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Mood (Y)



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Ova the Top

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DISCLAIMER

Mood(y) is an inclusively exclusive space for storytelling, sass, and science around hormonal health.

A little note before you dive in!

Everything here is for curiosity, not as prescriptions.

All bodies are different, one size never fits all.

Take what speaks to you, leave the rest behind.

Some stories get real-adult themes and overwhelming feelings.

If you're trying anything new, please check in with a pro first!

Team Mood(y) Magazine

EDITOR'S LETTER

My Dearest Mood(y) Readers,

Welcome to your safe space, where hormones meet hope and self care.

Mood(y) is not only personal to my heart's core but something that should be talked about more.

52% of women suffering with hormonal health issues globally, still remain unreported.

78% of the ladies I lunch with are diagnosed with hormonal disorders, and still rely on OCPs or quick fixes.

Mood(y) is not only about celebrating healing but over sharing. It is an amalgamation of 5 years of trauma and trial during my PCOS journey which finally concluded with the last 2 years of recovery through treatment and retreat. Like its been said before, there's no free lunch, and so, PCOS was just a price I paid for the gift im sharing today. Because if there's one fun fact i know as a journalist, it is that bad stories make good headlines.

Mood(y)'s Vision & Mission statement revolves around Attribute, Awareness, Access, and Agenda. *Mood(y)* wants to be the Cyster its audience never had, just how a Women's Hormonal Health Magazine is sadly something we never had.

Mood(y) does not believe in quick fixes or short reels, but in sustainable practices and expert appeals. *Mood(y)* has not only reflected a synergy between science and sass but it has been packed with healing, sweat and tears (included life savings).

So, if you've ever cried in a bathroom and didn't know why, If your doctor ever said 'it's normal' when it wasn't, If you've ever been called moody when you were actually just exhausted, if you've ever bled through a meeting and smiled anyway or if you've ever Googled "Is it normal to feel insane before my period?" then, my dear *Mood(y)* reader, you've come to the right place and you're reading the right space!

So, grab your favourite tea now, because I certainly have some to spill!

