

Digestive **RESET**

FIX Your
HORMONES
and DIGESTION

by Balancing
Your GUT
MICROBIOME
and ADRENALS



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DP

DIGESTIVE RESET

Fix Your Hormones and Digestion by Balancing Your Gut
Microbiome and Adrenals

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to my incredible parents, my husband, my three boys, my clients, and my mentors. To my amazing sons, who trust me and are so proud of me. To all of you who supported me on my journey and all of you who didn't believe in me, which gave me the drive to persevere. To everyone who is seeking to truly heal, I also dedicate this to you.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER 1: HOW DID I GET HERE?	8
CHAPTER 2: I KNOW HOW YOU'RE FEELING	13
CHAPTER 3: DID YOU THINK YOUR HORMONES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR GUT?	17
ADRENAL STRESS PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE	22
CHAPTER 4: GUT MICROBIOME AND YOUR HORMONES	25
CHAPTER 5: THE POWER OF APPROPRIATE TESTING	31
CHAPTER 6: POSSIBLE ROOT CAUSES OF HORMONE PROBLEMS AND HOW TO ADDRESS THEM	34
CHAPTER 7: LEARN HOW ANTI-INFLAMMATORY LIVING CAN BE AN EASY TASK	43
CHAPTER 8: HOW TO MAKE YOUR GUT MICROBIOME FRIENDLY AND HAVE YOUR SYMPTOMS GO AWAY	53
CHAPTER 9: HOW ALKALINITY WITHIN THE SYSTEM CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE FOR YOUR HEALTH AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT	59
CHAPTER 10: HORMONES IN HARMONY: HORMONE FIXES WITH NUTRITION AND SUPPLEMENTS	63
CHAPTER 11: THE IMPORTANCE OF GOING THROUGH A SERIES OF FUNCTIONAL DIAGNOSTICS TO TRULY UNDERSTAND THE ROOT CAUSE OF DIGESTIVE AND HORMONE IMBALANCE	76
CHAPTER 12: ADDING MINDFUL PRACTICES AND THE NEXT STEPS	80
CHAPTER 13: CONCLUSION	86
TRUSTED RESOURCES	87
REFERENCES	89

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	93
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	94
ABOUT DIFFERENCE PRESS	96
OTHER BOOKS BY DIFFERENCE PRESS	98
THANK YOU!	99

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Introduction

Do you have any of the following?

- Irregular menstrual cycles?
- Fertility problems?
- Frequent screaming, yelling, or feelings of rage that go from zero to ten in a few seconds?
- Difficulty falling asleep or interrupted sleep?
- Fatigued, but can't rest?
- Memory problems or feeling distracted that gets worse under pressure?
- Can't rest at night?
- Sugar cravings (need something sweet after meals, or in between meals)?
- Skin rashes, rosacea, eczema?
- Increased waist greater than thirty-six inches?
- Bone loss, diagnosed with osteopenia or osteoporosis?
- Indigestion, heartburn, GERD, constipation, or other digestive problems?
- Low sex drive?
- Recurrent headaches?
- Sensitivity to cold?
- Depressed moods or anxiety?
- Unstable blood sugar?
- Night sweats or hot flashes?
- Painful breasts, especially before getting your period?
- Bloating or water retention?

If the answer is yes to any of the above, then continue reading.

Chapter 1: How Did I Get Here?

Michelle was always an excellent student – curious, happy, and content. She was the kind of girl who made her parents extremely proud. She had been a good student when she was little and a great student in high school. Her college years went by so easily and there was never a moment when she would feel that she didn't have it all together.

She felt really healthy overall when she was young. Michelle had plenty of energy to play sports in high school and college. She would be the last one off the dance floor when she would go out with her friends. When everyone would get sick in her dorm, she was the one getting her roommates some tea and the only one not getting sick. She didn't even get a cavity until she was well into her forties. She never even had to complain about her health.

When Michelle was in her forties, she noticed that something was not amazing with the way she felt. Her digestion wasn't great. Her moods were up and down, but people said that was normal. It was normal to have constipation occasionally. For her, it was more than occasionally, but some doctors say going to the bathroom twice a week is acceptable. After she gave birth to each of her kids, the fact that she wasn't feeling very happy was also acceptable. We live in a society that thinks it's okay to have that postpartum depression, unless it's something severe. She still had her periods.

She was still a happy lady most of the time. She was always the one to get her family together, planning and organizing exciting events and vacations. She was the one to get ideas in their minds to do something fun together. She was the train that carried the family on their fun journey.

She felt, that inside, things were okay, until something was a little off with her hormones. There was a little bit of indigestion, a little bit of hot flashes, mood swings and a bit of night sweats, but then that went away. She thought that was normal at that age, and she felt okay for the next few months. Then, the same thing was happening again, but a little worse. It was like a growing tide. When the symptoms came back, Michelle felt like she was almost coming out of her skin. That's how uncomfortable she felt.

The worst part for her was that, at times, she could not control her anger. She was not the same person she used to know. She did not recognize herself in many situations. Things would

get her wired up so quickly. She worried about what someone would say, people's reactions, a raise of an eyebrow, an eye roll, or even a noise outside would make a really big difference in the way she reacted. She became so snappy. What happened to the person that used to be extremely calm, together, and proper? Suddenly, Michelle was not having it with anyone. If there was no answer from her kids about dinner, or if they didn't feel like having it, Michelle would start to rage. If she would hear from her husband that he didn't want to help with something, there was no end to that. She could not stop.

After her moods and rages would pass, she would sit there and be very upset at her own reaction; it didn't make any sense to her, whatsoever, to act that way. This was overreacting, she thought. She understood that. She knew she was overreacting, and that was even worse. The fact that she was keenly aware that she was overreacting made her deeply upset.

Michelle realized that it had gone too far because it wasn't one instance. It wasn't two instances. This kept happening over and over. Her kids were pretty upset by her reactions. They were extremely confused. They used to see their mother being very calm, and they were very comfortable with that. Her husband was uncomfortable with what was happening with her. He didn't want to mention it too often. He didn't really want to stress her out even more because he did see that something was happening with Michelle physically.

Michelle realized that it was time to do something about these changes. She knew it wasn't the life she imagined for herself. She understood it wasn't a mental illness or a mental situation. There was no history of mental illness in her family. She didn't have any problems when she was young, so it had to be something else. She started reading a lot of information about hormones and the digestive system, about neurotransmitters and what happens to the body at her age. She saw a primary care doctor, who recommended that she see a psychiatrist. Her OBGYN prescribed birth control pills for her, which she really got confused about because at her age, getting birth control pills didn't make sense, but the doctor explained that it would make her feel more stable with her hormones. He, too, recommended that she should go see a psychiatrist.

Michelle understood one thing after leaving the psychiatrist's office: she realized that the doctor did not really hear her. He seemed to listen to her, but did not really *hear* her. She explained to the doctor that there was no mental illness in her family. She didn't feel depressed,

as people with depression described it, but she was still given a prescription for depression. She was really confused about whether she needed to take the prescription or not.

She called her friends and they got together in a cute little cafe. Michelle was very uncomfortable to start the conversation about her problem with the girls, but she decided it was time to share. It was time to discuss this because her girlfriends were of similar age and maybe they could give her some good advice. She told her story. Her friends got quiet, listened and just sat there with their eyes glued to Michelle. One of her friends looked at her like she understood what she was going through. The others started to look away as if they were hiding something. She got empathetic looks. The girlfriend that looked like she understood and was on the same page with her said, “You know, I went to see this doctor, and he wasn’t a psychiatrist. He was a psychologist. Maybe you should go see that health professional.”

She went to see the doctor, who was a psychologist, and it helped her to a degree. She wanted to understand how to fix the rage, the mood swings and her reactions. The doctor helped her, and with the tools she learned, she was able to react to things a little differently. She became more aware of the thoughts and emotions that were going through her mind while she was reacting to triggers. She was able to control her anger a little better. She was happy that there was an improvement, but still, she was nowhere near to how she wanted to feel. Her digestion was not great. She often felt heartburn. She often felt reflux. She felt constipated and bloated all the time. And, the mood swings continued.

Even though she was able to react better after working with the psychologist, she was not a happy camper, and things were getting worse with the family. Her kids did not want to spend time with Michelle and her husband. They didn’t want to go out to dinners anymore. They didn’t want to sit down for their comfortable dinner time at home. They didn’t want to have the family time like they used to, which deeply upset Michelle. Her husband blamed her for it and they constantly fought about it.

Michelle decided to make another trip to the doctor’s office. She thought that maybe she needed to stop questioning and just do as the doctor said. She read somewhere on the internet that some digestive issues could be traced back to hormone issues. She decided that she wanted to investigate that. She went to see a gastroenterologist (GI doctor) who said that it probably

had a lot to do with some kind of inflammation that she was having. Since she was not at the age when it was recommended to do a first colonoscopy, and there were no other risk factors or family history involved, medication was prescribed for her. The doctor promised that the heartburn and reflux would go away, and she would feel much better after taking the medicine. As far as the constipation, her gastroenterologist gave her a bunch of prescription options that would get rid of the constipation. No side effects were discussed.

Michelle got home with tons of prescriptions from the gastroenterologist, along with some testing recommendations. She sat down and looked at the previously written prescriptions from the other doctor. Michelle was ready to do whatever was necessary. She thought that this was the right thing to do because she did not want to lose her family due to the way she felt, which she understood was due to her physical state. She did all the tests. She took all the prescriptions. She was feeling a little better with her heartburn, but over time, she felt depleted and more tired, and the constipation wasn't going away. Her hormones were still up and down, and now, fatigue was creeping in. Although occasionally she felt better, overall things were not great.

She got her friends together again for an "emergency meeting" that involved wine, chocolate, and more chocolate. She said, "I know I already discussed this with you guys. I'm not sure what to do. I'm losing my family. My husband is barely talking to me. I'm up and down, I'm screaming and yelling and I'm not the same person. You know I'm not that person." They looked at each other and sighed with understanding of what she was saying.

"I know that some people think it's quack, but I think you might want to try a holistic approach" one of her girlfriends said.

"I think I'm ready. I think I'm ready for anything that will work," Michelle said.

Michelle's friend gave her a phone number of someone she trusted in that field.

Although, at the beginning, she didn't really believe that it would work, Michelle decided to give it a try and she went for an appointment. She really felt like she had nothing to lose. She listened to every advice that the practitioner had given her. She changed her diet to improve her nutritional intake. She went for a series of non-traditional lab work. They found out about her nutritional depletion and a lot of problems with her gut that needed to be fixed in a more natural

and gentle approach. She was feeling better and better each week. Shortly after starting the program with that natural health practitioner, she was feeling the difference with her moods — even before they got a chance to fix her hormone imbalance.

She was so excited about her weekly improvements. The entire process did take a while, around six months in total. She did everything that was recommended by the practitioner. By six months, she felt like a different person.

Her family started mentioning that she smiled so much more, that she was cooking their favorite meals and how she hadn't done that for a while. One morning, her family decided to treat Michelle to breakfast in bed and it wasn't even Mother's Day. They all gathered around her and said, "We are so glad you're back. We were really worried about you."

She started crying. "I thought that I was losing you and I was afraid you felt like you were losing me," Michelle said. She then continued to say, "At the end of the day, I was losing myself because I couldn't recognize myself. I think my progress deserves a toast. I want to get a glass of champagne and drink to me getting myself back. Oh, wait — my health guru said I shouldn't have alcohol now."

Chapter 2: I Know How You're Feeling

I struggled with chronic digestive problems ever since I was little. There was no such diagnosis as Crohn's disease when and where I was growing up. There was one blanket diagnosis, which was colitis. I did get a lot of different diagnoses related to chronic digestive problems like chronic pancreatitis. Then, my teen years came and I felt much better. They do say that there are a lot of things you can outgrow. For example, childhood allergies, teen acne, and chronic childhood ear infections are all a thing of the past when you enter adulthood.

My menstrual cycle came at the age of thirteen and it was a most inconvenient time. It was 1986. I was living in Kiev at that time, and the Chernobyl disaster happened smack in the middle of that year, right before I got my first period. You could imagine how that affected my hormones and thyroid health. Even though, my parents, who are amazing, were able to get me very far out of Kiev for close to a year, I still was affected by this because I was there during the most dangerous time, right when it happened.

A lot of women who lived in Kiev during that time later developed thyroid problems. My sister was diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease. A lot of friends and family who lived around us were affected, including young women who were of child-bearing age, whose fertility was affected tremendously.

Growing up, I thought having a painful period was normal. I thought that PMS, bloating and unbearable pain were expected on the first day of the cycle. That's why they created Midol, right? I thought that many girls around me were taking Motrin or Advil when they had their premenstrual pain. It was socially acceptable. No one said that it was a sign of hormone imbalance. I kept on popping the pain medication on the first days of the cycle. That was something I could do, it was recommended by my pediatrician who we worshiped and I thought it was okay. Then, my entire life changed after I took a functional medicine course. That's fast forwarding through my journey with Crohn's disease, which you can read more about in my first book, *Crohn's and Colitis Fix*. I realized, that, by fixing my gut and things related to chronic inflammation in the gut, my hormones were improving a great deal. My mood was better. My PMS was gone.

When I was taking my functional medicine course with my first mentor, Dr. Daniel Kalish, I wrote him a thank-you note. I'm his biggest fan. He is dedicated to teaching doctors functional medicine philosophy and practices. Dr. Kalish was always interested in physiology and natural health. In his twenties, Dr. Kalish lived in Thailand in a monastery for a couple of years. There, he got a very bad parasitic infection. When he came back to the United States, he had what we would call chronic fatigue. He had to figure out how to get healthy. Part of that, or really all of that — getting healthy — happened as a result of doing functional medicine. He got very interested in it and decided to pursue it as a career. He enjoyed learning from the labs themselves. He liked the idea of applying science to natural health issues and not just doing it from intuition or just using herbs.

I was so grateful to have no pain when I was getting my period and to have regular cycles. I didn't know it was so abnormal to have anywhere between a thirty-three- and a forty-day cycle. That was normal for me ever since I was a young girl. Things were positively turning around for me, as far as my hormone balance was concerned. That wasn't even what I was looking to fix when I began my healing journey. I was trying to heal my gut, and as a result I healed my gut and my hormones. That was such an amazing side benefit. I still think that these accidental things that we find are probably the best gifts in life. Nevertheless, this is something I strongly believe I need to share with my ladies. My first clients, many of whom were chronic digestive sufferers, were patients with Crohn's and colitis. But, I also had many hormone-imbalanced clients. Just seeing the difference it made in their lives was amazing.

And, it wasn't just affecting them personally, but also their families. It was affecting their fertility. Just to remember a couple of my beautiful cases: One of my clients (age twenty-nine) came to me not having had a period for a decade. She could not believe that we could restore her cycle. She came in with the intention of losing a little bit of weight. I told her that this health goal was surely achievable with the right diet, lots of nutritional changes and lots of anti-inflammatory work. She called me when she got her first period, after ten years. She said she was sitting in the bathroom, screaming to her grandmother, "I got my period! Hoorah!" How amazing is that? She got her female mojo and confidence back. She started exercising after that. She didn't feel like exercising before because she didn't feel like a woman and she didn't feel

like doing anything about her body. A lot has changed for her after that. She didn't need my help any longer. She followed the plan I outlined for her and went on to be extremely good with her diet. She exercised and she lost the weight she wanted. All that was possible because her gut microbiome was balanced, her hormones were balanced, her thyroid was nutritionally supported and she restarted her menstrual cycle.

Another case I'd like to share with you is a client that came to me in her early thirties. She was very confused. She had already gone through a lot of different testing with traditional doctors. She even went to a fertility clinic. Doctors were giving her a sad prognosis. She was disappointed. She thought that she would not be able to ever get pregnant. It did not take very long to fix this. We restored her gut health. We addressed her adrenal health. Adrenal health and adrenal stress is the root cause of many chronic problems. Adrenal glands are located atop of the kidneys and are responsible for cortisol and DHEA production (DHEA levels are important in evaluating adrenal stress since DHEA is a precursor to the sex hormones estrogen and testosterone). We did a lot of work with her diet. Before I even got a chance to support her hormone balance, she was already pregnant. She was scheduled for a follow-up appointment with me when she called and said, "I think I won't be making my appointment. Guess why. I'm pregnant." That was one of my most beautiful cases.

Another case of beautiful hormone balancing that I want to share with you is a case of a forty-something-year-old woman who was in a depressed mood all the time. Almost clinically depressed, but not to the point where she was diagnosed with clinical depression. She wasn't losing interest in a lot of different things yet (in diagnosed depression cases, you would lose interest in many things you used to enjoy). Yet, she was very upset. She was gaining weight. Her menstrual cycle was still there, but something was a little off about it. She wasn't yet feeling the menopausal symptoms, like hot flashes or night sweats, but something felt wrong. It didn't take more than six months of working with her to restore her gut balance, hormone balance and adrenals; she was back to her healthy self again. Our goal was to balance her hormones and her gut. In the end, as a secondary benefit, like in my case, it was hormones that got balanced. And, as an unexpected positive benefit, she was losing weight. That wasn't the primary wellness goal

that she had with me, but now she was losing weight because she first got healthy and then the weight was coming off.

