

HORMONES AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Understanding Hormonal Changes Across a Woman's Life



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What Are Hormones and Why Do They Matter?

Hormones are chemical messengers that help body systems communicate with each other. They affect mood, energy, sleep, focus, stress response, metabolism, fertility, and emotional regulation. Hormones do not work alone. Mental health is influenced by biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors working together.

Women naturally experience hormonal changes throughout different life stages including puberty, menstrual cycles, pregnancy, postpartum, perimenopause, and menopause. Every woman experiences these stages differently. Stress, sleep, nutrition, trauma, relationships, and lifestyle can all affect hormonal health.

Key Hormones and Their Effects

Estrogen

Estrogen supports emotional regulation, brain function, memory, motivation, heart and bone health. Some women notice improved mood, focus, and energy during higher estrogen phases.

Progesterone

Progesterone is often associated with calmness, relaxation, and sleep support. Drops in progesterone before menstruation may contribute to irritability, emotional sensitivity, anxiety, and sleep changes.

Testosterone

Women also produce testosterone in smaller amounts. It supports motivation, confidence, energy, muscle strength, and libido. Low levels may contribute to fatigue and low motivation.

Oxytocin

Oxytocin is known as the “connection hormone.” It is linked to bonding, trust, emotional closeness, nurturing, and supportive relationships.

Thyroid Hormones

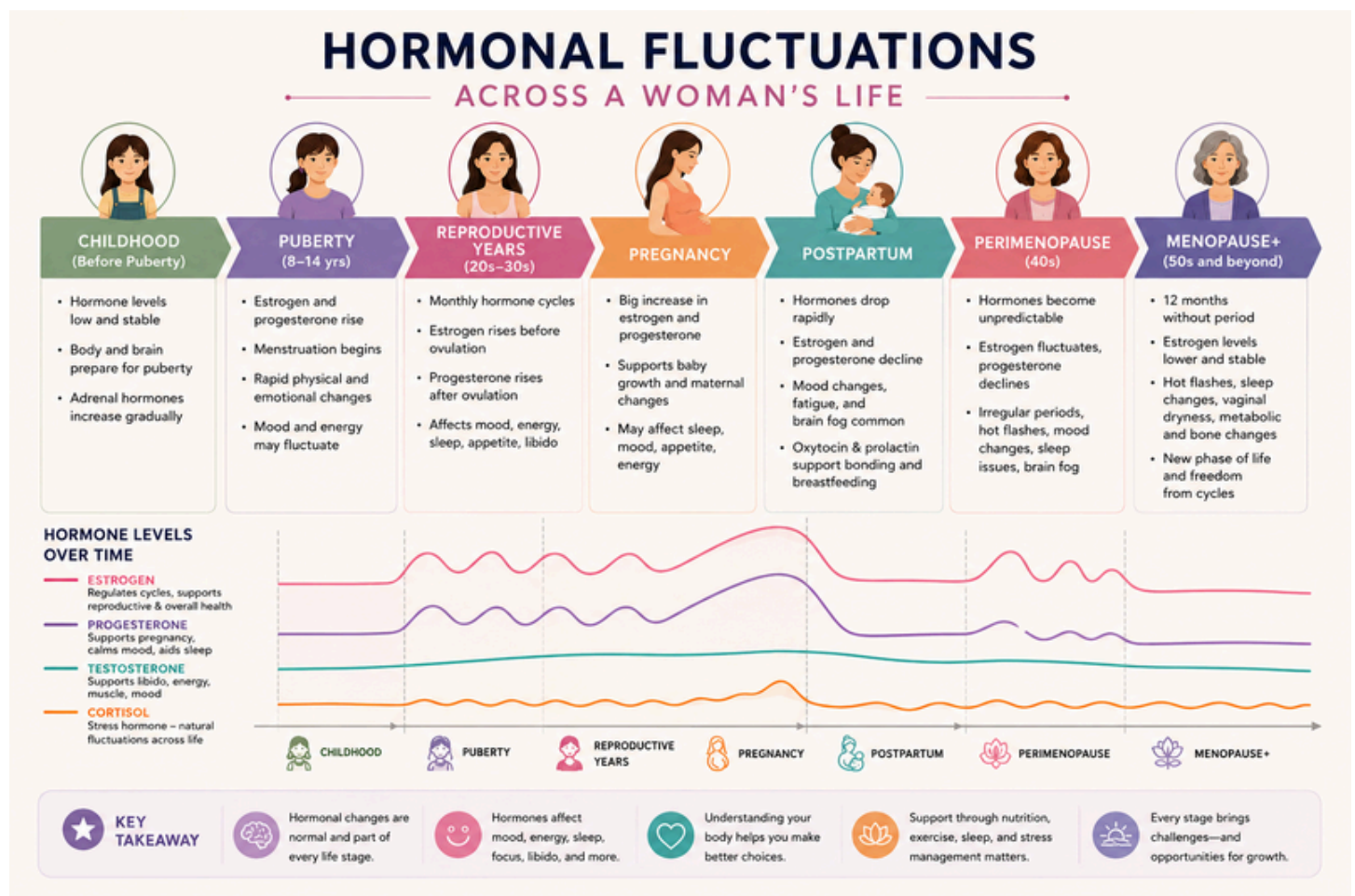
Thyroid hormones regulate energy, concentration, metabolism, and mood. Thyroid imbalance can sometimes mimic depression or anxiety symptoms.

