

## How hormones can affect your mental health



**Ever had days when you feel amazing?** You're full of energy. You can focus on anything. Your mood is great.

**Then suddenly everything changes.** You can't concentrate. You feel tired all the time. Small things make you anxious or upset. You can't work out why. Hormones don't just affect your periods or sex drive. They control your mood, energy, sleep, and how you cope with stress. When they change, your mental health changes too.

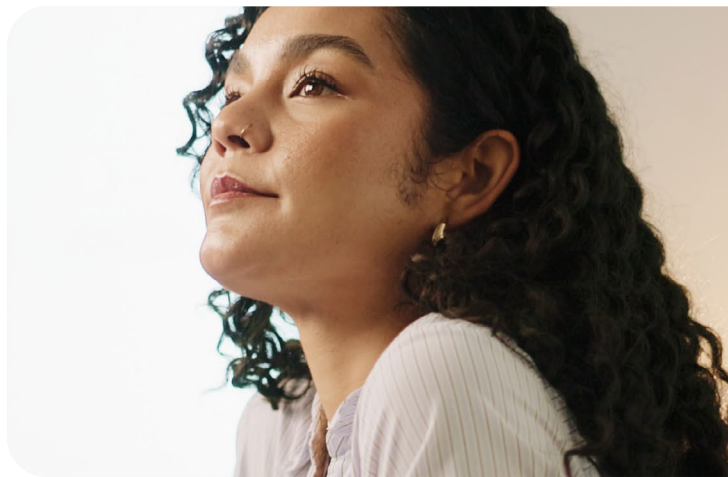
This happens to everyone. Men and women. Young and old. It's not just about puberty or menopause. **In this guide, we'll explain how hormones affect your mental health.** We'll help you spot the signs. And we'll share what helps.

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## How hormones control how you feel every day

Hormones are chemical messengers. They travel around your body in your blood. They tell different parts of your body what to do.

Think of them like text messages between your organs. When one part of your body needs to talk to another, it sends a hormone.



### Your hormones control lots of things:

- When you feel tired or awake
- How hungry you are
- Your mood
- How well you can focus
- How stressed you feel
- Your energy levels

**Hormone levels change all the time.** Some go up and down every day. Others change more slowly. When they get out of balance, you feel it.

The tricky thing is that hormones work together. When one changes, it affects the others. That's why **you might have lots of different symptoms at once.**

## What hormones control that affects your mental health:

- **Sleep** - when you feel tired and when you feel alert
- **Stress response** - how your body reacts to pressure
- **Mood** - feelings of happiness, sadness, or anxiety
- **Energy** - how much get-up-and-go you have
- **Focus** - your ability to concentrate and remember things
- **Appetite** - when you feel hungry and what you crave

When your hormones are balanced, you feel like yourself. When they're not, everything feels harder.

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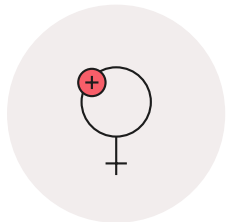
## The main hormones that control your mood

**Six hormones have the biggest impact on how you feel.** Each one has a different job. But they all work together.



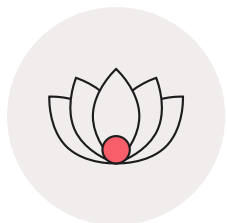
### **Cortisol – your stress hormone**

Cortisol helps you deal with stress. A bit of cortisol is helpful. It keeps you alert and motivated. But too much cortisol for too long causes problems. You might feel anxious all the time. You can't relax. Sleep becomes difficult. Cortisol should be high in the morning and low at night. When this pattern gets messed up, you feel awful.



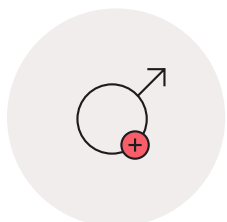
### **Oestrogen – the mood supporter**

Oestrogen isn't just about periods. It helps your brain work properly. It affects the chemicals that control your mood. When oestrogen drops, many people feel low. This happens before periods, after having a baby, and during menopause. For people with ADHD, low oestrogen can make focus problems much worse.