The last case that I want to mention here — so you can feel comfortable that functional medicine consulting and coaching can work for you — is the case of a fifty-something-year-old woman who already had menopausal symptoms. When she came to me, she told me that her doctor prescribed synthetic hormones for her, but she was afraid to take them. She read about them because she was a very educated patient. She read that these synthetic hormones she was prescribed were extracted from pregnant horses. She didn't want to take a medication that was extracted from pregnant horses. She said that she was really looking into fixing her hormones and getting rid of the hot flashes, night sweats and mood swings with a more natural approach. She also said that her doctor gave her the green light to try out natural hormone balancing methods.

“Would you be able to give me a number, from zero to ten, on how much it's bothering you?” I asked her.

Her number was a 9.5. “I can't sleep through the night. The night sweats are so bad, but it's not just the night sweats anymore. It's losing sleep, too,” She said.

She had no idea how quickly she would recover. This was one of the quickest fixes in my practice. Within less than two months, she was a different person. Again, she was good about changing her diet. She was good about sleep hygiene. She was excellent at listening to every piece of advice I gave her. I also did a lot of adrenal balancing for her. I looked at her nutritional depletion and I repleted her with many nutrients using nutraceuticals.

I started her on natural supplements containing natural plant-based hormones, but she really did not need to take them for too long because her hormones started getting balanced because of all the work we had done. Within two months her life changed tremendously. Her quality of sleep improved and she didn't wake up in the middle of the night anymore. That made a world of a difference in her case. Shortly after that her symptoms were all gone.

Some women say that they can bear certain symptoms, but they can't bear the others. For some, it could be those unbearable night sweats, but for others it's the lack of sleep that makes everything so much worse.

All these women that I just mentioned to you got so much confidence back because feeling better physically doesn't just make a difference physically. You feel better inside as a woman. You feel sexier when you feel better. You feel stronger. You feel more confident. You feel like a woman again – a desirable, strong, empowered woman. So, let's get your health back, so you can feel just as good as all these women.

Chapter 3: Did You Think Your Hormones Have Nothing to Do with Your Gut?

One of my favorite things to talk to women about is how our reproductive system is so beautifully designed. From the way we talk to the way we walk, it is all affected by sex hormones.

Our beautifully designed system can easily break and fail on us the further we get from nature. If nature gave you a system that works, why ruin that? In a way, many advances in medicine are fantastic, including surgical involvement, genetic testing and some preventative methods. When it comes to chronic disease prevention and chronic disease management, traditional medicine approaches are not always amazing.

When I was just starting out with functional diagnostic testing, I was not even at the point of hoping to fix my hormone imbalance. I didn't even realize how imbalanced my hormones were. All I wanted was for my gut to feel better. The balancing came later as a surprise. I realized that handling my bigger problem, which was my gut, helped in balancing my hormones.

With functional diagnostics, in a perfect world, you want to go through a methodological approach. Just like with anything else where you want to get results, when you use a method that is proven to work, it's just always better. Of course, the most important thing is to follow the process that's very customized and tailored to your needs, your neuroendocrine system, your gut microbiome and your toxic load. Testing your gut, adrenals, hormones and detox pathways is so efficient when you are choosing to do safe and effective detox. The reason why we want to run tests is because it's no longer guesswork, because it's science based, because we are uncovering something no other doctor was trained to check, because it's *all* about getting to the root of the problem.

Key Hormones in Women

Two key hormones in women's health are estrogen and progesterone.

Estrogen is responsible for female sexual development. It causes the lining of the uterus to grow and get thick to prepare for a fertilized egg. At the end of the cycle, the lining is shed, and estrogen levels drop.

Progesterone is responsible for regulating the condition of the endometrium (the inner lining of the uterus). We depend a great deal on progesterone levels in pregnancy.

In menopause, both estrogen and progesterone can be low. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is certainly an option in modern medicine, but at what cost? HRT studies certainly scared most women into taking a commonly prescribed hormone preparation in 2002 and left them confused on what their next steps should be. What happened between 2002 and now? Many conventional doctors and patients were scared by the potential side effects. The drug was taken off the shelves, but was placed back on the market and is currently available. Doctors still don't want to prescribe anything estrogen-related because of breast cancer and cardiovascular risks. What are the options then?

Neuroendocrine System

First, let's talk about the neuroendocrine system testing, which is where we investigate adrenal, hormone and thyroid health. The reason we want these checked is because this enables us to see an entire hormone picture more clearly. This testing includes saliva testing through functional diagnostics, which usually tests for the DHEA and cortisol levels.

Saliva testing is an accurate way of testing our adrenal hormones and, as of today, is considered a very reliable method of testing, as compared to blood or dry urine testing. When I was first learning functional medicine, around ten years ago, this was not considered an approach that you would take, especially in traditional ways. Now, it is acceptable even in traditional medicine as a reliable source. Saliva testing is simple to do. The testing consists of four saliva samples collected within twenty-four hours. You collect a morning, a noon, an afternoon and an evening sample.

It's interesting how our rhythm of cortisol follows our circadian rhythm. When you wake up in the morning, you have the most amount of energy, and that's when you want your cortisol to be high in order for you to be up, functioning and have that energy and brain activity. By noon, that number is supposed to be lower. By afternoon it should be lower than at noon. By evening, it should be so low that you want to fall asleep and stay asleep (high levels of cortisol usually won't let you sleep that well). Just by looking at your cortisol patterns, we can see how

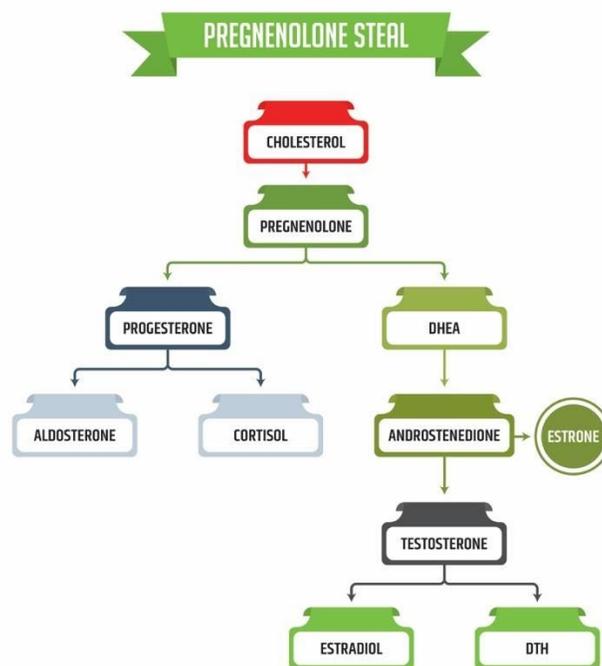
well you're sleeping. For example, if you have an evening cortisol level that is elevated, it will not be easy for you to fall asleep.

If your adrenal test results show a low morning cortisol level, it will certainly make sense why you are super exhausted, and something must be done about that. If your levels are up and down throughout the day, that could also indicate why you're feeling terrible. You're up and down the entire day. Your blood sugar probably goes up and down. Depending on your levels, you could have heart palpitations at one point or extremely low energy at another. Sometimes we call it the sugar rush, and then the sugar crash. A lot of people don't realize that those crashes happen after drinking coffee. A certain amount of time passes, after drinking a caffeinated beverage, and you are now at a much lower cortisol level after that artificial rise of cortisol from caffeine. Your body may not be able to produce enough cortisol because the elevation of the cortisol was not natural.

We would also look at the results of your DHEA levels through the saliva testing. DHEA is a stress hormone and a precursor to testosterone. DHEA is a very interesting hormone. We often call it the hormone of youth. We sometimes call this hormone the last soldier standing. Even if you're super low on cortisol, it's not always going to show you that the levels of DHEA are low. DHEA is the last one to be holding on and giving you that adrenal support. DHEA is directly responsible for healthy levels of estrogen and testosterone in women and men.

DHEA also helps us in staging our adrenal health. In certain methods of functional medicine, it's common to break up adrenal health into three stages. The first one is when you are just hit by a stressor and your body is in that "fight or flight" like effect, and you're producing an excess amount of cortisol to deal with the stress, not even realizing there is a problem. The stressor could be anything from your constant fighting with your spouse to your chronic problems at work, but it doesn't have to be emotional. The stress can be environmental toxins affecting your health. It could also be your microbiome being out of balance. It could be that you have a gut bacteria, parasite or candida. Candida is a naturally occurring yeast that's present in our microbiome, but when there's too much of it, it can become very hazardous to your health. It could be a lot of different stressors – one or many of them affecting you all at once.

Those stressors hit you. You fall into stage one originally. You can stay at that point. If you're able to get out of stage one, you did well. Your body took care of the situation and you are on the way to recovery without even knowing you had a problem. Most of the time, that's not what happens, and you fall into stage two, where you are now producing less cortisol. You have less energy. You now might have issues with your sleep, but you still could show normal levels of cortisol production, and your DHEA usually stays within normal range on those results. When you fall into the advanced adrenal fatigue, you will now have cortisol that's pretty much low or nonexistent and your DHEA will generally show lower than the normal range.



Many sex hormones are derived from cholesterol, then the body turns it into pregnenolone. When everything is good with your adrenals, pregnenolone will convert into progesterone or DHEA. So, as you see from the graph above, if you are chronically stressed, the cortisol gets stolen from pregnenolone and other hormone levels fall like the domino effect.

Staging adrenal health is an important part of creating a good natural plan for healing. Sometimes it's under-valued, but it does give a functional medicine clinician an idea of where you are with your stress. By stress, I don't mean just emotional. If you completed that lab test,

it's also helpful to complete a lab test like the DUTCH test where you would investigate more things than just your adrenal health. You would probably want to investigate your sex hormones and their metabolites. Choosing the type of testing is important. You can still go and test out your estrogen, estradiol, estriol, progesterone and testosterone through saliva testing, and that's a great way of testing them out. You could choose to do a dry urine test with the DUTCH laboratory, or another lab, to see the metabolites and to see a complete picture of the two, or just choose one of the two: dry urine or saliva.

Choosing either one of these labs or a combination of these labs should be individually selected. We like to consider many different things when we choose these combinations. Sometimes, in rare cases when things are a bit complex, considering doing all three (blood, dry urine and saliva) is a wise choice. Comparing the results of the DUTCH dry urine test with the others can be beneficial to see where your metabolites are and to see some of the neurotransmitters for a comprehensive picture. For example, serotonin metabolite levels have important answers about gut health, mood, and sleep, which are very important indicators to whether we further test or not. Comparing it to markers for serotonin is crucial because melatonin is a precursor of serotonin. If you're already having an advanced issue with hormones and are trying to fix and balance them, you want to look at those because your sleep will already be affected if these hormones are too low on the output.

Completing this testing will give you a nice picture of where you need help. Some patients will require different types of testing because we strive for an individualized approach and everyone is different. Additionally, some patients will really benefit from DHEA supplementation, from cortisol support, and/or from blood sugar support. If cortisol isn't following the rhythm it needs to follow, hormone and blood sugar balancing can be of great help (by keeping the levels more stable). Plant based supplementation is accepted by the body in a gentler way as compared to the absorption of synthetic hormones by the body. Therefore, in functional medicine we often recommend plant based supplementation. Birth control, for example, is a synthetic form of hormone supplementation and it requires a lot of hard work by the liver. All supplementation should be at the discretion of your doctor.

Everyone is under one form of stress or another, and a certain amount of stress can be healthy and keep us productive. However, extreme stress can accumulate and start to negatively impact our health, leading to adrenal burnout. Adrenal burnout is all too common in our modern society. It is the point where your adrenal hormone production is almost shut down and you start feeling the effects of that physically. Some of the symptoms include: fatigue, weight gain, insomnia, irritability, and mood swings. If you suffer from any of these conditions, take the following questionnaire to identify your personal stress level. This helpful questionnaire will give you a clue on where you are as far as adrenal health is concerned.

Adrenal Stress Profile Questionnaire

Next to each question assign a number between 0 and 5. You should assign values as follows:

0 = Not true

3 = Somewhat true

5 = Very true

Once you have completed the questionnaire, calculate your total and locate the range you fall under.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| <input type="text"/> | 1. I experience problems falling asleep. |
| <input type="text"/> | 2. I experience problems staying asleep. |
| <input type="text"/> | 3. I frequently experience a second wind (high energy) late at night. |
| <input type="text"/> | 4. I have energy highs and lows throughout the day. |
| <input type="text"/> | 5. I feel tired all the time. |
| <input type="text"/> | 6. I need caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, etc.) to get going in the morning. |
| <input type="text"/> | 7. I usually go to bed after 10 p.m. |
| <input type="text"/> | 8. I frequently get less than eight hours of sleep per night. |
| <input type="text"/> | 9. I am easily fatigued. |
| <input type="text"/> | 10. Things I used to enjoy seem like a chore lately. |
| <input type="text"/> | 11. My sex drive is lower than it used to be. |
| <input type="text"/> | 12. I suffer from depression, or have recently been experiencing feelings of depression such as sadness, or loss of motivation. |
| <input type="text"/> | 13. If I skip meals, I have low energy, or feel foggy and disoriented. |
| <input type="text"/> | 14. My ability to handle stress has decreased. |
| <input type="text"/> | 15. I find that I am easily irritated or upset. |
| <input type="text"/> | 16. I have had one or more stressful major life events. (i.e., divorce, death of a loved one, job loss, new baby, new job) |

	17. I tend to overwork, with little time for play or relaxation for extended periods of time.
	18. I crave sweets.
	19. I frequently skip meals or eat sporadically.
	20. I am experiencing increased physical complaints, such as muscle aches, headaches, or more frequent illnesses.

Scoring Your Adrenal Stress Profile:

It is important to note that this is not a diagnostic test and should not be used to diagnose any conditions. It is simply a tool to help assess your likely level of adrenal burnout.

If you scored between:

- 0 – 30 You are in good health.
- 30 – 40 You are under some stress.
- 40 - 50 You are a candidate for adrenal burnout.
- 50 – 60 You are in adrenal burnout.
- 60 + You are in severe adrenal burnout. ***

**If you scored 60 or higher, it is important that you take immediate steps to correct this condition before your health is adversely affected.*

If you have scored 40 or higher, you are in adrenal burnout and will, at some point, experience symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, insomnia, irritability, or mood swings.

Do not try new supplements without discussing them with your physician or healthcare practitioner first. Here's a **basic and general nutraceutical protocol for adrenal support**.

- Adaptogenic herbs (ex, Adaptocrine [APEX Energetics] or Adrenotone [DFH]) one capsule, two to three times daily

- Vitamin C 1000 mg with Bioflavonoids (ex, Bio Fizz [DFH] or BioFlav [OrthoMolecularProducts]) one capsule or scoop, two times daily
- Twice daily pack that contains Multi, Omega, vitamin D/K, Cal/Mag

Chapter 4: Gut Microbiome and Your Hormones

Everything about true natural healing should be based on individual recommendations. If you're the type of person that likes to go with the selections from your doctor, like with the traditional synthetic hormones, I can understand your logical way of thinking. Synthetic hormones have so much more supporting data available as compared to the much less data on natural hormone balancing, unfortunately, but natural hormone balancing shouldn't be discounted, as it looks very promising. There are still small studies and clinical cases to prove that functional medicine deserves a lot of attention. The Institute of Functional Medicine is a terrific source for functional medicine recommendations, and they are working hard on producing more and more studies. In my practice, I've seen natural plant-based hormone supplementation doing wonders for my clients.

Since, our traditional medicine is still broken apart into specialists, that makes it more difficult to get all the answers from a single source. That may require more visits to different specialists. Most women today would not be able to get information from their doctor that their hormone production is often a direct effect of their nutrition, lifestyle, gut microbiome, toxicity, genetics, mindset and more. Today, most women coming in to see their OBGYN will get a prescription for synthetic hormones and nothing else. But I'm a big dreamer and believe this will change.

So, what's the mystery and what is the connection between the gut and hormones? The out-of-balance hormones can worsen gut inflammation. But, chronic gut inflammation will negatively affect hormones. So, which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Just like that, the answer is not that simple. Since some hormones are made in the gut, it's logical to think that if there's gut inflammation, less of those hormones are made. Yet, chronic hormone imbalance goes hand in hand with chronic inflammation that will cause worsening of gut inflammation.

What else is made in the gut are some of the neurotransmitters, the things that we, for years, thought were all made in the brain, like serotonin, for example. Only a small percentage of serotonin is produced in the brain and most of it is made in the gut.

To think that your depressive thoughts are affected by your gut situation is straightforward logic. If you're inflamed, if you're having constipation, if you're having

diarrhea, if you're having chronic digestive problems, then fewer neurotransmitters can be made in the gut because you're unable to pre-manufacture or produce enough of them and, of course, you will feel sadder or have an unstable mood as a result because there is just not enough serotonin being made in the gut.

Now, by that same logic, you could derive that progesterone production, for example – which was my situation – was decreased because of chronic gut inflammation directly related to cortisol. In my case, it was Crohn's disease. If you're having other digestive problems, like constipation, diarrhea, IBS, reflux, heartburn, or other symptomatic or even asymptomatic digestive problems, you can also be producing fewer hormones. In my case, I was low on progesterone output, and I was having severe PMS pains, thinking it was just next to normal, thinking that taking pain relievers when I got my period was fine. I thought everyone else was having the same problem.

Progesterone is produced in the ovaries, and small amounts of it are produced by the ovaries. The production of it follows a certain curve up until day fourteen, and after day fourteen, the levels go up in hopes of getting pregnant. And if pregnancy doesn't happen, the levels drop so low that they signal the body to have a period. Isn't it brilliant how well designed this system is? A beautiful way that makes our systems have these beautiful hormone cycles every month. Everything was thought out so nicely.

