

## Seed Cycling Post:

As previous posts indicated - hormonal balance was a topic we "touched on" and that cause challenges to our emotional and physical wellness.

A safe way to balance hormones is = SEED CYCLING

### How to Balance Hormones Naturally with Seed Cycling

Being a Holistic Nutritionist, one of the questions I frequently get asked is how to balance hormones naturally. A whole foods diet, blood sugar balance and optimal endocrine function are at the foundation for hormonal balance and by far the most important starting place, but there are other ways to support the fluctuating hormones that ebb and flow throughout the month as well. One way to balance hormones naturally is with seed cycling.

### What is Seed Cycling?

Seed cycling is simply eating specific seeds at specific times throughout the month to balance hormones. Seed cycling can be used for both women AND men. By adding flax, pumpkin, sesame and sunflower seeds to your diet at the right time, you can support your body in binding and eliminating excess hormones and increasing deficient hormones. Cool, huh?

### How Does It Work?

Seeds contain nutrients that are the precursors to our body's hormone production.

Flax and pumpkin seeds support the estrogen dominant time of the month while sesame and sunflower seeds support the progesterone peaks.

Flax and pumpkin are both full of Omega-3s which allow our hormones to get where they need to be by maintaining healthy cell receptor sites. Flax also contains plant phytoestrogens called lignans that act as antioxidants and block extra estrogenic activity in the body. In fact, even though flax seeds contain phytoestrogens they actually prevent and regress hormone-associated cancers like breast and prostate cancer [source 1 and 2]. Both sesame and sunflower seeds contain Omega-6 fatty acids and stimulate progesterone production and are also high in zinc, which is necessary for overall reproduction. Sunflower seeds are particularly high in selenium, which is crucial for thyroid hormone conversion and liver detoxification.

### It's All About Balance

Stress, xenoestrogens, toxins, pesticides, processed foods, endocrine disrupting chemicals, not enough sleep and birth control all affect our hormones. Imbalanced hormones can wreak havoc on our lives.

Symptoms of hormonal imbalance:

- PMS symptoms
- low sex drive
- infertility
- fatigue
- mood swings
- depression
- excess abdominal fat
- sleep issues
- thyroid disorders
- adrenal issues
- insulin resistance
- PCOS

- endometriosis
- excessive sweating

As women, we've accepted painful and hard to deal with PMS symptoms like bloating, cramping, back pain, migraines and fatigue as normal. These symptoms we've come to know as just 'part of the deal' aren't actually normal at all, but a sign of imbalanced hormones.

The real cause for PMS is simply this: Your hormones become unbalanced, your estrogen levels increase and progesterone levels decrease, either relatively or absolutely. – Dr. Mark Hyman, How to Eliminate PMS in 5 Simple

For a woman's cycle it is important to have the right amount of each hormone, not too much, not too little. If a woman has too much estrogen it can cause depression, PMS symptoms and irregular periods. If she has too little estrogen, it can cause her not to ovulate at all. A high level of estrogen in relation to progesterone is also linked to several issues such as infertility, endometriosis, excess abdominal fat, low libido and even breast cancer. Progesterone deficiency has also been linked to irregular periods as well as fatigue, PMS symptoms, and miscarriage. You need the right amount of progesterone to conceive and sustain a pregnancy. You can use seed cycling to help regulate these hormones and bring them into balance naturally. Did I mention how cool this is?

#### How to Seed Cycle

##### For Women

Start seed cycling on the first day of your menstrual cycle. If your cycle isn't regular or you don't have a cycle, use the days corresponding to the phases of the moon. It has been studied that the female menstrual cycle and phases of the moon correspond so this is a way to gage it if your cycle isn't regular.

From Day 1-14 of the menstrual cycle (or new moon to full moon)

- 1 Tbs. per day of ground flax seeds
- 1 Tbs. per day of ground pumpkin seeds

From Day 15-28 of the menstrual cycle (or from full moon to new moon)

- 1 Tbs. per day of ground sesame seeds
- 1 Tbs. per day of ground sunflower seeds

##### For Men

Start seed cycling using the phases of the moon. Men's seed cycle is the opposite of the women's

Full moon to new moon

- 1 Tbs. per day of ground flax
- 1 Tbs per day of ground pumpkin seeds

New moon to full moon

- 1 Tbs. per day of ground sesame
- 1 Tbs. per day of ground sunflower

#### How Long Does It Take to See Changes?

Just like with everything hormone related, it takes about 3 months of consistency to see huge improvements, although a lot of people see changes right away.

I've been practicing seed cycling for over a month now and I already see some changes. I'm having fewer breakouts (hooray!), fewer PMS symptoms, and fewer migraines. I am excited to stick with this regimen and see how my body continues to heal and find balance. – From Creative Simply

#### Tips

- Seeds do go rancid fairly quickly, especially when exposed to air so make sure to buy seeds in a closed bag rather than the bulk bins, unless you know your store has a fast turnover for bulk items.
- Buy your seeds whole and raw and use an inexpensive coffee grinder to grind them. This is for freshness and digestibility. Whole flax seeds pass right through our bodies undigested, so make sure to grind 'em to get the benefits!
- Store your ground seeds in the refrigerator or freezer to keep them from going rancid. If you opt out of using a grinder and buy pre-ground, make sure to store those in the freezer or fridge as well.
- You can add sesame, sunflower, pumpkin and ground flax to smoothies, salads, soups, raw treats and bars, etc. and eat tahini (ground sesame seeds) in hummus or spread on toast with raw honey, use ground flax as an egg replacement, and eat raw pumpkin and sesame seeds as a snack.
- You can also keep it simple and make a pumpkin + flax ground mix each week for two weeks, then a sunflower + sesame ground mix each week for two weeks and just add the 2 Tbs. to smoothies, salads, oatmeal, yogurt, nut milks everyday.