### **Progesterone – the calming hormone**

Progesterone has a calming effect. It helps you feel relaxed and sleep better. When progesterone drops quickly, you might feel anxious or irritable. This often happens in the week before your period.

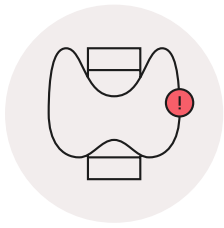


### **Testosterone – the motivation hormone**

Both men and women need testosterone. It affects your energy, confidence, and motivation. Low testosterone can make you feel tired and flat. You might lose interest in things you usually enjoy.

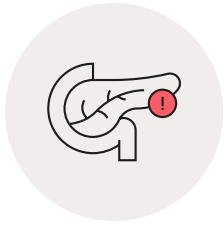
It's also important to be aware that **having too much testosterone can cause problems**. High testosterone levels, often due to supplements or certain health conditions, may make you feel more aggressive or irritable. Other side effects can include **acne, mood swings, and taking more risks**. Testosterone supplements are now widely available, but they should only be used if prescribed by a **healthcare professional**. Having excessively high testosterone can be just as harmful as having too little.

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### **Thyroid hormones – your energy controllers**

Thyroid hormones control how fast your body uses energy. They affect almost everything, including your brain. If your thyroid is slow, you might feel depressed, tired, and foggy. If it's too fast, you might feel anxious and restless.



### **Insulin – the blood sugar balancer**

Insulin controls your blood sugar. When blood sugar swings up and down, so does your mood. You might feel shaky, irritable, or anxious when your blood sugar drops. This can happen if you skip meals or eat lots of sugar.

#### **Signs these hormones might be affecting your mental health:**

- **Mood changes** that don't match what's happening in your life
- **Energy that goes up and down** for no clear reason
- **Brain fog** or trouble concentrating
- **Sleep problems** that come and go
- **Anxiety** or **low mood** at certain times
- **Feeling more emotional** than usual
- **Physical symptoms like headaches** alongside mood changes



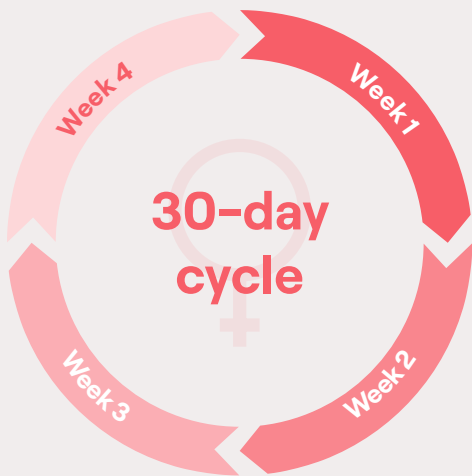


## Why men and women have different hormone cycles (and what this means for your mental health)

Here's something really important that most people don't know. **Men and women have completely different hormone cycles.** This affects when and how mental health symptoms show up.

### Women's 30-day cycle

Women's main hormones follow a monthly pattern. This cycle lasts about **28–30 days**. Oestrogen and progesterone go up and down throughout the month.



**Week 1:** Hormones are low during your period. You might feel tired but also relieved that PMS symptoms have gone.

**Week 2:** Oestrogen starts rising. Energy comes back. Mood improves. Many women feel their best during this time.

**Week 3:** After ovulation, progesterone rises. You might feel calmer but also more tired.

**Week 4:** Both hormones drop quickly. For those who experience PMS, this is usually when symptoms hit. Low mood, anxiety, and irritability are common.

### Men's 24-hour cycle

Men's hormones follow a daily pattern. Testosterone is highest in the morning and drops throughout the day.