The gut microbiota or microbiome is affected by many things around us. The gut microbiota is like a hidden organ of the body. The gut microbiome is a community of microorganisms that coexist in symbiotic relationship with human cells in the intestine, and some, when overgrown, can start negatively impacting the body. Taking chronic medications can often negatively affect gut microbiota. Specifically looking into a mini-review called *Gut Microbiota: The Neglected Endocrine Organ from Molecular Endocrinology* (August 2014), the authors show us how taking medications affected the gut microbiome, which, as a result, affected the metabolic state, the hormone status, and the weight of the experimented mice.

Now on the topic of the gut microbiome, I want to share parts of my interview with Kiran Krishnan from MicrobiomeLabs.com, which will help you understand the role of gut

microbiome in the big picture. Kiran is a microbiologist, a lecturer, and a clinical researcher on the human microbiome and functional medicine.

Kiran explains, *“The microbiome is like a hot, fancy term everyone should be using at cocktail parties, and it makes you sound smart the moment you say it, right? But the word microbiome is defined as the whole totality of microbes and all the genetic elements in contrast to the host. So, we are a host and we have trillions and trillions of microbes that live in and on our body, and they have millions of genetic elements that influence our lives every day, more than ninety-five percent – ninety-nine percent in some cases – of who we are, what we do daily, comes from bacteria. So, it starts to change your view on what a human is. We’re really a vessel for bacteria. We are a party that the bacteria, a whole bunch of bacteria, a few million years ago got together and said, ‘Hey, let’s create a human,’ essentially, you know? So, we’re just like a walking, talking bacterial party. They control everything. I mean, they control our brain. They control our immune system. They control everything about us that we find important to survive.”*

And we are right back to gut health. The place where hormones are made. Let’s see where you are with your gut health.

Here’s Your Quiz and Step-by-Step Process of Healing Gut Microbiome.

What is Your Gut Health Message?

A healthy gut is paramount to keeping immune health in check. Are you keeping your gut flora in balance?

Do You Take Any of These at Least a Few Times a Month?

(Count “yes” for each answer as 1 point.)

- A. Laxatives?
- B. Oral contraceptives (birth control pills)?
- C. NSAIDs, like ibuprofen or naproxen (brands of Motrin, Aleve, Advil, etc.) or aspirin?

D. PPIs (proton pump inhibitors), including Prevacid, Prilosec, etc. (omeprazole is a popular generic name)?

E. Acid reducing medication like Zantac, Tagamet or Pepcid (ranitidine, cimetidine or famotidine)?

Do You Often Experience Any of the Following?

(Count "yes" for each answer as 1 point.)

A. Burping or belching?

B. Fullness, gassiness, flatulence?

C. Poor appetite?

D. Constipation?

E. Diarrhea?

F. Pain under ribs?

G. Pain on the right side?

H. Gassy after eating fiber-rich foods like broccoli or cabbage?

I. Chronic colds or viruses?

Do You Take Care of Your Oral Health and How Often Do You Get Check-Ups?

(Count B as 1 point, and C and D as 2 points each.)

A. Every six months

B. Every year

C. Every two years

D. Sometimes

Do You Take Probiotics?

(Count C and D as 1 point each.)

- A. Once daily
- B. Twice daily
- C. Sometimes
- D. Never

Do You Often Experience or Have...

(Count "yes" for each answer as 1 point.)

- A. Difficulty digesting foods?
- B. White coating on the tongue?
- C. Bad breath?
- D. Body odor?
- E. Pain in the joints?
- F. Chronic allergies?
- G. Food intolerance?
- H. Nasal congestion?
- I. Dermatitis or eczema?
- J. Mood swings?

Answers:

- If you have 7 or more points, you still have a lot to learn about gut health! You may want to rule out leaky gut and candida overgrowth, and balance your gut microbiome. We recommend setting up an appointment as soon as possible with a professional gut health expert, specifically trained in functional medicine, to get to the root cause of the problem.

- If you have 3-6 points, you know a bit about gut health and are eating well, but it looks like you may still need some help keeping your gut microbiome in great balance.
- If you scored 0-3 points, great job! Congratulations, it looks like you have great gut health! Keep up the good work and make sure to keep scheduling those regular, preventative functional medicine visits with a gut health expert.

What Is Leaky Gut?

Let's also talk about the correlation between leaky gut and hormone imbalance.

Your gut lining is a thin wall with tiny spaces located between the cells. After you've digested a meal, those holes open up just enough to allow nutrients to pass into your bloodstream before closing back up.

If damage occurs to the digestive tract, those holes stay open, allowing bacteria, toxins, and undigested food particles to "leak" into your bloodstream. And that affects gut microbiome a great deal.

Many of your important hormones are made in your gut, so if it's out of whack, it can create a domino effect on all your hormones. Leaky gut causes inflammation and can shake up levels of hormones such as:

- Estrogen: Leaky gut leads to estrogen dominance. When your estrogen and progesterone are not in balance, it can affect your menstrual cycle, your weight and increase fluid retention.
- Estrobolome: This set of gut bacteria is responsible for metabolizing estrogens and disarming harmful estrogen that cause cancers in the thyroid, breast, ovaries and uterus.
- Thyroid hormones: Conversion of T4 thyroid hormone into the stronger, more active T3 form occurs in your gut, but this process can be compromised if your gut is unhealthy.
- Sleep and mood hormones: Ninety percent of your serotonin (your happiness hormone), as well as melatonin (which helps you sleep), are produced in your gut, but that process is severely disrupted in someone with leaky gut.

- Insulin levels: The healthier your gut, the more stable your blood glucose. Leaky gut can predispose you to insulin resistance and reduces your ability to burn fat.
- Appetite hormones: Harmful bacteria thrive in a leaky gut, and can change your levels of ghrelin (which makes you hungry) and leptin (which signals that you're full).
- Cortisol: Stress hormones soar when you have a leaky gut, and stress becomes harder to cope with.

Healing and sealing the gut lining becomes such an important part of the hormone balancing process, and it's critical to understand and address it when balancing hormones.

Chapter 5: The Power of Appropriate Testing

Now, let's get to the gut microbiome testing. As I write this book, laboratory testing and information are constantly evolving. It's been a long time since I began my research and work in gut health and in that time a lot has changed in regards to functional testing. I love the fact that we're growing, learning, and know more and more every day. Even from the time that I wrote my first book, which was not so long ago, there has been more information and advances in microbiome testing. Learning about your microbiome is important. How much of the good bacteria do you have? How much of the bad bacteria? Do you have parasites? Do you have pathogenic bacteria that needs to be removed? All of this information is important to know because some unfavorable gut imbalances will cause that inflammation that I mentioned earlier. Inflammation in the gut can directly mean less hormone production. How is this still not implemented and not calculated into every case that comes in with a hormone imbalance? It's mind-boggling. Understanding the fact that your gut is responsible for your hormone imbalance is the first and the most important message that I am trying to make in this book.

When choosing a lab test for a gut investigation, I usually prefer something like GI-MAP. GI-MAP is a PCR technology stool test that can become extremely useful in hard to crack cases. It's great in testing for parasites, bacteria, pathogenic bacteria, worms, markers for inflammation, markers for gluten reactivity and markers for immunoglobulins, which means how good your immune system is doing in the gut. All these give you such a great and clear picture of what's going on inside of your gut and what can be done about it. Another great thing about this type of testing is that the findings can be addressed with natural supplements (nutraceuticals), unlike with some other type of testing, such as genomic testing, which gives you results, but has no solution to address the problem it finds – no medications, no supplements or no lifestyle interventions.

While addressing the gut, you have to understand that healing it may be a longer process than expected. In most cases, it's a long process to get to a chronic state of ailment. So, expect some time for healing. I like to recommend applying changes in steps. If you have a combination of pathogens like parasites and the pathogenic bacteria and Candida, ideally you don't want to address them all at the same time. You can, if you really want to, but it's not going to feel good.

It will be overwhelming for the system. It will be way too many nutraceuticals used at the same time, which I wouldn't want to recommend. Your body may not feel good through the process of too much detoxification. It may be very draining on your body and you certainly don't want to put yourself through more stress. A slower, gentler and more natural healing path will be a better way to go. That's what I would do for myself, my family and all of the beautiful clients that come to me.

I recommend a step wise approach when it comes to healing plans. I use different types of protocols – protocols using nutraceuticals for different types of pathogens, bacteria and different types of parasites.

The general step-by-step guide in my practice includes:

1. Anti-inflammatory living (nutrition, lifestyle changes, and mindset)
2. Addressing adrenals, hormones, and thyroid health (testing first, evaluations, nutraceuticals)
3. Gut microbiome investigation (functional gut testing, evaluations, botanicals, nutraceuticals)
4. Detoxing (testing with OAT or other testing, evaluation, supplementation)
5. Re-evaluate according to original timeframe

Also, during this time, it's important to go with the right kind of probiotic. Selecting a probiotic is an art in its own right. My doctoral thesis was on clinical effectiveness of probiotics for Crohn's and colitis. I spent a lot of time researching probiotic use. I have seen from my clinical practice and from numerous cases how much of a difference it can make in someone's life.

Choosing the right probiotic, I believe, is something that I'm really experienced with and I would usually do it after getting the results of the gut microbiome testing; something like GI-MAP. If you've done gut microbiome testing with another company, it's also very helpful to just see your microorganisms and whether you could be overgrowing the bad bacteria, while lacking certain beneficial bacteria. For example, Crohn's patients have less of a certain bacterium, like *F. prausnitzii*, which is a commensal or bacteria that we expect to have enough of

in the gut to be responsible for certain functions. Our gut microbiome is a vitamin supplier of the body, so just imagine all these vitamins being depleted just from gut inflammation.

All these bugs or microorganisms are there for a reason. They all have a job to do. We used to think it's just bad bugs and good bugs, but now, with more research, we understand that there is a complex relationship between all the different microorganisms. They do depend on each other to perform a certain task which positively or negatively influences the function of the system. Something called a symbiotic relationship between the species can work for or against us. We used to think that the bad bugs are bad bugs, but some of them, we are now learning, are really helping the good bacteria to perform a certain function.

Learning to go on the right probiotic at the right time is really important. We do know the traditional and classic rules on when to use a probiotic. For example, you would never want to take it at the same time with an antibiotic prescribed by your doctor or even an herbal antimicrobial. By "the same time," I mean the same *exact* time. When you space them apart by about three hours, you do allow the time for each one to work, so it'll still be acceptable. It gets complicated when you must take an antimicrobial or an antibiotic more than three times a day because you now have a smaller time frame to space them out by three hours, but you could still figure out a way. Maybe take the probiotic early in the morning and then late at night while taking your antibiotic or antimicrobial two to three times during the day.

Balancing your gut microbiome is so crucial to decreasing the inflammation and increasing the natural production of your hormones as a result. If you didn't have a chance to get to a functional medicine practitioner, but would still like to start on probiotics, consider a professional brand like Master Supplements, Microbiome Labs, Pure Encapsulations, Garden of Life, Designs for Health, or others. Consider starting with a basic blend of Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus, which works for a large number of people. The example of these types of combinations would be Trubifido Pro or Ortho Biotic. Adding *S. Boulardii* can be beneficial since it has yeast replacing probiotic properties. Spore Probiotics may have a more therapeutic effect. A great start with spores would be MegaSpore probiotic formula. Some chronic gut patients have great benefits from soil-based probiotics like MultiProbiotic.

Healing gut microbiome is such an imperative way to heal hormones and start the healing process for your entire system. Healing your gut will improve not just your hormones, but your immunity, skin, and brain.

Chapter 6: Possible Root Causes of Hormone Problems and How to Address Them

Although true causes of certain conditions are not yet uncovered, and many reasons for that include bio individuality and genetics. There are conditions known to have certain direct causes. For example, one proven direct cause for lung cancer is smoking. There are many studies, long-term studies, and placebo-controlled trials that prove smoking is one of them. It gets a bit more complicated, however, when we talk about root causes for hormone imbalance.

Women don't really pay as much attention to themselves as they should, naturally. Whether it's a good thing or not, the excuses we often hear include examples like, "I'm supposed to take care of my family," or, "I must give all my time and energy to my children and there's no time for me," or, "I must devote myself to my husband's work because it's so much more important." We never put ourselves as a number one priority in our lives, which is something we should learn in school. In order to succeed in every way, putting ourselves as a number one priority – especially a number one priority for our health – should be learned when we're young, if we haven't already learned it from our parents. In my case, I didn't learn that from my mother, but some of you know the importance of making yourself important to yourself. So, complaining about things and researching the root causes usually come at the point where you already have a problem, and that problem is a long-standing one. Something is hitting you on the head so hard, now, that there's no way not to see it. And, when something starts to bother you very much, you may finally wake up and say, "I'd love to resolve this. What the heck could have caused it?"

You know what? I'm right there with you. I, for example, didn't even think that my PMS, bloating, or moodiness were problems caused by my other, more serious, health problems, right?

What issues would be related to hormone imbalance? We can name a bunch of the problems associated with imbalanced hormones. Especially in the case of PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome) for example, one of them is blood sugar instability. If there's a long-standing case of blood sugar imbalance, when someone is already at the point called "pre-diabetic," there could be such issues as imbalanced gut microbiome, food cravings, sugar cravings, increased thirst, blurred vision and extreme fatigue.

I've seen so many cases in my practice where PCOS was improving or reversing after stabilizing blood sugar. It makes complete sense to expect the improvement if you went after the root cause of it. The problem is that many women do not realize they have blood sugar issues. But, once they get off caffeine and lots of starchy carbs and sugars, many things start to improve, even fertility. Many people don't realize that they have blood sugar instability (dysglycemia). Classically, if they are having the jitters in the middle of the day after drinking coffee, crashing in the middle of the day after drinking caffeinated or sugary beverages or don't eat for a few hours — they may have blood sugar instability. Are you having lots of carbohydrates for breakfast, causing you to feel sleepy? You may be having blood sugar instability. Doesn't everyone? This truly needs individual investigation and needs to be addressed right away. The longer you put off balancing your blood sugar, the more health problems will develop.

Blood Sugar Instability Questionnaire

Do any of the following apply to you?

Yes No

Family history of diabetes, hypoglycemia, or alcoholism

Calmer after meals

Frequent thirst

Night sweats (not menopausal)

Crave salt foods

Dark circles under eyes or eyes sensitive to bright light

More awake at night

Food cravings

Headaches

Irritability

Mood swings

Easily fatigued

Anxiety

Difficulty sleeping

Mental sluggishness

Eat when nervous

Excessive appetite for carbohydrates or sweets

Hungry between meals

Irritable before meals

“Shaky” if hungry

Lightheaded if skip meals

Low energy in afternoon

Afternoon headaches

Crave sweets or coffee in afternoon

If you marked 5 or more, chances are you'd need to investigate your blood sugar spikes.

A simple and excellent way to address those blood sugar spikes would be a good blood sugar balancing diet. That would include perfectly balanced meals, including protein, large numbers of healthy veggies, good quality fat and a small amount of starchy carbs, if any. Your protein portion should be lean and healthful. It could be a vegetarian or vegan kind of protein, or it could be meat. It depends where you are on your journey. I'm still not one hundred percent convinced that this is the only way to go, but if you are the type that only prefers vegan protein, then that's fine.

If you have three meals a day like that, no snacking, and you follow that type of diet for a while without small meals in between, your blood sugar levels will be more stable. But that's the first way to address a situation with blood sugar instability. If the problem is now further where you are pre-diabetic, then there are more things that can be done with nutraceuticals or with pharmaceuticals, whichever way you prefer for your healing.

Do not try new supplements without discussing them with your physician or healthcare practitioner first. Here's a **basic and general nutraceutical protocol for blood sugar support**:

- Glycemic Select by Moss Nutrition starting one capsule, once daily, and increasing to three times daily. Or GlucoAdopt by Douglas Labs can be used.
- Cinnamon: One teaspoonful, once daily, sprinkled on foods
- Berberine 500 mg: Twice daily for up to three months. Contraindicated in medicated diabetics, pregnancy, breast-feeding, low blood pressure, and certain medications

Other root causes for hormone imbalance could be coming from **adrenal fatigue**, which I discussed in a previous chapter where we test for DHEA and cortisol levels. If your cortisol has been super low, and if your DHEA is affected, your estrogen and progesterone will be affected.

Fixing adrenal health will, as a result, help with hormone balancing. Another root cause for having hormone imbalance includes toxicity. In the case of the gut, issues such as constipation can lead to toxicity. Also, toxicity could be a problem associated with environmental toxins. If there are a lot of pesticides in your food, if there's mold in your house, if your home cleaning products contain a lot of chemicals and you haven't been able to have a good detoxification of your liver (which may not be performing great), these toxic stressors could be partial reasons for hormone imbalance.

Other root causes of hormone imbalance could include taking medications, as some medications are directly responsible for having issues with blood sugar, or having issues with hormones, including sex hormones. Taking birth control pills, for example, that are synthetic will keep your cycle steady and regular, but if you stop taking them, you could make your hormones go out of whack for a while until they get balanced.

Other root causes for having hormone issues could include over-exercising. I've seen plenty of women athletes that have overdone it with exercise and drove their cortisol levels to be really low, causing them to not have their periods for a very long time. That could bring on a major problem which takes a while to heal and recover from.

The possible root causes for hormone imbalance can be the same for many other health problems as well — and that being gut-related underlying causes. For example, a parasitic or other gut-related infection can be a possible root cause of hormone imbalance and it could also be a possible root cause of psoriasis for the same person. So, if the root cause never went away, it could be causing more inflammatory problems and issues that will create other related illnesses, or other health ailments. So, one root cause can be responsible for a variety of health problems.

