

A MODERN WOMAN'S GUIDE



TO A HEALTHY PERIOD

WRITTEN BY:
AMANDA MONTALVO, RD, FDN-P
@HORMONEHEALINGRD

A Modern Woman's Guide To A Healthy Period

In this guide, I'm sharing the things I wish I knew when I was struggling with my skin, moods, and cycle. When I got off the pill and didn't get my period for over 6 months. When I felt like I was crazy and about to have a breakdown the week before every period. When I felt alone.

I think the reason so many women struggle is because we aren't taught the basics about our monthly cycle. If we knew what was normal, what's not, and what could be impacting our health, everything wouldn't be such a mystery. We wouldn't be given the pill for every symptom or feel like we didn't have options.

I hope this guide empowers you and helps you on your journey. Please remember that although I am a dietitian, I'm not your dietitian. Implementing any nutrition or supplement information from this guide should always be done with the guidance of your healthcare practitioner.

*with Love,
Amanda*



What's Inside:

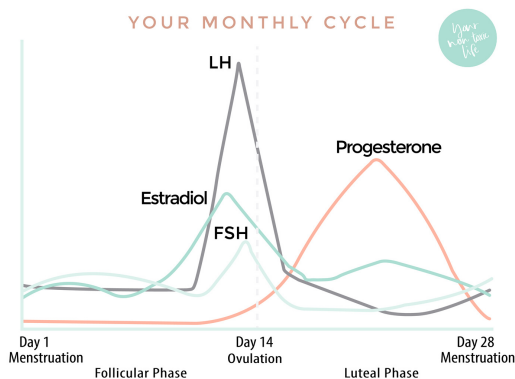
1. Getting to know your cycle
2. Nutrition for hormones basics
3. How to track your cycle & what's normal vs. abnormal
4. Signs of hormonal imbalance
5. FAQ
6. Testing & finding a practitioner
7. 5 Day Hormone Healing Meal Plan

A Modern Woman's Guide To A Healthy Period

Getting To Know Your Cycle

The first step of having a better period is understanding your cycle and the changes that occur in your body each month. Women are cyclical creatures. We cannot expect to show up the exact same way everyday since we have hormonal fluctuations that impact our brains, moods, energy, appetite, and more.

While this graph is based on a 28 day cycle, that's just the average and it's okay if your cycle is not 28 days (more on that later). Ovulation is marked day 14, but again, it's just a graph and you may ovulate at a different time. That's totally fine! Let's dive into each phase.



Menstrual Phase

The first phase of your cycle is menstruation. Hormones drop quickly to their lowest concentrations, which is what allows your period to start in the first place. We are actually the closest to being a man during this phase since our female hormones are so low.

The main event during this phase is the shedding of your uterine lining that was built up during your cycle. Hormones drop, the body recognizes that it's not pregnant, and the lining is shed.

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Fun Facts About Your Menstrual Phase!

We have the greatest amount of communication between your two brain hemispheres--the left side (analytical) and the right side (more emotional). This makes menstruation a great time to reflect and make decisions.

If you're not slowing down a bit or pushing too hard, this can also make you feel extra emotional. It's a beautiful thing if we let it be.

Nutrition



It's important to remember we are shedding a layer and working hard so replenishing nutrients is key.

Best Foods & Nutrients:

***Iron:** this is why increasing red meat is so important. By also increasing vitamin C rich foods you can boost absorption of iron.

A Modern Woman's Guide To A Healthy Period

Getting To Know Your Cycle

***Vitamin B12:** needed to make red blood cells and can help improve your energy during this time--another reason I am recommending red meat & quality animal proteins during this time

***Omega 3's:** this is a time where many of us experience cramps, nausea, mood swings, loose stools, etc. that are all signs of inflammation. Boosting omega 3 rich foods during this time (and leading up to it) is really helpful. Include salmon, flaxseeds, eggs, and walnuts.

***Magnesium:** Dealing with pain or headaches? Magnesium is your best friend. It's hard to get enough from food so you can consider supplementing with around 440mg per day (talk to your doctor first). There are many different types of magnesium--just avoid magnesium citrate as we don't absorb most of it and it makes you poop. Favorite high magnesium foods: cabbage, broccoli, swiss chard, dark chocolate, plantains, & bananas.

***Complex Carbs:** rich in B vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which are all great support during your period (and follicular phase). This is NOT the time to restrict carbs. My faves: chickpeas, legumes, sweet potatoes, oats, quinoa, winter squash.

***Anti-inflammatory foods** (to help with period pain)! My favorite is ginger! It works miracles for cramps and pain in general. I always keep ginger root on hand to make tea or add to meals. Turmeric is great too!



-Ginger tea: take a 1-2" piece of ginger and chop it up. Heat up 1 cup of water then add ginger and let it steep for a few minutes. Strain out ginger and enjoy. This is amazing for period cramps.

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Exercise Tip

Your hormones are their lowest during menstruation, which means it's a great time to go for max effort lifts or workouts. You may be tired the first day or two of your period, that's normal. A big shift in hormone levels can do that. Rest as needed then hit it hard when you're up to it!

Relationships

This is a great time to turn your attention inward and focus on yourself. Take time to reflect, spend some time alone, journal, meditate, whatever makes you feel connected to yourself.

Summary

This is a beautiful time in your cycle if you can recognize it as so. You are more sensitive but also more intuitive. Your mind wants some peace and quiet and will thrive if it gets this. You can feel grounded and calm and more in tune than ever before.

Follicular Phase

Once menstruation ends, you are now in your follicular phase and your body is preparing about 15-20 eggs for maturation and ovulation.

During this time our bodies are developing follicles and preparing for ovulation so estrogen is increasing. Because estrogen is building up, if we have imbalances or don't detoxify it well, it can lead to inflammation and symptoms like acne, mood changes, and just not feeling like yourself.

Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH) increases and is what helps eggs in the ovary mature. Each egg is enclosed in its own follicle. Follicles give off estrogen, which eventually leads to ovulation.

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Nutrition



Best Foods & Nutrients

Fiber: As estrogen increases we need to make sure we have enough fiber so we can eliminate it properly through our poop ☐ My faves: berries, apples, oats, legumes, seeds

Starchy/Complex Carbs: Estrogen is increases, which makes us more sensitive to insulin. This puts us in a great position to prioritize carbs. My faves: legumes, oats, plantains, potatoes, winter squash, quinoa, rice, chickpea pasta/rice.

Phytoestrogens: These help the body get rid of excess estrogen and have healthy estrogen levels. My favorite is flaxseeds! I think these are honestly great at any time in your cycle, but especially during follicular if you deal with acne.

Antioxidants: support the growing follicle but also reduce stress on the body (and therefore help reduce excess estrogen). My faves: berries, egg yolks, broccoli/broccoli sprouts, sweet potatoes, carrots, citrus, organ meats.

