

# Vital Nutrition



Female **Balance**

# Natural hormone balance

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All our hormones are in a finely tuned balance, so when one is out of whack, it upsets the whole symphony. From PMS, painful periods and PCOS, to fertility, fibroids and the menopause, the food we eat can make all the difference to our hormone balance.

In this workshop I will talk you through some ideas to help you take back control of your hormones, so you feel and function better, no matter what age or stage of life you are at.

stay healthy!  
Jane

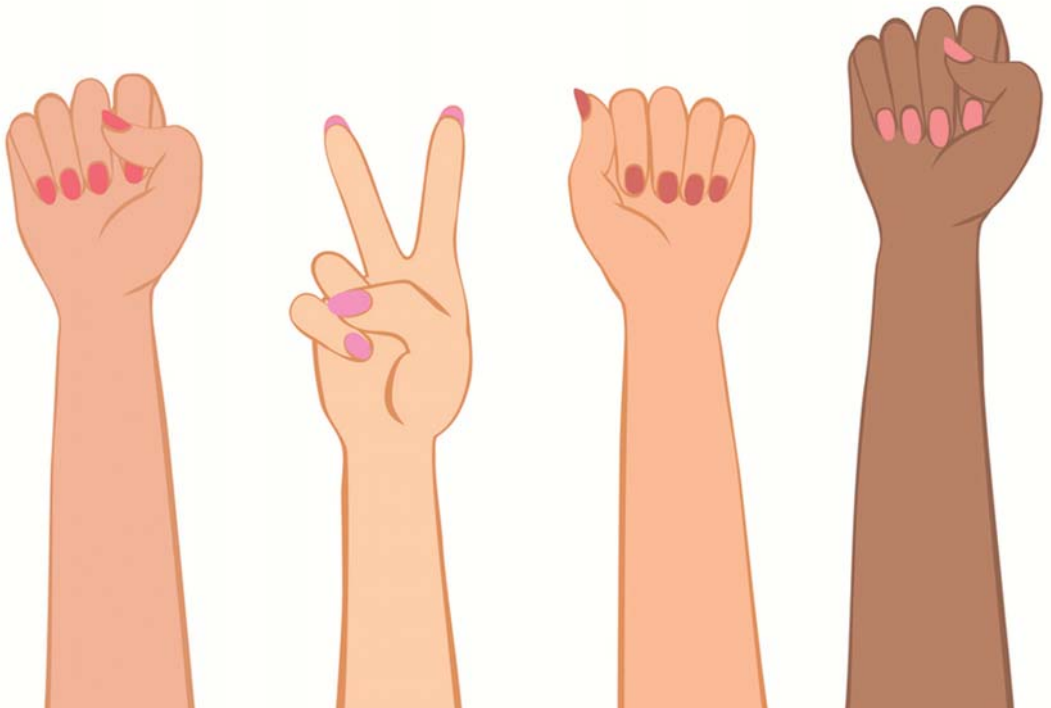


Vital Nutrition

[www.vital-nutrition.co.uk](http://www.vital-nutrition.co.uk)



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# Eat a hormone balancing diet

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1. Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and veg every day (...and eat more veg than fruit!)
2. Eat at least one portion of cruciferous veg every day (e.g. broccoli, cabbage, kale, rocket, watercress, cauliflower, pak choi, Brussels sprouts).
3. Eat more fibre-fibre-rich wholegrains than refined, white carbs.
4. Buy organic foods where possible.
5. Eat phytoestrogen rich foods every day – beans, lentils, flaxseed.
6. Eat oily foods every day – oily fish, nuts, seeds, avocado, olive oil.
7. Reduce your intake of saturated fat from dairy products and red meat.
8. Eat some fermented or probiotic foods most days – live yoghurt, kimchi, sauerkraut, kefir.
9. Drink enough water.
10. Eat real food – avoid artificial preservatives, sweeteners, colours and flavourings.
11. Drink less caffeine and alcohol.
12. Avoid sugar!



# Xenoestrogens

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Xenoestrogens are chemicals that mimic the physiological effects of oestrogen. They bind to oestrogen receptors and mimic its effects, often with dire consequences for our health. Sources of xenoestrogens include environmental toxins like PCBs, plastics, petrochemicals and pesticide residues.

We can reduce our exposure to these potentially harmful substances by making a few changes:

- use alternatives to cling film like waxed, reusable sandwich bags.
- look for cosmetics, shampoos, shower gels and other personal hygiene products that are free from synthetic fragrances – look for natural alternatives instead.
- Limit your use of plastic as much as possible.
- Eat organic where possible – especially fruit & veg from the ‘Dirty Dozen’ list, high fat foods like butters and oils, and foods of animal origin like eggs, meat and dairy produce.



# Phytoestrogens

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Phytoestrogen rich foods have a gentle hormone balancing effect on female hormones. Their structure is very similar to oestrogen and they have the potential to either increase or reduce oestrogen levels in the body, depending on where the imbalance is.

The main types of phytoestrogens are lignans and isoflavones, found in flaxseed (linseed) and pulses. Soya provides us with phytoestrogens too, but to be most effective, it needs to be a fermented form like tofu, miso or tempeh. Avoid soya yoghurt and soya milk they can upset hormone balance, rather than help regulate levels.

## Simple ways to increase your intake of phytoestrogens:

- Add some flaxseed (linseed) to your porridge, yoghurt or smoothies.
- Bulk out with pulses – add chickpeas to curry, kidney beans to chilli or puy lentils to bolognese.
- Eat more houmous!
- Have one meat-free meal a week with beans, lentils or tofu as your protein source. Spicy bean burgers, tofu stir-fry or lentil dhal.
- Use miso as stock for soups and stews.