Other root causes can be found by testing, such as with an OAT (organic acid test). It's helpful in some cases. It's a must for those with any toxicity-related and depletion-related health ailments, and it's great to do both (GI and OAT investigations), because sometimes both could give you a broader view as to what is going on. For example, from OAT testing, it's possible to see that candida is the root cause of severe fatigue, rash and hormone imbalance.

Many women have been on hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which can deplete folic acid, vitamins B12, B6, and magnesium. These nutrients are essential for heart health, as well as

for mood support. Before starting an antidepressant prescription, most of these women should be tested and given appropriate supplements to restore nutritional balance. In my practice, I have seen many women do excellent when the vitamins and micronutrients were repleted. The same concept applies to younger women on oral contraceptives as well. The longer they use them, the more depletion they show. Test and replete! The most important recommended nutrients include: methyl folate, 800 mcg daily; vitamin C, 500 to 1000 mg daily; zinc, 25 to 50 mg daily; calcium, 1000 to 1200 mg daily; magnesium, 500-600 mg daily; vitamin B6, 50 mg daily; and methyl vitamin B12 (Methylcobalamin), 500 to 1000 mcg daily. And, if you are getting most of these from your food, you are a superstar!

Neurotransmitter testing is important, especially for those who already have mood symptoms, depression, and other things. The root cause here can be taking medication without supplementing essential nutrients. The example here could be SSRI medicine like Prozac or Paxil, for example. Those medications can deplete common nutrients like magnesium, melatonin, serotonin, vitamin B6, and vitamin B12. Neurotransmitter testing, as well as micronutrient testing, looks for many of these issues.

Other functional diagnostics can uncover metal toxicity from urine or hair. Someone can be sick with metal toxicity and nothing else will get better until this root cause is taken care of.

SIBO (Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth) testing is tricky, but sometimes necessary for root cause investigation. SIBO is complex to fix. But there are more and more options now. Food sensitivity testing for root cause investigation can be important, especially if permeable gut has been ruled out.

Most common hormone imbalance presents with at least one of the following:

1. High cortisol (when you are in overdrive and can't stop it)
2. Low cortisol (the system can no longer crank up the numbers for you, but you need that cortisol)
3. Low progesterone and progesterone resistance (optimally your blood levels should be 15 to 25 ng/ml on days 18-21 of your cycle)
4. Too much estrogen or estrogen dominance (the ratio between estrogen and progesterone is off)

5. Low thyroid (cold intolerance, thinning hair, etc., testing thyroid is imperative)
6. Too much androgens (acne, hair growth in unwanted places, etc.)
7. Low estrogen (hot flushes, mood swings, etc.)

Genetics (more possible root causes associated with your hormone imbalance):

- COMP (Catechol-O-methyltransferase). COMP is an enzyme that helps the brain process catecholamines. Women with methylation genetic variance have problems detoxing estrogen and may need nutraceutical support.
- SL-C6A4 (serotonin-transporter gene). Almost half of Caucasians have a genetic variant in the way our serotonin is taken up by the brain, and that can result in depression associated with stress. Women with one or two copies of SL-C6A4 are more prone to being affected by stress physically.

Lack of exercise, as well as over-exercising are both possible root causes for hormone imbalance. Exercising helps natural hormone boosting. Hormones affected by exercising include estrogen, cortisol, testosterone, human growth hormones, and irisin (a hormone released by muscle during exercise). Irisin is being studied for possible osteoporosis prevention and other neurodegenerative diseases. Did you know fat cells can make more estrogen? And for those women who already have estrogen dominance (high estrogen relative to low progesterone), that can create a bigger problem. Scientists have found that extra-fat cells can lead to low-grade chronic inflammation and increase the risk of breast cancer.

When asked about Dr. Kalish's recent studies, he shared with us a six-month pilot study with the Mayo Clinic, where they looked at twenty-five women in very stressful positions, work and family related. These women had adrenal and gut problems, and after six months of intervention, their adrenal hormone levels improved. Eight out of nine cases of H. pylori were resolved. They felt much better physically, too. Emotional and spiritual disconnection played a big role and the cases that didn't improve were under an enormous amount of stress, like death of a loved one or divorce, for example.

When asked about the root causes of chronic hormone and digestive problems, Dr. Kalish shared, *"If we're operating under the premise that it's the emotional and spiritual disconnection*

that starts everything, then what happens first is typically the adrenal hormones go out of balance. The brain gets not so great. As part of that whole stress response, the body starts to chew up or use up or damage the intestinal tract lining, and there's a bunch of reasons why that happens. One is because cortisol, the main stress hormone, is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the immune system in the gut. As you get more stressed, your immune system and your digestive tract weakens."

When Dr. Kalish was asked how women can benefit from natural hormone balancing, he said, *"We see the interest coming from teenagers all the way up through menopause, whether it's in the younger women, usually it's PCOS, PMS, cramping, bloating, difficult periods, or women later in their life with depression at a certain time of the month, those kinds of things. Women get into their twenties and thirties and it's more about fertility. What else is happening? Skin-related problems, like cosmetic things. They're not looking as young and youthful as they used to because the hormones are out of balance. In the forties and fifties, it's usually hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, depression, osteoporosis, those kinds of things. You have this whole gamut of female hormone symptoms from teenage years all the way through menopause. Honestly, it's one of the easiest things to correct using functional medicine. It's a no-brainer. Conventional medicine doesn't have any great solutions anymore. The solution from the '60s and '70s was to use these high-dose prescription hormones that are synthetics, and they don't work very well and they're dangerous. It doesn't seem like a great option. The natural progesterone, this plant-based, low dosages of natural estrogen for short periods of time, all those solutions are immediate. Most women get relief in a month or two. If you're dealing with the digestion and the stress component, then most women can get off the sex hormone treatments. They don't have to take them forever and we're just restoring normal function, normal physiology. It really is one of the easiest things in functional medicine to treat. I don't want to downplay the symptoms because they can be severe. If we get the digestion working well, adrenal hormone stabilized, and then give small amounts of things like the bio-identical or natural progesterone, most of these problems disappear within three or four months."*

I love digging, researching, and reading about the newest information on root causes of gut and digestive problems. We are so advanced in many areas of medicine and we are getting so

advanced in functional diagnostics. Figuring out the root cause and taking care of it may not just help your gut and hormones, but help you live longer and have a much better quality of life.

Chapter 7: Learn How Anti-Inflammatory Living Can Be an Easy Task

It may sound simple to live an anti-inflammatory lifestyle with an anti-inflammatory diet. Just simply remove the “inflammatory,” right? Well, it took me close to a decade to completely clean up my life, my home, my diet, my supplements, my products, my clothing and so much more. Anti-inflammatory living includes removing all types of inflammatory things in your life: inflammatory emotions, inflammatory toxins, inflammatory foods and inflammatory thoughts. Starting out, ideally, you should begin with the physical things, and then progress in stages where you’re ready to completely remove even inflammatory thoughts and emotions. It’s sometimes easier to do the physical changes first, but if you are the type of person who’s ready for major action, you could address all of these at the same time.

In my practice, I’ve seen many many clients achieve better results when they decided to take small baby steps in this process and not give up. Those that tried to do it all at once, felt overwhelmed and decided they would just drop everything. They felt like it didn’t work for them. So, you could choose to go ahead and do all of these at the same time, but my warning to you is that it’s best to do this process one step at a time, without overwhelming yourself — because, in this case, slow and steady wins the race.

My family and I started easing into an anti-inflammatory lifestyle by cleaning up our home. Clean water is very important. My first project was to install a great quality water filtration system. Then, we proceeded to clean up our home by putting in air filters, which cleaned the air of molds and other toxins that would otherwise get into our rooms. This is extremely helpful, especially, if you have kids that have asthma or croup. The next step was to go through the products we use like toothpaste, cleaners, soaps and shampoos. We researched all these things and their ingredients, using different sources, and learned how to pick the best and cleanest type of ingredients that worked. This was not an overnight process. We had to go through each product that used to work, but had terrible ingredients, like deodorants, for example. It took a long time to find a product that was working well for us. Sometimes one

product worked for one person, but didn't work for another, so you will have to investigate different products and maybe ask other people on their experiences.

I make some recommendations to my clients in person and on my website. Generally, with cleaning products, the rule of thumb is the fewer the ingredients, the cleaner it is. The longer the list, the more chances of it being contaminated with terrible toxins. There's an excellent website called EWG.org, Environmental Working Group, where you can also get some information. Environmental Working Group puts out a Dirty Dozen and Clean 15 list. That's a list of foods for a particular year that are not recommended to be used; Dirty Dozen has the most amount of pesticides and Clean 15 has the least amount of pesticides per certain amount of weight. It's also a good resource for other environment-related information.

The next step, ideally, in cleaning up your home and making your entire lifestyle anti-inflammatory would be to go through your entire food pantry. Make sure none of your products are laced with chemicals or preservatives like EDTA. EDTA (Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid) is added to some foods and products as a preservative. EDTA can be irritating to the stomach, cause skin problems, low blood pressure and more. Too much of it can cause dangerously low calcium levels, kidney damage and death. You want to make sure that none of the products in your pantry have artificial colors, some of which are now even associated with cancer. You want to make sure that you don't have any processed meats, which are likely to be carcinogenic foods. The World Health Organization has classified processed meats – including bacon, franks, ham, and salami – as a Group 1 carcinogen, which means that there is strong evidence that processed meats cause cancer. Pork and red meats, such as beef and lamb have been classified as a “probable” cause of cancer. You want to make sure you have clean and clear products, transparent ingredients. Try to use all organic foods as much as you can to decrease the amount of toxic exposure to a minimum. For more on that, you can watch my YouTube video interviews and get more information on EWG.org.

Once the inside of your home is clean, you can work on the outside of your home. You probably won't have much control of what goes on outside of your home, but you can try. For example, if you live in a house and have a lawn, try not to use chemical pesticides in your grass to further decrease chances of chemical toxicity. Natural lawn products are available.

“Now,” is always a good time to work on your mindset, which includes getting rid of toxic emotions and toxic thoughts. You could learn to de-flame those. You want to exchange your negative thoughts for positive ones. An example is going from a thought like, “I don’t feel well. I am feeling sick and I cannot be helped,” to a thought pattern of, “I know that I’m going to be feeling well. I know that I’m going to recover from this, and I know that I am going to feel great.”

Addressing Inflammation with Functional Medicine.

How can you decrease inflammation with the help of functional medicine?

First, we investigate adrenal health as an imperative ground for de-flaming. The neuroendocrine system is a complex internal mechanism of neurons, glands, neurochemicals, and non-endocrine tissues to regulate physiology and behaviors.

Next, we look at gut health, and then we look at detoxification. These three pillars are the key to healing. With adrenal support, the very important key is to address inflammation because cortisol rules the house of inflammation. When balancing adrenals, it’s very important to balance sleep and balance blood sugar. We really want to keep blood sugar stable because it will affect the cortisol. Cortisol will affect the sugar. One will affect the other, so we really want to keep those balanced. Getting rid of the fatigue with adrenal support may or may not be easy, and as a side benefit of balancing all this, you could see the improvement in balancing sex hormones, without even having to go for natural hormone supplementation. Sometimes it’s still necessary to balance hormones for some people. It took that long to get sick, so it sometimes needs to take that long to get well. It cannot be an overnight success.

Functional nutrition is a big part of anti-inflammatory living. That’s the staple. There is no doubt that you must understand how important the right nutrition is for anyone. But everyone defines a healthy diet differently. And, you will still find some practitioners in gastroenterology that say food is not important, but there are less and less of them now.

When I asked Kiran Krishnan about diet, he suggested that, *“A plant-based diet is a very important part of the diet. That’s not to say that you must be vegetarian. Eating meat is fine, but the diet should be based on plant-based nutrients. Meaning eighty, ninety percent of your nutrition should come from plant-based foods. Then ten, fifteen, twenty percent from meat and*

other things. If you look at how our ancestors ate and our evolving microbiome, they were mostly gatherers and foragers and they hunted on occasion. Even though the word hunter-gatherer has the word hunter before it, they, as it turns out, hunted way less than they gathered and foraged for food. So, they dug in the ground for roots and herbs. They plucked fruits and things off trees because that was energetically the easiest way to get food, right? Every time they got food, if they had to hunt, they would put themselves in danger. It takes a lot more energy to stalk an animal and set traps and try to kill it and so on. So, they hunted occasionally, and they gathered and foraged mostly. When they gathered and foraged, what they ate was a huge diversity of macronutrients, right? Because they didn't have grocery stores where they could buy the same thing every week, they had to eat seasonally, they had to eat what they found, they had to eat small amounts of a lot of different things. That's how we should be dieting, that's how our food should be. We should be eating small amounts of a lot of different things.

To give you a comparison – and anthropological studies have confirmed this – our ancestors consumed upward of six hundred different types of foods on an annual basis. An average westerner who eats well consumes maybe twenty to twenty-five different types of foods. Big difference. And that's a huge devastation to the diversity within our microbiome. We see studies where if you eat a predominantly high-fat diet, it really sequesters your microbiome and ruins the diversity of the microbiome. The same thing – if you eat just certain plants every day, you're eating the same kale salad and avocado, you're not going to get the diversity that you need in your diet. So what I always recommend to people is go to an ethnic grocery store, don't just shop at Whole Foods every time. Go to an oriental market. Go to a Middle-Eastern grocery store. Go somewhere different because they'll have roots, herbs and vegetables there that you won't find at your regular grocery store and you just have to eat a little bit of it a few different times. So, my whole focus is I don't do any kind of diet. I just try to be as diverse in what I eat as possible.”

What I'm recommending to my clients is a mixture of science-based, clinical-report-based, as well as simply experience-based anti-inflammatory diet or healing diet. Start with whole food nutrition, like basic vegetables, good fat with protein meals, or protein with veggies and good fat, with a little bit of starchy carbohydrate on the side (that's if you can

handle starchy foods). If you tolerate rice or other grains and have no major digestive problems, chances are grains can stay a part of your diet. Just make sure they will take up to 15 percent of your plate. It's important not to combine rice with meat if the goal is to decrease severe inflammation, because it's hard for the body to break down these hard-to-digest foods. Green juices are considered healthy, but most of them are not really recommended to those with blood sugar instability. That would include green drinks and sweet green smoothies, but the better choice would be to add protein and healthy fat into the smoothie.

In order to decrease inflammation, you need to drink lots and lots of water to flush out the toxins. Of course, it's inevitable, right? If you don't flush enough, it all stays in your system and toxins get reabsorbed back into your blood stream. Make sure that your water contains good minerals, not chemicals; a good filter is important. Fruits and berries are a great part of healthy functional nutrition. You want to concentrate more on berries versus sugary fruits because they have less sugar content and lower glycemic indices.

Trying an elimination diet may be a great idea. Elimination diets aren't for everyone. Many don't stick to them and as a result they don't serve a purpose. This diet is essentially about eliminating major food allergens like gluten, soy, corn, dairy, nuts, and eggs. And after around four weeks, you can start placing back one food at a time. In my practice, I make recommendations to avoid certain foods right away and most of the time it's gluten and dairy.

Anti-inflammatory living includes stress reduction methods. Use it and follow the stress reduction method of your choice as if it is a prescription from the best doctor. You should be able to incorporate one of these methods for sure because when your system is in chronic stress, you can make a difference by decreasing emotional stress.

If you learn to practice a suitable stress reduction technique, things often start to improve, whether you choose hypnotherapy, EFT, meditation, deep breathing or psychotherapy, it needs to be something you believe in; and trust the process. I've seen clients do well with stress reduction techniques.

You also want to keep others from putting unnecessary stress onto you. Sometimes you'll have to put yourself first. Learning to say, "No," is very very important. Imagine you are excited about a new job, put too much on your plate to keep it, overwork yourself, eventually get sick,

and can't even keep the job. Now what? If you put yourself last, how could you expect to heal? How can you expect to heal if you're not even important to yourself?

What else is very anti-inflammatory? *Great sleep.* Sleep is huge. Sleep is so important for chronic digestive patients. Keep your sleep hours at least from ten p.m. to four a.m., and if it's after four a.m., that's okay, too, because ten p.m. to four a.m. is the best time for liver detox. Just think about your liver for a minute; what happens if you go to sleep normally at one a.m.? That's already half of that liver detox skipped, so today it's skipped, and the next day it's skipped. All those toxins are going to stay in the body, accumulate, and eventually back up on you. Your body is now flooded with a bunch of toxins that the liver cannot keep up with filtering out.

Let's remember that sleep is like taking a liver support supplement, so start sleeping, and start going to bed early. Digestive systems and immune systems need to reset and recharge and that can be accomplished with the help of an anti-inflammatory diet, positive mindset and energy, restful sleep and good connections and communications. It's also imperative that you are eliminating at least daily. Chronic constipation needs to be addressed like a major health condition since it can be the root cause of chronic inflammation, or chronic inflammation can become a cause for chronic constipation. So, the root cause needs to be investigated here for both. Professional advice may be necessary for figuring this out. Yet, you can start by adding fermented foods daily, do castor oil packs and take a nightly dose of magnesium citrate supplement for digestive detox.

Intermittent fasting is making a big come-back for weight loss and hormone balancing. It's okay to try it if you don't have major blood sugar instability issues, but if you do, you may want to probably hold off on that until your adrenals are functioning at their optimal level.