With love & h(o)rmony,
Your Cystic Sister xx

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director



Editorial
Out of office service
Faceless fame inspired by: *Maison
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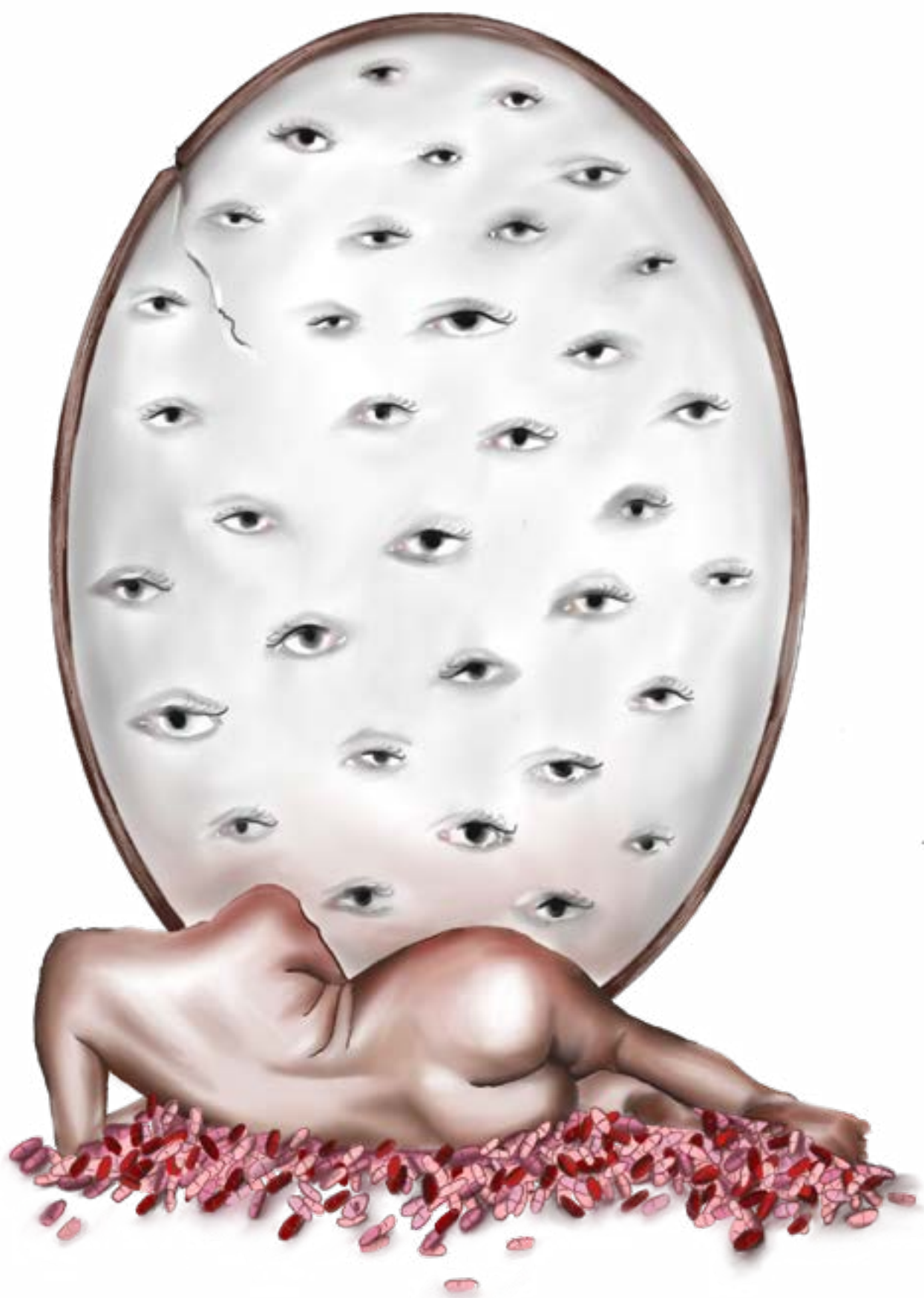
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Artist: Meet Ahluwalia



HORMONES VS HYSTERIA

MANSPLAINING MEDICAL MISOGyny

Women's pain is still treated as drama, not data. I bled for four months and waited four weeks for an ultrasound. Back home in Delhi, I spent three years visiting the city's "best" gynaecologists who gave me zero answers, a few hundred packs of pills, and a bunch of unsolicited opinions. These aren't rare horror stories, they're a pattern with a name, Medical misogyny. The quiet assassination of women's healthcare. The UK Women and Equalities Committee calls it "unconscious" bias, but unconscious doesn't make it harmless. Women's pain over the years has been dismissed, misdiagnosed, overlooked, and undermined. All their issues are conveniently tagged as personal stress or professional rage. Whereas men's health has always been on top priority in hierarchy. By intention and by default. From endometriosis to heart disease, symptoms are either alleged as "overreacting" or treated as "underwhelming." If spiralling was a day job and gaslighting a daily wage, I'd never end up jobless or underpaid.

A History of Hysteria

The roots are ancient. For centuries, medicine treated women as "small men," their bodies mysterious, their emotions suspect. Complaints were classified as hysteria or hypochondria. Medicine usually studied men and guessed women. The male body was the rule, and the female body, an exception. Women had to fight tooth and nail for their reproductive rights. After suffering in silence, finally, issues like Postpartum depression and psychosis were formally recognized in the 1900s.

Rashi Chowdhary, a functional nutritionist who speaks openly about hormonal health, calls it "the invisible filter that makes women question if their pain is real." She urges followers to track symptoms, demand tests, and refuse gaslighting. She often reminds her audience "Your symptoms are messages, not overreactions."

On the contrary, I slid into a family friend's inbox, on an impulse, who heads a big-pharma that pumps pills. She shot me down, and I'm still on a guilt trip figuring out my thirst for that tea. But, now I know that my thirst was demanding answers, and the answer was silenced protocol.