A Modern Woman's Guide To A Healthy Period

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Fermented foods: supports balance of good bacteria and digestive function. My faves: sauerkraut, kefir, raw ACV, and beet kvass.

Cruciferous veggies: brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli/broccoli sprouts all support estrogen detox to avoid excess levels.

Healthy fats: contain cholesterol, which is the backbone to our hormones that are increasing during this time. My faves: avocado, nuts, seeds, animal protein, egg yolks, coconut, olives.

Zinc: helpful for boosting estrogen & getting ready for ovulation. My faves: red meat, organ meats, nuts/seeds, avocado, eggs, chickpeas.



Exercise Tip

As you move through your follicular phase you will have more energy and strength. Use this to your advantage! Do some strength training and sprint/HIIT but don't over do it. Less is more!

Relationships

Slowly transition out of wanting more time alone. You don't have to jump in 100% as soon as your period ends. Ease in, enjoy more energy, but don't burn yourself out.

Summary

You may have more energy and have a to do list to complete, but continue to be gentle with yourself. You can harness this energy for the rest of your cycle if you don't over do it right away.

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Ovulatory Phase

The increase in estrogen from the follicular phase triggers an increase in LH (luteinizing hormone). This increase in LH tells your follicle to release the egg. High estrogen also increases cervical mucus. Testosterone also peaks during this time. Once ovulation occurs, which is what leads to an increase in progesterone.

Nutrition



Best Foods & Nutrients

Fiber (always!): As estrogen increases we need to make sure we have enough fiber so we can eliminate it properly through our poop. My faves for this phase: berries, legumes, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds

Liver Supportive Foods: as hormones increase, so does the burden on the liver. Eating foods high in sulfur, antioxidants, and glutathione helps ease this transition. My faves: broccoli sprouts, cruciferous veggies, berries, bell peppers, spinach, avocado, animal protein, dandelion tea/greens

A Modern Woman's Guide To A Healthy Period

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Wild Seafood: provide healthy fats, zinc, and protein.

Turmeric/Anti-Inflammatory Foods: upping your anti-inflammatory foods during this time can help make your pre-period time more enjoyable. My faves: turmeric root/powder/tincture, ginger, berries, green leafy veggies, salmon.

Zinc: supports healthy ovulation. My faves: red meat, organ meats, nuts/seeds, avocado, eggs, chickpeas.

Seeds: sunflower and sesame seeds are my favorite for this time. They contain zinc, magnesium, and fiber. Sesame seeds also contain lignans, which can bind to excess estrogen.



Exercise Tip

You typically have more energy during this time, which means bring up the intensity in your workouts and consider a group class. You can push your body a bit more and handle the intensity so don't be shy if you're feeling good!

Relationships

Testosterone peaks during ovulation, which means you will likely be feeling frisky (hopefully). Prioritize some alone time with yourself or with your partner.

Summary

Your body can handle more stress at this time in your cycle. You still want to get enough sleep (always!), but you can wake up earlier and likely still have good energy throughout the day. You're more resilient—take advantage of it!

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Luteal Phase

Your body is focusing on building the uterine lining back up for your next cycle. Progesterone is high (hopefully) in order to do this and estrogen has dropped off a bit. The key here is to remember that your body is preparing you. This is a great reminder to be compassionate with yourself. A lot is happening, hormones are high, so we all need a little extra support to keep us feeling good.

Nutrition



Best Foods & Nutrients

Water: It may seem really simple, but many women struggle with bloating during this time and drinking enough water can help reduce this. **BONUS:** add a pinch of Celtic sea salt for a mineral boost.

Fiber: As usual fiber makes the list since I feel it is essential for healthy hormones no matter what phase you are in. All fruits & veggies work!

Getting To Know Your Cycle

Vitamin B6: Supports healthy progesterone levels. If you struggle with severe PMS, boosting B6 can boost progesterone and even out those symptoms. My fave sources: chickpeas, plantains, spinach, red meat, carrots, sweet potato, avocado, sunflower seeds

Anti-inflammatory foods! My favorite is ginger! It works miracles for cramps and pain in general. I always keep ginger root on hand to make tea or add to meals. Turmeric and omega-3 rich foods are helpful too!

Magnesium: Reduce period pain and anxiety with Magnesium. It's hard to get enough from food so you can consider supplementing with around 440mg per day (talk to your doctor first). Favorite high magnesium foods: cabbage, broccoli, swiss chard, dark chocolate, plantains, & bananas

Complex Carbs: Struggle with cravings during this time? Add some complex carbs to your meals. My faves: chickpeas, legumes, sweet potatoes, oats, quinoa, plantains, squash, peaches

Exercise Tip

Use any energy to focus on strength training or intense yoga then scale back as needed. Don't try to go for any PR's or max effort exercises.

Relationships

Add in more romance with your partner (or yourself) and listen to your intuition.

Summary

In the beginning of the luteal phase your energy will still be high coming off ovulation—be careful not to overdo it. Start looking ahead to your expected period date. How can you simplify your schedule? Can you carve out some you time? As you get closer to your period you will start to withdraw, require more sleep, and have less energy. It's okay. Don't fight this. Prioritize sleep as best you can, prep some food, and nourish your body with what you're craving.

Nutrition For Hormones

I've seen a lot of claims out there for hormone balancing meal plans, recipes, and specific diets.

And honestly, I think this is a bit different for each person, especially when you consider the rest of their health history, current lab tests, and stress. It's all going to be unique, but there are certain things about nutrition for hormones that are the same for everyone.

One thing that doesn't change is what makes up our hormones or the building blocks of hormones.

Building Blocks of Hormones

Healthy Fats: contain cholesterol, which is the backbone of our hormones

Minerals: nutrients such as magnesium, selenium, potassium, etc. that we require in small amounts

Vitamins: b vitamins especially but also vitamin C, A, and E.

This means we have to get these from the foods we eat AND be able to digest and absorb them.

While these are what our hormones are made from, we also need macronutrients or nutrients that we require in large amounts, like carbs and protein to support hormone production.

Basics for Meeting Nutritional Needs

I like to set minimums so we don't feel restricted by food. Here are the recommended daily minimums:

Veggies: minimum of 4 cups per day

Fat: 75g a day minimum

Protein: 100g a day minimum (more if you have blood sugar issues)

Quality Carbs: 150g minimum (will vary per individual)

Fiber: 30g minimum

Nutrition For Hormones

How This Shows Up On Your Plate

Most Meals:

4-6oz protein source

1-2 cups of veggies

1/2-1 cup starchy carbs

Meal cooked with healthy fats or added 1-2 tbsp onto

Where To Start

Beginners:

Start with the minimums and adjust based on how you feel.

Advanced:

Look at what you are currently eating—how does it match up? Could you start experimenting with more fat or carbs? Are you eating enough protein or too much?