Kiran Krishnan shared this about the importance of resting your digestive system and fasting: *"One of the things that we do that's detrimental to the microbiome is not giving it a rest. Fasting becomes extremely important. What you find is that fasting increases the diversity of the microbiome because there's certain important species of bacteria in your gut that do better in a fasted state than in a fed state. And, our ancestors went through fasted states every single day."*

What else works as an anti-inflammatory plan? Some studies support that chronically inflamed patients improve when started on a semi-vegetarian diet.

Moving is not easy when you are fatigued and not feeling well, but it might be one of the biggest positive changes to do when healing. Moving is helping your body detox better, but it's also a mindset changer. Suddenly you feel like you can. You can move, then you can move more, then you can heal, and eventually you believe that you are on your way to your health goal. Moving supports a natural lymphatic cleanse. You could try a ten-minute walk around your home.

Let's mention what foods to avoid. Besides the list of major allergens like gluten, dairy, etc. you want to avoid nonorganic soy, GMO corn, mercury-filled fish, like some farmed raised fish, and conventional poultry that are full of antibiotics. What else? You guessed it: sugar. Sugar will feed more candida; you will have worsening of your gut microbiome situation, and will have worsening of candida, which will require either an herbal or traditional method to resolve it. Packaged foods are often laced with chemicals or other preservatives that are inflammatory. Avoid those.

What do you add for the anti-inflammatory activity? The top of that list should include all kinds of cruciferous vegetables. They're very detoxifying, liver supporting, and have plenty of fiber and great nutrition. If you are having trouble digesting these veggies, consider starting with a very small amount and increase as you begin to tolerate them better. Cruciferous veggies include broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, arugula, asparagus, and others.

Wild caught fish is important to add for anti-inflammatory effects of omega-3s. Bone broth and collagen are super great for leaky gut and they can be very anti-inflammatory.

Let's investigate this case study: A forty-six-year-old female with chronic gut problems came to me with fatigue, irregular cycle, weight gain, indigestion, constipation, sleep problems, anxiety, and depressed mood. Functional diagnostics were recommended. We went through initial nutritional changes, lifestyle changes, and digestive support, all of which made a huge difference in her life. She was already at twenty-five percent improvement in the first five to six weeks, just from initial nutritional changes and the lifestyle changes. Her lab results showed a lot of issues with adrenals, GI markers, and toxicity markers. Once these issues were addressed, she was up to seventy-five to eighty percent improvement on most of her symptoms by month four. By month six she resolved all her symptoms.

Choosing supplements can get complex, so understand that not all supplements are safe to choose. It's also very important to do good research on your brands of supplements, like where they get their ingredients and if they do testing on their products. It's really important to avoid additives and extra ingredients. Avoid the cheaper synthetic brands because you really do get what you pay for. Also pay particular attention on how certain brands market their supplements. The label can say something that may have one meaning to you, but the effect it has in your body is not what you would expect. For example, enriched foods, enriched vitamins, enriched with iron or organic phosphates could deplete the liver's ability to detoxify. Also, iron enriched foods can decrease the natural production of thyroxine, an iodine concentration in the system. The synthetic or "enriched" with something doesn't mean it's great.

The synthetic forms of vitamin D are not the same as vitamin D that you're going to get from a professional and reputable nutraceutical company. If it's synthetic, it's not going to bring you the result. It could even be harmful. If you're using glandulars, check where they are coming from. They could be coming from an animal that's been exposed to hormones or antibiotics, and that will come along with the glandulars you're taking.

Synthetic nutraceutical supplements can be xenoestrogens, and that can make your hormones go crazy. Men and women don't want to add xenoestrogens because an excess of estrogen can be toxic. Ascorbic acid is not vitamin C. Lots of people take vitamin C. Ascorbic acid is synthetic and when it's consumed with iron-enriched foods, then it can cause oxidation of the ascorbic acid, making it become dihydroascorbic acid, which is a free radical, and it could be harmful to the brain. When you're choosing supplements for yourself, make sure you are choosing researched brands, supplements that are not enriched or synthetically produced. Professional brands is what you want to go with.

When you're traveling or on the go it's not easy to have your ideal meal. Some foods can cause inflammation, so it's important to be prepared at any given moment. If you're traveling, for example, pack some digestive enzymes with you. They help you digest foods you don't normally eat or simply help in digesting proteins or hidden ingredients like gluten or dairy, that you may not think are there. Apple cider vinegar is great for digestive health and milk thistle has been used for liver support for decades.

Other anti-inflammatory hacks include:

#1 Keep sugar out of your house

#2 Keep only anti-inflammatory oils at home

#3 Swap your chemical house cleaning products for safe, natural ones

#4 Don't let your family members wear outside shoes at home

#5 Eat a small, healthy meal before going out to parties that may have unhealthy foods

#6 Make sure to get three daily servings of healthful oil like avocado or extra virgin olive oil

#7 Sing, even if you are bad at it

Another interview that I conducted just for the purposes of this book, and on the topic of anti-inflammatory living, was with a Feng Shui specialist who can help make more harmony at home, and therefore will bring more balancing for the gut and hormones. Patricia Lohan is a Feng Shui consultant. The reason I asked her to share her knowledge here is because people that seek hormone and digestive balancing really need energy balancing in their homes. Women by nature are the ones creating good energy at home and therefore creating the right energy at home can influence hormone balancing.

Patricia Lohan shared with us that, *“Feng Shui essentially, when you translate it into English, means ‘good health, good wealth, and good harvest.’”*

She likes to describe Feng Shui as acupuncture for your home. It's a way of fixing the energy of anything that is stuck, not working and literally blocking the flow of positive good things into your life. It helps with good energy flow.

Patricia suggested a few simple things, like making sure your door handles are working, which is your grip on life, a grip on your finances. So many things in your home are symbolic of what's going on in your life. If there are lots of things that are broken, depleted, cracked, not working, ratty, or old, that's really going to be mirroring back into your life, into your health, and into your wellbeing.

Patricia finds Feng Shui and functional medicine to be quite similar in a way that you don't just look at one thing. We look at everything. It's the big picture. It's your health, it's your wellbeing, it's your career, it's your finances, it's your family, it's your community, it's your creativity and it's your spiritual life.

Balancing everything around yourself can be of tremendous benefit for healing hormones and digestion. I often investigate Feng Shui ways of keeping my kitchen with good balanced energy because it's where I cook and where I feed my family.

Blocking the Lymphatic Flow

There's a lot of controversy about blocking the lymphatic system by wearing strong anti-perspirants and wearing underwire bras. There's not much science-based evidence. And possibly not a lot of studies are available, for whatever reason, because no one is looking to make a good quality large study that uses placebo, like no underwire bra vs. wire bras, for example. And anti-perspirants using Aluminum have been associated with toxicity. Aluminum can be associated with estrogenic activity and therefore can potentiate tumor growth in pre-disposed women. Yet, you won't find warnings about using underwire bras and using anti-perspirants in big name breast cancer guidelines or websites. The only thing to do here is to use common sense. Blocking lymphatic flow is going to stagnate the detoxification system and therefore it would interfere with appropriate detoxification of anything from bacteria, virus, mold, bacterial debris, toxins and more. When you block what is supposed to flow out, you will keep it there and cause bioaccumulation. Bioaccumulation is the gradual accumulation of substances, such as pesticides, or other chemicals in an organism. Bioaccumulation occurs when an organism absorbs a substance at a rate faster than that at which the substance is lost by excretion.

Chapter 8: How to Make Your Gut Microbiome Friendly and Have Your Symptoms Go Away

Fixing your hormones require a step-by-step process, but my entire point in this book is that without fixing the gut, it's very very hard to expect to balance hormones well. Understanding how to keep a well-balanced gut microbiome is an extremely important piece of the healing puzzle. It will teach you and your family to expect a better quality of life and improve longevity. You could expect more out of life just by healing and having a friendly microbiome.

One of the first steps when healing your gut microbiome is to follow an anti-inflammatory diet, and that's non-negotiable. It's an extremely important way of feeding your good bugs and not feeding your bad ones. You probably know that consuming a lot of sugar in your diet, especially with processed sugars or even fructose, will feed candida. That is something you don't want to have overgrown in your gut because having candida overgrowth is associated with major health issues. Candida can possibly provoke tumor growth and other major problems in the body.

Feeding your flora with sugar can also feed other pathogenic bacteria, so understand that getting sugar out of your diet is crucial. Remove the inflammatory foods like gluten, dairy, processed foods and inflammatory oils like canola oil. For some, the effects of staying on an anti-inflammatory diet are very quick. For some, it takes longer. What makes it faster? Your dedication, your will, how long you've had the problem and your genes.

If a client is eating a traditional, standard American diet, having cereal with milk for breakfast, hamburgers for lunch, and a microwaveable TV dinner for their supper, you can't expect the changes to happen as quickly as for someone who's menu consists of organic or fresh whole foods. Yes, the results will be very different. So, introducing an anti-inflammatory diet would be very important. The following are foods that you want to have on a daily basis.

Include cruciferous vegetables – about four portions of those a day. They are detoxifying. They are a natural source of fiber.

There are some excellent ways to keep your body in great pH balance. Having healthy oils in your diet, like extra virgin olive oil to add to your salads is a great way of maintaining a healthy diet.

Suggested Anti-Inflammatory Foods:

- Sweet Potatoes
- Wild Pacific Salmon
- Red Pepper
- Garlic
- Blueberries
- Turmeric
- Broccoli
- Ginger
- Chia Seeds
- Broth
- Avocado
- Naturally Decaffeinated Green Tea
- Berries
- Beans
- Healthy Oils

Using extra virgin coconut oil is also an anti-inflammatory way of heating up or cooking your foods. You also want to add other anti-inflammatory foods such as fermented or cultured foods, which can include raw sauerkraut or organic fermented natto. And, if you're ready for more fermented foods, try my favorite, fermented carrots and ginger. Fermented and cultured foods are excellent sources of natural probiotics for your gut. For best absorption and best way of feeding your microbiome is through naturally fermented probiotic foods. It will be accepted by the body in a natural way. Of course, taking supplemental probiotics is important when you're completely depleted. The way to know if you're depleted is by symptoms like diarrhea, constipation, fatigue, bloating, gas pains and others. You need to get good flora replenishment.

Probiotics are effective in improving the microbiota of the gut. Currently, gut microbiota is considerably studied and is believed to affect many functions of the body, including neutralizing toxins, communicating and re-training the immune system, balancing the microflora of the gut, preventing the growth of pathogenic organisms and producing vitamins including vitamin K, biotin and also short-chain fatty acids. Choosing a probiotic that's appropriate for you is important, and that's why the need for good functional stool testing arises. Many doctors recommend a probiotic called VSL#3, probably because it's one of the most studied ones. Yet, a lot of patients complain that they do not tolerate it well, especially in the beginning. The other choices of probiotics, if you are not ready for testing, include spore probiotics, soil-based probiotics and human strain probiotics. Some brands of these probiotics include Microbiome Labs, Garden of Life, and Genestra. (for disclosure, I am not affiliated with any of the supplement companies, and am not paid by any supplement companies).

When discussing probiotics with Kiran Krishnan, he had so much to say. He shared that, *“Most commercial probiotics that you can go buy in the store aren't really doing much of anything in the body. Most of them are just dying going through the stomach acid, right? It started with something as simple as this. I would go into the store and I would ask the people that work at the store, ‘What are your best probiotics, what do you recommend?’ And they would always point me to the stuff in the refrigerator. They would say, ‘These are the highest quality, they're kept refrigerated,’ and I'd say, ‘Well, why are they in the refrigerator?’ And they'd say, ‘Well, because what you need is live culture.’ Right? So, in order to maintain the live culture, you must keep it refrigerated. So, I said, ‘So if it sits on the shelf at seventy degrees here in the room, it would die?’ And they said, ‘Yeah, that's why we keep it refrigerated.’ ‘Well, then it's 98.6 degrees in the body and there's a pH of one in the stomach. The acidity in the stomach is so strong you can burn off the tips of your fingers if you actually are able to touch your stomach acid, so how is it going to survive that if it can't sit in this comfortable seventy-degree weather in room temperature?’ And they never had an answer for me. So, we just started taking products off the shelf and testing them through gastric systems and seeing that they're not surviving, they're just a bunch of dead bacteria going through.”*

“So, then we got into well what is a real probiotic, then? What kind of bacteria can naturally survive the gastric process and then when they get into the gut, can start making real functional changes within the microbiome? And that’s how we landed on these bacillus endospores. If you gave me five billion dollars and the hundred best scientists, I could never engineer bacteria that can do this. So, what they’ve done is, these bacteria, when they exist in the outside environment, they put this armor-like coating around themselves. It’s a protein calcified coating, that allows them to exist in the outside world, impervious to things like UV radiation, and being dried out and so on. Then when you swallow them, they survive through the gastric system because of this coating, but then when they get into your gut, into your small intestine, they’ll break out of the coating and become a live, functioning, probiotic cell for you in the gut.”

“One of the things that’s most fascinating about what they do is they act as the gut police. So, they look at the environment, the fancy term for that is quorum sensing, so they read the microbial environment, they find overgrown or pathogenic or bad bacteria, they’ll go sit next to them in the microbiome and they’ll produce up to twenty-five different antibiotics inside the gut to kill off those bad bacteria. At the same time, they produce a bunch of prebiotics to feed the good bacteria. When you add these five strains into your system, and we’re talking about just four billion a day, so a very small dose relative to most of the probiotics in the market they can make almost a thirty trillion organism shift in the microbiome. That’s how powerful they are. They increase the overall diversity of all the bacteria in the gut, they suppress pathogenic and bad bacteria, and they increase the growth of numerous good bacteria like Faecium bacteria, akkermansia, bifidobacteria, so they’re really acting like the gut police, gut modulators.”

That’s why Megaspores probiotics by Microbiome Labs are often favored over others by functional medicine practitioners. There’s still plenty of room for other probiotics on the market. I often recommend Master Supplements and Garden of Life Professional Line for individually selected probiotic support.”

Some other suggestions from Kiran Krishnan about microbiome include recommending being careful *“with personal care products, like your body washes and your soaps and shampoos. Try to get as natural and as clean of products as you can. Your deodorant shouldn’t have aluminum in it, you know, so if you can use the clean personal care products that are free*

of antimicrobials, you don't want any sort of personal care products that show on the bottle that it kills 99.9 percent of bacteria or it says antimicrobial on there. You don't need any of that stuff. We don't want to be killing bacteria all the time because it goes back to what we spoke about originally when we first started, everything about us is controlled by this ecology that lives in and on our body. Every time we damage that ecology, we start the process of disease. So, we need to leave that ecology alone a little bit.

“People need to get out in nature a little bit more, get in the dirt a little bit more, get a little bit dirty, you know? Stop using the hand sanitizers constantly, that causes a lot of issues. One of the best things you can do for your household is to get a dog. There are studies on this, that show that dogs, which are inside/outside animals, they'll go out and they'll pick up a bunch of good bacteria from sniffing around the ground and rolling around and stuff, and they'll bring it into your home, and they'll inoculate your home with these important bacteria. Households with dogs have people with fewer incidence rates of flus and colds and allergies and asthma and so on. And there's so many dogs that need adoption out there.”

When we talk about healthy gut microbiota, it's important to understand that toxicity can affect it, just as nutrition. I was interviewing Dr. Aly Cohen, who is a rheumatologist, integrative medicine, and environmental health specialist. She suggests buying organic food when it's available. When it's seasonal it's not too costly for your household. If you can buy fresh, that's wonderful, but even fresh frozen produce that is organic is now quite pervasive. It's in big box stores and you can find it in the frozen section where they have a small section of organic frozen food and graded frozen vegetables. That brings the cost down dramatically.

I've been reviewing many, many articles on how toxicity can be affecting our health, how there are over eighty thousand new chemicals, how they only test five hundred of them, and how the newborns are born with over two hundred chemicals in the umbilical cord. All of this information is alarming. Since we can't do that much about our environment, the least we can do is to make sure that we decrease our exposure as much as possible. If you are perfectly capable to change your plastic water bottles to stainless steel, do that. If you can switch your fluoride toothpaste to a non-fluoride one, do that. If you can switch dangerous cleaning products at home to natural ones, go ahead and protect your family. If you can go ahead and place a good water

filter at home, do that. If you can replace your chemically infused personal products with products that do not have SLS, preservatives or parabens, please do that. Following these suggestions will decrease your toxic load and make it so much easier for your detoxification system to concentrate on other things to detox.

Do not try new supplements without discussing them with your physician or healthcare practitioner first. Here's a **basic and general nutraceutical protocol for gut microbiome support**:

- L-glutamine powder: Up to five grams, three times daily (I prefer Ortho Molecular Products, Design for Health and Pure Encapsulations), which can be used as a combination product with NAC, N-Acetyl-D-Glucosamine and Lactoferrin
- Digestive Enzymes: One capsule, three times daily before meals
- Milk Thistle: Two capsules, twice daily
- Liposomal Glutathione: 100 mg, once daily or NAC, up to 1500 mg, once daily
- Biocidin: One capsule, two times daily for one to three months
- Probiotics (Megaspores or MultiProbiotics): Once to twice daily, three hours apart from other supplements

Chapter 9: How Alkalinity within the System Can Make a Big Difference for Your Health and How to Achieve It

If you learn how to generally stay well and away from health ailments, you will learn that one of the ways to do that is to stay alkaline. The body is always trying to maintain equilibrium at a pH of 7.365, which is slightly alkaline. And that's where you would like to stay. That can get tricky because some parts of us want to be very acidic, like hydrochloric acid in our upper stomach for best digestion, yet some parts of us we would like to be more alkaline. The general rule of thumb is that a healthy body remains healthy in an alkaline state. That's why I bring my interview with Dr. Jeffrey Moss to your attention.

