

LOWER ESTROGEN LEVELS AND ITS AFFECT ON THE FEMALE BODY

Any adult female could tell you that as women age our estrogen level drops. Many of us are aware of the effects of weight gain, fatigue, mood swings, hot flashes, and memory loss ([link](#)) (wait..where was i going with this??) to name a few, but i'm also going to add digestion and stress. How are digestion and stress related? The answer, **cortisol**. Cortisol is your body's stress hormone. It helps fuel your body's "flight or fight" instinct in a crisis. It also manages how your body uses carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, it keeps inflammation down, regulates blood pressure, increases your blood sugar, controls your sleep/wake cycle and boost your energy so you can handle stress and restore balance ([link](#)). Estrogen controls your level of cortisol, keeping it in check. **Are you starting to catch on ladies?** My husband wouldn't.

As our estrogen level drops our cortisol level rises, resulting in a conglomerate of symptoms (see above). This includes slowing of digestion. When digestion slows it can increase gas, cause weight gain, and poor absorption of nutrients to name a few. The increase in cortisol can also result in increase hunger since it increases insulin levels and therefore drops blood glucose. The result is we reach for immediate satisfaction found in comfort foods and foods high in sugar. SO....low estrogen makes us hungry, eat poorly, sleep poorly (which adds to the hunger), get gassy and bloated, gain weight, and causes more stress, UGHHHHH. Nature can be so cruel, but I have some healthy tips! You can control this ladies! Without hormone therapy.

First, I'm sure you already know, but eat a healthy diet. including olive oil, beans, kale, etc. Some call it an anti-inflammatory diet. These foods can actually help estrogen levels. It is also better to eat smaller, more frequent meals to help with digestion. Your body is going to have a harder time digesting so why tax it with a large meal. Second, stay active. doesn't just mean going to the gym. Take stairs more often, walk, just be more active throughout the day. Third, get rest. I know, easier said then done, but you have to try. Shut computers off at night. Give yourself downtime before bed. Or, your mate could massage your back every night so you can sleep (i'm one of the lucky ones). One last thing is it wouldn't hurt to try and lower inflammation levels naturally by adding cinnamon, and turmeric into your diet. Also taking a prebiotic may be helpful in aiding in digestion. **Please discuss these changes with your doctor.** Your body is changing, what worked before isn't necessarily going to work now. It is ok. you can change too, and work with it. The effects of lower estrogen levels do not have to control you! You can control them!