I love the app Cronometer to track food in. I do NOT recommend tracking everyday, but this can be a great way to get some insight into whether or not you are close to those daily minimums.

How Do I Know If I'm Eating Enough?

In order to figure out if something is working for you, I recommend tracking the following:

1. How you're sleeping (can you fall asleep easily and stay asleep)
2. Energy: how do you feel when you get up in the morning and throughout the day?
3. Hunger: Are you hungry between meals?
4. Cravings: these should really only be around your period.
5. Energy during and after workouts: are you running out of steam?
6. Recovery from workouts: if you aren't recovering well, you may not be eating enough.
7. Track your cycle! More on this in a few pages.

Nutrition For Hormones

Undereating & Your Hormones

Nourishment:

“Having insufficient food and nutrients for good health and wellbeing.”

This can be related to calorie intake and micronutrient intake (vitamins and minerals). You can be eating adequate calories but not meeting micronutrient needs. You can also be doing double the damage with inadequate calories and inadequate micronutrient needs.

This can greatly impact hormone health.

Our stress hormones and feedback loop are connected to our thyroid. This is why chronic stressors can eventually lead to under active thyroid. Your thyroid is not the root issue—your stress is.

Not eating enough for an extended period, not digesting and absorbing your food, and missing important nutrients in the diet are all chronic stressors.

No matter what your goal is, you want a healthy thyroid and you need to be fueling your body adequately.

The Body's Response To Undereating

1. First, the body will break down protein to turn into glucose aka sugar for energy and fuel. It does this with a stress response and the stress hormone cortisol.
2. In response to the reduced calorie/nutrient intake, your thyroid that controls your metabolism slows down. Your body is smart—it reduces its energy needs so it can survive.
3. Your hormones are not prioritized—especially not ovulation. When your body senses a major stressor like under eating, eventually it decides it's not a healthy time for you to bring a baby in this world. That means no ovulation, which also means you don't make progesterone (our feel good, chill hormone).

Nutrition For Hormones

Signs You're Not Eating Enough

- low energy levels
- hair loss & brittle nails
- anovulatory cycles/irregular cycles/missing period
- difficulty sleep
- feeling cold all of the time
- constipation
- anxiety
- cravings
- irritability/mood changes
- constant hunger

Check out my 5 day Hormone Healing Meal Plan at the end of this document!

How To Track Your Cycle

As women, we are cyclical creatures. Our energy and hormones ebb and flow with the moon so why do we expect ourselves to show up and be the same exact way every single day? It's not realistic and often detrimental to our health. That's why getting in tune with your cycle is so important. You may have grown up similar to me dreading your period, but the truth is, your period is trying to tell you something. It's not just this random time of the month when you bleed and are more tired. It's an outward expression of your underlying health.

When you are healthy, your period will arrive regularly, without annoying symptoms that keep you from living your best life (hard to believe, I know). When your body is out of balance, believe me, your period will also let you know.

It's not just me that thinks this is important, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) put out a life changing statement called "Menstruation in Girls and Adolescents: Using the Menstrual Cycle as a Vital Sign." It's true, we can all use our female cycle and cyclical nature to help us live a healthier life and uncover imbalances in the body. Our female hormones like estrogen and progesterone are important for our overall health. If we are not ovulating, then we are not fertile, and our bodies aren't functioning properly. Even if you don't want to have children it's still important to make sure you are ovulating. It's a huge part of what helps keep you young and age gracefully.

*One thing I do want to mention is that pill bleeds, or bleeding during what is supposed to be your period on birth control, is not the same as a period. You actually don't get a period at all while on the pill and are not ovulating.

How To Track Your Cycle

I love functional lab testing because of all the data you get and I look at cycle tracking the same way.

Tracking your cycle gives you SO much information about your health and hormones. It is a great way to know if you need to make changes or if what you are doing nutrition/lifestyle wise is working.

In this section, we are going to dive into how to track and what's normal vs. what's not.

Your Monthly Report Card

Your cycle is like a monthly report card where you can track specific areas and gain insight. Here are the areas I recommend tracking.

Cycle Length

This is the number of days between day 1 of your current period and day one of your next period. A normal cycle length is between 24-35 days. It's important to find YOUR normal.

Period Length

The number of days of bleeding is your period length. If it is longer than seven days this typically means that you did not ovulate and is considered abnormal. Less than 3 days likely means low estrogen.

Heaviness of period

This is the amount of blood lost during your period. You can measure this in tampons or if you use a menstrual cup use ml. Your average menstrual cup is 30ml. 80ml of blood or 16 fully soaked tampons is considered a heavy period.

Pain

There are a few different types of pain during your period. This is important to track because it indicates inflammation in the body. Note any pelvic pain, cramping, tender breasts, low back pain etc. Some pain is considered normal, but debilitating pain is NOT normal.

How To Track Your Cycle

Your Monthly Report Card Continued

PMS Symptoms

PMS symptoms are a great way to evaluate your stress and hormone balance because these symptoms are your body's way of communicating with you that there are imbalances. Make note of symptoms such as excessive cravings, irritability, headaches/migraines, acne, etc.

Bleeding Between Periods

Bleeding or spotting between periods is also a sign of a hormonal imbalance and should be monitored. Possibly low estrogen or progesterone.

Ovulation

Ovulation is how we make progesterone. A lot of the common hormone imbalances I see are from low progesterone. We track ovulation through our basal body temperature because after we ovulate, we get an increase in progesterone, which increases our basal body temperature.

Tips For Tracking Ovulation:

- Get a basal body thermometer ([click here for an affordable one](#)). I personally use a TempDrop because you wear it on your arm and don't have to remember to take your temperature in the morning. There are less fluctuations, but it is an investment (although you can use your HSA to purchase).
- Take your temperature first thing in the morning before you get out of bed. Hold the thermometer in your mouth for a minute to warm it up.
- Track your temperatures in an app like Flo or Kindara. They will chart it for you so you can easily see changes.
- You need 3 high temperatures that are higher than the previous 5 in order to confirm ovulation.
- The average ovulation day is day 16, but it can vary.

How To Track Your Cycle

Your Monthly Report Card Continued

Period Color

The last area I recommend paying attention to is the actual color of your bleed. The color can actually tell you a lot of possible imbalances.



Clear/Yellowish/Creamy: blood deficiency, anemia, kidney deficiency, lack of nutrients in the blood & kidneys are tired.



Light Pink/Orange: blood deficiency or anemia; this can also be related to implantation spotting; possible infection; low levels of estrogen; ovulation; low nutrient diet. This can also be cervical mucus mixed with period blood.



Bright, Cranberry Red: this is the color of a healthy period!



Dark Red: often seen at the beginning/end of your period and/or on the heaviest day. If it's more purple, it can be a sign of high estrogen and a thick uterine lining.



Brown: beginning or end of period, oxidated blood that is moving slow out of the uterus; hormonal birth control; early pregnancy.