Cortisol

Cortisol is the body's stress hormone. Chronic stress may contribute to anxiety, poor sleep, fatigue, irritability, and emotional exhaustion

Hormones and Mental Health Across Life Stages

Hormonal changes across different stages of life can influence mood, sleep, energy, stress response, and emotional well-being. Experiences vary between women and are affected by physical, emotional, social, and lifestyle factors.



Practical Strategies for Managing Hormonal Changes

1. Normalize the Experience

Hormonal fluctuations are a normal part of a woman's life and do not mean weakness, failure, or lack of faith.

Hormonal changes can affect: Mood- Energy- Sleep- Focus- Emotional sensitivity- Motivation

Instead of fighting these changes or feeling ashamed of them, it can be helpful to understand the body and work with it.

Ask: "What is my body trying to tell me?"

Understanding hormonal patterns can help reduce guilt, self-criticism, and emotional overwhelm.

2. Track Patterns

Track: Mood, Energy, Sleep, Cycle days, and Emotional triggers.

Use a calendar, notes app, or tracking app to identify patterns.

3. Notice Triggers

Pay attention to:

- Times of emotional overwhelm
- Repeated monthly patterns
- Stressful situations and triggers
- Changes in sleep, energy, or motivation

Understanding patterns can help identify which situations, thoughts, or physical changes increase emotional stress.

4. Plan Around Your Energy

Energy and emotional capacity naturally fluctuate during hormonal changes.

Instead of forcing constant productivity:

- Schedule demanding tasks during higher-energy days
- Leave lighter tasks for lower-energy periods
- Build routines that allow flexibility and rest

Build goals around realistic daily capacity instead of ideal conditions.

The Prophet ﷺ said "The most beloved deeds to Allah are those that are consistent, even if they are small." Sahih al-Bukhari 6464 / Sahih Muslim 78

5. Set Realistic Goals

Capacity changes with:

- Stress
- Sleep

- Hormonal fluctuations
- Pregnancy and postpartum
- Physical and emotional exhaustion
- Life circumstances

Goals should match current physical and emotional ability rather than unrealistic expectations.

“Allah does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear.” Surah Al-Baqarah 2:286

6. Islamic Regulations align with human capacity

Islamic rulings during menstruation and postpartum periods recognize women’s physical and emotional needs and reflect mercy and compassion.

7. Practice Acceptance and Spiritual Support

Avoid unhealthy comparison with others. Every woman experiences hormonal changes differently and has different circumstances, stressors, and levels of support.

Faith, Quran, dua, religious reminders, and spiritual practices can support emotional regulation and resilience.

8. Emotional Labeling

The way people describe emotions to themselves can affect emotional intensity and coping.