Breaking the Silenced Protocol

Medical misogyny is a silent yet powerful parasite in the healthcare system that misreads women's pain at every level. It's not just about gynecology, women's heart attacks, depression, and even cancer symptoms are often ignored because they don't fit the male-centric "template." If doctors can't fit us in their box, they slap the "PMS" label on our foreheads. A convenient blame on the existence of our nature. The odds are dangerously against us, women are less likely to be believed and more likely to be offered therapy. The Handmaid's tale is a great depiction of this memorandum. Years of delays, misdiagnoses, and suffering later, dangerous gaps in chronic pain and cardiovascular care is the punishment 'we' suffer for 'their' dismissal. Women are still brainwashed about their bodies, whether it's menstrual pain, fertility, or chronic illnesses. Medicine still chooses to focus on men's health and hand out therapy vouchers to women "in need." The system now capitalises on women's health by pushing forward private care and elite after care. It's worse for marginalized groups who face greater barriers and abseil outcomes. At this point this isn't just misdiagnosis, but disregard.

Outdated stigma around women's health piles on daily stress. Women are forced to fight over appointments. There is no discrimination left between scoring a Birkin or an ultrasound appointment. Stigmas around women's health which are intertwined with lifestyle blaming and body shaming simply add insult to the injury. Medical misogyny is a ruthless barrier that keeps women in a mentally traumatising asylum and physically painful prison. Women's voices must lead, the painful gap must collapse, and healthcare must finally treat women like humans, not afterthoughts. Because advocacy isn't optional, it's survival.

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Silenced Protocol
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HORMONAL HARMONY

THE STATE OF WOMEN'S HORMONAL HEALTH ON A GLOBAL LANDSCAPE

The progress of any country is often measured by its GDP, military might, technological advancements and economic prowess. But aren't we missing something crucial here? What about something that concerns half of the world's population that we don't pay adequate attention to? Yes, I am talking about women's hormonal health, which isn't given its due respect in global forums and across cultures, ranging from being shunned, commodified, overlooked, and stigmatised. Thus, it's vital to have conversations on how women's hormonal health is perceived across cultures, how it has been subjected to hyper-commercialisation and over-medicalisation, along with its political dimensions amidst international challenges. Rooted in India's civilisational ethos yet mindful of global perspectives, I feel the world urgently needs a unique framework balancing both tradition and modernity, one that can serve as a beacon to follow.

From Stigma to Celebration: Global Perspectives on Women's Hormonal Health

Some view it as scandalous or 'impure'. Some completely ignore it. Some choose to over-medicalise and commodify it. Some even celebrate it.

Reactions to women's hormonal health could not be more different across the globe. Let's first examine the situation across the developed nations of the Western world. In fact, Hollywood celebrities such as Kourtney Kardashian have decided to capitalise on the issue by marketing their own brand of vaginal-enhancing gummies. The product itself perpetuates a notion wherein an ideal vaginal smell and taste exists without considering that all vaginas are different, thereby further stigmatising women in the process.

Conversations about women's hormonal health are penalised in certain regions of the world, particularly in Western Asian and Northern African countries. Menstruating women are forbidden from participating in socio-religious activities, showcasing how taboos surrounding menstruation are ubiquitous across the region. Women are deprived of access to information about their own hormonal health, which harms their overall well-being, especially during their periods. Consequently, they are hesitant to seek support and assistance due to the potential cultural backlash they might face. And, society remains a mute spectator, failing to understand how this prevents women from taking steps to improve their hormonal health and menstrual hygiene.

But if you really want to see what a celebration looks like, why not embark on an expedition to India, a land deeply rooted in civilisational wisdom and traditional values?

The menstrual cycle of the Goddess Kamakhya is honoured annually during the Ambubachi Mela observed in the northeastern state of Assam: a divine acknowledgement of fertility and creation. The Raja Parba festival in Odisha celebrates the annual menstrual cycle of Mother Earth. During this time, women are showered with immense care and affection, eliminating any societal taboo about menstruation in the process. Travelling down south, a girl's transition to womanhood is celebrated through the Thirandukalyanam tradition in Kerala. Contrary to what many believe, we do have traditions which revere different facets of women, especially when they go through their periods.

