

Let's talk
Women's Health

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Regulate your cycles

There are many factors that affect your cycle. It could be an underlying health condition that needs to be addressed, environmental factors that you are exposed to on a regular basis, or diet and lifestyle factors. **The bottom line is you need to find the root cause and address the root cause.**

First, start tracking your cycles. Are you noticing any patterns? Any other symptoms that you are experiencing? Some popular Apps include: **Clue, Flo, P-tracker**. Second, go get assessed by a medical health practitioner to determine your cause. Third, make the changes that you are in control of. This handout highlights some of the things you can start doing to help regulate your cycles

Optimize your diet

Eliminate common food sensitivities

Eating foods that you are sensitive to on a daily basis is considered a stressor on the body. It causes gut inflammation and triggers our immune response. All of these factors can affect our cycles. Try to eliminate common sensitivities like **dairy, refined and processed sugars** and **gluten** for 3-4 weeks, and see if there are any improvements in symptoms. If not, there may be more specific food groups that you're sensitive to.

Get in the habit of building a balanced plate

There are so many diets out there that it can be overwhelming. Instead, focus on building a balanced plate by using this general rule:

- 1/2 of your plate = colourful vegetables, dark leafy greens
- 1/4 of your plate = healthy protein (plant-based, animal proteins etc.)
- Rest of your plate = healthy fats and carbohydrates
- Aim for whole foods and avoid packaged foods with ingredients you don't recognize

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Optimize your detox pathways

The 3 ways your body eliminates waste and toxins is through your stools, urine and through sweat. Hormones, environmental toxins, alcohol, medications and even food get processed by our detox organs and broken down.

Make sure you're regular

Healthy digestion involves having a bowel movement at least once a day. Hormone metabolites are one of the many things that are eliminated through stools. Here are some things to keep your regular:

- Aim for 30 g of fiber a day
- Ensure you are drinking enough water, especially if you are increasing your fiber intake

Minimize toxic burdens

Minimize your alcoholic intake to 4-5 drinks/week at most and less if you can. Avoid plastics, commercial cleaning products, skincare products etc. with endocrine disrupting chemicals. You can use the **Think Dirty App** to help you navigate through different products.

Support your detox organs

The main detox organs include the liver, kidneys and the skin. Some ways you can help support them are:

- Castor oil packs over the abdomen and liver to help increase blood flow to the liver and for detox
- Drink water, herbal teas and stay hydrated
- Use clean skin care products
- Move your body and sweat! Choose any form of movement that you enjoy and make sweating your goal

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Optimize your stress management skills

Cortisol aka our stress hormone affects so many things. It can stimulate insulin production to bring sugar into the cells of our muscles, liver etc. but constant stimulation can increase the risk of insulin resistance. Elevated cortisol levels can also affect our sex hormones. All of these things can disrupt our menstrual cycles and cause symptoms.

Assess the source of stress

Stress can come in the form of mental, emotional or physical stress. Are you overwhelmed by deadlines, projects, house work? Are you grieving a loss? Did something traumatic happen years ago and are you still processing it? Or is there just a lot on your plate? Try and reflect on what's contributing to your stress load.

How do you manage stress?

Assess your current stress management strategies. Are they working for you? How can you optimize them. Recognize stressors that are within your control and those that are not. Create boundaries, learn to say "no", and prioritize your own well-being. The best thing you can do for someone is to take care of yourself.

Optimize your sleep

Getting good sleep doesn't just mean clocking in 7-8 hours a night. It's about getting quality, restful sleep. Sleep allows our bodies to detox, heal, recharge. Poor sleep can be recognized as a stressor to the body, which will then affect our cortisol levels, melatonin levels and even our sex hormones.

Avoid screen time

Try and avoid screen time at least one hour before bed. The blue light from screens disrupts our body's ability to produce melatonin, which is our "sleep hormone" and also a powerful antioxidant.

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Regulate your sleep schedule

Our bodies love routine. Try to sleep and wake up at the same time almost every day. This helps regulate cortisol levels and melatonin production, which will help balance our other hormones

Wind down

Develop a bedtime routine that works for you. It can include things like practicing gratitude, meditation, deep breathing, cuddling, or anything that will help you relax and calm your nervous system down. For example, if you notice you are very tense, then focus on your breath and progressively relax your muscles from your head to your toes.