Dr. Moss is a great health and wellness educator, a scientist and founder of a supplement company Moss Nutrition. He began writing many nutrition reports based on cutting edge issues in the practice of nutritional medicine. He still has a small practice where he assists chronically ill patients in addressing quality of life. He's a Certified Nutritional Specialist of the American Clinical Board of Nutrition.

When asked about the quality of nutritional supplements, Dr. Moss said, *"Quality, every company will say they believe and emphasize quality control. But what exactly is quality control? Well, very often it's a balance between optimal efficacy, optimal purity and cost considerations. And it is a balance, no question about it that every company, every manufacturer really must find out what they can do and what they can afford, and what will allow them to sleep at night knowing they've done the right thing."*

When Dr. Moss was asked about testing, he said: *"Certainly, you need to start out by looking at your diet. And there's plenty of information out there where you can see which foods are more alkaline and which are more acidic. Now, with that said, we have to say something, acid is not a four-letter word. It's not a dirty word. You're supposed to have acid-based foods in your diet, it's a matter of balance. So that's what I would emphasize, it doesn't mean you avoid acid and all animal-based foods, and just eat plant-based foods. That's not what I'm saying here. The literature agrees, you want balance. So that's number one, so look at your basic diet, that's certainly the main issue."*

When Dr. Moss was asked to make recommendations about good protein intake, he said, *“There is an epidemic of protein deficiency. And as you get to older individuals, it gets even worse. Why is that? It’s because they need more and more protein.”* Being deficient in protein is considered one of the main reasons that people feel lousy, no matter what the situation. As an adjunct to good quality allopathic medical treatment, it can really help you feel better, and improve your ability to respond to the treatment, and improve mortality and length of life. But the thing that people don’t realize is how much low protein affects the muscle. We tend to think *“Well, you lose muscle.”* Yes, you do, people don’t often appreciate what losing muscle means. It’s not just your arms and your legs or your skeletal muscle. You breathe because of intercostal muscles, your lung muscles. You have trouble breathing effectively, and this can lead to pooling of fluids, and infections in the lung. Also, we tend to forget that there are certain muscles that we don’t talk about in polite conversation. Muscles that control urine or muscles that control bowel function are lost. And so, when people are losing muscle, it’s not just the arms and the legs. We’re talking about some issues, the very basics of self-respect. The things that we take for granted, people lose that. So, there’s a tremendous amount that we can do by helping build muscle with proper protein intake. And of course, optimal exercise.”

I think the ideas and suggestions made here are invaluable for anyone with a chronic condition. And generally staying alkaline can benefit your health. Loading up on greens, warm water with lemon and occasional use of baking soda (aluminum free) can benefit you. Relaxation techniques, as well as exercise, will be beneficial for you and will get you to an alkaline state.

Here’s a breakfast recipe for alkalizing your body and balancing your hormones:

Ingredients:

1 cup unsweetened hemp, almond or coconut milk

4 tbsp. of organic chia seeds

1 tbsp. unsweetened shredded coconut flakes (unsulfured)

½ tsp. organic vanilla

1/2 tsp. organic cinnamon

¼ cup raw chopped walnuts or seeds of your choice

Directions:

Prepare the night before: Combine the liquid unsweetened hemp milk with chia seeds in a glass jar, add vanilla, cinnamon and mix very well with a wooden spoon. Cover with lid and sprinkle with nuts. Refrigerate overnight. The next morning, top it with your favorite berries or more nuts and it's ready to go.

Lunch Burrito Bowl

Ingredients:

1 cup organic quinoa

Two 15-oz cans of adzuki beans (look for BPA free lining on the can or cook it yourself)

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 heaping tsp. cumin

2 avocados, in cubes

4 green onions (scallions), sliced

2 limes, fresh juiced

Small handful of cilantro, chopped

Directions:

Cook quinoa (15 minutes total, 5 on high, 5 on medium, and 5 on low). Can warm the beans on low. Stir in garlic, onions, lime juice and cumin and let flavors combine for 10-15 minutes. Top with cilantro, beans and avocado when cooked.

Here's a smoothie recipe for alkalizing your body and balancing your hormones

Ingredients:

2 cups fresh organic spinach or organic kale

2 cups unsweetened hemp milk

1 cup frozen wild blueberries

1/4 frozen banana (can skip banana if diabetic)

½ avocado

1/2 tbsp. MCT oil

½ tsp. organic cinnamon

2 tbsp. raw almond butter

Directions:

Combine all the ingredients and blend.

Chapter 10: Hormones in Harmony: Hormone Fixes with Nutrition and Supplements

When the thyroid, adrenals, and sex hormones are all in-tune, the result is our hormones are in harmony. And, if you also unleash your women's intuition, you can have your hormones singing your song. What happens if you lose that balance and stop trusting your intuition? It's possible to reset it.

Let's talk about nutritional and dietary changes that will help you balance hormones in the big picture. Since we have no reasonable belief to dispute that inflammation is at the root of most chronic problems, including hormones and digestion, anything anti-inflammatory would start the reverse process. A good, healing, individual based anti-inflammatory diet is the first, fundamental step in making a really big difference for gut and hormones, especially since we know about the effect of cortisol and DHEA on sex hormones. Starting here, at this point, is a no-brainer. Supplementing with DHEA can be very beneficial, but not recommended to women with high androgens, like high testosterone with common symptoms of acne.

I want to discuss what foods can cause inflammation and what foods heal inflammation. How do you want to restock your pantry as to not be tempted, and how to prepare a healing meal plan with planning ahead?

Learning how to balance macronutrients on the plate can become life changing, especially for those who have been eating a traditional American diet for the past few decades, including things like cereal for breakfast, more carbohydrates for lunch and low-fat dinners. With the healing diet I use in my program, the results are not just anti-inflammatory, but are also blood sugar balancing, which in return support adrenal glands and therefore will be anti-inflammatory,

This healing diet consists of three meals a day. Ideally, no snacking is needed when your blood sugar is balanced. But if you cannot yet eat without snacking in the beginning, it's okay. If your snacks have protein, good fat, along with carbohydrates, that's okay too.

I like to teach my clients how to balance their plate and not just give them a meal plan because when you give a meal plan to people, you are not teaching; they will depend on a meal

plan and when they don't have one, they feel lost. Many programs provide clients with meal plans. Once they're done with the program, they still haven't learned how to properly prepare each plate that will balance their blood sugar, provide proper nutritional value and have that anti-inflammatory effect we are looking for.

Rotating meals is very important in order to avoid food intolerances, as well as keeping the rainbow on your plate (variety of foods) to grab as many vitamins as possible from each meal. Rotating ideally should follow at least a four-day schedule. For example, if you are eating eggs with spinach for breakfast, you want to make your next three days a different protein, different veggies kind of breakfast. And for the rainbow plate, the example could be over easy organic egg, broccoli, fermented carrot and ginger and a side of purple sweet potato topped with MCT oil. How beautiful and nutritious is that?

What are we taking out?

Let's quickly go over which foods will cause inflammation and it's no surprise that sugar is on top of that list. You want to get rid of sugar in any kind of way, shape, or form. We can write an entire book on how processed sugar is negatively impacting health.

The second thing that you want to get out of your fridge is anything cow dairy related. Cow's dairy is an inflammatory food. Conventional milk can have bovine growth hormone that is like human growth hormone; it will bind to growth hormone receptors in the body and it will increase the levels of IGF-1, which can increase further inflammation. Try to slow down and then eventually get off dairy if you're healing your hormones. Many of my clients have trouble in the beginning and miss their dairy. I recommend trying healthy dairy-free alternatives like Kite Hill almond cheese or Tree Line cashew cheese.

Caffeine should be out. The reason to get caffeine out of your daily routine is to improve your natural adrenal output and to decrease the acidic effects from caffeine. Drinking coffee can affect hormone health directly since it can shut down the production of natural anti-inflammatory cortisol. Stopping caffeine can be hard and physically painful since it's an addicting chemical. There are many things that you can do when trying to stop caffeine, like drinking herbal teas and trying licorice root in the morning (if you don't have blood pressure problems or other health issues that are contraindicated with taking licorice root). It's best to consult a functional

medicine practitioner for the dosing of licorice root and do the lab testing first. In the meantime, follow the instructions on the bottle.

Next one on the list to take out is tricky, and that is chocolate. Any kind of chocolate contains sugar or other sweeteners, so it can get very addicting. Without denying the positive components in chocolate, like bioflavonoids, magnesium and iron, there are plenty of negative effects of eating chocolate, including blocking absorption of vitamins and minerals, potentially causing kidney stones, gut irritation, joint pain, cystitis, and others because of high amounts of oxalates. Raw cocoa may have metals like nickel or cadmium. Phytic acid found in chocolate in the form of phytate cannot be digested by humans. Genetics will also play a role in how well you will do with chocolate by targeting your caffeine metabolism. If you already have arthritic symptoms, you could have a problem with chocolate and with its sugar content. Even if you consume a high cocoa percentage of chocolate, such as seventy percent or eighty-five percent, which has less sugar, you may still have gut irritability or difficulty absorbing nutrients with it. Once your hormones are back in harmony, you should be able to occasionally enjoy organic dark chocolate.

Avoid or limit alcohol. Alcohol can raise cortisol, interfere with sleep and cause rhythmical problems. It is very unfavorable to those with blood sugar instability. Alcohol can also interfere with fat burning.

Next on the list are sweet fruits that are high in fructose. Those will include bananas, pineapples, mango, and papaya; theoretically these are fruits and they are good for you. They're very high in sugar content and when you're trying to heal inflammation, these are the foods you want to avoid.

Next on the list would be gluten-containing foods, anything containing barley, rye, oat, wheat and spelt. There are ways to know if you're truly gluten intolerant and the best way to test it is through blood. There are good labs for precise testing, including Cyrex Labs. Some clients try elimination diets and realize how gluten intolerant they are without any expensive testing.

And, the next food on my list to get rid of can be surprising to many. Although there's a lot of controversy, I do discuss oatmeal as a food that can potentially create more inflammation than have a good effect. For years and decades, we were told that oatmeal was this great source

of fiber and that it would balance and heal the stomach. It feels soothing. It's one of those comfort foods, but some of the new studies will have the opposite information. Oatmeal can potentially lower levels of sex hormone binding globulins, and that may mean there would be more testosterone available in the body. And, when you are trying to cool down inflammation, oatmeal, in my signature program, is out of the question. One of the reasons why oatmeal is problematic in chronically inflamed patients is because many of them have blood sugar instability, and the high carbohydrate amount in oatmeal can cause that crash effect. There is also strong evidence that it's probably impossible to find gluten-free oats. Gluten is used to describe the prolamin protein fraction affecting celiac patients or those with gluten allergy. The gluten fraction is called hordein in barley, secalin in rye, gliadin in wheat, and avenin in oats, which is a gluten protein. Also, there's cross contamination mixing of oats with wheat particles. New Zealand, for example, doesn't even allow labeling any oats as "gluten free" just for the same reason. Although, again, you still find a lot of practitioners saying how great oatmeal is.

Sugar/fructose containing juices are the next things to get out of your pantry. Sugar is sugar. And sugar equals inflammation. No excuses that the fruit has vitamins or nutrients. Most juices, sold, are pasteurized and contain an unacceptable high amount of sugar.

One of the most asked questions about hormone balancing foods I get is about soy. Soy is an estrogenic food and has modest effects on estrogen levels. Women that have a hormone imbalance will most likely have a problem with estrogen to begin with, so ideally you want to avoid this food, especially if it's GMO soy. The exceptions to this rule would include the occasional use of organic non-GMO tempeh, organic miso, and organic fermented natto. And, if you are concerned about estrogen dominant breast cancer history in your family or other things associated with soy, you can simply avoid it altogether to have peace of mind.

What are we including in our anti-inflammatory diet?

One of the most important things that you want to include in your diet is cruciferous vegetables. Cruciferous vegetables are broccoli, cauliflower, kale, cabbage, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, collard greens, mustard greens, radishes, turnips and watercress. These vegetables contain glucosinolates; those compounds help with detoxification. They contain a phytonutrient called DIM, Diindolylmethane, which helps detoxify harmful excess estrogen and active

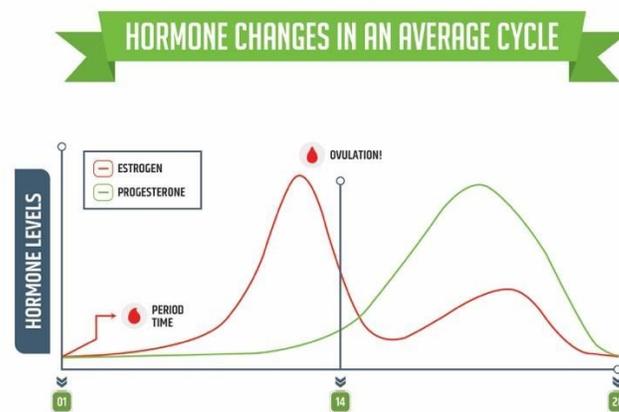
androgen blockers. Since there's controversy of using cruciferous vegetables in thyroid conditions such as Hashimoto's, and if you choose to eat these veggies since they are superfoods, just consider quickly steaming them to keep the most nutrients intact. The best way to cook cruciferous foods for your chronic inflammation is to chop them first and then let them sit for 20-30 minutes. It's best not to use very high temperatures when cooking, to avoid destroying the beneficial effects.

Bone broth and collagen should become a staple if you are trying to heal. They contain glycine, proline, and glutamine. All these amino acids are great for gut healing and microbiome balance. Bone broth can be effective for inflammatory conditions and leaky gut syndrome (or permeable gut). Collagen in the bone broth may be helpful for skin, joints, and hormone balancing. I highly recommend including bone broth in your anti-inflammatory diet. It helps treat leaky gut syndrome. It helps with food intolerance and allergies that improve joint health. It will boost the immune system. We call bone broth stock (when prepared properly) nature's multivitamins because it's fully packed with amino acids (easy to absorb essential amino acids), which are the building blocks of protein. It also contains gelatin, which helps form cartilage or connective tissue and provides nutrients that support digestive functions, immunity and brain health.

The next ones on my list are sweet potato and purple sweet potato. Sweet potato is a great antioxidant food. It has a lot of vitamin A, great fiber to prevent constipation, some vitamin B6, vitamin C, potassium and manganese.

Seeds, seeds, seeds — the big topic for hormone balancing. Raw seeds are amazing simply because they combine protein, good fat, omega-3 oils and fiber all in one. Nature's perfect food. The example of good seeds would include raw pumpkin seeds, raw sunflower seeds, raw chia seeds, raw hemp seeds and raw flaxseeds. All of them are great sources of omega-3 acid. The way they decrease inflammation in the body is through a fibrous binding effect and increasing levels of SHBG (sex hormone binding globulin). This also improves estrogen/progesterone balance because excess testosterone is converted to estrogen if it is not bound to SHBG.

There are cyclical augmentation protocols for those who are cycling, including plant-based hormone supplementations. There are also seed cycling recommendations where you have seeds during a certain time of the month. For seed cycling recommendations, you want to support estrogen for the first part of the cycle and progesterone for the second.



Day 1-14

Using seeds that support estrogen health, which include flax and pumpkin seed (one tablespoonful daily at the same time of the day).

And on Day 14-28

Using seeds that support progesterone health, like raw sunflower seeds and sesame seeds (one tablespoonful daily at the same time of the day).

Raw nuts are great sources of nutrition, including walnuts and almonds. They contain omega-3 nutrients, vitamin E, L-arginine, and melatonin, which is helpful for relaxation and sleep.

Red foods such as wild Pacific salmon or red bell peppers, are very anti-inflammatory foods, great sources of vitamin C and a great source of collagen. Wild Pacific salmon is a great natural source of vitamin D and omega-3. It also contains the carotenoids, antioxidants and astaxanthin that converts to retinol (vitamin A), which is helpful for inflammation.

Avocado is an excellent source of vitamin E and has natural anti-inflammatory properties. It helps stabilize blood sugar, reduces food cravings, and has a high fiber content, which is always helpful for people who have constipation issues.

Alkalizing lime and lemon are great to use with anti-inflammatory diet. If you start your day drinking warm water with lemon, you will start a good detoxification process. Lemon is an amazing source of vitamin C, great for digestion, blood purification and immune system support.

Fermented, pickled and cultured foods. They are the powerhouse of a balanced microbiome. Raw sauerkraut will support gut microbiome and improve the immune system function. If you are not a big fan of sauerkraut or cabbage, at least you could try some fermented carrots with ginger. If you are using fermented foods, hopefully daily, and they're not bothering you, you are feeding your good gut bacteria and strengthening your immune system. Raw sauerkraut is a real fermented cabbage. It contains probiotics and is very good for microbiome. Eating fermented foods on a regular basis helps to balance gut microbiome, decrease the amount of candida, reduce inflammation, and help people with food allergies and those who are prone to constipation.

Berries are a very important part of an anti-inflammatory diet. Those include blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries. They are full of antioxidants, fibers and vitamins. They are also very good for blood sugar stability, especially blueberries.

