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8 Natural ways to balance your hormones:

FOR DR. ROZE BIOHEALTH CLINICS | 03 OCTOBER , 2022

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Hormones are chemical messengers that have profound effects on your mental, physical, and emotional health. For instance, they play a major role in controlling your appetite, weight, and mood.

Typically, your body produces the precise amount of each hormone needed for various processes to keep you healthy.

However, sedentary lifestyles and Western dietary patterns may affect your hormonal environment. In addition, levels of certain hormones decline with age, and some people experience a more dramatic decrease than others.

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However, a nutritious diet and other healthy lifestyle habits may help improve your hormonal health and allow you to feel and perform your best.



Here are 10 natural ways to balance your hormones.



1. **Enough protein. At every meal**



Consuming adequate amounts of protein is extremely important.



Not only does protein provide essential amino acids that your body can't make on its own, but your body also needs it to produce protein-derived hormones — also known as peptide hormones.

Your endocrine glands make these hormones from amino acids. Peptide hormones play a crucial role in regulating many physiological processes, such as growth, energy metabolism, appetite, stress, and reproduction.

For example, protein intake influences hormones that control appetite and food intake, communicating information about energy status to your brain.

Research has shown that eating protein decreases the hunger hormone ghrelin and stimulates the production of hormones that help you feel full, including peptide YY (PYY) and glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1). One 3-month study in 156 teenagers with obesity associated a high protein breakfast with increased PYY and GLP-1 levels, which resulted in weight loss due to increased feelings of fullness.

Experts recommend eating a minimum of 20–30 grams of protein per meal. You can do this by including high protein foods such as eggs, chicken breast, lentils, or fish at each meal.

2. **Engage in regular exercise**

Physical activity strongly influences hormonal health. Aside from improving blood flow to your muscles, exercise increases hormone receptor sensitivity, meaning that it enhances the delivery of nutrients and hormone signals.

A major benefit of exercise is its ability to reduce insulin levels and increase insulin sensitivity.

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Insulin is a hormone that allows cells to take up sugar from your bloodstream to use for energy. However, if you have a condition called insulin resistance, your cells may not effectively react to insulin. This condition is a risk factor for diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.

However, while some researchers still debate whether the improvements come from exercise itself or from losing weight or fat, evidence shows that regular exercise may improve insulin resistance independently of body weight or fat mass reduction.

Many types of physical activity have been found to help prevent insulin resistance, including high intensity interval training, strength training, and cardio.

Being physically active may also help boost levels of muscle-maintaining hormones that decline with age, such as testosterone, IGF-1, DHEA, and human growth hormone.

For people who cannot perform vigorous exercise, even regular walking may increase these hormone levels, potentially improving strength and quality of life.

3. **Maintain a moderate weight**

- Weight gain is directly associated with hormonal imbalances that may lead to complications in insulin sensitivity and reproductive health.
- Obesity is strongly related to the development of insulin resistance, while losing excess weight is linked to improvements in insulin resistance and reduced risk of diabetes and heart disease.
- This means obesity is strongly related to lower levels of the reproductive hormone testosterone in men and contributes to a lack of ovulation in women, both of which are common causes of infertility.
- Nonetheless, studies indicate that weight loss may reverse this condition. Eating within your own personal calorie range can help you maintain hormonal balance and a moderate weight.

4. **Take care of your gut health**

Your gut contains more than 100 trillion friendly bacteria, which produce numerous metabolites that may affect hormone health both positively and negatively.

Your gut microbiome regulates hormones by modulating insulin resistance and feelings of fullness.

For example, when your gut microbiome ferments fiber, it produces short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as acetate, propionate, and butyrate.

Both acetate and butyrate aid weight management by increasing calorie burning and thus help prevent insulin resistance

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Acetate and butyrate also regulate feelings of fullness by increasing the fullness hormones GLP-1 and PYY.



