

21-DAY *Hormone Detox* GUIDE





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WELCOME LOVELY LADY

Welcome. I'm super excited that you took this step toward finding hormone bliss! Whether you need freedom from estrogen dominance, or perimenopause symptoms such as low sex drive and low moods, the key to getting there is to address the underlying root causes for endocrine system breakdown. If you're frustrated with ineffective medications that provide little to no relief of symptoms and you've needed three coffees (the last thing you need!) to get through your daily routine – you're in the right place.

I've so been there. For years my hormones were a hot mess. I've struggled with the weight, the bad periods and the mood swings. But I found solutions to restore balance and reclaim my health. And now, I'm here to help you do the same - to help you ditch the hormone crazies so you can live in FREEDOM! You've got a life to live and you deserve to feel amazing while living it!

It's about food first. Our bodies are incredible machines designed to thrive on food as fuel. By that I mean the right foods not the ultra-processed refined offerings that have taken over the industrialised world. I'm not going to say it's going to be all rainbows and butterflies because sometimes change can feel alien. But trust me, 21 days down and everything will taste sweeter and nicer than you ever thought they could.

It's also about other self-loving rituals like moving our bodies (not too hard out) and finding a great place for our minds and thought processes.

So let's do this! Jenna x

PS: Please join our private Facebook group [here](#). We'll be small at first but watch us grow and email me anytime: jenna@youology.co.nz ☺



PART ONE: DETOX BASICS

WHAT IS A HORMONE DETOX?

The definition of detox according to the Cambridge Dictionary is: “a period when you stop taking unhealthy or harmful foods, drinks, or drugs into your body for some time, to improve your health.” That's an essential aspect of detoxification for sure, though, during this detox, you will be doing so much more! Reducing your toxic load is something you should ALWAYS be concerned with if you want to maintain healthy hormone balance and, I'm going to show you how to do that. But for an effective hormone detox, you must also support the organs and glands involved in maintaining hormone balance and nourish your body with hormone healthy foods. For the next 21 days, you will be giving your body some much-needed TLC.

WHY YOU NEED A HORMONE DETOX

LIVER CONGESTION

Our liver is the main detoxification organ in the body. Most toxins and chemicals reach the liver, where they are eliminated or broken down to remove the toxic compounds from circulation. The liver works extremely hard to do this and usually does a very good job. However, nowadays, our liver is exposed to toxins at such an alarmingly increased rate; it simply cannot keep up. An overworked liver often leads to hormonal imbalances – especially estrogen imbalance. Detoxification is essential for helping the liver eliminate estrogen and toxins from your body.



EXPOSURE TO ENDOCRINE DISRUPTING CHEMICALS

Each day, we are exposed to hundreds of chemicals that interfere with our endocrine system by mimicking, decreasing, or increasing our hormone levels (no wonder our hormones are a hot mess!). EDCs have been linked to many health issues and diseases, including several types of cancers, autoimmune conditions, endometriosis, and thyroid disease. EDCs are found in everyday household products, beauty care products, as well as many foods you may regularly be eating. I suggest you start detoxing your home from EDCs to reduce your exposure.

Here is a guide to help you get started.

https://static.ewg.org/pdf/kab_dirty_dozen_endocrine_disruptors.pdf

XENOESTROGENS

Most of the beauty and personal care products we use contain some endocrine disrupting chemicals. Xenoestrogens are a sub-category of endocrine disrupting chemicals that mimic the estrogen hormone. BPA is a notorious xenoestrogen that can act as natural estrogen in the body and bind to the estrogen receptors, causing a multitude of health problems that are often seen with abnormally high levels of estrogen, also referred to as estrogen dominance. Estrogen dominance, whether it's caused by abnormally high levels of natural estrogen or xenoestrogens, can cause endometriosis, infertility, highly symptomatic menopause journeys, cancer, and much more. BPA is found on store receipts, in canned food, and plastic containers. Phthalates are another group of xenoestrogens that cause many reproductive problems. They are found in most fragrances and are unfortunately not always listed in the ingredients. The chances are that if a personal care product contains fragrances, it also contains phthalates.