Dandelion greens are amazing greens that have soluble fiber, vitamin A, natural vitamin D, vitamin C, B6, calcium and zeaxanthin. Greens are very alkalizing and purifying foods.

Lentils are the next ones on my list of anti-inflammatory foods. Since there's strong evidence that it's important to have plant-based (no animal protein) days, lentils can be a great substitute for meat on those days. Lentils are not just a great source of protein, but also fiber, magnesium, natural folate and lentils are great for stabilizing blood sugar.

Garlic and onions are generally healthy foods and great for gut microbiome. Garlic is a natural antibiotic, natural immune system supporting agent, great for liver health and amazing during cold and flu season.

Omega-3s. There are going to be times where you are eating out and having packaged foods; most of these foods will not have ideal oils. In fact, most of the time, these oils will be

inflammatory canola oil or corn oil. Great sources of omega-3 include fish oils, flax seeds, salmon oil, pure cod liver oil (I particularly like the brand of Carlson), chia seeds and extra virgin olive oil, but not canola or corn oil. If you are eating quality, mercury-free wild caught fish, like salmon, young tuna bellies, sardines, mackerel, or herring, those are really good sources of omega-3 that are anti-inflammatory. Fish and seeds are also great protein sources, so making those your staples is important.

The foods that have omega-6 include sunflower oil, corn oil, canola, margarine, and soybean oil, and you want to avoid those or at least minimize their consumption tremendously. If you do that, you will stay in the three to one ratio between omega-3 to omega-6 and you will stay in anti-inflammatory state. The moment you shift the ratio to more omega-6s, you will then enter a pre-inflammatory state (the state where you will be feeling your inflammation). For example, three tablespoonfuls of combination between fish oil and seeds with one tablespoon of unfavorable canola will still offset the negative effects, generally speaking, but if you consumed processed foods, microwaved foods, or doughnuts in the morning, you are now at around twenty-five grams of unfavorable omega-6 oils along with trans-fat, which will place you directly into pro-inflammatory state. And by the way, even if that doughnut was gluten free it wouldn't help this situation. Once you start shifting away from that ratio to more omega-6, you move into pro inflammatory state where you will open the door to increase inflammation.

Vitamin D is not really a vitamin; it's a hormone. It's the hormone which affects the sex hormones. Vitamin D deficiency is associated with many chronic conditions and most importantly for the purposes of this book, vitamin D deficiency is associated with low estrogen in women, which means low sex drive. And in men, low vitamin D can decrease testosterone. Imbalanced levels in both estrogen and testosterone have a big effect on the mood, causing anxiety, depressed moods and irritability. Vitamin D has a direct effect on mood without sex hormone involvement. That effect involves the release of dopamine and serotonin – the happy neurotransmitters. Testing your vitamin D level is important because that will give you your precise recommended dosage. General OTC recommendations vary between 400-800 IU daily, but unfortunately most people require a lot more for the optimal vitamin D level that ranges between 50 and 80 ng/ml.

Balancing your plate for hormone balance. Three quarters of your plate (fifty to seventy-five percent), ideally, should be low glycemic, non-starchy fruits or vegetables. By fruits, I mean berries here. A quarter of your plate should have a healthy, lean protein, and up to 15 percent on that plate (if any) you could add starchy, non-gluten grains or vegetables (which can be sweet potato, gluten-free pasta, millet, quinoa, or small amount of rice if you are not avoiding grains). The rest of your plate should be healthy fats, such as olive oil, nuts, raw nuts and avocados. That's how your macronutrients should be broken down.

General rules still apply: Avoid high glycemic foods, such as candy, cookies, juices, white potatoes, fries, chips, sugars, white rice food, fruit juice, white bread, bagels, and even gluten free bagels will be high-glycemic if you are having too much. Sweet snacks are all high-glycemic. Avoid those. You want to swap for low-glycemic snack like berries with raw nuts.

Having enough protein and oil in the morning will set your whole day right, without any cravings. For most people, it's still the most important meal of the day. If you are having blood sugar instability issues, a nutraceutical can be tried like Chromium or GlucoAdopt by Douglas Labs.

What Labs Are Important to Periodically Monitor for Women?

#1 CBC complete blood count, CMP complete metabolic panel that also investigates your LFTs (liver function tests)

#2 Lipid profile (HDL, LDL, total cholesterol, triglycerides, ratios)

#3 Fasting glucose, HgA1C, and insulin levels

#4 Full thyroid panel including: TSH, free T3, free T4, TPO antibodies, TG antibodies and reverse T3

#5 Full iron panel including ferritin, TIBC, iron, hemoglobin, transferrin

#6 Homocysteine

#7 Micronutrient panel including B6, B9, and B12

#8 Vitamin D levels D25 H

#9 Female sex hormone markers including FSH, LH, free testosterone, estradiol, prolactin (day 3-5 of your cycle)

Functional Diagnostics:

#1 Cortisol and DHEA saliva

#2 Progesterone saliva and blood (day 18-21 of your cycle) or full month of saliva testing for those seeking cyclical augmentation programs with natural hormone supplementation or those seeking better fertility

#3 Estrogen metabolites markers (dry urine)

#4 PC Stool testing for a comprehensive gut test for parasites, bacteria, commensal flora, markers for inflammation, SigIgA, Zonulin (marker for leaky gut), and more.

#5 GGT (glutathione)

#6 Genetic variances in detoxification pathways, such as CYP1A2, COMT, and methylation pathways

#7 Check for heavy metal toxicity

If you have a thyroid condition: thyroid gland sonogram

If you have uterine or ovarian issues: lower abdominal sonogram

It's very important to get a base picture with all these tests and periodically check. These are especially helpful for women who become symptomatic later during menopausal time to see what has changed.

It's interesting to understand that prolactin is associated with ovulation; high levels of prolactin can suppress ovulation. So, prolactin is an important hormone to investigate when you are looking to improve your fertility. Women can still be cycling even when they no longer get bleeding.

Estrogen is the hormone that makes us feel sexier and gives us those gentle physical features while progesterone is that "feel-good" hormone.

How do you feel when your hormones are out of whack? The symptoms, for example, of estrogen excess can cause puffiness, bloating, rapid weight gain, breast tenderness, migraine headaches, insomnia, depression, anxiety, heavy bleeding and mood swings.

Also, when you want to balance estrogen in your system, you want to avoid plastics. Anything xenoestrogen related, even hormone injected chicken and poultry can affect your estrogen in the system. Eating a lot of cruciferous vegetables helps to detoxify excess estrogen. If you are not metabolizing excess estrogen well on your own, eating cruciferous vegetables is indispensable help. All recommendations made here are general. If you see a healthcare practitioner and do diagnostic testing, you can get even more accurate with your treatment. Generally, DIM is recommended for excess symptoms of estrogen at 200 milligrams a day.

As for progesterone, if you are feeling PMS symptoms, if you have infertility issues or miscarriages, cyclical headaches, anxiety, insomnia, or weight gains, these could indicate symptoms of low progesterone in the system. If you test the actual progesterone, day 18 to 22, the blood work usually shows low levels of progesterone with these type of symptoms.

Nutrients that naturally support progesterone and estrogen production in the body are zinc, magnesium, GLAs and CLAs, seed cycling, and others. If you are picking up a progesterone cream from a health food store, it may improve your symptoms in the beginning. But, often, later it can have distribution of sporadic progesterone levels, which can only complicate things.

Other supplements used for hormone problems include chaste tree, which is used with prolactin problems. If there are problems with DHT hormones, naturopathic solutions include green tea extract, spearmint tea and Reishi mushrooms.

In the meantime, when you're still fixing your gut, what can you do if your hormones are so out of whack? Like in my case with my PMS, with the moodiness, with the ups and downs of sad thoughts during this time, it's beneficial to consider natural supplementation with natural hormones. There are more great options available than what conventional medicine offers.

Also, essential oils are used for hormone balancing. The oils used are bergamot oil, helichrysum (everlasting oil), rose oil, frankincense oil, lavender oil, clary sage oil, thyme oil, ylang oil and evening primrose oil. Essential oil experts recommend making certain blends and

as always, I recommend using a blend that's more personalized; you can even pick and choose your favorite combination for a soothing effect.

Most common preps of essential oils I've seen include:

- A blend of clary sage, 30 drops,
- Ylang ylang, 30 drops,
- Thyme oil 30 drops.

...In one oz. or 30 ml of evening primrose oil.

Evening primrose oil can be substituted for almond oil, jojoba oil or your favorite base. Evening primrose oil has more beneficial effects here since it naturally has the anti-inflammatory effect of the GLA oil's component.

Use about five drops on your body daily. Most women and most oil experts prefer using the blend on the neck.

Supplements:

- **Vitamin C, B1, and B6** are great adrenal supporting vitamins and can improve cortisol levels.
- **L-theanine**, a component of green tea has stress reducing properties.
- **PS or phosphatidylserine** is a supplement to help reduce high levels of cortisol. It's especially effective when used at night to improve sleep.
- **L-lysine with L-arginine and L-tyrosine** are amino acids often used for stress relief due to adrenals stress.
- **Turmeric**, or curcumin, is known as one of the most anti-inflammatory ingredients and shows good results on paper. Many clients are doing very well with it. Some women with hormonal imbalance reported that turmeric worsened their symptoms and caused spotting in the middle of the cycle. If you are trying turmeric, consider an expert opinion.
- **Melatonin** is a hormone which can lower estrogen levels. It also helps with sleep. It's really important to test to check the need for melatonin.
- **Vitamin E** can be used with symptoms of low estrogen such as vaginal dryness, hot flashes, and mood swings. It takes time to see the beneficial effects.

- **Chromium** is a mineral often used with blood sugar instability and even diabetes. Women with PCOS often benefit from chromium supplementation.
- **Inositol** is a naturally occurring B-complex vitamin which can improve insulin sensitivity and therefore can also be useful in women with PCOS.
- **Selenium** is an important element to protect thyroid. And, if the hormone imbalance is due to thyroid radiation damage or autoimmunity of the thyroid, selenium may be very beneficial.
- **Iron** is a key for thyroid and hormone health. Lack of iron can present with severe fatigue, low sex drive and confusion. Supplement when needed after testing only. Overdosing on iron can be life-threatening.
- **Copper** is very important for thyroid support. But test to see the need.
- **Zinc.** Thyroid depends on Zinc when converting T4 to T3. Most people are depleted of zinc. Supplementation is often recommended.
- **Vitamin A** supplementation shows benefits for thyroid function. Many multi-vitamins and thyroid supporting supplements, as well as hair and nail vitamins, have a high amount of vitamin A. More than 10,000 IU per day of vitamin A is associated with serious toxicity, vision problems, and more.

There are supplementation recommendations (nutraceuticals) according to the age of the patient, symptoms, and testing results. If both progesterone and estrogen hormones are affected, you could take a combination of those hormones in the plant-based forms. A great example of such supplements would be products by a company called Bezwecken. I recommend their products like Progon B4LX or Phyto B4LX.

In my case, I went from having symptoms during PMS to have absolutely no pain, to having absolutely no moodiness, and to having a shorter cycle. I went from 33 days to 28 days, like clockwork, getting the period to be on day 28 without even a symptom warning. No pain there. No headache related to the PMS and no issues related to PMS, just from following the protocol that I just mentioned. First, neuroendocrine, gut healing, and then gentle and safe detoxification. I was already better by the second part of the three pillars. I was having no symptoms, and I was fortunate to find functional medicine at the right time for myself.

Basic Hormone Supporting Protocol for Women:

1. Zinc orotate or sulfate: One capsule, one to two times daily
2. Fiber supplement with prebiotics, ex PaleoFiber DFH
3. DIM 200 mcg, one to two times daily
4. Pregnenolone continued release caps: One capsule, one time daily
5. Vitamin D3 /with vitamin K: 2,000 IU, once daily
6. Hormone Supporting Blends for women perimenopausal or menopausal age containing chaste tree extract or black cohosh, as well as supporting calcium D-glucarate, calcium-magnesium, methyl folate, B6, methyl B12, green tee extract.

Please note, herbs like chaste tree extract can have potential side effects like water retention or others.

In my clinical practice, I found a lot of success recommending rhapontic rhubarb (*Rheum rhaponticum* L) particularly a product called Estrovera and it was tolerated extremely well. Speak to your health care practitioner to see if this is a product for you.

For women of pre-menopausal age, the following herbs are commonly used: Licorice root, motherwort root, burdock root and wild yam, as well as supporting calcium D-glucarate, Cal-mag, methyl folate, B6, methyl B12 and vitamin D3 with vitamin K. Wild yam is also commonly used by functional medicine practitioners after the testing is complete.

When choosing supplements you need to be armed with good resources to trust. Go to pubmed.gov for latest research studies and look for randomized, placebo-controlled trials for most accuracy. Look for third party validation like GMP (Good Manufacture's Practices). And I love looking into Consumer Labs Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database for safety information. When you are trying out new supplements, always add one new ingredient at a time, pay attention to your body's reaction, and then you can proceed to adding more.

Chapter 11: The Importance of Going through a Series of Functional Diagnostics to Truly Understand the Root Cause of Digestive and Hormone Imbalance

I have helped many clients balance their hormones, and it's been a decade since I started. I've seen tremendous change in the world of functional medicine and how much it has improved from when I started in 2009.

I've seen some doctors open to the idea of introducing these functional diagnostics into their practice. I've seen a lot of practitioners resist them tremendously. No matter where you go, no matter who you're seeing, if you truly want to get the best for yourself and for your physical body, you want to test. We have come so far with diagnostics that it simply doesn't make sense not to test. Without testing, you can't really understand the hormone picture very well and you can't know your hormonal output.

Sometimes symptoms look like you have a major progesterone output problem, or everything looks extremely estrogenic based on the symptoms, but when you do the testing, it doesn't look that way at all. It is important to test because the program could be so perfectly tailored to your needs.

The issue with functional diagnostic testing is the fact that not a lot of studies have been compiled to make it so widespread. Nevertheless, it's extremely effective to use them, based on what I have seen in the past ten years. Clinically, the cases that I resolved and other practitioners that I communicate with, have had such a great success rate using functional diagnostics.

Here are a couple of client cases that I want to present to make a point for testing.

A twenty-nine-year-old woman I worked with hadn't had her period since she was nineteen years old. She was diagnosed with PCOS. She wasn't recommended any diet changes. She wasn't recommended anything to fix her cycle. She wasn't even recommended to do anything about the weight gain she had. The doctors gave her the diagnosis, a few prescriptions, and told her that if she ever wants to get pregnant, to go straight to a fertility clinic. She was not considering having a child, at least at that time when she came to see me, but she was concerned

that she was kind of misunderstood. She said, “I don’t want to have something going on with me that’s causing me to have no period. It’s just simply not natural.”

She was seen by another practitioner while she was seeing me, and the other doctor told her that it was no problem. “We could put you on a birth control pill and you will get your cycle back.” She said, “Of course I’ll consider that, but give me about a month or two. I waited 10 years to regulate my period. What’s another month or two.”

She went through the functional diagnostic testing for adrenals hormones and her gut. There were so many issues with her gut microbiome, with parasite overload, bacteria overgrowth and candida. It took a little while to heal her gut. She started losing weight naturally from the anti-inflammatory diet, and she called me almost screaming. I wasn’t the first person she called though. The first phone call she made was to her grandma from the bathroom once she got her period. I thought it was such an amazing experience for both of us – for me, as her guide, and for her to get her period back naturally. It wasn’t an overnight success. It was after we addressed her adrenal fatigue, stress, diet, and gut-related issues that she got it back. She’s been cycling ever since, and she has lost so much weight. It’s just simply one of those cases you will never forget.

Case number two for stressing the importance of using functional diagnostics is the case for someone for whom it took longer to balance hormones. It took longer to clear the situation with all the gut-related issues. It was someone who was in the perimenopausal age, someone in her late forties who was skipping her period half the time, but still occasionally had her period. She started gaining weight and having food cravings. She really didn’t think that she could go into a graceful menopause, because she was already feeling occasional flashes, but the period was still there. She was really confused if she could be considered menopausal or perimenopausal.

When I discussed how she wants to feel, she said, “I don’t care if I have my period or not, as long as I don’t feel like I’m going crazy, as long as I don’t feel exhausted, as long as I don’t feel these cravings and mood swings, I don’t care if I have the period.” And I asked, “What is important to you truly? Try to think if it’s important for you to really have your period, or if you had a magic wand, would you want to erase it and not have a period at all?” She mentioned that

her mother suffered from terrible menopause symptoms when she went through it, and she had ten years of suffering. She said she was afraid that she was going to feel the same way.

Once she completed adrenal testing and gut health stool testing, she took the next test, which was the DUTCH test, for her to see estrogen metabolites. She had been very compliant with the anti-inflammatory diet. Her hormone levels reversed to physiological range, and that placed her back into having cycles every month despite being so irregular before. She felt like a young girl again, and she mentioned, “You know, now I know what I really want is to *feel* great like I do now, and not to have my period, which was pretty nice.” And I said, “You know, trust nature, trust your body, and trust your cycle! Your body is back with periods because your physiological levels of hormones are on the level of a young woman naturally. Your adrenal fatigue is gone. Your gut health has been improved so much.” Parasites and dysbiosis were taken care of. Her weight started to come off. She was feeling so much better physically, and I said, “You were meant to still have your period and enjoy this great physical health!”

I am a big believer of our innate ability to heal and our natural ability to heal hormones when everything else is balanced. If you’re still having your periods in your late forties and even in your late fifties, if you’re feeling great, if you’re feeling energetic, your metabolism is good, you have no issues with fatigue, hormone symptoms and toxicity issues — it’s a blessing.