Black: possibly thicker uterine lining, beginning or end of period, oxidized blood; slower shedding of uterine lining; similar to the brown blood--moves slower out of the uterus.



Gray: possible bacterial vaginosis; irregular cycle--definitely contact your doctor.

How To Track Your Cycle

Choosing Your Tracking Method

Certain thing like how you track can feel important and confusing, but I want to preface this with it really doesn't matter, it just matters that you are consistent.

That's why I recommend choosing whatever is easiest for you to reduce any barriers to tracking.

Method 1: Period Apps

This is my go-to method because of convenience. We are all always on our phones and typically always have them with us so it's easy to quickly put in a symptom or period start date.

I also like apps because you can graph your BBT, period length, full cycle length, and more.

Favorite Apps: Flo & Kindara

Method 2: Journal/Notes

If you prefer to write in a journal or the notes on your phone--that works too! You don't get the graphing benefits of the apps, but it's not the end of the world.

A written charting/symptom system I have used and enjoyed is from fertilitycharting.com.

Method 3: Planner

I have some clients that like to track their period in their calendar in a planner. This works too! They also like to write the cycle day they are on next to the date so they can stay in tune with where they are at.

Signs of Hormone Imbalance

I'm sharing the common symptoms of different hormone imbalances, but I want to preface this with saying that you have to TEST and not guess before you try taking any supplements.

It's also important to note that it isn't always just about high or low hormone levels, but also how they compare to each other.

High Estrogen

- PMS symptoms
- Heavy/irregular periods
- Fluid retention/bloating
- Breast tenderness
- Weight gain
- Headaches/Migraines
- Brain fog
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Weepy/emotional
- Irritability
- Low libido
- Sleep disturbances
- Sugar cravings
- Histamine intolerance
- Fibrocystic breasts
- Uterine fibroids
- Thyroid issues
- Gall bladder issues
- Blood sugar issues

Low Estrogen

- Hot flashes
- Night sweats
- Vaginal dryness
- Painful intercourse
- Recurrent UTI's
- Urinary incontinence
- Headaches
- Brain fog
- Forgetfulness
- Poor concentration
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Cry easily
- Lethargy
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Thinning hair
- Facial hair
- Dry skin
- Weight gain
- Joint pain

Natural Ways To Support Healthy Estrogen Levels:

Include flaxseeds and other phytoestrogens in your diet. They help support both high and low estrogen levels. 2 tbsp freshly ground daily is a great place to start.

Eat cruciferous veggies like broccoli sprouts daily.

Eat adequate healthy fats (75g).

Support digestion and make sure you have a bowel movement daily (increase fiber and water intake if needed).

Switch to cleaner/less toxic beauty and household products.

Signs of Hormone Imbalance

High Progesterone

There aren't typically negative side effects of high progesterone, however, it can be indicative of adrenal issues.

Low Progesterone

- Hot flashes
- Face hair growth and hair loss
- PMS symptoms
- Menstrual cramps
- Breast tenderness
- Infertility
- Recurrent miscarriages
- Irregular cycles
- Spotting between cycles
- Heavy periods
- High blood sugar levels
- Low libido
- Fluid retention (bloating)
- Weight gain
- Low body temperature
- Hypothyroidism
- Osteoporosis
- Insomnia
- Headaches/migraines
- Pain/inflammation
- Fibroids/cysts
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability/mood swings
- Sugar cravings

Natural Ways To Support Healthy Progesterone Levels:

Track your monthly cycle and ovulation. We only make progesterone when we ovulate.

Increase your intake of vitamin B6 rich foods: animal proteins, carrots, sweet potato, chicken liver, spinach, chickpeas

Increase your intake of magnesium: cacao, avocado, nuts, legumes, seeds, leafy greens

Reducing stress is huge for progesterone. It can easily become depleted. Work on identifying mental/emotional stressors, get enough sleep, eat enough food (see previous recs), and prioritize relaxation during your period.

Signs of Hormone Imbalance

High Testosterone

- Acne or oily skin
- Irritability or aggression
- Lack of impulse control
- Infertility
- Hair loss or thinning hair
- Hair growth on the face, chin or chest
- Deepening voice
- Weight gain
- Insomnia
- High blood pressure
- Ovarian cysts

Low Testosterone

- Low libido
- Impaired sexual function
- Decreased muscle mass & strength
- Aches and pains
- Wrinkled skin
- Dry thinning hair/skin
- Sagging cheeks/thin lips
- Hot flashes
- Incontinence
- Depression
- Worry, anxiety, fear
- Lack of motivation/drive
- Poor concentration
- Fatigue
- Weight gain
- Lack of self confidence

Natural Ways To Support Healthy Testosterone Levels:

If you are struggling with low progesterone, tiger nuts are actually really helpful for increasing.

If you are struggling with high testosterone/androgens, reishi, saw palmetto, and spearmint tea. You do want to make sure you don't have any contraindications for these before taking.

If you have PCOS, insulin resistance is often at the root of high testosterone. Balancing your meals, eating adequate protein, weight lifting, walking, getting adequate sleep, increasing fiber intake, and getting into a relaxed state daily (meditation, yoga, journaling) are all very helpful.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do you track day 1 of your cycle if you have spotting?

Day 1 of your cycle is the first day of full on flow. This means you need a tampon/menstrual cup/pad/period panties.

How can I reduce period cramps/pain?

Reducing inflammatory foods (gluten, dairy, caffeine) prior to your period helps. Ginger is my favorite natural remedy! 1-2 1" pieces of ginger, chopped. Add to hot water and steep. Strain and enjoy.

Magnesium is also really helpful. Magnesium malate, epsom salt baths, and magnesium oil spray ([click here](#)) are all helpful.

Increase omega 3 fatty acids from food or supplements.

Crampbark is a helpful herb, but you need to check with your healthcare practitioner first.

What causes bloating and constipation before your period?

This is often related to low progesterone. Progesterone is our calming hormone and low levels can lead to constipation. It's also a natural diuretic and without adequate levels we can be dealing with bloating.

How long should my cycle be?

24-35 days is considered normal, but you want to monitor your cycle and find your normal.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a way to make your cycle shorter?

If your cycle is 35 days or longer, you can work on reducing stress, eating enough, getting enough sleep, and eating foods that boost progesterone (see page 21 for more). There are many reasons for a longer cycle.

Consider working with a practitioner. You can also consider seed cycling.

[Click here for more info.](#)

Are big blood clots bad?

If blood clots are smaller (smaller than a quarter), they are considered normal. If they are occurring frequently and are larger than a quarter, this is a sign something deeper could be going on. Our bodies produce natural anticoagulants to thin our blood. When the flow is too fast it will clot. This can be a sign of low progesterone, fibroids, endometriosis, etc.

What causes mid cycling bleeding/spotting?

