

Women's General Health

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For: The Natural Health Practice Ltd



Having good general health and balanced hormones is dependent on how well you look after yourself. You are what you eat and unfortunately, if you have dieted over time or been eating convenience or packaged food then it is likely you will be deficient in certain nutrients. We do live in a stressful society and the tendency is to 'eat on the run' and yet your body has to have the right fuel in order to function efficiently.

What you eat can have a profound effect on your health. There are many women's health problems, but most are triggered by the same mechanisms, including stress, hormone imbalance, nutritional deficiencies and toxins. By taking steps towards optimum health, the vast majority of women's health problems can be alleviated, or in many cases eliminated altogether. Your diet and your nutritional status are crucial to this process.

Nutrition is so important because everything that you eat can be turned into the fuel that your body uses to produce hormones, enzymes, blood, etc. It has taken years for the link between cardiovascular disease and nutrition to become common knowledge and now the evidence is overwhelming. More research is now linking nutrition to cancer and in the future, further research will show that your diet can play its part in many aspects of your health.

It is useful to use supplements when you want to achieve positive health benefits in as short a space of time as possible. Certain nutrients, depending on your problem, will help to speed up this process because they can help you to detoxify or strengthen your immune system for example.

With any female problem, especially those that are connected with hormone imbalances, such as fibroids, endometriosis or polycystic ovary syndrome, it is important that your liver is functioning at an optimum level. The liver is the waste disposal unit of the body, not only for toxins, waste products, drugs and alcohol, but also for hormones.

If the liver is not functioning efficiently, old hormones can accumulate. These old hormones are left over after each menstrual cycle, but unless they are deactivated by the liver, they can return to the bloodstream and cause all sorts of problems. The liver deals with oestrogen so it can be eliminated safely from the body.

The liver also performs other important functions that have a bearing on your health. Among its many tasks are the storage and filtration of blood, the secretion of bile and numerous metabolic functions, including the conversion of sugars into glycogen, which is the form in which carbohydrates are stored in your body. It plays a vital part in metabolising fat (breaking it down properly) and it helps to use up fat to produce energy. The liver also helps to optimise thyroid function.

Optimising liver function:

As well as avoiding substances that can compromise your liver, such as alcohol, you can also take substances to help liver function. The B vitamins are especially important because they are essential for the liver to be able to convert oestradiol into the harmless oestriol.

A good multivitamin and mineral is essential for making sure that you have all the nutrients in good supply e.g. zinc, calcium and B vitamins that your liver needs in order to operate efficiently. The antioxidant vitamins such as vitamin C, vitamin E and beta-carotene are also important and vitamin C should be taken in addition to the multivitamin and mineral as there will not be enough in the multi.

Essential fatty acids:

These are crucial for women's health and often women will have been following a low fat or no fat diet so will not have been getting enough of these essential fats. Signs of an essential fatty acid deficiency are dry skin, lifeless hairs, cracked nails, fatigue, depression, dry eyes, lack of motivation, aching joints, difficulty in losing weight, forgetfulness and breast pain. Essential fatty acids are found in foods such as nuts, seeds (e.g. linseeds) and oily fish. These essential fats are a vital component of every human cell and the body needs them to balance hormones, insulate nerve cells, and keep the skin and arteries supple and to keep the body warm.

The body makes beneficial prostaglandins (which are hormone-like substances) from these essential fatty acids. These prostaglandins help to prevent inflammation, regulate the immune system and reduce abnormal blood clotting. They play a major role in helping with period problems so they are extremely important when thinking about women's health.

Prevention:

We are living in a time of an epidemic of degenerative illnesses such as cancer, coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes and arthritis. People in the Western world rarely die of old age. Degenerative illnesses that happen over time are not just 'one of those things' but are the effect of how we have looked after ourselves over the years. In our society, as we get older, arthritis is very common; in other cultures it is not. Does this make it acceptable or 'normal' because it is so common?

During normal biochemical reactions oxygen can become unstable which can in turn generate free radicals. Free radicals are also triggered by our environment e.g. pollution, smoke and UV rays. It is these free radicals that have been linked to premature aging, cancer and coronary heart disease. Fortunately, nature provides us with protection against free radicals in the form of antioxidants. So making sure we get enough of these free radicals, in our diet and in supplement form, can help to prevent some of these Western health problems.

Supplements are necessary nowadays in our society because, due to the depletion of the soil and other factors, even the best diet in the world will not contain all the nutrients you need to maintain optimum health.

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