

HORMONE HAVOC

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Five ways your hormones might be messing with you

If your energy level is at an all time low and the number on the scale is at an all time high, chances are it could be hormone related. Here's what Katy experts are saying.

1. WEIGHT GAIN

If you've genuinely tried eating less and exercising more and the scale is stuck, then you may want to check with your doctor. The thyroid gland controls metabolic rate and energy output. "Weight gain is easily caused by hypothyroidism, which slows down your metabolism and energy production. Low progesterone not balanced with estrogen also leads to fluid retention and weight gain," says Dr. Steven Hotze, from Hotze Health and Wellness Center. Women can play a role in their own hormone health by "eating a healthy diet without a lot of processed carbohydrates, getting at least seven to eight hours of sleep daily, and exercising at least four days per week," recommends Syndi Nobles, PA at Fulshear Family Medicine.

2. SEX DRIVE

Testosterone is present in both women and men and is the key influencer of sexual desire. Hormone levels fluctuate in a woman's cycle with the peak of sexual desire hitting before and around ovulation, with a second, less intense peak during menstruation, and the lowest level of libido is often prior to menstruation. If your testosterone levels are low, your bedroom activity might be, too.

3. MOOD SWINGS

From puberty through menopause, some women are subject to mood swings due to fluctuating hormones that affect brain chemistry. "Females need a proper balance of estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone - to name only a few critical hormones - which help regulate menstrual cycles and moods," says Nobles.

4. MIGRAINES

Estrogen and progesterone play key roles in regulating the menstrual cycle and pregnancy, and may also affect headache-related chemicals in the brain. According to experts, the drop in estrogen just before your period may contribute to headaches, and many women with migraines report headaches before or during menstruation as well.

5. INFERTILITY

Because hormones contribute to a woman's menstrual cycle, they can interfere with her ability to conceive and carry a healthy pregnancy. "Dozens of hormones come into play. If even one of them is abnormal, a woman may not even ovulate," says Dr. Jason Yeh, director of patient education at Houston Fertility Institute in Katy. Even some hormones that are unrelated to reproduction - like those coming from the thyroid - can affect a woman's cycle. Fertility specialists can determine potential infertility causes and review treatment options. "Patients are open about a broken bone or the flu or even cancer diagnosis, but there is something about infertility that prevents a lot of people from talking about it. It is extremely common: about one in six couples struggle with it," says Dr. Yeh. "Women who experience irregular periods should consider speaking to their doctor to address the problem now. **KM**

MOST COMMON HORMONE CULPRITS

- PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome)
- Overactive Thyroid
- Sluggish Thyroid
- Adrenal Fatigue

GETTING HELP

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