When a Woman's Body Becomes a Business Plan

The hyper-commercialisation of women's hormonal health. We all know who the culprits are, but as the saying goes in Hindi: kuch baatein ankahi rehne do (some things are better left unsaid). So rather than naming and shaming them all in a list-like fashion, let's explore how they have unabashedly profited by propagating pernicious perspectives, especially those regarding menopause.

In fact, a report by the Guardian elucidates that these corporations portray menopause, a perfectly natural biological stage of hormonal ageing, as a malady to market 'treatments' like hormone replacement, a.k.a. menopausal hormone therapy. They conveniently overlook that taking MHT continuously for five years exacerbates the risk of breast cancer, as stated in the research conducted by Prof Martha Hickey in the well-renowned medical journal the *Lancet*. The evidence in their research further highlights that MHT was efficacious only in mitigating hot flashes and night sweats. The other symptoms? Nada. The sheer lack of transparency and impartiality regarding information on menopause is quite alarming indeed.

These corporations have even resorted to selling low-standard products to African countries in contrast to the West. Sanitary pads, produced by one of these corporations, that were sold in Kenya, caused rashes amongst several product users who alleged that their quality was far inferior to those sold in Western countries. And it turns out that they were correct. Hard to believe it, right? Neo-colonialism 2.0 at its finest.

Nuclear Deals, Trade Wars, but Nothing for Women's Hormonal Health

Countries spending hours deliberating over nuclear non-proliferation, trade wars and climate goals sounds common, no? But what about women's hormonal health? Well, the simple answer is that it conveniently gets relegated to the sidelines of international summits with a polite mention. And then what? Radio silence with no hoots.

Global health emergencies like COVID brought ventilators, masks and vaccines to the forefront, while women's health took a backseat with hormonal health clinics ceasing their operations. It's the insidious invisibilisation of women's hormonal health that shows how utterly misplaced the world's priorities are.

Even countries with a strong public health framework, like Scotland, which made significant strides in women's hormonal health, continue to medicalise to such an extent that it ends up becoming "a double-edged sword". Although Scotland had passed a landmark legislation in 2021, promulgating universal access to menstrual products for women, it inadvertently reinforced the notion that menstruating women were vulnerable and needed assistance. Seems rather patronising. Sympathy is not required. Rather, empathy is in need of the hour.

Over-medicalisation, which includes the aggressive marketing of treatments and menstrual products, is simply not the solution. Holistic approaches rooted in traditions such as yoga and ayurveda can be taken forward. In fact, our Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji has championed the integration of yoga into the lives of women to mitigate pregnancy-related discomfort, cope with pain, bolster overall hormonal health and enhance energy levels, while reducing their susceptibility to broader health issues. This vision, grounded in civilisational ethos offering balance and resilience, besides blending the traditional and the modern, is what the world urgently needs.

So, where do we go from here?

It's high time the world stopped viewing women's hormonal health as a niche area or a footnote if true progress is to be made. After all, healthy women are the key to ensuring healthier societies, economies and countries. The world needs approaches which combine civilisational wisdom with modern public policies, not commercialisation and over-medicalisation.

Aditya Bhalla
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Period Pact
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THE MOOD MANUAL

THE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S HORMONAL HEALTH
ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

“You’re just being moody.”

This so-called moodiness has less to do with personality and more with hormones, our hormones aren’t any less than tiny chemical messengers running like headless chickens in our bodies. They influence not only how women feel but also how they think, act, and sometimes even the choices they make in life. If our brain is the CEO, hormones are creative directors, often unapologetically rewriting agendas.

Take serotonin, for example, the happy hormone, estrogen helps regulate it, which means when estrogen levels dip (especially right before menstruation), serotonin dips too. According to *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, estrogen directly influences serotonin neurons. The result? The world suddenly feels heavier, minor annoyances feel unbearable, and Netflix tragedies hit ten times harder. That fight with your partner over who left the lights on? Probably not about the lights at all, just serotonin storming out of the room.

