

**The delicate symphony of hormones** that occur within the endocrine system can be easily disrupted in many different ways. The sheer act of ageing can result in the endocrine system being upset.

As reproductive functions play out over time, hormone levels naturally decline. If the hormones decline too quickly, this can trigger the onset of early menopause and can cause other hormone imbalances associated with the change of life. Lifestyle habits play a major role in the pace of hormonal decline and premature aging.

Hormone balance is deeply connected to many different factors including nutrition, exercise, detoxification capabilities, obesity and stress levels. At midlife, the already overstressed adrenal glands must take over much of the hormone production previously handled by the ovaries. Chronic stress which exceeds the body's capabilities causes excess cortisol to consequently flood the system and disrupt the total hormone production.

The body sacrifices its own progesterone in order to make even more cortisol in response to the chronic stress. This depletes the key balancing hormone progesterone with obvious implications for estrogen dominance. Prolonged stress deteriorates our bones, atrophies our muscles, decreases strength and energy, lowers libido and overwhelms our immune system. This puts women at serious risk for severe menopausal symptoms as well as chronic illnesses and autoimmune diseases. Many women's ailments are linked to specific hormonal imbalances which can be triggered by any one or a combination of the following:

- Stress and overexertion
- Not enough time for relaxation and play
- Improper breathing
- Improper diet– excess saturated or hydrogenated fat, sugar, refined carbohydrates, meats, dairy, toxins in fish
- Nutritional deficiencies– such as vitamins B5, B6, C, zinc, selenium, magnesium, tyrosine, tryptophan, essential fatty acids
- Food sensitivities
- Environmental allergies
- Infectious organisms and/or imbalances in intestinal flora
- Intestinal toxins, such as yeast toxins
- Impaired liver function or liver stagnation
- Elevated blood sugar
- Excess alcohol
- Smoking
- Exposure to electromagnetic chemicals, including PCB's, dioxin, pesticides, phthalates, Bisphenol A, PVC, fire retardants, parabens in cosmetics
- Exposure to hormone–disrupting chemicals or hormonal excess in utero
- Pharmaceutical drugs, birth control pills, hormone replacement therapy
- Heavy metals, particularly cadmium, mercury and lead
- Lack of exercise or excessive exercise
- Light at night
- Lack of exposure to sunlight
- Shift work
- Insomnia
- Obesity or being underweight

- History of emotional trauma or abuse
- Negative thought patterns and emotions