



How to balance your PCOS hormones naturally

A practical guide



Welcome

Getting to know your hormones

One of the most frustrating things about PCOS is the treatment that's recommended. You've probably either been told to either take the hormonal contraceptive or lose weight. Truth be told, neither of these are going to help you overcome the symptoms of PCOS. The pill simply masks hormonal imbalances and losing weight does not focus on correcting underlying hormonal imbalances.

And if you've done your own research, you've probably come across advice such as the recommendation to eliminate gluten, dairy, caffeine and who knows what else. I'm here to tell you that this is **not necessary**.

In fact, by making **small** changes to your diet and lifestyle you can overcome the symptoms of PCOS.

Managing your PCOS symptoms is not just about getting your confidence back, making yourself feel more feminine or no longer feeling dragged down by the chronic fatigue. These are obviously important and often the biggest motivators for making changes. But what's even more important is the things that we often don't see and feel, and this is the increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, atherosclerosis, and high blood pressure which are all associated with PCOS.

We may not be able to make your PCOS go away for good, but we can teach you to be so good at managing your symptoms that it will feel like you no longer have PCOS.

How do we do this?

The first step to re-balancing your hormones is to understand where your imbalances lie; this guide will help you identify some of the more common PCOS symptoms, what they may indicate and what lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your symptoms.

Remember that if you can, blood tests are another way to help you identify what PCOS imbalances you have. For more information on what blood tests to have for PCOS read our guide to blood tests for PCOS [here](#).



It's important to know that blood tests don't always pick up on hormonal imbalances – often, the reference ranges used are very wide and do not pick up minor imbalances which is why it's important to use your physical symptoms as a guide too.



How to use this guide

Use the symptom checklist on each page to tick off the symptoms that you are currently experiencing.

Match the hormones to the colours on the treatment list (pg 12) and start making the suggested lifestyle changes to balance your hormones.

Don't forget to check out pg 13 for your go-to shopping list of anti-inflammatory foods.

Best regards,

Jodie



**Freebie on
page 14!**

Cortisol

Stress signals the production of both cortisol and testosterone. This can increase oestrogen levels and increase blood glucose levels, which can further increase insulin levels. When cortisol levels are high other hormones become less effective. It also causes cells in the body to become less efficient in using oestrogen, progesterone and thyroid hormones. Elevated levels of cortisol may cause the below.

Tick the symptoms that apply to you.

	Yes	No
1. Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Irritability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Headaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Bloating / IBS type symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Depression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Low libido	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Carb cravings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cortisol is a hormone produced by our adrenal glands in response to a stressful situation. It prepares us for stress and shuts down many functions in the body that are not considered essential, to make more energy available to deal with the situation at hand (like running away). To help provide energy to deal with the stress it inhibits the actions of insulin, keeping more glucose in the blood stream, as opposed to encouraging it to move into the cells of the body. Increased cortisol levels over time result in increased blood glucose levels which can increase the risk of developing other health conditions such as diabetes.

If you ticked any of the boxes above, choose the GREEN treatment options on page 12.

Insulin

Insulin is made by cells in the pancreas. Its role is to assist glucose in moving from the blood into the cells of the body where it is needed for energy (think of insulin as a key, opening the cells and allowing glucose to enter).

If this doesn't happen the body is left feeling as if there is no glucose and signals for more energy (like hunger despite having just eaten). It also stimulates the production of more insulin which results in a build-up in the blood-stream.

These constantly elevated glucose levels can increase the risk for developing other health conditions such as diabetes. The increase in insulin also causes the ovaries to produce more testosterone. Increased insulin levels may look like the below.

Tick any symptoms that apply to you:

	Yes	No
1. Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Lack of energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Intense carb cravings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Feeling hungry immediately after eating a substantial meal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Increased thirst	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Frequent urination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you ticked any of the boxes above, choose the LILAC treatment options on page 12.

Luteinising Hormone (LH)

This hormone is produced by the pituitary gland and travels to the ovaries where it plays a role in the first part of the menstrual cycle. It is involved in the maturation of follicles in the ovaries. Halfway through the cycle a sharp rise in LH levels promotes the release of a mature egg.

In some women with PCOS the pituitary gland produces an excess of LH which causes an imbalance in the LH:FSH ratio impacting the release of a mature egg.

When there is no LH surge in the middle of the cycle, ovulation does not occur.

Symptoms:

- Anovulatory cycles

Treatment:

Lower insulin and testosterone levels through diet & lifestyle changes



Follicle stimulating hormone (FSH)

Also produced by the pituitary gland, FSH is involved in stimulating the egg to mature.

When LH levels are higher than FSH, the ovaries are stimulated to produce testosterone rather than oestrogen. This results in an imbalance in the ratio of LH:FSH (ideally, we want a ratio of 1:1) which can prevent or delay the release of an egg from the ovaries (ovulation).