And serotonin has a secret hiding place. About 90% of it is made in the gut, not the brain. Johns Hopkins actually calls the gut the ‘second brain’. That’s why women crave chocolates, chips, or even bizarre food combinations before their periods or during pregnancy. I personally love cheese and caramel popcorn or pineapple on pizza. These aren’t just comfort foods, they’re biochemical negotiations. When your gut-brain axis is activated, your body demands fuel to keep neurotransmitters running. Have you ever wondered why you felt strangely calmer after consuming half a jar of Nutella during PMS? That wasn’t weakness - it was neurochemistry with a sweet tooth.

Our body also speaks in whispers that many of us ignore. Sweaty palms before an exam, a knot in the stomach before a breakup, or even that heavy chest feeling when deadlines pile up.

These are your hormones and brain having a loud conversation through your body. Psychologists call this interoception. The insula, a region deep in the brain, translates these signals into feelings. When we dismiss them, we miss the early warnings our body gives. So when you say, “It’s my gut feeling”, you’re not being poetic, you’re being neurologically accurate.

Now let's add stress to the cocktail. Cortisol, the so-called stress hormone, is like that overzealous colleague who never takes a day off. It's useful in short bursts, helping you run from danger or deadlines. But when it's always on, things start breaking down. The Cleveland Clinic points out that chronic stress in women often leads to irregular cycles, insomnia, and increased anxiety. Add trauma into the mix, and your hormonal orchestra can completely lose rhythm. A toxic relationship or long-term stress doesn't just hurt emotionally, it rewires hormonal responses, leaving women caught in cycles of exhaustion and mood disruption.

This is why conditions like PMDD, PCOS, and postpartum depression are more than just emotional struggles. PMDD is PMS multiplied by ten, with hormonal fluctuations triggering depressive episodes so severe that they interfere with daily life. PCOS brings its own baggage - elevated androgens, insulin resistance, and inflammation, all of which are linked to higher risks of anxiety and depression.

Now, what makes things harder is misdiagnosis. Birth control pills, for example, are lifesavers for some, regulating cycles and moods. For others, they're emotional wrecking balls. A JAMA Psychiatry study shows how differently women respond. According to NIH researchers, even something as ordinary as paracetamol has been shown to blunt emotional intensity. The problem is, women's experiences with these drugs often get dismissed. "It's all in your head", they're told, when in fact, it's in their hormones and neurons.

These hormonal shifts don't just affect personal lives. Imagine a woman spending weeks preparing for a high-stakes presentation. On her big day, she struggles to recall stats, her mind blacks out, and her confidence shaken. Was it a lack of preparation? No, it was perimenopause brain fog, a real phenomenon backed by Frontiers in Global Women's Health. Many women step back from leadership opportunities, not because they lack ability, but because biology has momentarily hijacked their focus and self-belief. In a world that equates productivity with worth, that can be devastating.

But here's the silver lining: while hormones can't be tamed completely, their effects can be managed. Sustainable treatments often go beyond medications. They're often small, consistent habits that keep the body and mind resilient. Sleep is the foundation missing, which makes every hormonal imbalance worse. Movement matters, whether it's yoga, a walk, or dancing in your kitchen, because physical activity reduces cortisol and stabilises mood. Food, too, plays a role: stable blood sugar supports stable emotions. That means balanced meals, not crash diets.

Journaling may sound old-school, but it's powerful for spotting patterns and turning confusion into clarity. Sharing your experience with a friend, a partner, or a therapist isn't indulgence, it's science. Emotional sharing lowers stress hormones and activates brain regions tied to safety and trust.

Harvard Health calls these lifestyle anchors resilience builders. They don't erase hormonal fluctuations, but they cushion the impact. They help transform what feels like chaos into something manageable. And sometimes, humour is its own medicine. Laughing at your PMS cravings or rolling your eyes at brain fog doesn't minimise the struggle; it makes it lighter to carry.