SIGNS YOU NEED A HORMONE DETOX

Here's a list of signs or symptoms showing you may well benefit from a hormone detox in a big way:

- Feeling exhausted all the time
- Absent periods if you're still menstruating
- Difficult periods (as above)
- Mood swings
- Tender breasts
- Water retention
- Skin issues
- Weight gain – especially belly, hips and thighs
- Resistant weight
- Low sex drive
- Hot flushes and/or night sweats
- Fibroids or cysts
- Thinning hair, hair loss or excess hair
- Estrogen dominance
- Body aches and pains
- Joint pain

THE LIVER AND ESTROGEN METABOLISM

Estrogen dominance is a prevalent hormonal imbalance in industrialised nations and is associated with peri/menopause symptoms, endometriosis, PCOS, cystic breast disease, fibroids, and breast cancer in women. The good



news is that a hormone detox is beneficial for clearing excess estrogen from the system, which is beneficial during peri/menopause. The focus should be on the liver, as the liver is the primary site of estrogen metabolism.

In the liver, estrogen is eliminated through two phases. The phase I pathway changes the structure of the estrogens to prepare them for removal from the body via the sweat: poop and urine.

Often, when the liver is not functioning optimally, it has trouble with the second phase of its detoxification process, which is the removal of estrogen from the body. If this process is inefficient, it results in compounds remaining in the body. As a result, estrogen circulates back into the bloodstream in a more toxic form. These estrogen metabolites can be reactivated once they enter circulation and contribute to the increased risk of cancers and conditions we see with estrogen dominance.

TO SUPPORT PHASE 1

Reduce alcohol consumption to protect your liver and consider replacing your coffee with green tea during the 21-days at least. Green tea is loaded with antioxidants, which help fight the toxic free radicals the liver produces in phase I of eliminating hormones and toxins. Vitamin C, milk thistle, cruciferous vegetables, and magnesium also help support phase I liver detox.

TO SUPPORT PHASE 2

If your liver needs help in eliminating toxic metabolites in phase II, you can increase the amount of free-radical fighting foods in your diet, such as berries, turmeric, green tea and cinnamon. Sulfur-rich foods like onions and garlic, amino acids, and B12 are also beneficial for phase II detox. It's essential to keep the bowels moving so estrogen can be cleared! If you become constipated, you can't remove estrogen out of your body – no matter how hard your liver works. So, it's important to eat lots of fibre-rich fruits and vegetables and to stay adequately hydrated. If you suffer from poor gut motility, use prokinetic agents like magnesium citrate and ginger tea. You can drink ginger tea



between meals. If prokinetics don't help, investigate if there are imbalances of bacteria in the gut or food intolerances.

NB: A prokinetic helps food move through your system.

10 WAYS TO ROCK YOUR LIVER HEALTH

1. Reduce your toxic load by eating organic, ditch toxic beauty care products, use only environmentally safe cleaning products in your home and drink purified water.
2. Consume the Lemon Water Elixir drink every morning (in your Recipe Guide). It's alkalising and supports healthy detox.
3. Stay hydrated by drinking approximately eight glasses of water each day. More if you're very active. You can power up your daily water intake by adding lemon, liquid chlorophyll, probiotic powders, vitamin C powders or other vitamin boosters to your water.
4. Consume green herbs and foods like coriander, parsley or bitters like rocket and kale.
5. Drink a green smoothie daily, or juice if you prefer but bear in mind that a smoothie gives you the benefits of fibre. Remember it's more of a meal than a snack.
6. Take a probiotic supplement daily.
7. Use prokinetic agents like magnesium or ginger tea each day to keep the bowels moving.
8. Ditch the pharmacy antacids and pain relievers. Learn to use natural medicines like slippery elm, ginger tea and turmeric.
9. Avoid trans fats. Watch out for donuts, bakery offerings, chips and other fried foods. Use only healthy fats such as coconut, olive and avocado oil.
10. Get a colonic or do a castor oil pack if you're up for it. You can find YouTube videos to learn how castor oil packs work.

PART TWO: LET'S DETOX!