This is a sign of hormone imbalances. Low estrogen and low progesterone can both lead to spotting. Getting your hormones tested to identify imbalances is helpful for determining the root.

Is a lot of discharge normal? I have to change my panties at least once a day..

It depends on where you are in your cycle. Start tracking and monitor when this is happening. Leading up to ovulation, our cervical mucus increases and it is 100% normal to see it on your underwear. If this is happening all of the time, it could be related to an infection. You'd want to contact your doctor for an exam for this.

Why do I ovulate so late in my cycle?

Average ovulation day is day 16. Some women ovulate later. The important thing to pay attention to is your luteal phase. You want your luteal phase to be 10-14 days. If it's shorter, you likely have low progesterone. Stress, travel, lack of sleep, under eating, illness, can all push off ovulation. Make sure you're eating enough carbs.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is pain with ovulation normal; especially postpartum and/or with endometriosis?

Some ovulation pain is normal. If it is debilitating you want to talk to your doctor. I often see ovulation pain in those with endometriosis, postpartum, and post pill. The goal is to reduce inflammation to reduce pain and support hormone balance. Ginger, turmeric, reishi mushroom, and omega 3's are all helpful.

How do you prevent heightened anxiety during ovulation and before your period?

Balance your hormones! Ovulation and luteal phase are times of huge hormonal shifts. The more imbalanced our estrogen and progesterone are, the more intense the shifts will be. Anxiety is often related to low hormone levels. Getting your hormones tested 5 days after ovulation is ideal. Otherwise, reducing stress is also helpful and a huge part of longterm hormone balance. Considering magnesium support is also helpful.

Is there a reason we crave chocolate before our periods?

Chocolate is high in magnesium. Magnesium is helpful for reducing period pain and support calmness. It's also delicious and comforting and we need that at this time in our cycle!

Does supplementing with progesterone raise your basal body temp (BBT)?

Progesterone in general raises our BBT so if you are supplementing, then yes it can increase your BBT. I do not recommend supplementing daily forever. Talk with your doctor about using it during the second half of your cycle once it is regulated.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do you regulate your sugar cravings leading up to your period?

Sugar cravings leading up to your period are normal! I always recommend having a healthy treat at home so you can treat yourself and still support healthy hormones. One other thing to help reduce the cravings a bit if they are feeling out of control is to add 1/3-1/2 cup of starchy carbs to your meals. Don't be afraid of carbs!

Are yeast infections common when you come off the pill and start getting a period again?

YES! I see this a lot. It is often related to copper toxicity. The pill increases copper levels in the body. When copper is high it is actually unavailable for use in the body. Copper is a natural anti-fungal/bacterial so when we don't have enough or access to it it's easier to get yeast infections, UTI's, and gut imbalances.

What to do when your hormone are "normal" but you don't get a period.

This is tricky because I cannot see your lab work, but if your LH and FSH are normal, it means your brain signaling to your ovaries is working. You want to also look at thyroid labs (TSH, free T3, free T4, reverse T3, and antibodies) as well as check for high testosterone, DHEA, prolactin.

I often see thyroid issues with a missing cycle, PCOS, under eating/over exercising, and just excessive chronic stress on the body.

I would work with a functional practitioner to get to the root of your missing period. Conventional medicine isn't going to do this for you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do hormones fluctuate when you are missing your period/have hypothalamic amenorrhea (HA)?

Estrogen and progesterone do not fluctuate because you are not producing them without a cycle and ovulation. You can still have testosterone and stress hormones fluctuating though.

Why did I lose my period?

This depends on the person, but some basic areas you want to investigate:

- are you eating enough? See pages 12-16.
- is your thyroid working properly?
- do you have a lot of stress?
- are you sleeping enough? Aim for 8 hours.
- how is your digestion?
- is prolactin high?
- are androgens high? PCOS could be a factor.
- did you take the pill? you do not get a true period on the pill. It is a pill bleed and it can take up to 6-8 months for your period to return post pill.

These are all possible stressors on the body. When our bodies are stressed they do not prioritize reproduction so we can lose our periods.

Why do you gain weight during peri and post menopause? What can I do?

There are a few factors resulting in weight gain:

- Estrogen is lower, which impacts our blood sugar handing. Estrogen helps make our cells more sensitive to insulin, which means we can tolerate more carbs. Since estrogen is lower because it's no longer being made by the ovaries (only 10%), reducing carbs is ideal. This is the ONLY population I recommend lower carb diets for. You still want lots of veggies & fiber.
- Adrenal & stress are even more important. The adrenals are now making 90% of your body's estrogen. Reduce stress as much as possible, start or continue lifting weight, walks, get 8 hours of sleep.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I get my period back after getting off hormonal birth control (HBC)?

First, be patient. Your brain hasn't talked to your ovaries the entire time you've been on HBC. Reducing stress as usual, getting enough sleep, eating enough, and making sure you're not over exercising all help.

Second, you can consider a combination of maca and vitex--PLEASE talk to your doctor to make sure it's okay for you. I have a blog post with more details here ([click here](#)).

How to reduce high testosterone?

You always want to think about what is driving the increase in androgens and for those with PCOS it's insulin resistance. You can also have elevated androgens after coming off the pill, to which this can also apply. I myself had post pill PCOS with high androgens, lots of acne, hair growth, and irregular cycles. Balancing your meals with protein, carbs, fiber, and fat; minimizing sugar; getting 8 hours of sleep; weightlifting; walking; and meditation/getting into a relaxed state daily all help reduce insulin resistance. Inositol is helpful too. Here's the brand/ratio I recommend ([click here](#)). Reishi, saw palmetto, and spearmint are helpful herbs as well.

Hypothyroidism can also lead to high androgens for which you'd want to support thyroid function.

I have PCOS, what lab tests should I do?

- Sex hormones (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, DHEA, DHT)
- Thyroid labs (TSH, free T3, free T4, reverse T3, antibodies)--25% of women with PCOS have hypothyroidism
- Fasting insulin
- Fasting glucose
- FSH and LH
- I also test gut health and mineral balance using a GI map and HTMA test

Testing & Working with a Practitioner

Important Lab Testing

In order to actually uncover hormone imbalances you have to test and not guess.

My favorite hormone test is the DUTCH test. It uses dried urine and looks at sex hormone and stress hormones. This is important for evaluating our hormone health.

If you go to your doctor and get a blood test, you are seeing a very small percentage of actual hormones and you are only getting one measurement for cortisol (if they even test it). I require DUTCH testing with clients to get the full picture.

Why You Can't Just Look At Hormones

When you have an imbalance in your sex hormones, it's a symptom and the result of something else.

If you have PCOS, there's a root cause that's causing the imbalance.

If you have an issue in your gut, it's nearly impossible to heal hormones longterm.

If you have a nutrient deficiency, heavy metal exposure, or need detox support you have to investigate further. You can't just do hormone testing.