**Morning:** Testosterone peaks. Men often feel most energetic and motivated in the morning.

**Afternoon:** Testosterone starts dropping. Energy and mood might dip slightly.

**Evening:** Testosterone is at its lowest. Men might feel more tired and less motivated.

**This daily pattern repeats every 24 hours.** It's much more predictable than women's monthly cycle.

## What this means for mental health

These different cycles explain a lot about mental health patterns:

### Women might notice:

- Mood changes that follow their monthly cycle
- Some weeks feeling great, others feeling awful
- Symptoms that are hard to predict
- Mental health that seems to change for no reason

### Men might notice:

- Feeling better in the mornings
- Energy dropping as the day goes on
- More consistent day-to-day mood
- Gradual changes over months or years rather than weekly changes

## Why this matters for treatment

### Understanding these cycles helps explain why:

- Women might need different support at different times of the month
- Men might benefit from morning exercise or important tasks
- Tracking symptoms looks different for men and women
- Treatment timing might matter more for women

If you're a woman, **tracking your cycle alongside your mood can help**. You might spot patterns you never noticed before. If you're a man, paying attention to **daily energy patterns can help you plan your day better**.

## Signs your hormone cycle is affecting your mental health:

### For women:

- Mood changes that happen at the same time each month
- Feeling like a different person during different weeks
- PMS symptoms that affect your daily life
- Mental health problems that started around puberty, pregnancy, or menopause

### For men:

- Feeling worse in the evenings
- Gradual changes in energy or motivation over time
- Morning mood being consistently better than evening mood
- Mental health changes that coincide with major life stress or ageing

## How hormones affect men and women differently

Men and women have the same hormones. **But the amounts and patterns are different.** This affects when and how mental health symptoms show up.

### Women and hormones

Women's hormones change more often. This happens because of periods, pregnancy, and menopause. **Monthly hormone changes can affect mood and energy.** Some women barely notice, while others find it really affects their daily life. **Pregnancy and after having a baby** involve huge hormone changes. These can trigger depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. **Menopause is another big hormone change.** It can last for years, and many women are surprised by how much it affects their mental health.

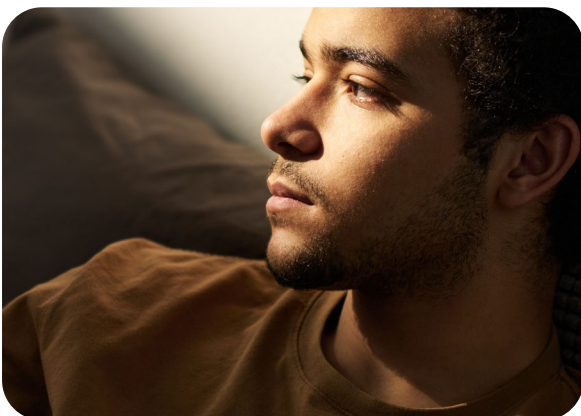


#### Signs of hormone-related mental health changes in women:

- Feeling low or anxious before your period
- Mood changes that follow your monthly cycle
- Depression or anxiety after having a baby
- Sleep problems during menopause
- Brain fog or memory problems during hormone changes
- Feeling like a different person at certain times of the month

### Men and hormones

Men's hormone changes happen more slowly. **Testosterone drops gradually** as men get older. **This usually starts in the 30s.** Stress, poor sleep, and health problems can speed up these changes. Thyroid problems also affect men's mental health. Because changes happen slowly, symptoms can be easy to miss, with many men thinking they're just getting older or stressed at work.



#### Signs of hormone-related mental health changes in men:

- Feeling tired even after sleeping well
  - Less motivation than usual
  - Mood swings or feeling irritable
  - Trouble concentrating
  - Not sleeping as deeply
  - Less confidence in social situations
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## Spotting when hormones might be the problem

It can be hard to know if hormones are affecting your mental health. The symptoms often look like other problems. But there are some clues to look for. **The timing of symptoms** is often the biggest hint. If your mental health symptoms **follow patterns**, hormones might be involved. This could be **monthly patterns**, **seasonal changes**, or **symptoms that started during big life changes**.