YOU MIGHT WANT TO PURCHASE

- **A probiotic:** I suggest [Garden of Life Probiotic](#)'s at Amazon. [Clinicians](#) in New Zealand do an excellent range as do [Australian Naturalcare](#) if you're in Australia. A healthy gut microbiome has been shown to improve hormone modulation.
- **A digestive enzyme:** Sometimes, when you kick up the veggies, especially hormone healthy cruciferous vegetables, you may temporarily experience gas and bloating. Taking a digestive enzyme with meals can make a difference. I suggest a broad-spectrum plant-based digestive enzyme like [Zenwise](#) or [Now](#) from Amazon. Tip: cruciferous veggies are best lightly cooked.
- **Prokinetics:** When you eliminate stimulants such as coffee or sugar, you may have a temporary change in gut motility resulting in constipation. Ginger tea or magnesium citrate are my favourite go-to prokinetic agents. Drink ginger tea between meals and pre-bed.
- **A tongue scraper:** This is a simple and easy trick to boost your detox. You can purchase a tongue scraper on Amazon [here](#).
- **Natural Toothpaste:** Find one that is free of sodium lauryl sulfate. SLS can cause canker sores and mouth inflammation. My favourite brand is Red Seal, Weleda, Dr Bronners. I've heard good things about Hyperbiotics too which is not only free from SLS and other toxins – it contains probiotics too.

What's the difference between a prebiotic and a probiotic? Prebiotics come from fibre in food that feed beneficial digestive system bacteria. Probiotics are good-for-gut bacteria found in food and supplements.

HOW TO GET STARTED

DOWNLOAD AND REVIEW THE MATERIALS

To make this 21-day program easy and sustainable, you have a Recipe Guide, Suggested Meals Guide, and Shopping List for each week that includes all the



ingredients required to cook your suggested meals. You also have a complete Eat and Don't Eat Foods List, Food Diary and other handouts/bonuses. I suggested getting two transparent leaf folders (60-page), printing out the documents and storing them therein.

- **This Detox Guide:** Here is where you get the scoop on the best hormone foods and herbs for hormone balance.
- **Recipe Guide:** This is where you will find my chef-created hormone detox recipes.
- **Suggested Meals + Shopping Lists:** You have a full 21-day meal plan. The meals are mapped out for you and the shopping lists will save you a lot of time and make grocery shopping a snap!
- **Eat and Don't Eat Foods List:** Your go-to cheat sheet. Download it to your phone for easy access.
- **Food Journal:** I suggest recording your foods and moods so you can see what's working for your individual body. Pay special attention to foods that energise you and foods that cause you to drag. Just because a food is "healthy" doesn't mean it's right for your body.

ELIMINATE HORMONE DISRUPTING FOODS

You'll kick off your detox by eliminating 'common' foods known to affect hormone balance such as: dairy, gluten, refined sugar, industrialised cooking oils, coffee, alcohol and all processed foods (see the Eat and Don't Eat list). Instead of eating foods that can mess up your hormones, you'll be incorporating hormone balancing smoothies, soups and deliciously healthy meals. Remember, when choosing your foods, it's always best to choose organic to avoid toxins like pesticides and herbicides, which disrupt the endocrine system. If you're budget's restricted review the Environmental Working Group's Clean 15 & Dirty Dozen lists (listed later), so you know where to prioritise organic.

SHOP FOR THE DETOX FOODS

Take your shopping list with you to the supermarket and fruit and veg store. If you don't have access to a good store, you can purchase many items online. I'll give you recommendations as we go through.



FOLLOW THE WEEKLY SUGGESTED MEALS

I've prepared some fantastic meal plans for you, which you can tweak to your taste and unique lifestyle. Keep it simple and cook once and eat twice if you like to utilise leftovers or repeat some of the meals a few days in a row.

MAKE THESE PART OF YOUR DAILY REGIME

- Sign the commitment contract.
- Don't snack at night. Close the kitchen at 6.30-7pm.
- Add a salad to every day.
- Include protein at every meal – about a fist size.
- Focus on nutrients not calories/kilojoules
- Move daily – a 30-minute walk is great.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Upon Rising: Hydrate with the Lemon Water Elixir (in your recipe guide).

Take your probiotic.

Tongue scraping & brush teeth.

10 minutes of mindfulness (prayer, gratitude journal, breath work, meditation or yoga). Highly recommended.

It's a good idea to say “**I AM**” statements (included in bonuses).

Breakfast: See Suggested Meals.

