

Understanding the Female Hormone Cycle



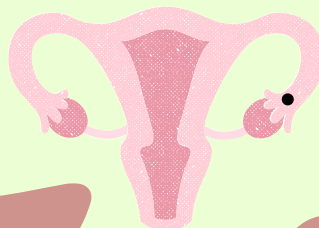
Aunt Flo, Shark Week, Menses, Lady Time, Crimson Wave, Time of the Month... We have all heard these names people have made for the monthly female reproductive cycle. But what really drives this cycle? Hormones! Let's take a look at the hormones at play each week during the typical 28 day cycle.

Week 1

- Your period begins. Bleeding typically will last anywhere from 2-7 days.
- Estrogen and progesterone are low but begin slowly rising now, thanks to follicle stimulating hormone and luteinizing hormone production.

Week 2

- Estrogen and progesterone continue to rise. Estrogen rising causes a surge in luteinizing hormone, which triggers ovulation.
- You may feel more confident and energized in this week.
- Ovulation occurs around day 14 of a typical 28 day cycle.



Week 3

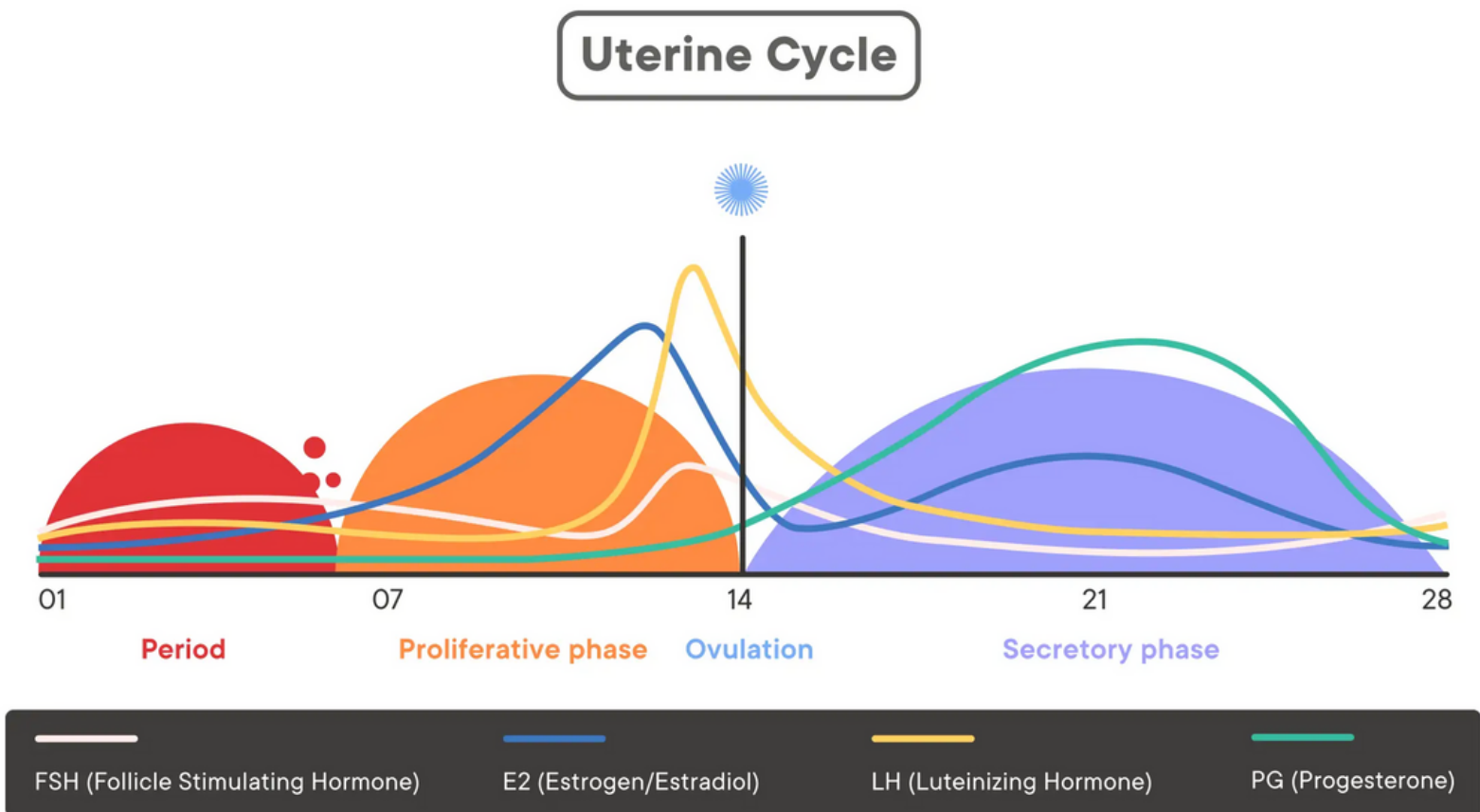
- Progesterone and estrogen both rise after ovulation, preparing your body for pregnancy if the released egg is fertilized.
- You may start to notice your energy level decreasing this week.

Week 4

- Progesterone and estrogen levels begin to take a dip, if you are not pregnant and your next cycle is approaching.
- You may begin to feel irritable.
- If you did become pregnant, progesterone levels will increase steadily.



The ovarian and menstrual (or uterine) cycle occur simultaneously in the 28 day period. The ovarian cycle consists of three phases: Follicle, ovulation, and luteal. The menstrual cycle also consists of three phases as well: menstrual, proliferative, and secretory. Below is a chart showing the hormone ebb and flow during the reproductive cycle.



Ray, L., & Michalowski, M. (2023a, April 28). The menstrual cycle, explained. The Menstrual Cycle: Phases of Your Cycle. <https://hellocycle.com/articles/cycle-a-z/the-menstrual-cycle-more-than-just-the-period>

Want to Learn More? Check Out These Helpful Resources:

- <https://hellocycle.com/articles/menstrual-cycle>
- <https://www.myhormonology.com/learn/female-hormone-cycle/>
- Taking Charge of Your Fertility by Toni Weschler, MPH

References:

- Ray, L., & Michalowski, M. (2023a, April 28). The menstrual cycle, explained. The Menstrual Cycle: Phases of Your Cycle. <https://hellocycle.com/articles/cycle-a-z/the-menstrual-cycle-more-than-just-the-period>
- Weschler, T. (2015). Taking charge of your fertility: The definitive guide to natural birth control, pregnancy achievement, and Reproductive Health. William Morrow, an imprint of HarperCollins.
- Female hormone cycle: What goes on during your monthly cycle?. Hormonology. (2021, April 7). <https://www.myhormonology.com/learn/female-hormone-cycle/>