

Hormone Imbalance Symptoms

Disclaimer:

I am not a physician and this information is not intended to be medical advice. It is to be used for information purposes only.

This guide is by no means exhaustive and should be used for information purposes. I discuss the most common hormones that effect your efforts to lose weight during menopause and peri menopause. Check with your physician to diagnose any hormone imbalance issues.

Reproductive hormones

Perimenopause is a time that you will find your reproductive hormones are out of balance. Estrogen levels fluctuate wildly and progesterone levels decline. Estrogen dominance is common, despite declining levels since the relative amount of estrogen is higher than the relative amount of progesterone.

After menopause the balance of estrogen, progesterone and testosterone is still an issue. The relative levels of these hormones with each other and the lower levels in general can have several effects.

Symptoms of peri menopause (and to some extent menopause):

- Hot flashes
- Night sweats
- Mood swings
- Trouble sleeping
- Anxiety
- Weight gain, especially around the middle
- Heavy, irregular menstrual periods

Since peri menopause and menopause are by nature a time of changing reproductive hormones, “balance” may be difficult to achieve.

Thyroid hormone

You can have either an over active thyroid (hyperthyroidism) or an under active thyroid (hypothyroidism). Hypothyroidism is more common. Since the thyroid controls your metabolism it is extremely important when it comes to weight loss.

Symptoms of hyperthyroidism are:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Nervousness and tremor
- Fast heart rate
- Intolerance to heat

Symptoms of hypothyroidism are:

- Brain fog
- Fatigue
- Thinning hair

- Feeling cold
- Weight gain
- Heavy menstrual periods

Note that Hashimoto's disease is an autoimmune disorder that may present as symptoms of either one at different times as the disease progresses.

Insulin

When blood sugar levels are chronically elevated insulin levels are also elevated. This often leads to insulin resistance or pre-diabetes. Generally there are few actual symptoms of insulin resistance, when diabetes is not present. The following symptoms may be present:

- Excess belly fat
- Feeling tired after meals
- Sugar cravings after meals
- Difficulty getting to sleep

If you are diabetic, other more severe symptoms will occur.

Cortisol

Cortisol is the stress hormone. Chronically high cortisol levels can cause these symptoms:

- Weight gain around middle and upper back
- High blood pressure
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Sweet cravings
- Difficulty falling asleep

It is also possible to have low cortisol levels. The symptoms of this are:

- Difficulty staying asleep
- Lightheaded and shaky between meals
- Low blood pressure
- Weight loss
- Salt cravings

If you experience these symptoms, getting your cortisol levels tested is a good idea. Both low and high cortisol can be part of more serious conditions that need to be treated by a medical professional.

Leptin and Ghrelin

Leptin and Ghrelin are considered to be the hunger hormones. Leptin is produced by the fat cells and its job is to decrease appetite. Ghrelin is produced mainly in the stomach and increases appetite. Not surprising that these hormones play a huge role in your ability to lose weight.

Unfortunately with more body fat (and increased levels of leptin) you are also more likely to be resistant to leptin. Lack of sleep and other hormone imbalances also can cause leptin resistance.

Being resistant to leptin, means that you are not getting the right signals that you are have had enough to eat, so you might tend to overeat. Less is known about exactly how ghrelin works.

Some of the symptoms that you are leptin resistant include:

- Food cravings
- You are a chronic yo yo dieter
- You are a stress eater

Hopefully this article has given you a better understanding of how your weight loss efforts may have been sabotaged by various hormones.