Mid-Morning: Prepare a detox drink, juice, or smoothie.

Lunch: See Suggested Meals

Mid-Afternoon: If needed, have a high-power snack such as 5 brazil nuts, 1 hardboiled egg, or ½ an avocado.

Dinner: See Suggested Meals

Before Bed: Don't eat past 6:30/7pm so you can fast overnight.

Write in your food diary.

Take a warm Epsom salt bath.

Get off your screens at least two hours before bedtime.



Listen to guided imagery or meditation recordings to relax body + mind. It'll change your life!

Contact me, your partner on this journey, with any questions.
hello@youology.co.nz

FOODS FOR HORMONE HEALTH

ASHWAGANDHA

Ashwagandha is a supplement and an excellent adaptogen (a healing herb/plant beneficial for stress). Indeed, it supports the adrenal glands and for hormone balance we need our adrenal glands robust! One study showed Ashwagandha at 600 mg daily boosted the endocrine system and increased thyroid hormone production. You can get it at [iHerb](#) here or your favourite health supplement provider.

BONE BROTH

A thin soup made from brewing animal bones, bone broth is touted as having many health benefits. It's helpful for liver detoxification and immune modulation. Immune problems such as Hashimoto's are common among women and broth is an affordable way to support a healthy immune system for non-vegetarian/vegans. Available from most supermarkets.

CACAO

If you purchase at least 70% cacao chocolate (Whittakers Dark Ghana or Green&Black's rock – [Coles/Countdown](#)), it's a good source of prebiotics to promote healthy gut flora. Chocolate is also a good mood boost. Anandamide, a neurotransmitter in chocolate, makes you feel happier. You can purchase



chips, nibs, bars, or powders. I like to purchase cacao powder and add it to smoothies when I get a chocolate craving!

CHAGA

Regular caffeine consumption can be problematic for many women with hormone imbalance and Chaga makes an excellent coffee substitute. Caffeine is confusing - it can be good for us in many ways if our bodies are balanced but studies show it may contribute to both breast and ovarian cysts and increase hot flashes. I can guarantee I will get a hot flush with my cappuccino every time! Chaga is a mushroom coffee – checkout HealthPost or click [here](#).

CHIA OR FLAX SEEDS

Seeds are the perfect hormone food. They contain lignans, which bind excess hormones so they can be removed from the body. As well, they are high in omega 3 fats to help with hormone production. A super combo that you can pick up easily at the supermarket.

COLLAGEN

Collagen is the most abundant protein found in mammals and promotes healthy skin, hair and nails. Supplements (made from animal tissue) can provide a protein boost for non-vegan/vegetarians and be used as a substitute for protein powders that can sometimes contain ingredients that inhibit sex hormones. These days it is possible to find vegan options too such as this [one](#).

CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES

Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, bok choy, kale) have properties that support healthy estrogen metabolism. Some people have been told that if they have thyroid issues they need to avoid them but you can still eat them; just cook most of the cruciferous vegetables you eat. [Click here](#) for a list.



GREEN FOODS

The liver plays an essential role in estrogen metabolism. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, green foods are believed to be cleansing to the liver. Some liver-loving choices are watercress, coriander, parsley and rocket.

CULTURED FOODS

Cultured (aka fermented) foods help keep the gut microbiome (beneficial bacteria) thriving and research is emerging demonstrating a connection between the microbiome and hormone balance. It appears that certain microbes in the gut secrete and modulate hormones to such an extent that the microbiota should be classified as part of the endocrine system. Add fermented vegetables like kimchi, sauerkraut, sugar-free non-dairy yoghurt and kefir to your diet daily to keep it robust – you should easily find them at your supermarket or Asian fruit and veg stores.

HEALTHY FATS

Healthy fat is essential for hormone production, great skin and weight management so don't be afraid of adding coconut oil, olive oil, hemp seed oil and avocado oil to your daily diet along with avocados, salmon and olives, which are also good sources of healthy fat.

KELP, NORI OR OTHER SEA VEGETABLES

Sea vegetables provide much needed iodine for the thyroid gland, breast tissue and energy production. You can add kelp sprinkles to food, add spirulina to smoothies or take chlorella tablets. If you can't find kelp sprinkles chopping/ripping up nori sheets (the kind used to roll sushi) makes a great snack. Braggs make a good one. Click [here](#) for Amazon, [Ceres.co.nz](https://ceres.co.nz), or [buyorganicsonline](#) in Australia.