Instead of using harsh or extreme statements such as:

- “I am overwhelmed.”
- “I hate my body.”
- “I cannot do this.”

Try using calmer and more specific language such as:

- “I notice I am feeling stressed today.”
- “I do not like how I feel about my body right now.”
- “I will focus on one task at a time.”

Reducing extreme emotional language can help create emotional distance, improve self-regulation, and reduce discouraging thought patterns.

9. Reframe Thoughts

Thoughts, emotions, and physical symptoms are deeply connected. Reframing thoughts does not mean ignoring emotions. It means changing harsh or hopeless thoughts into more balanced and realistic ones.

Instead of:

- “I became lazy.”
- “I cannot think clearly anymore.”

- “Something is wrong with me.”

Try:

- “My energy is lower today, and I need to adjust my pace.”
- “My mind feels slower today, and I need more structure and time.”
- “My body is going through a transition, not a failure.”

Repeated negative self-talk can strengthen feelings of hopelessness, shame, and frustration. Small changes in language and thinking patterns can improve emotional regulation and resilience over time.

10. Pause Before Reacting

Hormonal fluctuations can increase emotional sensitivity and impulsive reactions.

When emotions rise:

- Pause for 60 seconds
- Breathe
- Delay reactions
- Change physical position if needed

Making wudu, drinking water, walking away briefly, or taking a short pause may help calm emotional reactions and improve emotional regulation.

Even short pauses can reduce impulsive responses and improve communication.

11. Nutrition and Physical Health

Hormonal regulation is strongly connected to physical health habits.

Helpful habits include:

- Regular meals
- Hydration
- Protein-rich foods
- Reducing excessive sugar and caffeine
- Sleep and rest
- Medical follow-up with primary care or OB/GYN
- Monitoring vitamins and medical conditions

Physical health conditions such as thyroid imbalance, vitamin deficiencies, or other medical issues can sometimes affect mood, energy, and emotional well-being.

12. Movement

Light movement such as walking, stretching, or short exercise routines may improve mood, stress regulation, and hormonal balance.

13. Support Systems

Reduce isolation and stay connected with supportive people.

Helpful support may include:

- Trusted friends
- Family members
- Community support
- Simple check-ins and conversations

Small acts of kindness, emotional support, and social connection can positively affect emotional well-being and reduce feelings of loneliness and overwhelm.

14. When to Seek Professional Help

Seek support if symptoms:

- Interfere with daily functioning
- Become severe or persistent
- Cause ongoing anxiety or depression

Support may include:

- Therapy
- Psychiatric care
- Medical evaluation
- Medication when appropriate.

Final Takeaway

Hormonal changes are a normal part of a woman's life and are closely connected to emotional and mental well-being. Understanding hormonal patterns can help women build self-awareness, reduce shame and self-criticism, improve coping skills, and seek support when needed.

Faith, healthy habits, supportive relationships, emotional awareness, and professional care can all contribute to healing, balance, and resilience.

Mental Health Support Resources

If you need to seek professional mental health support for additional guidance or have concerns related to hormonal changes, anxiety, depression, postpartum mental health, or emotional well-being, the following resources may help:

- Start with your primary care provider or OB/GYN

They can provide medical evaluation, guidance, laboratory testing, and referrals when needed.

- Contact your insurance provider: ask for a list of in-network mental health professionals.

- Muslim or Arabic-speaking therapists can be found through directories such as:
 - a. **Psychology Today:** <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/>
 - b. **Rula:** Online therapy platform with insurance options :www.rula.com

For those residing in California:

- **Bay Area Muslim Therapists:** directory of Muslim therapists in the Bay Area (<https://www.bayareamuslimtherapists.org>)
- **Khalil Center – Santa Clara:** counseling services from an Islamic perspective (<https://www.khalilcenter.com>)
- **Trust Mental Health:** therapy services with culturally responsive approaches
- **Maristan:** muslim mental health resources and support (<https://www.maristan.org>)
- Suicide prevention support is available 24/7 in the United States.

Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: (<https://988lifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now/>)

For emergencies: Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department

