

*Let's talk  
Women's Health*

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## *Seed Cycling*

Estrogen and progesterone are two of the key hormones that help regulate your menstrual cycle. Estrogen levels rise during the first half of the cycle, whereas progesterone levels rise (while estrogen levels slowly decline) during the second half of your cycle. An imbalance between estrogen and progesterone throughout this cycle, can contribute to emotional and physical PMS symptoms, menstrual cramps, acne, short luteal phases, anovulation and irregular cycles to name a few.

### **Seed cycling helps your body naturally re-balance its hormones**

This is done by including different seeds during the different phases of your menstrual cycle. The concept is fairly simple: The seed hulls contain lignans, which are chemicals that help bind up excess hormones, while the seed oils contain essential fatty acids that provide the building blocks for making hormones.

### *How to seed cycle*

#### **PHASE 1**

Follicular phase = Day 1 – 14

- **Day 1 of your cycle is the first day of your period** and the 2 weeks that follow make up your follicular phase
- If you have a longer cycle length (35-40 days) your phase 1 will be closer to Day 18-20. If you use an app to track your cycles, your **ovulation day** marks the beginning of Phase 2
- **Every day take:**
  - 1 tablespoon of organic, raw, ground **FLAX SEEDS**
  - 1 tablespoon of organic, raw, ground **PUMPKIN SEEDS**
- These seeds are both rich in omega 3 fatty acids which promote healthy cell membranes. Flax seeds contain lignans which will block excess estrogen in the first phase of your cycle. Pumpkin seeds are high in zinc which supports progesterone production and release for the second phase of your cycle.

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## PHASE 2

Luteal phase = Day 14 – 28

- As previously mentioned, your **ovulation day marks the beginning of Phase 2**, so if you don't have a 28 day cycle you may start phase 2 on Day 18-20.
- Phase 2 of your cycle is when your body shifts into making more progesterone than estrogen, which is known as the luteal phase
- **Every day take:**
  - 1 tablespoon of organic, raw, ground **SESAME SEEDS**
  - 1 tablespoon of organic, raw, ground **SUNFLOWER SEEDS**
- These seeds are high in omega 6 fatty acids. Sesame seeds, which also contain lignans, help to block excess estrogen. Sunflower seeds provide the body with selenium, a trace mineral that assists the liver in its detoxification process and thus overall hormonal balance.

## How to prepare your seeds

It is best to buy your seeds in its whole form (raw, organic, unhulled, unsalted) and use a coffee grinder to grind it. You can store them in an airtight jar and put them in your freezer. I buy my seeds from *Bulk Barn* but you can also find them at *Costco*, *Whole Foods*, *Healthy Planet*, *Goodness Me!*

The easiest way to add them to your diet is to add them to smoothies, sprinkle them on your yogurt, soup, salads, oatmeal or even on your cooked vegetables and grains.

## When to expect changes

While you may notice a change within the first month, it usually takes about 3-4 cycles (3-4 months) to see significant improvements in your menstrual-related symptoms. This is just one of many ways to address your symptoms. There are other herbs, supplements and avenues of support to explore!