When I work with women, I'm not looking to keep them on as a client forever. I'm helping them get to the root, heal imbalances, learn how to maintain healthy hormones and then move on. This is why I look at gut health, mineral balance, and hormones.

Testing & Working with a Practitioner

Finding a Practitioner

If you're ready to do some investigative work and get to the root of your hormone imbalances, it's time to find a practitioner.

It's important to find someone that specializes in women's health and has a functional approach. The way I look at hormones is different than how your doctor will. If you want to get to the root you need to work with someone that practices this way. I know it's frustrating, I have been there, but conventional doctors are not trained this way so we really can't expect them to work with us this way.

If someone only wants to test your hormones, find someone else. That is a close-minded look at female health.

Licensed medical professionals (functional medicine doctors, RD's, and naturopaths) can accept your HSA and flexible spending accounts so you aren't paying 100% out of pocket.

[Click here to schedule your free clarity call to see if we are a good fit!](#)

I hope this guide has been helpful!

Other Resources:

Follow me on IG: @hormonehealingrd

Listen to my podcast: Balanced Babes Podcast everywhere podcasts are played!

MON



BREAKFAST
Blueberry Overnight Oats with Protein



LUNCH
Extra Tuna Chickpea Salad



SNACK 1
Celery with Sunflower Seed Butter



DINNER
Acorn Squash & Sausage Hash High Protein



SNACK 2
Decadent Chocolate Peppermint Truffles with Collagen

TUE



BREAKFAST
Blueberry Overnight Oats with Protein



LUNCH
Extra Tuna Chickpea Salad



SNACK 1
Celery with Sunflower Seed Butter



DINNER
Acorn Squash & Sausage Hash High Protein



SNACK 2
Decadent Chocolate Peppermint Truffles with Collagen

WED



BREAKFAST
Gut Healing Green Smoothie with Protein



LUNCH
Crunchy Cabbage Salad & Chicken



SNACK 1
Jicama Fries with Guacamole



DINNER
Orange Beef Stir Fry High Protein



SNACK 2
Coconut Candied Pecans

THU



BREAKFAST
Meal Prep Breakfast Veggie Bowls



LUNCH
Crunchy Cabbage Salad & Chicken



SNACK 1
Jicama Fries with Guacamole



DINNER
Extra Chicken, Spinach & Mushroom Pasta



SNACK 2
Coconut Candied Pecans

FRI



BREAKFAST
Meal Prep Breakfast Veggie Bowls



LUNCH
Crunchy Cabbage Salad & Chicken



SNACK 1
Almond Butter Apple Sandwiches



DINNER
Extra Chicken, Spinach & Mushroom Pasta



SNACK 2
Coconut Candied Pecans

FRUITS

- 3 Apple
- 1 1/4 Avocado
- 1/2 Banana
- 1 cup Blueberries
- 2 Lemon
- 1/4 Lime
- 1/4 Navel Orange

BREAKFAST

- 1/4 cup Almond Butter
- 2 1/2 tbsps Maple Syrup

SEEDS, NUTS & SPICES

- 1/4 cup Cashews
- 2 1/2 tbsps Chia Seeds
- 1/3 tsp Chili Powder
- 1 3/4 tps Cinnamon
- 1 tbsp Ground Flax Seed
- 2 tbsps Hemp Seeds
- 1 1/2 tps Onion Powder
- 3/4 cup Pecans
- 1 tsp Red Pepper Flakes
- 1 3/4 tps Sea Salt
- 0 Sea Salt & Black Pepper
- 1 1/2 tps Sesame Seeds
- 1 cup Slivered Almonds

VEGETABLES

- 1 Acorn Squash
- 4 cups Arugula
- 3 cups Baby Spinach
- 3 2/3 cups Broccoli
- 2 1/4 Carrot
- 16 stalks Celery
- 6 1/2 Garlic
- 3/4 tsp Ginger
- 1 1/3 cups Green Beans
- 2 1/2 stalks Green Onion
- 2 cups Jicama
- 4 1/4 cups Kale Leaves
- 1 cup Mushrooms
- 1/4 cup Parsley
- 3 cups Portobello Mushroom
- 2 1/4 cups Purple Cabbage
- 3/4 cup Snap Peas
- 1/4 Sweet Onion
- 1 1/2 Sweet Potato
- 1/4 Yellow Onion

BOXED & CANNED

- 2 tbsps Brown Rice
- 12 ozs Chickpea Pasta
- 1 cup Chickpeas
- 1 1/4 cans Tuna

BAKING

- 2 1/8 tbsps Cocoa Powder
- 1 1/8 tps Coconut Sugar
- 1 1/2 tps Nutritional Yeast
- 1 1/2 cups Oats
- 2 1/8 tbsps Organic Dark Chocolate Chips
- 1/4 tsp Peppermint Extract
- 1/3 cup Pitted Dates
- 1 tsp Raw Honey

BREAD, FISH, MEAT & CHEESE

- 4 ozs Beef Tenderloin
- 12 ozs Chicken Breast
- 1 1/8 lbs Chicken Breast, Cooked
- 6 ozs Pork Sausage

CONDIMENTS & OILS

- 2 1/4 tbsps Avocado Oil
- 2 tbsps Coconut Oil
- 2/3 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 1/2 tps Rice Vinegar
- 1 2/3 tps Sesame Oil
- 1 cup Sunflower Seed Butter
- 1 1/4 tbsps Tamari

COLD

- 6 Egg
- 1 1/2 cups Unsweetened Almond Milk

OTHER

- 3/4 cup Collagen Powder
- 1 2/3 ozs Collagen Powder
- 3 1/4 cups Water

■ 3 tbsps Unsweetened Shredded
Coconut

Blueberry Overnight Oats with Protein

4 SERVINGS 8 HOURS



INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups Oats
- 1 1/2 cups Unsweetened Almond Milk
- 2 tbsps Chia Seeds
- 1 tbsp Maple Syrup
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 cup Water
- 1 cup Blueberries
- 1 cup Slivered Almonds
- 1/2 cup Collagen Powder

DIRECTIONS

- 01 Combine oats, almond milk, chia seeds, maple syrup, cinnamon and water together in a large tupperware container. Stir well to mix. Seal and place in the fridge overnight (or for at least 8 hours).
- 02 Remove oats from fridge. Use single-serving size mason jars and place a large spoonful of the oat mix in the bottom of each, then a layer of blueberries followed by a layer of slivered almonds. Repeat until all ingredients are used up. Store in the fridge until ready to eat. Enjoy hot or cold!

Gut Healing Green Smoothie with Protein

1 SERVING 5 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

1 1/4 cups Water (cold)
1 cup Kale Leaves
1/4 Avocado (peeled and pit removed)
1/2 Banana (frozen)
1 1/2 tsps Chia Seeds
1 tbsp Ground Flax Seed
2 tsps Hemp Seeds
1 tsp Raw Honey
3 tsps Collagen Powder

DIRECTIONS

01 Throw all ingredients into a blender and blend until very smooth and creamy. Divide into glasses and enjoy!

NOTES

NO KALE

Use spinach instead.

