

FEMALE HORMONES AND METABOLISM – PART I

As women, we are definitely at a disadvantage when it comes to gaining weight as we are so sensitive to the damage caused by stress and inflammation. We may see it as sugar cravings, waist expansion, moodiness, lack of sleep or even feelings of being overwhelmed. These symptoms can be clues that your hormones have become unbalanced. If not corrected, we are left with a broken metabolism and no matter what “diet” we may try, we continue to store fat and gain weight. If this is you, then it’s time to understand that our hormones govern nearly every aspect of fat loss, from where we store fat, to our cravings, appetite, gut bacteria and addictive patterns with food. So, what are these hormones that result in a broken metabolism? Estrogen, insulin, leptin, cortisol, thyroid, testosterone and growth hormone. In order to fix our broken metabolism, we’ll have to spend a little time understanding how these hormones become unbalanced and how to reset them.

ESTROGEN, the hormone responsible for making us uniquely female (breasts, hips, curves, hair) is easily disrupted by red meat and alcohol. Red meat that is grain-fed and hormone-injected, slows down digestion making us bloated and/or constipated, raises our estrogen levels and disrupts that microbiome that lives in our gut. Many women become estrogen-dominant compared to the counter hormone, progesterone. This puts us at high risk for weight gain, breast cancer, prediabetes and diabetes. Men can also have estrogen dominance and can develop fatty deposits on the breasts, hips and “love handles”. Eating wild-caught fish, wild game, grass-fed beef and organic chicken is a way to avoid spiking our estrogen levels. Decreasing or abstaining from alcohol is a way to clear out our liver and reverse estrogen dominance. Eating less “meat” overall and increasing our intake of vegetables (fiber) helps to stimulate removal of excess estrogen from the body.

INSULIN is the gatekeeper of many other hormones of metabolism. High insulin can result in estrogen dominance, excessive testosterone and insulin/leptin resistance. Normally, insulin

takes the glucose from the food you eat and stores it in the cells of the liver and muscles as glycogen, this is a storage form of glucose. We can only store a small amount of glycogen at any time. When you overindulge in foods that turn into glucose, insulin transforms into a fat-storage hormone. This is because your pancreas makes more and more insulin and we eventually develop insulin resistance. The only way to reset your insulin levels without drugs is to exercise, eat foods that stabilize blood glucose like clean proteins, healthy fats, slow-burning carbs (not more than 20-49 gms/day) and take supplements that sensitize your cells to insulin.

LEPTIN, the hormone in charge of hunger is negatively affected by a diet high in fructose. When we overeat fructose, leptin levels rise excessively, resulting in weight gain and a feeling of being ravenous all the time. Compared to a person in the 1950’s, we eat 30 lbs more fruit per year. In addition, the fruit we eat today contains much more fructose, due to corporate farming.

By paying attention to the 3 most important metabolic hormones: estrogen, insulin and leptin, you can make some major strides in fixing your “broken” metabolism. Next month we’ll continue this story as we talk about the other important hormones involved in resetting our metabolism: cortisol, thyroid, testosterone and growth hormone. Until then, make changes everyday in the kind and amount of meat you eat, the amount of glucose you eat and especially the amount of fructose you eat (that includes HFCS).

Nutrition and Weight Loss Center of Ocean is hosting a free workshop on Monday, June 17th at 7:00 pm:

Female Hormones and Metabolism

Learn why our metabolism may be stuck despite our best efforts. Space is limited so call today to reserve your seat. 732-609-3366



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