

E.F.A.s & HORMONAL BALANCE

Hormonal Balance

Hormonal balance is rarely mentioned in the same breath as health and nutrition, but once you see the benefits below you will see how essential this can be to your internal and external system.

- Relieves PMS and menopause symptoms
- Promotes recovery in both men and women
- Protects against fibrocystic breasts
- Helps prevent breast cancer
- Normalises blood sugars
- Protects against osteoporosis
- Restores and boosts sex drive
- Improves lipid profile
- Helps convert fat for energy
- Clears up acne problems
- Promotes clear complexion during PMS
- Natural anti-depressant
- Improves sleep patterns

Your Hormonal Balance

The 2 primary factors of hormonal balance are:

- 1 – Hormones are produced by your body in the correct balance*
- 2 – Excess and used hormones are cleansed from your system by your body*

With the two factors working in harmony your body will have a perfect hormonal balance. However if any or both of the following occur then your body will have a hormonal imbalance:

- 1 – Your body over produces hormones*
- 2 – Excess hormones are not cleansed by your body and turn rogue*

The main regulators of your hormones are prostaglandins. Prostaglandins translate the directives to your hormones into local instructions to local cells and tissue. Without these prostaglandins your hormones turn rogue and blind. The problem then is your hormones will become disrupted and out of balance.

These prostaglandins are essential for regulating and stabilising your hormones. There are over 30 different prostaglandins all playing a different role in hormone regulation, but how do you produce these prostaglandins? From E.F.A.s.

E.F.A.s - Essential Fatty Acids

The raw material necessary for the production of prostaglandins is fat, but not just any ordinary fat, but a fat called essential fatty acids (EFAs). Your body cannot produce EFAs, they must come from your diet. There are found in cold-water fish like cod and salmon and also in vegetable oils like flax, starflower, primrose, walnut and blackcurrant seeds.

There are three types of fats - saturated, mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated. Highly saturated fats such as butter are solid at room temperature, mono-unsaturated fat such as olive oil are liquid at room temperature but if put in the fridge will start to solidify, whilst poly-unsaturated fat such as sunflower oil will be liquid both at room temperature and in the fridge.

Your body is able convert complex molecules from simple beginnings. Most people are aware of the importance to their health of vitamins such as vitamin C, etc, but not many people realise that certain fats are required by the body to utilise these vitamins and function properly, which is why they are called 'essential' fatty acids. Marketing and promotion of 'low fat diets' have made things worse as they have instilled a belief in people that all fats are bad-NOT TRUE.

EFAs come in 3 main categories namely; omega 3, 6 and 9. To produce prostaglandins your body needs omega 3, 6 and 9 in your diet. You get these by eating foods rich in EFAs and by supplementing with certain vegetable and/or fish oils. Your body must be able to convert these EFAs into long chain fatty acids. If your body cannot do this you need to supplement with cold-water fish oils like cod liver oil and salmon oil.

Main Benefits of EFAs

- Regulation of hormone productions
- Primary constituent of cell membranes
- Prevents excessive blood clotting
- Regulates immune system
- Cardiovascular protection
- Regulates kidney function
- Increase in HDL (good) cholesterol
- Regulates inflammatory response
- Regulate blood vessel dilation
- Primary energy source for the heart
- Stimulate steroid production

A deficiency in omega 3 and 6 may be the cause of the following problems:

- Dry skin and hair
- Arthritis-like conditions
- Can increase cholesterol
- Hair loss
- Male sterility

- Susceptibility to infections
- Wounds fail to heal
- Kidney malfunction
- Behavioural changes
- Eczema-like skin problems
- Dry eyes

The three most effective oils to balance hormones are primrose, flax and starflower (borage) oil. Starflower oil has the richest source of gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), evening primrose oil is also very rich in GLA. This fatty acid is rarely found in foods and is a common deficiency.

Flax oil is the richest source of omega 3, so combining all 3 oils will give you a good spectrum of EFAs and there are also key secondary ingredients found in starflower and primrose that will support your hormonal balance.

The easiest way to supplement your diet with these oils is by tablet and/or liquid form (make sure these are cold pressed as any heat used in the process will make the oil rancid). Most health shops stock liquid EFAs that contain flax, primrose and starflower. The oil can be poured on bread, vegetables or used as a salad dressing, do not use it to cook with as again this will make the oil rancid.

Secondary Benefits of EFAs

Raises IQ – the brain is made of fat and EFAs provide the perfect fat to balance out brain chemistry also improving any endeavour that requires focus including sports.

Alleviates Depression Symptoms – balancing out any imbalances that can cause depression

Speeds up Metabolism Reducing Body Fat – EFAs combine with oxygen in your system and ‘fan your metabolic fire’, body builders have used flax, primrose and fish oil to cut body fat before competitions.

Normalise Blood Sugar – Cod liver oil has long been proven to be very beneficial to those who suffer from blood sugar problems

Long Term Benefits to Heart Disease – Omega 3 EFA fats have been proven to be the common denominator in culture that have high fat diets yet suffer from little or no heart disease

Improves Liver Health – EFAs have been proven to improve overall liver health.

EFA Cofactors

EFAs need other nutrients to be completely processed and absorbed by your body, without these nutrients your body simply cannot use EFAs. The nutrient cofactors cover two categories. First you have those that protect EFAs and oxidation and quell any excess free radicals and then there are nutrients to absorb EFAs. Most of these nutrients will have a secondary positive effect on your body.

Coconut Oil – a saturated fat, a fantastic EFA stabiliser and free radical protector. This amazing oil can be used hot or cold (I use it in porridge, and on toast and potatoes) and has various other benefits to your health. Improves digestion, speeds up metabolism, supports thyroid function, help control diabetes symptoms and stabilises blood sugar levels and gives sustained energy.

Lecithin – the most important cofactor for EFA absorption. This also aids in liver repair, prevents fatty build up in the liver and enables fats such as cholesterol and other lipids to be dispersed in water and removed from the body.

Vitamin E & Zinc – Vitamin E is the best EFA protector and very good for healthy skin. Other protectors are vitamin A (beta-carotene) and C and minerals selenium and zinc.

Summary

To promote hormonal balance the following, order of priority, are necessary to achieve this goal:

- EFAs and coconut oil
- Lecithin
- Zinc
- Vitamin A and Beta Carotene
- Vitamin E
- Selenium
- Vitamin C

Adding these EFAs and supplements to your existing diet you should see some form of benefits within 2 – 4 weeks.

Conclusion

So there you have it, all you need to know to reap all the benefits of normalising hormonal balance.

References

Flax oil as a true aid against arthritis, heart infarction, cancer and other diseases

-Dr. Johanna Budwig

The Omega-3 Connection

-Dr. Andrew L Stroll

Links

Pam Rotella – www.pamrotella.com

Graham White B.Sc of National Institute of Medical Herbalists – www.gcwhite.co.uk