



RUTH CLARK, RD, LD, MPH

# Reboot Your Hormones to Increase Energy and Burn Fat



# WHY FOCUS ON HORMONES?

Put simply, **hormones are chemical messengers** created by your body. They travel in your bloodstream to tissues and organs. The release of hormones is one way that different parts of the body communicate with one another.

Why do hormones matter? Because hormones affect many processes in the body, including:

**Growth and Development**

**Metabolism**

**Appetite**

**Sexual Function**

**Mood**

**Sleep**

If your hormones are off it can make you feel exhausted, moody, grouchy and completely out of sorts.

Some important hormones for women to know about include cortisol, thyroid hormones, estrogen and insulin. Newer hormones on the scene include leptin and ghrelin which are important hormones in the control of appetite.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF HORMONE BALANCE

I can't tell you how often I sit across the desk from clients, women especially, who are very clear that they are doing everything they need to lose weight, including counting calories and regular exercise, but who are not losing weight. It's no wonder they are frustrated and anxious about their lack of success.

It's important to understand that the old calories-in/calories-out model doesn't tell the whole tale because it doesn't take into consideration several variables that can affect fat loss. It's no longer just about dieting and calories.

**Food is Medicine** and provides important information to your body. The better you understand how it works, the better decisions you can make to improve your success.

If you are struggling with an inability to lose the expected 1 to 2 pounds of fat a week, there are some things you need to know about your hormones and the effect of your lifestyle and eating habits on these chemical messengers.

*Unbalanced hormones could be keeping you from making the progress you would like.*



# 6 TIPS TO BALANCE HORMONES NATURALLY

## **1** Take good care of your gut.

An unhealthy gut contributes to a wide range of diseases including diabetes, obesity, rheumatoid arthritis, autism, and depression.

**Friendly or Healthy Bacteria** in your gut can help offset symptoms of perimenopause and menopause. To increase healthy bacteria, avoid sugar and processed food.

A good way to add healthy bacteria to your gut is to eat more fermented foods such as pickles, kimchi, sauerkraut, and plain kefir and yogurt, if you tolerate dairy.

Consider removing dairy and gluten from your diet as they are not easily digested and can cause inflammation and irritation to your gut



# 6 TIPS TO BALANCE HORMONES NATURALLY

## 2 Eat Healthy Fats.

Essential fats are foundational building blocks for hormone production.

The type of fat you eat makes a difference so **balance your ratio of Omega 3 to Omega 6 fats**. Hormones derived from omega-6 fatty acids tend to increase inflammation while those from omega-3 fatty acids decrease it.

In recent years the ratio of Omega 6 to Omega 3 fats in our diet have gone from a healthy ratio of 1:1 to more like 20:1. That's unhealthy!

Eat more fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel. Nuts and seeds, especially walnuts, are a great source of omega 3 fats. Animal sources of protein such as beef, chicken and turkey are much better for you if they are grass-fed or free-range.

Be especially careful of the types of oils you use. Stick with coconut oil, sesame and avocado oil for higher heat cooking. Olive oil is best for lower heat cooking (around 350 degrees) or used raw in salads. Other nut oils like macadamia and walnut oil are great raw or at room temperature. Always use organic and cold pressed oil.





### **3** Control your insulin and blood sugar.

Insulin is a very important hormone which is necessary to help glucose or the sugar found in blood to get inside the cell where it is used to create energy.

Consuming a diet high in sugar and refined carbohydrates can create high insulin levels. High circulating levels of insulin can cause insulin resistance which means you are likely not getting the sugar in your cell where it belongs. Too much circulating insulin can result in those calories that should be creating energy being converted to fat instead. It's no wonder you feel exhausted.

If your insulin levels are high, you are most likely highly inflamed which puts you at risk for degenerative diseases like diabetes and also makes it very difficult to lose weight.



## 4 Optimize the Health of Your Adrenal Glands.

In our world of non-stop stimulation and stress, it's easy to create adrenal fatigue. The response to stress created by deadlines, crazy schedules and never having enough time to do what needs to be done creates an outpouring of the hormone cortisol.



The more demand you put on your adrenal glands, the harder it is for the adrenal glands to deliver. Because the fight or flight response is innate and tied to our very survival, the adrenal glands get priority when it comes to hormone production which leaves the sex hormones and the thyroid hormones at a deficit.

High levels of cortisol are also major contributors to belly fat. Both caffeine and alcohol drive cortisol levels up as well as increase PMS symptoms. Cutting caffeine and alcohol is good for balancing your estrogen levels. Your thyroid will also be happier if you cut caffeine.

If cutting back on alcohol is a challenge for you it might help to know that it increases belly fat. When you drink a glass of wine your liver shifts to burning alcohol for fuel instead of fat. This may slow down your fat burning by more than half.

## 5 Manage Your Estrogen Levels.

Estrogen is the hormone that most defines you as a woman. It gives you your curves. Estrogen balance is directly related to progesterone. These two hormones do a dance for your entire lifetime. If estrogen becomes the more dominant partner, problems can occur. When estrogen becomes dominant you can experience water retention, breast tenderness, mood swings, and irritability which can lead to anxiety and depression. **And difficulty losing weight.**

To reduce levels of unhealthy estrogen, increase your fiber intake because it will increase estrogen excretion.





## 6 **Protect Your Thyroid.**

The thyroid secretes hormones that regulate the activities of almost every cell in our bodies including how quickly we burn calories and maintenance of our metabolism. Thyroid fatigue can impact metabolic rate, sex hormone levels, overall mood, wellbeing, and the ability to build muscle. Low thyroid has also been implicated in heart disease.

Some signs of low thyroid include dry skin, thin brittle nails, loss of one third of your outer eyebrow, weight gain, fluid retention, cold hands and feet. If you are experiencing these symptoms, it is a good idea to get further evaluation by a doctor you trust.

The best way to support your thyroid is to eat a nutrient dense diet focused on selenium, copper, zinc, B vitamins, vitamin A and vitamin D. You may also want to keep away from soy foods and raw foods from the brassica family which includes veggies such as kale, broccoli, Brussel's sprouts, and cauliflower. Steam them lightly.

Your thyroid is one of the most important organs in your body. Making sure you give it great nutritional support can go a long way toward protecting it and helping it live a long healthy life.



# Balanced Hormones can be the Solution

*Are you experiencing low energy, aches and pains, or difficulty concentrating?*

*Do you have difficulty falling asleep or disrupted sleep?*

*Do you have sugar cravings?*

*Do you have a few pounds, or 20, that you just can't lose?*

*Do you have irritating menopause symptoms?*

If you are experiencing any or all of these issues I can help. I work with clients like you who understand that the one size fits all approach to good health just doesn't work. No two individuals are alike. I take the time to evaluate your lifestyle, preferences, physical being and emotional being so together we can develop the best program for you.



Ruth Clark, RD, MPH

---

## About Me

I am a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist with a B.S. in Human Nutrition, a Master's degree in Public Health from Boston University, and over 35 years of experience in health care. I have held positions at Harvard and Tufts teaching hospitals, corporate America, and was formerly Executive Director of Wellness Programming for the Deaconess Hospital in Boston.

In my nutritional counseling practice, Smart Nutrition (in-person, by phone and online) I am committed to helping each client reach long term permanent results on their journey to optimal health.

**To Learn More**, Email me at: [ruth@ruthrd.com](mailto:ruth@ruthrd.com)

[www.ruthclarkrd.com](http://www.ruthclarkrd.com)

*Your Hormones exert profound control over your body. The better care you take of them, the better care they will take of you.*

