

Know Your Hormones

Hormone imbalance can cause a wide variety of health issues in women of all ages. DR CHARLENE KULENKAMPFF of **Dr Lauren Bramley & Partners** explains more.



How do hormones affect our bodies?

Our bodies are like a factory – all our hormones must work together in order for us to look and feel our best. If any of our hormones are in excess or deficient, this can lead to significant health problems.

What are the most common symptoms of hormone imbalance?

For women around the perimenopause, it's hot flushes, night sweats, mood swings, weight issues (particularly around the middle), hair loss, indigestion, sleeping problems, and vaginal irritability and dryness. Younger patients suffer from heavy periods, irregular menstrual cycles, mid-cycle bleeding and bad PMS symptoms – mood swings, bloating, weight gain and sore breasts. There's also a hormonal shift post-pregnancy that might result in postnatal depression.

If you're having difficulty losing weight despite eating well and exercising regularly, this could be oestrogen-dominance – fixing that imbalance can really help. For women with fertility issues, small hormone adjustments can sometimes result in pregnancy after years of trying unsuccessfully.

What treatments are available?

We use natural hormones that are biologically identical to those in the body, rather than synthetic hormone replacement therapy. We prefer using creams as they bypass

the liver, making them the safest option. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, our customised programme tailors the amounts of different hormones, using as little as possible to treat your symptoms.

What to avoid for healthy hormones:

- A high intake of soy and MSG
- Chronic dieting
- Certain medications (check with your doctor!)
- Exposure to radiation and pesticides
- Recreational drug use
- Smoking
- Stress

The sooner treatment begins, the better – be aware of the symptoms and seek help quickly to avoid years of suffering for something that can be treated easily! *EL*

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