MACA

Maca is a cruciferous root vegetable with adaptogenic properties, which means it helps your body adapt to stress. It's through this mechanism that it aids in hormone balance and is good for women in midlife on so many levels.



Ensure the brand you choose uses Peruvian maca and start off slowly (1/2 teaspoon) building up. [Seleno Health](#)'s is amazing.

ORGANIC AND PASTURE- RAISED MEATS

I don't eat meat but if you do it's essential you purchase clean meats. Conventional meats are high in arachidonic acid, a pro-inflammatory omega 6. Pasture-raised meats, on the other hand, have a higher ratio of omega 3 fats, which reduce inflammation and support hormone production.

ORGANIC FOODS

If you want to regulate your hormones, eat as organic as possible. Many of the pesticides and herbicides sprayed on our food supply are known endocrine disruptors and female reproductive system toxins. Check out www.whatsonmyfood.org for more information. It's more expensive but if your budget can manage it so much the better.

PREBIOTICS

Prebiotics cultivate good bacteria in the gut. Favourite prebiotic foods include cacao powder, dark chocolate (at least 70% cacao) apples, asparagus, artichokes, leeks, onion, garlic, flaxseeds, and Manuka honey.

PROTEIN POWDER

If you are feeling run down and depleted, a daily protein shake may give you some va va voom. Unfortunately, many of the protein powders on the market have ingredients that may inhibit hormones. Stay away from protein powders that are whey-based or milk-based. Don't compromise on quality. It would be better to pass than bring in poor quality proteins that can inhibit your thyroid. Hemp powder's a good choice. [Here's a link to one from Amazon Australia](#).

WILD-CAUGHT SEAFOOD

Seafood is a good source of protein and supports healthy iodine levels, vitamin D and testosterone levels. If you're not a vegetarian or vegan prawns, snapper



in New Zealand, barramundi in Australia, scallops, oysters, salmon and sardines are popular choices.

CLEAN 15 + DIRTY DOZEN FOOD LIST

HOW TO USE IT

I know it's more expensive to shop organic but if you can manage it, it will repay you in spades. Reducing our exposure to chemicals (most of which are both endocrine disruptors and female reproductive system toxins) is important and one way to do so is to shop organic. Having your own veggie garden and weekend farmer's markets are great for this reason. While we can't eliminate our exposure to chemicals completely, we can reduce our toxic load. The following is a list of foods from [The Environmental Working Group](#) that have the highest and least amounts of pesticide residue. When deciding which foods to buy organic, this is a super-handly guide.

THE DIRTY DOZEN

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Kale
4. Nectarines
5. Apples
6. Grapes
7. Peaches
8. Cherries
9. Pears
10. Tomatoes
11. Celery
12. Potatoes

THE CLEAN 15

1. Avocados
2. Sweet corn

- 
3. Pineapples
 4. Frozen sweet peas
 5. Onions
 6. Papayas
 7. Eggplants
 8. Asparagus
 9. Kiwis
 10. Cabbages
 11. Cauliflower
 12. Cantaloupes
 13. Broccoli
 14. Mushrooms
 15. Honeydew melons

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT DAIRY

Many women I talk to have heard it can be a good idea to eliminate dairy products, but they don't understand why. Let me explain why you could make the choice to ditch dairy, including your daily yoghurt, if you want to maintain healthy hormone balance.

HORMONES

Dairy is the number one dietary source of estrogen. Cow's milk naturally contains over 60 different hormones including estrogen, progesterone and insulin.

A1 INFLAMMATORY PROTEINS

Most conventional cow's milk contains a protein called A1 casein. A1 can form BCM-7, which in turn stimulates inflammatory mast cells. This is particularly concerning for women who are still menstruating as the uterine lining contains an abundance of mast cells which can cause pain and heavy bleeding if activated. Many hormone experts such as [Dr Laura Briden](#) implicate A1 casein with the development of serious health problems such as autoimmune disease.

