



Nutritional Tips for Hormone Balance

Hormones are often referred to as the messengers of the body. They play important roles in countless physical stimuli including emotion, stress, reproduction, and aging. When hormones are out of balance, symptoms such as weight gain, accelerated aging, PMS, menopausal difficulties, or loss of sex drive may surface. Below are basic nutritional guidelines for healthy hormone balance.

- **Drink enough water.** Water is an integral part of many chemical reactions in the body, particularly those involved with detoxification. Start with 6 cups of water daily, and drink more if you are thirsty. If you exercise or are in hot weather you will need more water than usual. You should drink enough water to make your urine a light yellow color with a clear consistency. When your body is properly hydrated it will be more equipped to prevent hormonal imbalances.
- **Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, at least 4 servings per day.** This will give you fiber, which detoxifies extra hormones in your body. This will also give you extra nutrients to help with hormone balance. Whenever possible, eat organic fruits and vegetables, which are free of pesticides and fertilizers which negatively affect the body's hormonal balance.
- **Eat cruciferous vegetables often.** "Cruciferous" refers to a family of vegetables including broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, collard greens, cabbage, and turnips. These vegetables contain compounds that detoxify unhealthy forms of hormones and may protect against cancer.
- **Avoid sugar and caffeine as much as possible.** Sugar and caffeine disrupt hormonal balance by putting stress on your endocrine (hormonal) system. They also cause blood sugar spikes and crashes, which may lead to food cravings, irritability and headaches.
- **Limit alcohol consumption to 0-2 drinks per day.** Alcohol dehydrates the body and puts unnecessary stress on the liver. Both of these factors intensify hormonal symptoms.
- **Replace commercial meat and dairy with organic, hormone-free, and/or range-fed meats and dairy products whenever possible.** Commercial meat and dairy products contain higher levels of pesticide residues and artificial hormones, both of which confuse the body's natural hormonal signals.
- **Regularly eat healthy fats.** Healthy fat is absolutely necessary for the production of most hormones made in the body. Sources of healthy fats include avocado, coconut, flax, raw nuts and seeds, butter, fish, and organic meats and dairy products. Unhealthy fats which contain hydrogenated oils and trans fats (for example, margarine) actually interfere with healthy hormone production by blocking the pathways in your body that produce hormones.
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Sleep is a time of deep detoxification for the body, and especially for the liver. When your liver is able to work effectively, it is more likely that your hormone levels will stay in balance.

The above are only general suggestions. If you would like to learn more about how to balance your hormones nutritionally, please consult with a qualified nutrition-minded practitioner.