NO HONEY

Use maple syrup, dates or extra banana to sweeten instead.

LIKES IT CREAMY

Use almond milk instead of water for extra creaminess.

STORAGE

Make ahead and store in a sealed mason jar. Shake well before drinking. Keeps well in the fridge for 1 - 2 days.

Meal Prep Breakfast Veggie Bowls

2 SERVINGS 35 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

2 2/3 cups Broccoli (chopped into florets)
1 1/2 Sweet Potato (small, chopped into cubes)
1 tbsp Avocado Oil
1/3 tsp Chili Powder
Sea Salt & Black Pepper (to taste)
1 1/3 cups Green Beans (trimmed)
6 Egg

DIRECTIONS

- 01 Preheat the oven to 425°F (218°C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Add the broccoli and sweet potatoes to the pan. Drizzle with avocado oil, chili powder, sea salt and pepper. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.
- 02 Remove the pan from the oven and add the green beans. Cook for an additional 10 minutes.
- 03 Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil. Hard boil the eggs. Cool, peel and slice.
- 04 Divide the vegetables and sliced eggs between plates, or into containers. Enjoy!

NOTES

EGG-FREE

Replace the eggs with your favorite protein such as ground beef, sliced chicken, chickpeas or lentils.

NO AVOCADO OIL

Use olive or coconut oil.

MORE FLAVOR

Add cayenne pepper, chili flakes or hot sauce.

LEFTOVERS

Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

SERVING SIZE

One serving is equal to approximately 2 cups of roasted vegetables topped with 2 eggs.

Extra Tuna Chickpea Salad

2 SERVINGS 15 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

2 1/8 tbsps Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1/2 Lemon (zest and juice)
1/8 tsp Sea Salt
1 cup Chickpeas (cooked)
1 1/4 cans Tuna (drained)
2 1/2 stalks Green Onion (chopped)
4 cups Arugula
1/4 cup Parsley (chopped)

DIRECTIONS

- 01 In a large mixing bowl whisk olive oil, lemon zest, lemon juice and salt. Fold in chickpeas, tuna, green onions and parsley. Season with additional salt or lemon juice if needed.
- 02 Top arugula with salad and enjoy!

NOTES

LEFTOVERS

Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

MAKE IT A MEAL

Serve salad over baby spinach with sliced cucumber on the side.

NO GREEN ONIONS

Use red or white onion instead.

NO CHICKPEAS

Use white beans or lentils instead.

NO TUNA

Use canned salmon instead.

MORE FLAVOR

Add dried or fresh dill, minced garlic, red chili flakes, or freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Crunchy Cabbage Salad & Chicken

3 SERVINGS 20 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

12 ozs Chicken Breast (skinless and boneless)
1 1/2 tsps Onion Powder
1 1/2 tsps Sesame Seeds
1/3 tsp Sea Salt (divided)
3/4 tsp Avocado Oil
1 1/2 tbsps Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 1/2 tsps Rice Vinegar
1 1/2 tsps Sesame Oil
1 1/8 tsps Coconut Sugar
2 1/4 cups Purple Cabbage (chopped)
2 1/4 cups Kale Leaves (de-stemmed and shredded)
2 1/4 Carrot (thinly sliced)
1/4 cup Cashews (roughly chopped)

DIRECTIONS

- 01 Coat the chicken with the onion powder, sesame seeds and sea salt. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Add the avocado oil and chicken. Cook for 6 to 7 minutes and then flip. Continue to cook until the chicken is cooked through. Remove and let cool, and then slice and set aside.
- 02 Whisk the extra virgin olive oil, rice vinegar, sesame oil and coconut sugar in a small bowl.
- 03 Add the cabbage, kale and carrots to a large bowl. Add the dressing and massage it in. Top the salad with chicken, chickpeas, and cashews and lightly toss. Divide between bowls and enjoy!

NOTES

LEFTOVERS

Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to two days.

NUT-FREE

Omit the cashews or use pumpkin seeds instead.

MAKE IT VEGAN

Top with tofu or chickpeas instead of chicken.

NO AVOCADO OIL

Use extra virgin olive oil instead.

NO COCONUT SUGAR

Use brown sugar or maple syrup instead.

Celery with Sunflower Seed Butter

4 SERVINGS 5 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

8 stalks Celery (sliced into sticks)
1/2 cup Sunflower Seed Butter

DIRECTIONS

01 Spread sunflower seed butter across celery sticks (about 1 tbsp per celery stalk). Happy munching!

NOTES

NO CELERY
Use cucumber instead

Jicama Fries with Guacamole

2 SERVINGS 45 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

2 cups Jicama (peeled, sliced into 1/4-inch strips)
1 tbsp Avocado Oil
3/4 tsp Sea Salt (divided)
1 Avocado (peeled, pit removed)
1/4 Lime (juiced)

DIRECTIONS

- 01 Preheat the oven to 425°F (218°C) and line a baking sheet with foil or a silicone baking mat.
- 02 Par-boil the jicama strips in a pot on the stovetop for 10 minutes, or microwave them in a bowl with a few tablespoons of water for 15 minutes. Drain and dry with a towel.
- 03 In a mixing bowl, toss the jicama strips in the oil and season with 3/4 of the salt. Transfer to the baking sheet and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until browned and tender-crisp.
- 04 Meanwhile, mash the avocado and stir in the lime juice. Season with the remaining salt.
- 05 Serve the jicama fries alongside the guacamole and enjoy!

NOTES

LEFTOVERS

Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to four days. For best results, store the jicama fries and guacamole separately, and re-crisp the fries in the oven before serving.

JICAMA

One medium jicama equals approximately 5 cups.

SERVING SIZE

One serving equals approximately one cup of jicama fries with 1/4 cup of guacamole.

MORE FLAVOR

Add your choice of spices to the jicama fries before baking.

ADDITIONAL TOPPINGS

Add tomatoes, cilantro, feta, onion and garlic to the guacamole.

Almond Butter Apple Sandwiches

2 SERVINGS 10 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

2 Apple
1/4 cup Almond Butter

DIRECTIONS

- 01 Slice the top and bottom off of each apple and discard. Then slice the entire apple in half so you are left with two rounds. Now cut each half in half to make 8 rounds. Cut the center core out of each round.
- 02 Spread 1 tbsp of almond butter on one apple round. Set another round on top. Repeat, plate and enjoy!

NOTES

NUT-FREE

Use sunflower seed butter, tahini or pumpkin seed butter instead of nut butter.