# The Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen

When it comes to fruit and vegetables some tend to be sprayed more than others. In the USA, the Environmental Working Group publish the Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen lists every year\*. This is a useful guide to help reduce your intake of pesticide residues. The foods on the Clean 15 list have been shown to have the lowest levels of pesticide residue, so it may not be necessary to opt for the organic version of these foods. When buying non-organic produce, choose the foods on the 'Clean 15' list.

Remember that no matter whether you are choosing organic or not, fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet. If you want to up the ante in the health stakes, then go for the organic option when you pop any foods from the Dirty Dozen in your trolley.

## Clean 15

1. Avocado
2. Sweetcorn
3. Pineapple
4. Cabbage
5. Onion
6. Peas
7. Papayas
8. Asparagus
9. Mango
10. Aubergine
11. Honeydew melon
12. Kiwi
13. Canteloupe
14. Cauliflower
15. Broccoli

## Dirty Dozen

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Nectarines
4. Apples
5. Grapes
6. Peaches
7. Cherries
8. Pears
9. Tomatoes
10. Celery
11. Potatoes
12. Peppers

\*correct at time of going to press!



# Eat More Fat

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Fat is essential for female hormone balance, and yet many of us still calorie count and opt for the low fat versions of foods. Could this be contributing to symptoms of female hormone imbalance?

Omega 3 and omega 6 fats are the building blocks for hormones, including oestrogen and progesterone. Most women eating a western diet fall short of the daily recommend intake of omega 3 fats in particular.

These omega 3 fats, make up the cell membranes of every cell in our bodies.

They are important for hormone balance and deficiencies have been associated with:

- painful and heavy periods
- infertility problems
- risk of premature birth
- pre-eclampsia
- postnatal depression
- menopausal problems
- postmenopausal osteoporosis
- breast cancer
- cardiovascular disease

## Aim to:

- eat oily fish like wild salmon, mackerel, herring, trout or sardines 2-3 x week.
- eat a handful of nuts and seeds every day – especially flaxseeds/linseed, chia, walnuts, hemp seed.
- never cook with sunflower or vegetable oil. Swap to olive or coconut oil instead.
- eat butter instead of margarine (in moderation, of course!).

**Vital Nutrition recommends:** taking a good quality fish oil, or krill oil supplement every day. Some of the brands we like include Viridian Nutrition, Biocare, Eskimo 3, Lamberts and Clean Marine.



# Eat Less Sugar

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Sugar plays havoc with our hormones. The foundation for natural female hormone balance is eating a diet to help promote a balanced blood sugar.

## Here's how to:

1. Check food labels. Sugar levels of 5g or less per 100g is a low sugar food, but be careful that the sugar is not replaced with artificial sweeteners, which can be just as bad.
2. Eat more vegetables than fruit. Aim for a couple of pieces of fruit a day and at least 3 or 4 portions of vegetables. Eating fruit that grows locally can help you to reduce your sugar content too, as tropical fruit like bananas, pineapple and mango tend to have higher sugar than apples, pears, plums and berries.
3. Find healthy snacks that are lower in sugar. Oatcakes with nut butter, yoghurt and berries or some really dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa chocolate) with a few brazil nuts are good options.
4. Have some protein every time you eat, to help you feel fuller for longer and reduce the urge to snack on sugary foods.
5. If you really struggle to cut the sugar, try taking a supplement like Viridian Nutrition's Cinnamon and Chromium Complex for a couple of weeks to help curb cravings.





# Keep yourself regular!

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It may not sound like an obvious connection, but making sure your digestion is regular is an essential step for female hormone balance.

Once we have used hormones that the body needs, then we need to get rid of them. They are sent into our liver to be metabolised before being excreted by our digestive tract.

If we tend to be constipated, then we don't get rid of these hormones and they get recirculated into our system, setting up a hormone imbalance.

- Keep well hydrated.
- Eat more soluble fibre from foods like oats, vegetables, fruit, flaxseed and brown rice.
- Take regular exercise.
- Eat some fermented or probiotic foods every day – e.g. kefir, kombucha, sauerkraut, live yoghurt.



# Supplements

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Supplements for female hormone balance can vary, depending on your age and whether you have a medical condition, so please talk to your GP, pharmacist, or Vital Nutrition if you are unsure.

## **The basic essentials include:**

1. A good quality multivitamin designed specifically for women's needs.
2. Fish oil.
3. Vitamin D in the winter months.
4. Milk thistle complex for liver support and digestive health.

## **Optional extras:**

- Magnesium and B6 have been found to help support symptoms of PMS.
- A chromium based supplement to help regulate blood sugar and insulin levels.
- A herbal combination including sage, milk thistle and agnus castus can be supportive for hot flushes and peri-menopause.



# Sugar-Free Nutty Granola

Most commercial granolas are laden with sugar and vegetable oil, not very healthy! This nutritious and delicious version is oil-free, sugar-free and makes enough to do all week.

- 100g jumbo oats
- 100g sunflower seeds
- 100g hazelnuts, crushed or roughly chopped
- 100g pumpkin seeds
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 egg whites
- juice of half a lemon
- pinch of sea salt
- 1 tbsp coconut nectar or maple syrup (optional)

## Makes 6-8 servings

- Pre-heat the oven to 160C/  
Gas mark 3 and line a large baking tray with greaseproof paper.
- Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl.
- Whisk the egg whites until they are fluffy.
- Fold the egg white into the dry ingredients.
- Stir in the lemon juice and syrup (if you are using it).
- Spread the granola mixture over the baking tray.
- Bake for 40-45 minutes until lightly golden. Check every now and then so it doesn't burn.
- Store in an airtight container and enjoy with natural yoghurt and berries.

Recipe from *Vital Nutrition: How to eat for optimum health, happiness and energy* by Jane McClenaghan.



If you are hungry for more...

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