

So Mo-vember is over.....what next?

5 Ways to Support Hormonal Health for Men & Women

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Mo-vember raised awareness about prostate cancer and the importance of early detection and treatment which of course, is very important. However, in naturopathic medicine we acknowledge that although we can treat illness at such an advanced stage, we can more easily treat the early stages of disease before they become advanced and require aggressive treatment; this is the power of prevention.

Some signs of hormonal imbalance in women include; PMS (including irritability, bloating, pain, breast tenderness, acne breakouts), menstrual irregularities, fatigue, weight gain, hair loss, mood swings, and depression.

As men age, they may experience weight gain (around the middle), lower energy, lack of enthusiasm, difficulty urinating or loss of libido, and these can be signs of low testosterone.

There are lots of factors that affect hormonal health including stress, diet and environmental exposures.

The hormonal (or endocrine) system is a complex network of interactions between many organs and systems in the body. In my practice, I assess and treat hormonal imbalances by examining the role the liver plays in its ability to metabolize and produce hormones, as well as how all the endocrine glands are working together; e.g. the interaction between the adrenal glands, thyroid, ovaries/testes, pituitary, and hypothalamus, and how they can affect other organs such as the pancreas and its role in blood sugar balance. I use treatments that support organ function as well as identify any nutrients that may be lacking which may impair them from working their best.

Top 5 Everyday Ways to Support Hormone Balance:

1. Reduce stress: Yes, we all have stress—but we can become more effective at managing our stress. Breathing techniques, meditation and relaxation practices can all be helpful.
2. Movement: Regular physical activity has a beneficial effect on circulating hormone levels and hormone production as well as energy balance, and blood-sugar regulation.
3. Cruciferous vegetables (cabbage family): Cruciferous vegetables like cabbage, kale, rapini, chard, collard greens, mustard greens, brussel sprouts and broccoli contain

powerful nutrients such as *indole-3-carbinol* and *sulforaphane* which support liver function, hormonal balance and are cancer preventative.

4. Use Chemical-free Skin-Care products: Many skincare products contain carcinogenic chemicals and as we use them, they are absorbed into the body *through the skin!* One major group of dangerous chemicals in skincare products that affect hormone balance are *xenoestrogens*. They mimic estrogen in the body and increase the risk of hormone-dependent cancers such as breast and prostate cancer, however they can also play a role in other conditions that may be related to excess estrogen or "estrogen dominance" such as PMS, fibroids, low libido, weight gain, PCOS, ovarian cysts, endometriosis and others. Every product we use may contain small amounts of these dangerous chemicals, but when you count all of the products we use daily, and all the times we use them, it really adds up. E.g. toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, moisturizer.....etc. Some major classes of xenoestrogenic chemicals to check for on labels include: parabens, "parfum" or "fragrance", and sodium lauryl sulphate/sodium laureth sulphate (SLS). Consult your local health food store for effective, chemical-free skincare products.

5. Avoid coffee: Coffee makes the body acidic and acidity predisposes us to hormone imbalance. Also, coffee encourages the loss of minerals including magnesium, as well as increases our cortisol (stress hormone) levels, which in turn affects insulin and blood sugar so that we are more predisposed to hypoglycemia.

If you are interested in a wholistic approach to healthcare designed according to your specific needs, consult a naturopathic doctor. Treatments I often use for hormone-balancing include any or a combination of: herbal medicine, homeopathy, biotherapeutic drainage, nutrition, acupuncture and/or stress management. For more information about our services or to book appointment, please call; 416-699-6336.