5 STEPS TO

BETTER PERIODS

Disclaimer

This guide is for educational purposes and is not medical advice. Nothing in this document is intended to diagnose, treat, or prevent disease. Any mention of herbs or nutritional supplements have not been evaluated by the FDA. Please consult a qualified healthcare professional before making any changes to your lifestyle or diet. By using this document, you agree to the complete terms on our website.

For when you dread your cycle...

If you struggle with period problems, you are not alone. Whether you dread the discomfort of menstrual cramps, can't manage the mood swings of PMS, or struggle with erratic and irregular cycles, this guide is for you.

Our periods are under the control of our hormones. That means that every aspect of our health that influences hormones also influences the menstrual cycle, including:

- Liver Health & Detoxification
- Gut Health & Digestion
- Thyroid & Adrenal Health
- Underlying Inflammation

When I work with patients who struggle with their cycle, we test for hormone levels as well as these other influences on hormones and menstruation. While a personalized approach is powerful, there are always foundational recommendations that every woman with a menstrual cycle can benefit from.

You now have those recommendations in your hands.

This guide gives you 5 steps to better periods. Many women notice changes after just one month of following these steps, but you'll see the biggest benefits if you commit for a minimum of three months.

Here's to better periods!

STEP
1

Purge Products

Many common personal care products contain synthetic chemicals known to mimic estrogen in the body and disrupt hormonal balance.

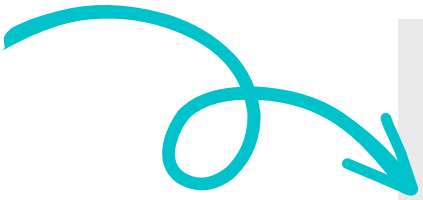
Examples include:

- Bisphenol A (BPA) found in plastics and food packaging
- Phthalates found in soaps or shampoos
- Parabens found in lotions and creams

Step one is to purge shampoos, soaps, and lotions that contain parabens or phthalates and minimize consumption of packaged foods.

Why does this work?

Compounds known to mimic estrogen in the body are called endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs). Studies show that exposure to these chemicals can contribute to menstrual pain, heavy bleeding, and other menstrual abnormalities.



Try This!

Stop putting plastic in the microwave because this can cause BPA to leach into your food.

Reference

Park S, Chung C. Effects of a dietary modification intervention on menstrual pain and urinary BPA levels: a single group clinical trial. *BMC Women's Health* 2021: 21 (58).

STEP
2

Ditch Damaging Drinks

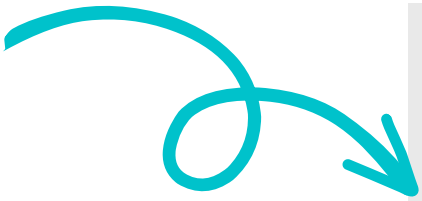
Your body (and uterus) crave water to stay hydrated. Caffeine and alcohol have a dehydrating effect. Other damaging drinks include soda and sweetened beverages that can spike your blood sugar and trigger inflammatory pathways.

While many women can handle these drinks in moderation, you know best if you are consuming them excessively. Drinks that can become damaging if consumed too often or too much include:

- Caffeinated beverages like coffee
- Alcoholic beverages like wine
- Sweetened beverages like soda

Why does this work?

Hormones are metabolized by the liver and are influenced by other compounds that need to be detoxified. Studies show that alcohol consumption leads to higher levels of estrogen and lower levels of progesterone in menstruating women and that women who drink alcohol are more likely to experience PMS.



Try This!

Choose an alternative beverage to reach for instead of your most damaging drink. Then commit to at least one month of ditching that drink!

References

Fernández MDM, Saulyte J, Inskip HM, Takkouche B. Premenstrual syndrome and alcohol consumption: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ Open*. 2018;8(3).

Schliep KC, Zarek SM, Schisterman EF, et al. Alcohol intake, reproductive hormones, and menstrual cycle function: a prospective cohort study. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2015;102(4):933-942.