Symptoms:

- Anovulatory cycles
- Irregular cycles

Treatment:

Lower insulin and testosterone levels through diet & lifestyle changes

Testosterone

It is thought that in PCOS the ovaries are stimulated to produce an excess amount of testosterone, these elevated levels of testosterone in the blood stream are responsible for many symptoms of PCOS, listed below.

Tick the symptoms that apply to you.

	Yes	No
1. Acne	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Increased facial and body hair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Male pattern baldness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Irregular ovulation/menstrual cycles (due to follicles not maturing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Loss of libido	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Thinning hair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Testosterone is the dominant sex hormone in men, it is produced in small amounts by the ovaries in women and plays a role in the maintenance of healthy bones and muscles.

If you ticked any of the boxes above, choose the PINK treatment options on page 12.

Progesterone

Once an egg has been released the remaining follicle (corpus luteum) produces progesterone. Progesterone is responsible for the thickening and maintenance of the lining of the uterus (ready to support and nourish an egg if fertilised during pregnancy). If the egg is not fertilised there is a sharp drop in progesterone levels which causes the shedding of the uterus lining, this results in a bleed in your menstrual cycle.

Symptoms:

- May notice a shorter luteal phase (less than 10 days)

Women with PCOS often have lower progesterone levels.

Once an egg is not fertilised it is the remainder of the follicle which produces progesterone, however, because the follicle didn't mature or develop properly, it struggles to produce adequate amounts of progesterone to support a healthy pregnancy.

Treatment:

- Often improves naturally* as ovulation begins to self-regulate after correcting insulin and testosterone levels
- *Can require prescription if chronically low

Oestrogen

Oestrogens are mostly secreted in the ovaries by maturing follicles, however some are produced by the adrenal glands. Oestrogen levels may be elevated, causing disruptions in the menstrual cycle.

Tick the symptoms that apply to you. There are no right or wrong answers; simply respond as you see fit.

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cycles that are shorter than 21 days | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Cycles that are longer than 35 days | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Oestrogens have multiple roles within the body:

1. Thickening of the uterine lining
2. Promoting maturation & release of eggs
3. Natural fluctuations in oestrogen levels stimulate changes in other hormones (Luteinising hormone, follicle stimulating hormone)
4. Strengthening and protecting bones
5. Maintaining healthy cholesterol levels

If you ticked any of the boxes above, choose the **GREY** treatment options on page 12.



Sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG)

SHBG is a protein which binds to androgens (such as testosterone) in the blood, preventing them from activating cells).

Symptoms of low SHBG levels:

- When SHBG levels are low testosterone levels can fluctuate above normal ranges causing symptoms of elevated testosterone (as above)
- High insulin levels can lower SHBG levels, therefore SHBG levels can be an indicator for insulin resistance

Treatment:

- Lower insulin levels

Treatment Bingo

How many can you tick?

<input type="checkbox"/> Manage stress levels as cortisol can increase insulin levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Inc. anti-inflammatory foods in your diet	<input type="checkbox"/> Work towards lowering testosterone & insulin levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose foods that help combat inflammation
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve sleep	<input type="checkbox"/> Manage stress levels	<input type="checkbox"/> Work on insulin resistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Include anti-inflammatory foods in your diet
<input type="checkbox"/> Try to include protein with most meals	<input type="checkbox"/> Find stress coping strategies	<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise can help increase insulin sensitivity	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose foods high in fibre & low in saturated fats to help maintain healthy cholesterol levels
	<input type="checkbox"/> Get enough quality sleep		<input type="checkbox"/> Lower stress levels / stress management

Notice a pattern? Many of the hormonal imbalances in PCOS are interconnected, by correcting one or two of them you will create a knock-on effect that will help balance out the rest.

Anti-inflammatory foods

Research has shown that there is a link between PCOS and chronic low-grade inflammation. This inflammation can increase the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes and worsens insulin resistance. Reducing inflammation is therefore a really important step in managing your PCOS.

To help you do this I've pulled together a shopping list of foods to include as often as you can to help reduce inflammation.

FROZEN FOODS

- Frozen berries
- Frozen spinach

CUPBOARD STAPLES

- Tinned tomatoes
- Olive oil
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Tinned oily fish – mackerel, salmon, sardines
- Green tea (be mindful of your total caffeine intake)
- Brown pasta & rice
- Oats
- Lentils
- Chickpeas
- Beans



TIP: A great way to get a variety of nuts and seeds in your diet is to use [Linwoods](#) which can be popped on top of porridge, yoghurt or added to smoothies.

FRESH FOODS

- Oily fish like salmon
- Kale
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Ginger
- A variety of colourful fruits and vegetables



TIP: Pop fresh ginger into a freezer bag and store in the freezer, when you need it simply grate it with a fine grater and pop it back in the freezer.

Take control of your symptoms



For more information on how to treat your PCOS and working with me, head to my [website](#) or my [Instagram](#) page.

You can also sign up to a FREE 7-day trial of **PCOS ReBalance** - a course designed to help you understand your PCOS and manage your symptoms naturally.

[Sign up to Free Trial](#)