So here's the truth: women's psychological well-being cannot be separated from their hormonal health. These aren't two parallel stories. They're one intertwined narrative. What the world often dismisses as moodiness or overreaction is frequently biology. Hormones, neurotransmitters, gut microbes, and stress systems are all playing tug of war. Instead of shame or dismissal, there can be compassion, awareness, and smarter choices.

Hormones will always have a flair for drama, but women don't have to feel like helpless protagonists in the story. With the right mix of awareness, science, and sustainable care, they can co-author the script of harmony. Because the brain isn't broken, it's bilingual. It speaks psychology, and it speaks hormones. And when you learn to listen to both, life feels more than just survival.

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The Mood Index
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OXYTOCIN POTION



DOPAMINE DRESSING

Style Board

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Illustration: Maria Rodriguez

Art Direction: Ash Gul

Item list:

Oxytocin

Dress from Zimmerman

Bag from Loro Piana

Heels from Amina Muaddi

Necklace from Tiffany

Dopamine

Tank from Blumarine

Jeans from Loewe

Bag from Fendi

Flats from Maison Alaia

Watch from Cartier

Cortisol

Bag from The Row

Tabis from Maison Margiela

Watch from Longines

Adrenaline

Corset from Schiaparelli

Bag from Miu Miu

Heels from YSL



CORTISOL

CONFORT



ADRENALINE ADVENTURE

Going down memory lane, I see a 10 year old me seated in the waiting room of my doctor's clinic. However, I wasn't there for a broken bone, or an open wound, instead, I was there to understand why my periods lasted nine days. Not very usual now, is it? Fast forward 16 years, and even now, the unpredictability of my cycle is still regarded as a medical mystery. I have been poked, prodded, and tested to various degrees, and still, there's no conclusive answer. In a twisted way, it was reassuring to know that I wasn't alone, many women share the same struggle. Women's hormonal health has been a taboo subject for decades, now.

In a survey by Endometriosis UK, around 70% of the respondents stated that they had to visit their GP over 5 times to find a solution for their hormonal health issues, in this case, endometriosis. Almost half of the respondents stated that they had to visit their GP more than 10 times before being referred to a specialist.

Another study conducted by the Manchester Metropolitan University found that amongst 33 participants, most of the women were told that their symptoms of disrupted hormonal health were in their head and that the pain is essentially something women had to endure. Of course, challenging your doctor, who is supposed to be well-versed, is not an easy task, so many of these women had to plead repeatedly before finally being referred to a specialist. We are often failed by healthcare providers due to the lack of training and knowledge. In 2025, there are still doctors who would rather quick fix a band-aid on issues.

Women's hormonal health is creeping into headlines, slowly yet surely. In this era, women have the legal rights to know what's going on in their bodies and receive proper care. And with the rise of social media and technology, long-overdue awareness is spreading. Social media has become the new waiting room, with doctors turning years of research into 30-second reels.

HORMONES ON HOLD

PIZZA ARRIVES FASTER THAN PRESCRIPTIONS WHEN
YOU'RE A WOMAN WITH AN UTERUS

Funding, or the lack of it, is one of the main culprits. A UK Parliamentary report found that there is an “under-investment in women’s health research” which usually explains why doctors resort to outdated knowledge. The saturated funding means that the training on women’s hormonal battles, such as endometriosis and PCOS, are often on the back burner and heavily ignored, even though over 1.5 million women are affected by such issues. Postcode lottery also plays a big part, a phenomenon where access to NHS services is limited by location. The blunt truth is, for some, pizza reaches faster than prescriptions do. Underfunding poisons women’s hormonal health everywhere, from a lack of research to a lack of understanding.

Worst abdominal pain of your life? Here are some painkillers. Worst mood swings? Here are antidepressants and “reassurance” that it’s all in your head. When conditions are not being invested in, they’re being misunderstood, and that is the sorry case of women’s hormonal health worldwide.