A1 casein is found in the milk of Holstein-Friesian cows, which are the most common type of cows in the US, Canada, Australasia and the UK. If you simply



can't give up dairy, get your hands on A2 milk or dairy from Jersey cows, goats and sheep. It's free of A1 protein; Instead it contains A2, which doesn't seem to be as problematic.

MIND + BODY SUPPORT

It's not enough to detox the body; we must also detox the mind. Emotional charge, negative internal self-dialogue, and stress all wreak havoc on your hormones. For many of us, it's easier to make dietary changes than it is to do the inner work. If you've been trying to heal your body without results – this could be the missing piece. I kid you not. If you're serious about restoring hormone harmony, add these to your daily non-negotiables. I know it sounds woo woo but it really does make a difference.

I AM STATEMENTS

You can do this by simply adding '**I AM**' affirmations to your morning and evening routine. (There's a bonus handout for your reference.)

- "I am healthy, healed and whole"
- "I am joyful, grateful and deeply connected to my feminine-self"
- "I am balanced and feel good in my body"

Find the 'I AM' statements that resonate with you the most and start saying them out loud every morning and night (and for even stronger results, say these statements to yourself while looking in the mirror).

HEALING AFFIRMATIONS

Speak at least one affirmation per day.

- I feel easy and joyful – I honour myself during this time and I am completely connected to my body and my inner-self.
- I trust that I can take care of myself in so many ways.

GUIDED IMAGERY

Guided imagery, meditation and mindfulness are all great ways to reduce stress and detox from emotions that keep us from healing. Emotional charge wreaks



havoc on your hormones and these have been proven to help during the menopause years. There are some fantastic options on YouTube and I will create some in the near future. In the meantime try [this meditation](#).

SLEEP

Studies show less than seven hours of sleep per night causes weight gain and hormone imbalance. Why? It has to do with the hormones leptin, insulin, and cortisol. It really is true – you need your beauty sleep!

PART THREE: HORMONE HEALTH

THE BASICS

The two most abundant sex hormones in the female body are estrogen and progesterone. However, women also have low levels of the “male” sex hormone testosterone, which provides many essential functions. In this detox we will discuss the sex hormones, their roles in the female body, and why it’s vital to have just the right level of each hormone.

THE THREE PRIMARY ESTROGENS

Regardless of what you may have heard, estrogen isn’t bad. Without estrogen, we wouldn’t have breasts, curves, or a nice butt! It’s also essential our mental and physical wellbeing. Not all estrogen hormones are the same. The female body makes three major types of estrogen hormones. The first and most abundant estrogen hormone produced in women of childbearing years is called estradiol or E2. It’s important for maintaining regular menstrual cycles and overall health. Estriol (E3) is only detected in significant quantities during pregnancy, during which the placenta produces it. The third major estrogen hormone is known as estrone (E1), which is the main estrogen hormone that the female body produces after menopause.



PROGESTERONE

I've heard it said, "If estrogen is a woman's hormone superhero, then progesterone is its trusty side-kick!" Progesterone keeps estrogen in check and aids in weight loss. Our levels drop significantly around age 35, several years before estrogen begins to decline in the lead up to menopause. Low progesterone levels may lead to weight gain, mood swings, infertility and exacerbated peri symptoms. Low progesterone may result in estrogen dominance during peri as well. And guess what? Stress is the biggest inhibitor of healthy progesterone production.

TESTOSTERONE

Although testosterone is predominantly thought of as a male hormone, women produce it too. We require healthy levels for bone strength, cognitive performance, emotional stability and sex drive. Women with inadequate levels of testosterone may experience low libido, which is not only frustrating but can be damaging to relationships. Low testosterone can also increase the risk of osteoporosis as bones become weaker. Just as too little of a hormone is problematic, so is too much of it.

Testosterone can also fluctuate during perimenopause and higher levels can be behind facial hair, and acne.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF HORMONE IMBALANCE

THE PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

The predominant female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone are essential for the health of the female reproductive system, and the health of women overall. The female body requires more progesterone than estrogen when it's younger. Hormonal changes in the lead up to menopause begin – surprisingly - when progesterone drops significantly around age 35 several years (on average) before we head into perimenopause around 40-45. When



perimenopause begins our estrogen levels can begin to fluctuate wildly leading to high levels of estrogen, which combined with the significantly lower levels of progesterone, may lead to estrogen dominance.

THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

As women, our whole lives, we've been led to believe that difficult periods, bloating, hot flushes, painful breasts, and food cravings come with the territory. So we have a history of taking pills, suppressing our cycles and sucking it up. Then as we grow older we often know nothing about what to expect with peri/menopause and it kind of creeps up and blindsides us. Often far earlier than we thought if we actually did think about it at all - usually it's something far off in the distance. It can be a rude awakening to experience menopausal symptoms at a time when we – and oftentimes our doctor – think we're too young.

But we can take charge of our health and help ourselves as we navigate our way through the meno years. There are 34 known symptoms of perimenopause and weight gain is a big pain point but it doesn't have to be. We can manage our weight and our symptoms. However, it usually means some lifestyle adjustments because this is a time of transition and as such we often need to make some changes.

One of the reasons for weight gain can be attributed to estrogen dominance, which as we said earlier occurs when estrogen is high in relationship to progesterone. Yes, even older women can experience estrogen dominance during menopause.

Even though our fertile years are ending the health issues surrounding sex hormone imbalances are not limited to the reproductive system they can also increase the risk of breast cancer and autoimmune diseases, which is partly why autoimmune diseases are much more common in women than in men.

THE MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

We've discussed the consequences that sex hormone imbalances can have on your physical health, but the effects are even more widespread than this.



Hormone imbalance can also exert its effects on your mental health, causing symptoms such as the extreme mood swings, irritability, anger, low sex drive and anxiety of peri/menopause. In fact, research has established a link between high levels of estrogen and anxiety. Studies have shown that high estrogen levels (which as explained can happen during perimenopause) affect the COMT gene and slow down the breakdown of neurotransmitters, which causes dopamine to build up and leads to high levels of stress, anxiety, and insomnia.

UP CLOSE

ESTROGEN DOMINANCE

High estrogen was coined “Estrogen Dominance” by Dr. John R Lee MD. a Harvard graduate famous for his research on progesterone. Estrogen dominance is the most common hormonal imbalance affecting women today and is considered something of an epidemic.

Estrogen dominance affects both young and older women (especially during perimenopause when estrogen is all over the map). It occurs when estrogen levels are too high or high in relation to other hormones.

When estrogen levels are high in relation to progesterone levels, this is known as “relative estrogen dominance”. This can occur even when estrogen levels are low such as during menopause. As we discussed supporting liver health is key to balanced estrogen levels.

HORMONE TESTING

Unfortunately, my experience has been that most doctors don't want to run a full hormone panel. They don't see the point. With so many women struggling with hormone imbalance this makes zero sense. Man do we need a major overhaul of women's medicine in this country!



Thankfully, we can order your own lab tests online. For hormone testing, I suggest DUTCH testing which you'll find a link to in the [Youology Shop](#). Currently, DUTCH testing is the most comprehensive hormone test available. It's a few hundred dollars but well worth it.

THYROID TESTING

Thyroid disease affects two out of every eight women. Many of the symptoms we blame on peri/menopause may be due to poor thyroid function. I personally believe every woman should have a full thyroid panel if they are not feeling well.

Most doctors only order TSH levels to be checked but we need both T3 and T4 tested too. If your GP won't do it you need to find a good functional medicine doctor. I can help you with that just let me know.

A LOVING DISCLAIMER

Drawing on my background, years of training, skills, and life experiences, I support my clients—spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically.

I am not a medical doctor, dietitian, or nutritionist. I do not hold a degree in medicine, dietetics, or nutrition. I make no claims to any specialised medical training, nor do I dispense medical advice or prescriptions.

I am however a certified international integrative health coach with a specialty in weight management and women going through peri and post-menopause.



This content is not intended to diagnose or treat any diseases. It is intended to be provided for informational, educational, and self-empowerment purposes ONLY. Please consult with your doctor if you have any questions regarding this whole food program, and then make your own well-informed decisions based on what is best for your unique genetics, culture, conditions, and stage of life.

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PLEASE NOTE: All contents within this guide are based on my personal knowledge, opinions, and experience as a holistic health coach. Please consult your doctor regarding medications or medical advice.