### Patterns that suggest hormones are involved:

- Symptoms that happen at the same time each month
- Mental health changes during puberty, pregnancy, or menopause
- Symptoms that get worse during stressful times
- Problems that started when your sleep changed
- Mood or energy changes with the seasons
- Mental health treatments that don't seem to help much



### Physical signs that often come with hormone-related mental health symptoms:

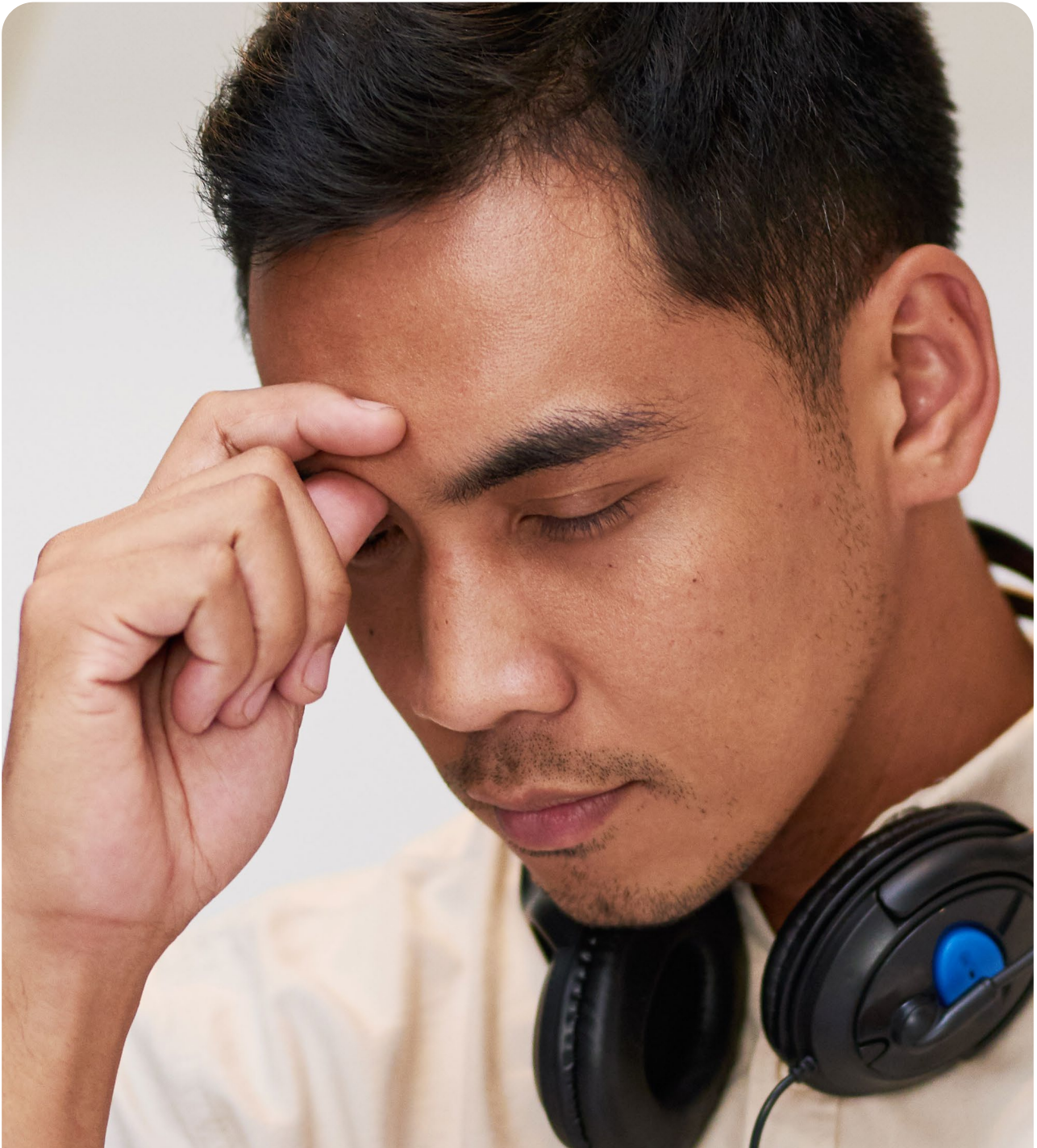
- Sleep changes – trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Energy that doesn't match how much you've slept
- Appetite changes or new food cravings
- Feeling too hot or too cold
- Stomach problems or bloating
- Skin changes like new spots or dryness
- Hair or nail changes