STEP
3

Swap Out Sugar for Seeds

You might be surprised to discover how dramatically your food choices can influence your period. Some foods drive inflammation in the body, which can contribute to menstrual cramps and PMS. Foods to avoid include:

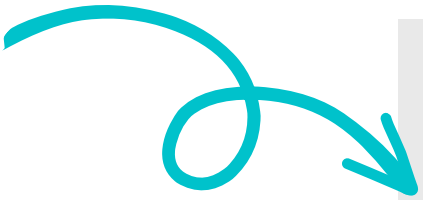
- Sugary foods - Processed foods - Fried foods

On the other hand, some foods help to fight inflammation and support hormonal health. These include:

- Nuts & seeds - Green leafy vegetables - Colorful berries

Why does this work?

Sugar leads to blood sugar problems, weight gain, and inflammation. Seeds are rich in omega-3 essential fatty acids, which have the opposite effect. Seeds also provide zinc, which is an essential mineral for hormone metabolism.



Try This!

Eat 2 tablespoons of seeds every day. Try hemp seeds, chia seeds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, or ground flax seeds.

References

Hashim MS, Obaideen AA, Jahrami HA, et al. Premenstrual Syndrome Is Associated with Dietary and Lifestyle Behaviors among University Students: A Cross-Sectional Study from Sharjah, UAE. *Nutrients.* 2019;11(8):1939

Mohammadi MM, Dehghan Nayeri N, Mashhadi M, Varaei S. Effect of omega-3 fatty acids on premenstrual syndrome: A systematic review and meta-analysis. J Obstet Gynaecol Res. 2022;48(6):1293-1305.

STEP
4

Enjoy Exercise

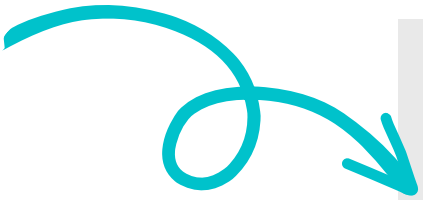
Exercise can be a powerful way to improve your periods, but like all things, it can also be overdone. Overexercising can be just as harmful to your hormones as not exercising at all.

One thing to consider is to match your exercise patterns with your menstrual cycle. Many women have more energy during the first half of their cycle when estrogen levels are high. This is a good time to ramp up the intensity or add in heavier weights. The second half of the cycle, when progesterone levels rise, is a time to do gentler and more rejuvenating exercises, like yoga.

The best exercise is the one that you enjoy because that's how you will stay consistent!

Why does this work?

Exercise reduces stress, supports healthy weight, and reduces inflammation. Studies show that both aerobic exercise and yoga can reduce menstrual cramps and PMS.



Try This!

Find an exercise or yoga class to try with a friend. You'll keep each other motivated and have fun while you're at it.

Reference

Vaghela N, Mishra D, Sheth M, Dani VB. To compare the effects of aerobic exercise and yoga on Premenstrual syndrome. J Educ Health Promot. 2019;8:199.

STEP
5

Try Herbal Teas

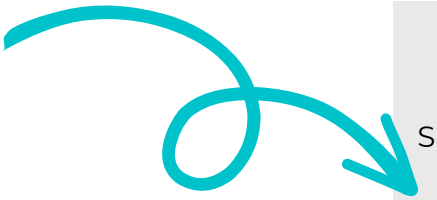
Herbs have long been used to support health and hormones, and teas are a gentle and nourishing way to use herbs at home. You'll benefit not only from the herbs themselves but also from the ritual that comes along with brewing tea and relaxing with that steaming mug in your hands.

An herb that has traditionally been used to support the menstrual cycle in women is called Chaste Tree Berry (*Vitex agnus-castus*). This herb can be taken throughout the entire menstrual cycle and anecdotally helps to reduce PMS.

If you are looking for gentle relief from cramps and discomfort during your period, try brewing a cup of raspberry leaf tea or ginger tea.

Why does this work?

Herbs contain plant compounds that act as antioxidants and support healthy inflammatory pathways. Although many herbs are used based on tradition and anecdotal evidence, several studies have found that ginger can be supportive during the first few days of menstruation.



Try This!

Sip on ginger tea for the first few days of your period—especially if you have a tendency toward discomfort or cramps.

Reference

Daily JW, Zhang X, Kim DS, Park S. Efficacy of Ginger for Alleviating the Symptoms of Primary Dysmenorrhea: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Randomized Clinical Trials. Pain Med. 2015;16(12):2243-2255.

Take the Next Step!

I am committed to helping you achieve better periods and hormone harmony. Please explore more ways to work with me:

www.drruthannebaron.com