Interestingly, studies show that obesity may change the composition of the gut microbiome to promote insulin resistance and inflammation.



In addition, lipopolysaccharides (LPS) — components of certain bacteria in your gut microbiome — may increase your risk of insulin resistance. People with obesity seem to have higher levels of circulating LPS.



5. Lower your sugar intake



Minimizing added sugar intake may be instrumental in optimizing hormone function and avoiding obesity, diabetes, and other diseases:

- The simple sugar fructose is present in many types of sugar, comprising up to 43% of honey, 50% of refined table sugar, 55% of high fructose corn syrup, and 90% of agave.
- In addition, sugar-sweetened beverages are the primary source of added sugars in the Western diet, and fructose is commonly used commercially in soft drinks, fruit juice, and sport and energy drinks.
- Fructose intake has increased exponentially in the United States since around 1980, and studies consistently show that eating added sugar promotes insulin resistance — regardless of total calorie intake or weight gain.
- Long-term fructose intake has been linked to disruptions of the gut microbiome, which may lead to other hormonal imbalances.
- What's more, fructose may fail to stimulate the production of the fullness hormone leptin, leading to decreased calorie burning and increased weight gain.

Therefore, reducing your intake of sugary drinks - and other sources of added sugar - may improve hormone health.

6. Try stress-reduction technics

Stress harms your hormones in several ways.

The hormone cortisol is known as the stress hormone because it helps your body cope with long-term stress. Your body's response to stress activates a cascade of events that leads to cortisol production.

Once the stressor has passed, the response ends. However, chronic stress impairs the feedback mechanisms that return your hormonal systems to normal.

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Therefore, chronic stress causes cortisol levels to remain elevated, which stimulates appetite and increases your intake of sugary and high fat foods. In turn, this may lead to excessive calorie intake and obesity.

In addition, high cortisol levels stimulate gluconeogenesis — the production of glucose from non-carbohydrate sources — which may cause insulin resistance.

Notably, research shows that you can lower your cortisol levels by engaging in stress reduction technics such as meditation, yoga, and listening to relaxing music.

Try to devote at least 10–15 minutes per day to these activities, even if you feel you don't have time.

7. Consume Healthy Fats

Including high quality natural fats in your diet may help reduce insulin resistance and appetite.

- Medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) are unique fats that are less likely to be stored in fat tissue and more likely to be taken up directly by your liver for immediate use as energy, promoting increased calorie burning. MCTs are also less likely to promote insulin resistance.
- Furthermore, healthy fats such as omega-3s help increase insulin sensitivity by reducing inflammation and pro-inflammatory markers.
- Additionally, studies note that omega-3s may prevent cortisol levels from increasing during chronic stress.
- These healthy fats are found in pure MCT oil, avocados, almonds, peanuts, macadamia nuts, hazelnuts, fatty fish, and olive and coconut oils.

8. Get consistent, high quality sleep

No matter how nutritious your diet or how consistent your exercise routine, getting enough restorative sleep is crucial for optimal health.

Poor sleep is linked to imbalances in many hormones, including insulin, cortisol, leptin, ghrelin, and HGH.

For instance, not only does [sleep deprivation](#) impair insulin sensitivity, but poor sleep is associated with a 24-hour increase in cortisol levels, which may lead to insulin resistance.

In fact, one small study in 14 healthy adults found that 5 nights of sleep restriction decreased insulin sensitivity by 25%.

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Moreover, studies consistently show that sleep deprivation results in increased ghrelin and decreased leptin levels.

In a review of 21 studies in 2,250 people, those assigned to a short sleep group showed higher ghrelin levels than those who got the recommended amount of sleep.

Plus, your brain needs uninterrupted sleep to go through all five stages of each sleep cycle. This is especially important for the release of growth hormone, which occurs mainly at night during deep sleep.

To maintain optimal hormonal balance, aim for at least 7 hours of high quality sleep per night.



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