### When to get professional help:

Some hormone-related mental health symptoms need professional help. Don't try to manage everything on your own. **Get help if symptoms are affecting your work, relationships, or daily life.** Also get help if you're having thoughts of hurting yourself. Remember that asking for help shows you're taking care of yourself.

**It's not a sign of weakness.**





## What actually helps with hormone-related mental health problems

There are lots of things you can do to support your hormones and mental health. Some you can do yourself. Others need help from a doctor. **The key is to support your body's natural hormone production.** You also want to avoid things that mess up your hormones.

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## Sleep is the foundation of hormone health

During sleep, **your body makes and balances hormones**. Poor sleep messes up your hormones, affecting your mood, energy, and ability to cope with stress.



### Sleep tips that help your hormones:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet
- Stop looking at screens 1-2 hours before bed
- Try reading or gentle stretching before sleep
- Avoid caffeine after 2pm
- Consider magnesium supplements if you have trouble falling asleep
- Track your sleep and mood to spot patterns

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## Eat in a way that keeps your blood sugar steady

What and when you eat affects your hormones. **Eating regularly helps keep your blood sugar stable**. This supports better mood and energy. Skipping meals or eating lots of sugar can cause blood sugar swings, affecting your mood and making you feel tired.



### Eating tips for better hormone health:

- Eat something every 3-4 hours
  - Include protein, healthy fats, and complex carbs in each meal
  - Start the day with 20-30g of protein
  - Choose whole grains over white bread and pasta
  - Drink plenty of water throughout the day
  - Limit alcohol as it affects sleep and hormone production
  - Eat your biggest meals earlier in the day
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## Move your body to manage stress hormones

Exercise is one of the best things you can do for your hormones and mental health.

**It helps balance stress hormones and boosts mood.** You don't need to do intense workouts.

**Regular moderate exercise works well.** The key is finding something you enjoy and can stick to.



### Exercise ideas that support hormone health:

- Walk for 30 minutes most days
- Try strength training twice a week
- Do yoga or tai chi for stress relief
- Exercise in the morning to help your body clock
- Listen to your body and rest when you need to
- Spend time outside for natural light
- Choose activities you actually enjoy

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## Manage stress to protect your hormones

Chronic stress is one of the worst things for your hormones. It keeps cortisol high, which affects all your other hormones. You can't avoid all stress, but **you can learn to manage it better and better protect your hormones and mental health.**



### Stress management that helps your hormones:

- Try 10 minutes of meditation each day
  - Use deep breathing when you feel stressed
  - Set boundaries and say no to things you don't have to do
  - Do creative activities like drawing or music
  - Spend time in nature
  - Stay connected with friends and family
  - Consider talking to a therapist if stress feels overwhelming
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## When to see a doctor:

- Symptoms that stop you doing **normal activities**
- Problems that don't get better with lifestyle changes after **2-3 months**
- Sudden or severe **changes in mood or energy**
- **Physical symptoms** alongside mental health changes
- **Family history** of hormone or mental health problems
- Big life changes like **menopause** or **having a baby**
- **Depression** or **anxiety** that doesn't respond to usual treatments



### Special considerations for ADHD

If you have ADHD, **hormone changes might need extra attention**. Work with doctors who understand both ADHD and hormones. **Be ready to adjust your usual coping strategies during times of hormone change**. This might mean changing medication timing or trying new approaches.

**Contact [HealthHero](#) today for support and advice on your hormone and mental health. Our expert clinicians understand how hormones and mental health connect and can help.**