

## **Migraine and Hormonal Problems**

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Migraine is a common, but extremely debilitating affliction, with many possible causes and contributory factors. Some migraines may be related to hormone imbalances.

For instance the hormone insulin affects blood sugar levels, which may trigger headaches and migraines. Insulin is just one of many hormones, so it is well worth exploring whether others could be implicated.

Although the incidence of migraine in boys and girls is approximately equal until puberty, in the reproductive years the ratio of female to male sufferers is about 3:1, suggesting a possible hormonal effect. Often attacks start during pregnancy or when oral contraceptives are first used. However, remissions are also common in pregnancy. Hormonal influences cannot be the whole story as the gender difference continues after the menopause.

There has been a great increase in hormone-related health problems over the last 50 years. Many scientists believe that the increasing number of chemicals we encounter in the modern way of life is disrupting our hormonal balance. Such chemicals may be found in: pesticides, plastic compounds, industrial compounds and pharmaceutical drugs.

Excess exposure to estrogens (known as estrogen dominance) may be a major factor behind hormone related problems. Synthetic hormones such as those found in the contraceptive pill or hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can cause problems. The natural hormone produced by the body has a precise chemical formulation to perform its function – this may be pregnancy maintenance, normal menstruation or maintaining correct bone density. Where a synthetic hormone is introduced, the chemistry can differ from the natural form in some tiny way – but this may be sufficient to create an imbalance that may not show up until many years later, or even in the next generation.

Estrogen dominance may be a major factor behind many hormone related problems such as: headaches, water retention, PMS, weight gain, sweet cravings, heavy/irregular periods, fibrocystic or swollen breasts, osteoporosis, endometrial or breast cancer, low sex drive, vaginitis and depression.

We obtain some hormones from food – particularly meat and dairy products where animals are dosed with hormones to speed growth and increase profits. Animals' food may also contain high amounts of non-degradable pesticides and chemicals that have been released into the environment and accumulate in fat in chicken, lamb, milk etc.

Another major source of hormone disrupting chemicals is in the plastics industry and you have no way of knowing whether an item of plastic contains such chemicals or not. Safest to assume it does and avoid it!

To minimize exposure to hormone disrupting chemicals:

- § Eat organic food to minimize your exposure to pesticides
- § Filter all drinking water or buy bottled water - glass bottles are better than plastic
- § Reduce intake of fatty foods of animal origin
- § Minimize the contact of your foods with plastics. This includes plastic lined cans or cartons as well as more obvious sources such as cling-film
- § Never heat food in plastic, transfer it to glass first
- § Use ecologically friendly detergents and cleaning products

A balancing effect can be obtained by using plants that contain phyto-estrogens. These are weaker estrogen-like compounds that have a beneficial, hormone-balancing effect because they lodge in the same sites as estrogens produced by our body, blocking them off from synthetic forms that might otherwise dock into place.

Soya and its by-products (such as soya milk and tofu) are the richest source of phyto-estrogens, but they are also found in citrus fruits, apples, cherries, plums, oats, rice, wheat, carrots, potatoes, parsley and fennel. As cows' milk is probably the most significant source of estrogens in the Western diet, soya milk is a better choice. Much scientific research indicates that phyto-estrogens protect against cancer and reduce cholesterol. However over-frequent use of soya can set up allergic tendencies, ideally rotate it with oat and rice milk.

Other dietary measures you can take to balance your hormones naturally are:

- § Decrease stress, sugar and stimulants.
- § Decrease your intake of meat and dairy products. Where you do use them, choose free-range and/or organic meats wherever practical. We appreciate that organic meat is more expensive, just buy as much as you can and don't worry if you can't use it all the time.
- § Increase your intake of essential fats from seeds, raw unprocessed nuts, oily fish and a good supplement product.
- § Use a good multi-vitamin/mineral on a regular basis to ensure that your diet has all the vitamins and minerals necessary to process the foods you eat.

Male or female hormone panel tests, available from nutritionists, may be a useful diagnostic tool in this case.

The suggestions above are taken from a far more complete treatment of natural migraine prevention and relief, available in my new ebook that details a wide variety of drug-free migraine remedies.

Keep up-to-date with new information on migraine at my blog:

<http://natural-migraine-alternatives.blogspot.com/>

For immediate delivery of an ebook full of further recommendations for natural, alternatives approaches to treat and prevent migraine visit:

<http://www.natural-migraine-alternatives.com>