcohol affects our health in many ways, not least of all, it has the potential to damage or destroy liver cells. If avoiding alcohol altogether is not a viable option for you, try to be mindful of how much alcohol you consume, and how often. If drinking, make sure to drink plenty of water to reduce the immediate pressure on the liver.



REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO TOXINS

Since the liver's main job is to filter toxins out of the body, it makes sense that cutting down exposure to toxins will support a healthy liver. Avoid smoking (even secondhand smoke), choose natural cleaners and beauty products wherever possible, and opt for whole foods over packaged varieties.



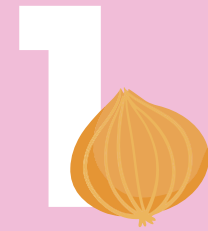
MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Carrying excess weight puts a lot of pressure on your liver, and for those who are overweight or obese, there is an increased risk of developing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

{ tips }

LIVER-FRIENDLY FOODS

Give the liver a helping hand by including some of these liver-friendly foods everyday!



ONIONS

Rich in allicin, onions are packed with phytonutrients, flavonoids, fibre and Potassium and support the body's natural detoxification process.



GARLIC

As well as being a delicious addition to almost any meal, garlic is rich in allicin and Selenium which are natural detoxifiers. Garlic reduces oxidative stress in the liver which is the cause of most liver injury. Opt for fresh garlic cloves over minced or powdered varieties wherever possible.



BROCCOLI

Broccoli is certainly a super-food and is a good source of Calcium, Potassium, Folate, fibre and phytonutrients. Broccoli is part of the cruciferous vegetable family, along with cauliflower, bok choy and brussels sprouts.



GREEN TEA

Green tea is high in antioxidants, and has been found to support the liver, improving enzyme levels and reducing oxidative stress.



FATTY FISH

Fatty fish, such as salmon, are great sources of Omega-3 fatty acids. Studies have shown that these fatty acids can help regulate enzyme levels, fight inflammation, improve insulin resistance and brain health.



{ recipes }

CURB THE CRAVINGS

As hormone levels fluctuate throughout your menstrual cycle, it is natural to have cravings for certain kinds of food. The problem arises when we give in to those cravings and reach for that tub of ice cream or family-sized block of chocolate.

The following collection of recipes provides some healthier options to curb those cravings – without excessive sugars, salts and saturated fats. Remember to always consult your healthcare practitioner before making any dietary changes and be mindful of intolerances and allergies.

CHOCOLATE POPCORN

This chocolate popcorn can be made ahead of time and will keep for several days if stored in an airtight container. This recipe will make 5-7 servings.

Ingredients

½ cup organic popping corn
1 tablespoon organic coconut oil
4 tablespoons organic, grass fed butter
2 tablespoons coconut sugar
1 tablespoon organic cacao powder

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to approximately 160 degrees Celsius.
2. Heat the coconut oil in a medium sized pot (with a lid) with three corn kernels.
3. Once those three “test” kernels have popped, remove the pot from the heat, add the rest of kernels, and place the lid back on.
4. Leave the pot off the heat for approximately 30 seconds, then return to heat: the kernels will start popping quite quickly.
5. Remove from heat once there is a 5 second pause between pops.
6. Place the popped popcorn into a large oven tray, in an even layer.
7. Add the butter, coconut sugar and cacao powder to the pot, and heat over a medium heat, stirring constantly, until the sugar has dissolved (this should only take a few minutes).
8. Pour the butter mixture over the popcorn and mix to combine.
9. Distribute the popcorn evenly on the tray, and place in the oven.
10. Bake for approximately 40 minutes or until popcorn feels dry to touch.





CHIA PUDDING

This make-ahead dessert is low in sugar and packed full of antioxidants. Make a couple to keep in the fridge for when the craving strikes!

Chia Pudding Base

Ingredients

2 tablespoons chia seeds
1 teaspoon cacao powder
1 teaspoon organic, raw honey
2 tablespoons almond milk

Method

1. Combine all ingredients in a small glass or ceramic container and refrigerate overnight (even an hour will do if cravings are intense!)

Variations

While this basic chia pudding is delicious, there are many variations you can try to keep things interesting! Some of these are better without the cacao powder, but it's all about finding the flavour profile that works for you.

- Orange zest
- Lemon zest
- Vanilla bean
- Natural Peppermint
- Cinnamon

DARK CHOCOLATE

WITH SEA SALT

It might surprise you how easy it is to make chocolate at home - without vegetable fats or refined sugars. The following quantities can be adjusted to taste, they're just a guide to use as a starting point. Cacao powder can be quite bitter for new users, so it's best to start with a smaller amount, and keep adding small amounts to find your desired taste.

Ingredients

1 cup organic cocoa butter (available at any health food store)

¼ cup organic cacao powder

1 tablespoon smooth nut butter

1 tablespoon maple syrup (or sweetener of choice)

Sea salt to taste

Method

1. Heat all ingredients in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until combined and smooth.
2. Pour the mixture into moulds, or straight onto a lined tray.
3. Sprinkle sea salt over the mixture, to taste.
4. Place in the fridge for 30 minutes to an hour or until set.

Notes

This recipe is a great base for all kinds of chocolate goodies. Omit the sea salt and add in roasted nuts or use the melted chocolate to coat strawberries or banana.





BANANA CHOCOLATE "ICE CREAM"

This dairy-free variation of chocolate ice cream is sure to curb those cravings, while providing essential nutrients such as Potassium and Magnesium. This recipe does require a food processor.

Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen banana
- 2 tablespoons almond milk
- 1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon organic cacao powder

Method

1. Place banana and maple syrup/honey into a food processor and pulse for 2-5 seconds or until slightly granulated.
2. Add the almond milk and cacao powder, and process until smooth.

Notes

Different variations of this ice cream can include frozen berries, such as blueberries or strawberries.

If your food processor struggles to make the frozen fruit completely smooth, a small amount of almond milk can be added until there is enough liquid in the mixture that the processor can handle.

Your next appointment is:



orthoplex

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