When Dr. Kalish was asked to suggest the most important thing to do for gut and hormone balancing, he said, “*Really, you must do the lab testing. The self-treatments are obvious. You can just go to the bookstore and buy books about diet and stress management and stuff like that. If you’re not able to solve your problem with self-help, you need to find someone who’s experienced and knows how to interpret and order the labs and get the right labs. They’re generally solvable problems. It could take a year or two to fix, but if you don’t have the lab information, you really have no idea what’s going on. There’s so much variation in what could be wrong that you can’t really tell just by symptom analysis or looking at the person.*”

“If we say that the bigger reason why people get sick is because of emotional and spiritual disconnection, once you’ve gone through the labs and your hormones are regulated properly and you’ve got your digestion working right and basically you have this platform of physical health, then, you can look at the emotional and spiritual underpinnings and start to

figure out how to have healthier relationships and how to practice spirituality. I just read a research study yesterday. I couldn't believe this. It was on loneliness. Loneliness decreases your lifespan. Loneliness decreases your lifespan as much as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. In Buddhism, they call it Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha. You have the Buddha. You have the Dhamma, which is the path or the teachings. The Sangha is the sense of community. I think spiritual practice with a sense of community, that's how you prevent yourself from getting sick again. That's the preventive medicine of all time. It's not taking herbs or taking DHEA the rest of your life. It's figuring out how to get that emotional and spiritual connection back."

As a health professional, a true healer at heart, a constant learner and a scientist, I am constantly trying to figure out what is that one true magic pill that heals women's tummies and hormones. Since the time when I was a little girl who wanted to find the magic pill for my grandmother to stop suffering, I feel confident that today's technology in a way of functional diagnostics and other amazing diagnostics is that magic which can truly help women with hormone issues now.

Chapter 12: Adding Mindful Practices and the Next Steps

For the past century, we were following conventional medicine as the only way to heal. Medicine evolved into something truly amazing and I'm the biggest believer in the direction we are heading. There are huge advances with surgery, with genomics and with pharmacogenomics where we could customize treatments for cancer patients and so much more. We are doing very well in medicine, except addressing and preventing chronic conditions. There's not enough training in that. There are not enough preventative studies in literature. But, we are still growing and one day I believe that functional medicine will hopefully be so mainstream that everyone will be able to benefit from it.

What's wonderful is that we are kind of going back to nature with medical concepts. Some ancient, holistic, and alternative practices are more and more recognized. No one says acupuncture is quack anymore. No one is laughing when you mention a chiropractor who is helping so many people. There should be balance in everything. Going all in on holistic and avoiding giving your child a fever reducer when the temperature is 104° F may just be really overdoing it. Nothing is black and white. That's why many practitioners integrate their practices to give more options to their patients.

With all the advances in medicine, you still have to put yourself in the center of your own healing. It's your healing party, as I say, when you choose your practitioners — you choose your doctor, you choose your preventative doctor, you choose your natural health expert, you choose your yoga guru, you choose your hypnotherapist, or any other therapists that can help you balance mind and body.

I want to stress the importance of doing something to get into the healing mode. The mode where you realize that without setting your mind right, it's not possible to heal. The right mindset of changing the beliefs from a sick person to a healthy person.

You may say how can I re-focus and say that I'm feeling okay when I'm feeling the pain? How can I re-focus to something else when I have this pain right now?

So, what I'm trying to say is that there are tools that can take you from small minor changes to huge changes by shifting your mindset about everything, not just your health.

I've had clients who went through my program and they tremendously improved their health and changed their entire lifestyle. What I really recommend is to choose one of the things that you would like to change for your mindset. You could use a therapist that can help you in the beginning stages. You could use a psychotherapist that will give you tools and homework. You could do some hypnotherapy that will reset your subconscious. There are EFTs (emotional freedom techniques) or tapping. This type of resetting your mind is great for just a free tool to do at home when you don't need a professional. You could just practice by watching YouTube videos, which is great and free.

Every time you have a negative thought, an inflammatory thought, you want to switch it up and feel emotionally uplifted. I'm not suggesting here a certain process. I'm not a specialist or a licensed practitioner in any of these practices. If you're in really bad shape emotionally, you should consider the help of a psychologist or a psychotherapist or EFT practitioner, or a hypnotherapist. Those are really great professionals to see if you want to get help. There are lots of free resources available on YouTube channels that have great EFT practitioners who will show you how to do EFTs for negative thoughts, EFTs for healing, and EFTs for recovering from a chronic condition. I recommend starting there, and if you feel you need more help, consider a professional. I'm going to include an EFT practice that's helpful for me, that I have created, and I would love for you to try it out and see how you feel before and after. Again, this is something that I personally created for myself, and I am sharing it with you, but I am not a licensed practitioner of this modality. It's just something that helps me personally.

EFTs

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a wonderful, simple technique that involves tapping, near the points where meridians of energy are located. These points are located around the body, followed in a certain pattern. EFTs are used to ease up stress and headaches, anxiety, improve sleep, increase energy, reduce pain, improve self-esteem, improve mindfulness, and more. Tapping has been researched and published in peer-reviewed journals.

Example of an EFT recommended for hormonally imbalanced patients:

Karate Chop

Even though my hormones are up and down, I'm grateful for this because it's showing me a signal. I will let them know that I'm listening now, and I'm going to help my body rather than fight my body.

Even though my hormones are out whack, I send it soothing energy and love. I'm tapping to soothe this process and allow my body to heal.

Even though my moods are up and down right now, and I have flushes, I'm grateful for a strong body and I'm ready to heal my beautiful body.

Top of the Head: Sorry hormones.

Eyebrow: Those moods are not easy to handle.

Side of the Eye: We have many solutions now.

Under the Eye: I'm getting balanced as I am receiving gut and hormone healing.

Under the Nose: And love, positive communications, and understanding

Chin: Tapping is like soothing support.

Collarbone: For the hormones, tummy, and the soul.

Under the Arm: You don't have to do it all alone anymore.

Top of the Head: It was a lot to process.

Eyebrow: No wonder you didn't have a lot of energy to enjoy life.

Side of the Eye: I'm here with you now.

Under the Eye: We're clearing things as we tap.

Under the Nose: It's improving already.

Chin: And I'm so grateful to you.

Collarbone: I'm sure it's exhausting...

Under the Arm: But it's improving as we tap.

Top of the Head: I took a lot of emotions in.

Eyebrow: I wasn't sure how to deal with my emotions.

Side of the Eye: But I'm resolving it now.

Under the Eye: I'm going to improve.

Under the Nose: The tension is released.

Chin: I'm feeling better now.

Collarbone: I'll be thinking ahead about my emotions and reactions.

Under the Arm: So grateful for you, my hormones and my tummy.

Top of the Head: Thank you for being so nurturing.

There are other therapies you could try, and I think it's amazing that we are tapping into so many different things. There is past life regression therapy. There are therapists that just deal with your energy and bioenergy. All these things will work if you believe in it, but if you're going in with the mindset of it being completely not useful or even ridiculous, you should not go there. That's not for you. Eventually you might be open to it, but if you're completely not open to it, it might just not be for you yet. Then, a traditional therapist like a psychologist could be your option, which is always great. Trained clinical psychologists are going to be able to help you.

So, if you covered that part of supporting yourself with a positive mind, positive energy, a great outlook and a strong belief that you will be better and that you will recover, then you could feel and see yourself as a healthy person in a short period of time. I went through different therapists myself. I loved all of them. I am a curious person by nature, and I find positivity in most of these therapies. But I wasn't born in a family that practiced positive psychology at all. This involved years of learning and practicing my mindful exercises to get to where I am today.

In your journey to better health, I recommend going with a healthcare practitioner that's really experienced in this process, and I highly recommend someone that knows functional medicine well and has the expertise and training, and hopefully certifications. Doing it alone is hard and I know that well. Doing it right is important. Doing it in the right sequence can be life-changing. Investing in testing would make sense if you had someone you can work with later.

Healing gut microbiome might be the toughest part, but it might just be the most important in hormone healing. Healing a gut requires skill and expertise, and I think that's where the biggest obstacle might be. When you have a guide that will go with you, hold you by the hand, and deliver results, it gets that much easier. I wish there was someone like me when I was healing, that knew the process and got me better. The safest and most economical way is doing it with the right kind of guidance.

Dhru Purohit was interviewed by me for this book to stress the importance of community, friendships, and how to shift the “sick” mindset. Dhru Purohit is an author, CEO, serial entrepreneur, and the host of Broken Brain collaborative podcast with Dr. Hyman.

Dhru Purohit said, “We become the average of the five people that we spend the most time with.” Whether that’s exactly statistically true or not, we know that the people we’re closest to, especially our friends, have a direct impact on our health and especially our mental health.

So, I began to work toward surrounding myself with people who thought differently, who were encouraging, who didn’t rely on sarcasm. People who want to see the best in you, and you want to see the best in them, instead of the standard sort of small talk that was out there. So really, that’s how the journey started, and I realized then that who you surround yourself with and the mindset you have is even more important than what you eat. What you eat is very important, but how you think is even more important.

Don’t immediately expect anybody to just get why you’re doing anything in life. This isn’t just with your own health; this goes for your career choices, maybe who you want to marry. Maybe you want to marry one person, your parents want you to marry someone else, and it’s like you get to take them on a journey. Especially with health, your parents care about you, they want you to be healthy, but they just don’t understand. Sometimes they’re driven more by fear because they don’t have the education. So, take them on the journey, get educated, and explain the concepts to them. Have them listen to podcasts with you, have them watch videos with you. Have them watch things like Broken Brain with you.

Then I’m going to give you honest advice, the honest advice that is: if they still don’t agree, then ultimately, if you are above the age of eighteen, you are responsible for yourself legally. That might mean that you must go get a job and save up money so you can pursue your own path. Luckily the good thing is there are a lot of things you can do. Yes, you may not be able to get the full testing that the functional medicine practitioner wants to do with you, but you can make dietary changes and other stuff. And you can save up money and pay for yourself. It might take six months, it might take a year, but what’s the alternative? If you really feel that your parents aren’t supporting you, and this goes for any decision in life, then you must go out and do it on your own. That’s the truth.”

When asked about self-care and important priorities, Dhru said, *“If you’re fried, that’s going to affect your ability to make decisions. If you’re burned out, if you have adrenal fatigue, you are not going to be able to win in the marathon.”*

At the end of the day, the truth is that if whatever you’re doing is working for you, keep doing it. But then you must ask yourself an honest question: Is this really working for me? The human brain is not very good at understanding the ramifications of the long-term. That’s why one of the most powerful practices that I’ve done in my own life is something called a Tibetan death meditation, and it’s where you think about your death. You think about you on your deathbed, and you think, and you meditate on your death, and you would think about, ‘What regrets would I have if I died today? Or what regrets, even if I didn’t die today, if I die when I am eighty years old, but my life stayed the same as it is right now? If I didn’t invest in my health. If I didn’t have the energy to run after my kids and play with them?’

“Until you feel the pain, you’re not going to change.”

When Dhru was asked to make a suggestion to my tribe and people with chronic gut problems or hormone problems, he said, *“I think that in my experience of being involved with programs and businesses in the functional medicine space now for over ten years, and working with thousands of people and hearing thousands of stories through podcasts and things, even though I don’t work with people one on one and I’m not a practitioner, everybody’s journey is so unique. Even if you hear these great testimonials ... of practitioners who have changed their lives and you feel like, ‘It’s not happening for me yet,’ just know that I’ve heard every version of every story.*

“I’ve heard it was not working out for people and then it was working out later. I’ve heard from somebody, every year for ten years it got ten percent better. I’ve heard from somebody for 10 years it didn’t get better at all, and then one shift changed it. I’ve heard people who also just think super-transparent who are still working on getting better, and they’re working with some of the top functional medicine doctors, and they feel like it’s not as much of a physical thing, it’s more of a mental health thing that they must look at. And the belief systems that are there, and trauma that was there.

The one common thread that I've seen is whoever this person was, the people that don't get down on themselves for the fact that their journey is not a linear journey, that it's zigzagging and it takes time and everybody's unique, the people that have the most joy and most contentment, even if they are suffering a lot, are the ones that just have a sense of acceptance that this is the situation. 'Okay, there's a lesson. I don't know exactly maybe what the lesson is right now, or maybe I feel like I know part of that lesson, but most importantly I'm just surrendering to the fact that this is a lesson, and this is my reality, and most importantly, I just have to keep on going.'"

What would your next steps be? You can get busy and forget all about healing your hormones. Or you can say, "It's too complicated. I need an easier way." Or you can say, "I'll eventually get to do this, but not now."

Guess what? There will always be excuses — It's never a good time. There's never enough time. There are never enough resources for this.

The truth is, there is only now and healing your hormones is imperatively important.

Chapter 13: Conclusion

First, my wish for you, my dear reader, is to heal as soon as you possibly can. Reverse the symptoms you currently have and get that mood under control as soon as you possibly can. Go out with your family and play with your children. Have fun with your husband. Go out with your girlfriends for tea time and enjoy conversations without having the negative emotions just because your hormones are going crazy, up and down. Feel brand new, like you're a teen again.

I wish for you to heal your tummy and have all these hormone problems be a thing of the past. Great health is one of the most amazing things you can achieve for yourself. Just imagine what you can accomplish when you're so healthy and energetic.

You will be the person that can even help others. You will be the person with the knowledge to help your family benefit from the dietary changes; your children depend on healthy eating habits because our world is only getting more toxic. They will only benefit from all these things that you are changing for your hormonal health. You will be the person that is in balance and is feeling great and amazing. My wish is for you to be that person that is balanced in every way: mind, body and hormones.

To get to great health you want to think about the possible root causes of your health problem. That's the reason why we emphasize on doing functional diagnostic testing. When you complete them, you will have the most eye-opening health discovery. Make it a priority to add anti-inflammatory foods on your shopping list. Anti-inflammatory living is where a lot of changes will start happening, too. You can always start slow and at your comfort level. Investigating your gut microbiome health is crucial for balancing your gut and hormones, so get tested and eat all the gut-microbiota-loving prebiotic foods you can handle. And always remember to be mindful, to spend a few minutes on yourself and learn self-care as if it were your new prescription.

You want to be the one who's happy, healthy and enjoying life to the max. Right? Then, let's get to it.

Trusted Resources

For Environmental Questions visit EWG.org.

For this book Dr. Inna interviewed leading experts in the field of medicine, wellness and health. All the interview videos are available on the YouTube channel Real Health Solutions' YouTube channel.

This is their information.

Dr. Daniel Kalish

Dr. Kalish is a Chiropractor, a Pioneer Functional Medicine Doctor and an Amazing Clinician. He's dedicated to teaching doctors Functional Medicine Philosophy and Practices.

Dr. Kalish's information: <https://kalishinstitute.com/> and <http://kalishwellness.com/>.

Dr. Moss

Dr. Moss is a brilliant health and wellness educator, scientist, retired dentist, founder of a supplement company Moss Nutrition. He began writing *Moss Nutritional Report* based on cutting-edge issues in the practice of nutritional medicine. He still has a small practice where he assist chronically ill patients in addressing quality of life. Dr. Moss is also a Certified Nutrition Specialist and a Diplomat of the American Clinical Board of Nutrition.

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About the Author



Dr. Inna Lukyanovsky, is a Doctor of Pharmacy, an expert in gut and hormone health, and a Crohn's patient in full remission. Her career started as a traditional pharmacist and her mission later became to heal herself and help others with chronic gut and hormone problems.

Dr. Inna was a certified geriatric consultant pharmacist from 2002 until 2012. During that time, she worked in a nursing home setting as part of an interdisciplinary team. She consulted on thousands of chronic, autoimmune, and other complicated cases that mainly incorporated pharmaceutical medications. After a short period of time, Dr. Inna was able to advise and influence the use of vitamin, mineral, and micronutrient supplementation for the nursing home residents. She became an expert in clinical pharmacology and familiar with identifying drug-related problems.

In 2010, she became certified in functional medicine clinical training with Dr. Daniel Kalish. In December of 2017 she earned her PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy) degree from one of the top pharmacy schools in the U.S., University of Florida, graduating *cum laude*, to broaden her clinical knowledge and incorporate that into her functional medicine practice.

After fourteen years of researching Crohn's disease, colitis, and other digestive disorders, she is combining the newest clinical information along with her expertise and personal experience to launch a program to help digestive disease sufferers. While completing her PharmD degree she wrote her paper on the clinical effectiveness of probiotics in Crohn's and colitis. Dr. Inna is also working on root cause and analysis-based protocols for her clients.

Since opening her practice, Real Health Solutions, she has helped hundreds of clients with their IBDs, digestive problems, hormone imbalances, and other chronic conditions that could not have been resolved by traditional medicine alone. Dr. Inna successfully incorporates her extensive knowledge of functional medicine into every case that comes into her practice. She is the creator of the Digestive Reset program, which has helped numerous clients virtually and in person. She is truly passionate in helping people regain their health, vibrancy, and joy for life. She lives with her husband and three sons in Marlboro, New Jersey.



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Thank You!

Thank you for reading and thank you for your trust!

This is my second book and I am thrilled to be able to share the information that I wish was shared with me when I was sick. I wish for you to stay focused on your healing journey and trust the process!

Healing your hormones and your gut is so powerful for us women. We can get back to what we want to do and what we enjoy doing!

My website <https://digestivereset.com/> is a good source of information where you can find a link for my free webinar.