



## Hormones - why balance is key



**Naturopath Gemma Hurditch gives us a taster of what we can find out about balancing our hormones naturally, one of the topics that will be covered on 15th September at the special Open Day at CNM Manchester (College of Naturopathic Medicine).**

**Hormones are all about communication and they play a vital role in the health of our body. 'Sex hormones' don't just give us our male or female characteristics, they also influence many other things including mood, bone health and immunity.**

Issues such as premenstrual syndrome (PMS), acne and hair in unusual places can occur when we have an imbalance. Hormones also influence our metabolism, libido, weight and even the way we handle stress. Given the importance of our hormones, it pays to ensure that we utilise our diet and lifestyle to support them, for optimal health and vitality.

### Stress

In general, stress is the biggest alterable factor affecting our hormones and the reason why we need to make stress reduction a priority. Find what works for you. Exercise, herbal medicine and Acupuncture are some of the many natural therapies that can help to reduce stress.

Cortisol is a particularly influential stress hormone. When stress levels and cortisol are in a good balance, the rest of our hormones are often harmonious too.

Naturopathic nutrition is focused on a good general diet which is based on sticking as close to nature as possible - organic whole foods, leaving processed and 'artificial' foods on the shelf. Further nutritional tips to balance cortisol include:

- Don't make a habit of consuming excessive sugar; favour a diet with a low GL (glycaemic load) and keep the sweet treats to a minimum. There are plenty of online tools to help you choose low GL.

- Take probiotics and pre/probiotic foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha.
- Get plenty of soluble fibre from foods such as oats and artichokes.
- Drink plenty of water and green tea.
- Increase your magnesium intake. Magnesium is found in nuts and seeds, legumes, cooked spinach and other leafy greens. (The cooking process reduces the effect of oxalates and phytates which can reduce absorbability of magnesium). Magnesium is known as the relaxation mineral, because it relaxes muscles and nerves and promotes a feeling of calm, so necessary for maintaining hormonal balance.

### Sex hormones

In the world of hormones, an imbalance in our sex hormones, particularly oestrogen and progesterone, can lead to problems in both men and women. These two hormones work in concert with one another and the balance of the two influences us more than the effect of one hormone alone. It's not just natural causes that we have to look to. Various modern-day pollutants act as 'xeno-oestrogens'. These are endocrine disruptors, mimicking the effects of oestrogen. Xeno-oestrogens are implicated in various diseases including cancers of the breast, lung, pancreas and brain.

Insufficient progesterone is linked to difficulties with fertility, conception,

and anxiety and in men, many symptoms that also occur with lack of testosterone, such as muscle loss and erectile dysfunction. A major finding in clinic is that progesterone is too low in relation to oestrogen.

Fortunately there is a great deal that most of us are able to do to overcome some of the contributing factors, but it involves rethinking many aspects of everyday life and taking a completely fresh look at the products we use, as well as eat. Certain foods can go a long way to help normalise oestrogen levels, and there are a number of nutrients that have been found to support the natural production of progesterone.

For personalised advice, consult a Naturopathic Nutritional Therapist.

*You can find out more about balancing your hormones and improving fertility naturally, at CNM Manchester's special Open Day on 15th September 2018. Additional fascinating talks will focus on the gut brain connection, and herbal help for immunity. 10am-5.30pm. £10 entry.*

## Attend a Free Open Evening

to find out how you could train with CNM in Manchester for a rewarding career as a Naturopathic Nutritional Therapist or a Naturopathic Herbalist, helping yourself and others to better health naturally.

**Find out the next date and reserve your free place by visiting:**

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