Acorn Squash & Sausage Hash High Protein

2 SERVINGS 30 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

6 ozs Pork Sausage (casings removed)
1 1/2 tsps Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 Acorn Squash (peeled, chopped into cubes)
1/4 Yellow Onion (chopped)
1 cup Mushrooms (sliced)
1 cup Kale Leaves (chopped)
1 1/2 tsps Nutritional Yeast
1/2 tsp Sea Salt
1 Apple (cored, cubed)

DIRECTIONS

- 01 In a skillet over medium heat, cook the sausage. Break it up with the back of a spoon as it browns. Once it is cooked, drain the fat and set the sausage aside on a plate.
- 02 In the same skillet over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil. Add the squash, onions and mushrooms and cook for 10 minutes or until the squash is soft. Lower the heat to medium and add in the kale. Cook for about 2 minutes or until the kale is soft.
- 03 Add the sausage back in along with the nutritional yeast and sea salt. Stir until everything is combined and warmed through.
- 04 Remove from heat and stir in the chopped apples. Divide between plates and enjoy!

NOTES

LEFTOVERS

Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to five days.

SERVING SIZE

One serving is approximately 1 cup of the hash mixture.

MORE FIBER

Stir in cooked quinoa or rice.

MAKE IT VEGAN

Use black beans or lentils instead of sausage.

MEAL PREP

Cook the acorn squash in advance to save time.

Orange Beef Stir Fry High Protein

1 SERVING 50 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

2 tbsps Brown Rice (uncooked)
1/4 cup Water
3/4 tsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil (divided)
4 ozs Beef Tenderloin (sliced into thin strips)
1/4 Navel Orange (juiced)
1 1/2 tsps Tamari
1/8 tsp Sesame Oil
1/4 tsp Red Pepper Flakes
1/4 Sweet Onion (diced)
1/2 Garlic (cloves, minced)
3/4 cup Snap Peas
1 cup Broccoli (cut into florets)
3/4 tsp Ginger (grated)

DIRECTIONS

- 01 Get your brown rice started by combining brown rice and water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil uncovered stirring occasionally. Once boiling, reduce to low heat and cover. Let simmer for 45 minutes or until all water is absorbed.
- 02 Meanwhile, heat half of your olive oil in a large wok over medium high heat. Cook beef strips to desired doneness. Remove from heat and wrap in foil to keep warm.
- 03 Combine orange juice, tamari, sesame oil and red pepper flakes together in a bowl. Add 1/4 cup water and mix well.
- 04 Pour juice out of wok and place back over medium heat with remaining olive oil. Add diced sweet onion and garlic and saute for 5 minutes or until translucent.
- 05 Add in orange juice sauce, broccoli, and snap peas. Saute for another 8 to 10 minutes or until broccoli is tender.
- 06 Add cooked beef back into wok. Add in grated ginger with 1 tbsps warm water. Saute for 1 minute and remove from heat.
- 07 Serve stir fry over a bed of brown rice. Enjoy!

NOTES

VEGETARIAN

Use chickpeas instead of beef.

MAKE IT SAUCY

Double up on the orange juice, tamari and sesame oil.

MORE GREEN POWER

Fold in some sautéed spinach until wilted.

Extra Chicken, Spinach & Mushroom Pasta

6 SERVINGS 25 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil (divided)
2 1/4 tsps Tamari
3 cups Portobello Mushroom (diced)
3 cups Baby Spinach
6 Garlic (cloves, minced)
3/4 tsp Red Pepper Flakes
12 ozs Chickpea Pasta (uncooked)
Sea Salt & Black Pepper (to taste)
1 1/8 lbs Chicken Breast, Cooked (sliced)
1 1/2 Lemon (cut into wedges)

DIRECTIONS

- 01 In a frying pan, add one quarter of your olive oil and all the tamari. Place over medium heat. Add mushrooms and saute for 5 minutes. Then add spinach and stir just until spinach is wilted. Remove from heat and set aside.
- 02 Heat remaining olive oil, garlic, red pepper flakes and salt in a separate skillet over medium-low heat. Stir frequently for about 5 minutes or until garlic is golden. Remove pan from heat.
- 03 Fill a large pot with water and bring to a boil. Add penne. Cook for 7 - 10 minutes. Remove from heat and dump pasta into a strainer. Immediately run cold water over the pasta to prevent it from cooking any further.
- 04 Add pasta to a large bowl. Pour in desired amount of oil and garlic mixture, then toss in mushrooms and spinach. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Mix well.
- 05 Plate pasta and top with strips of baked chicken (optional). Squeeze a lemon wedge on top of the pasta. Enjoy!

Decadent Chocolate Peppermint Truffles with Collagen

4 SERVINGS 20 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup Pitted Dates (packed)
1 1/4 cups Water (just boiled)
2 1/8 tbsps Cocoa Powder
1/4 tsp Peppermint Extract
1 1/4 tbsps Coconut Oil
2 1/8 tbsps Organic Dark Chocolate Chips
1/8 tsp Sea Salt (large flakes, for topping)
1 2/3 ozs Collagen Powder

DIRECTIONS

- 01 Add the dates to a medium-sized bowl and cover with just-boiled hot water. Let them sit for 8 to 10 minutes.
- 02 Drain the dates and add to a blender or food processor along with cocoa powder, collagen powder, peppermint extract and coconut oil. Process until the mixture comes together.
- 03 Remove the chocolate mixture and scoop into rough teaspoon-sized balls. Don't roll them with your hands just yet as they will be too oily. Place them on a parchment-lined baking sheet and put them in the freezer to set for about 8 to 10 minutes.
- 04 In a small bowl, add the chocolate chips and microwave on high for 30 to 45-second intervals until melted. Stir with a spoon to fully combine.
- 05 Remove the truffles from the freezer and use your hands to smooth them into balls. Take each ball and roll into melted chocolate with a spoon and then place them back on the baking sheet. Top with flaky sea salt and let them sit for 5 to 10 minutes to set or place in the fridge to set faster. Enjoy!

NOTES

LEFTOVERS

Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to seven days.

SERVING SIZE

One serving is equal to approximately two truffles.

ADDITIONAL TOPPINGS

Top with crushed up candy cane or shredded coconut flakes.

MORE FLAVOR

For a silkier chocolate coating, melt the chocolate chips with a bit of coconut oil.

Coconut Candied Pecans

3 SERVINGS 10 MINUTES



INGREDIENTS

2 1/4 tsps Coconut Oil
3/4 cup Pecans
1 1/2 tbsps Maple Syrup
3 tbsps Unsweetened Shredded Coconut
3/4 tsp Cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

- 01 In a medium skillet, heat the coconut oil over medium heat. Add the pecans, maple syrup, shredded coconut and cinnamon.
- 02 Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
- 03 Remove from heat, let cool and enjoy!

NOTES

LEFTOVERS

Store pecans in a glass jar for up to 14 days.

SERVING SIZE

One serving is approximately 1/4 cup of pecans.

MORE CRUNCH

Add pumpkin seeds.

NO PECANS

Use almonds or walnuts instead.