And not to forget that women aren’t even protected digitally! The notorious app, Flo, which was trusted by many, came into question for their regulation. Selling millions of users’ personal data was never a part of their subscription. Flo decided to use that for “marketing purposes”.

Women’s hormonal health is creeping into headlines, slowly yet surely. In this era, women have the legal rights to know what’s going on in their bodies and receive proper care. And with the rise of social media and technology, long-overdue awareness is spreading 30-second reels. The over-saturation of going down memory lane, I see a 10 year old me

in the waiting room of my doctor’s clinic. However, I wasn’t there for a broken bone, or an open wound, instead, I was there to understand why my periods lasted nine days. Not very usual now, is it? Fast forward 16 years, and even now, the unpredictability of my cycle is still regarded as a medical mystery. I have been poked, prodded, and tested to various degrees, and still, there’s no conclusive answer. In a twisted way, it was reassuring to know that I wasn’t alone, many women share the same struggle.

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Content leads to intensifying confusion, especially when women don’t know where to begin! I conducted a survey to find out how women felt about

the uprising awareness of women’s hormonal health on social media. All five women shared similar sentiments, but one word echoed in all answers: “confusing”. Hormonal health affects different women in different ways. When a PCOS coach suggests steak to a life-long veggie, it sounds like expecting a fish to run. One size never fits all!

The rising awareness of women’s hormonal health issues on social media is generally perceived optimistically. In 2025, women can be presidents but cannot find a reason to why their bodies are acting up, at least not without visiting their GP thrice. Until medical institutions catch up, social media may be messy, but it’s the megaphone we’ve got.

As a tech lawyer, I can’t help but end with a quick reality check. First, guard your data like you guard your last piece of chocolate: use strong passwords, turn off unnecessary app tracking, and read those privacy policies (even the boring bits). Second, if you have the bandwidth or spare change, funnel it toward organisations funding women’s health research or offering low-cost care—those donations keep the science moving. Finally, curate your feed the way you’d curate a playlist: follow qualified professionals, mute the noise, and remember that a TikTok reel is not a diagnosis. Staying informed without getting overwhelmed is an act of self-care—and one we deserve.

Nashwah Turshin
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Heavy Flow, Heavier Silence Set:
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Photographer: *Lila Cobryn*
Production Assistant: *Nashwah Turshin*

LOVE

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BITTER PILL:

TAKE ON OPCs & A YOUNG WOMAN'S HEART ATTACK
THE DEADLY COST OF A QUICK FIX

“Just take the pill” is a dangerous prescription. Walk into a doctor’s clinic with a hormonal complaint and you can almost set your watch by the advice you’ll get, Here’s the pill. Chill. These notorious colourful tablets have been marketed as Swiss army knives for women's health issues. From unqualified social media influencers to so called nutritionists and seasoned healthcare professionals, surprisingly, everyone is looking to make a quick buck over a quick fix.

Dr Kaushal Chattrapati,

a cardiologist based in Mumbai, in an interview with Mood(y) Magazine, exposes how this ‘magical cure’ can easily end up becoming any woman’s worst nightmare. These pills are the biggest culprits behind serious cardiovascular problems. In fact, Dr Chattrapati emphasises that “women with predisposing genetic factors, PCOS, and those using high doses for period postponement are susceptible to cardiovascular events.” A 27 year old woman he earlier treated had a heart attack after seven years of contraceptive pill use, which caused severe gastrointestinal distress and chest pain.

This is quite a chilling picture of these pills that are prescribed to patients like pancakes. What’s really concerning is that patients are seldom told that weight gain and menstrual changes may be side effects of their medications. According to Dr. Chhatrapati, this displays “a significant neglect and misunderstanding of cardiovascular risk in female patients”.

He also expresses that while oral contraceptive pills are effective contraceptives for young, sexually active married women, they do not protect against STDs. The very protectors are now the perpetrators, just like how corrupt government officials exploit the people they are meant to serve. Sounds familiar, no?

Dr. Chhatrapati further remarks, “The presence of estrogen and progesterone in birth control pills exacerbates the risk of blood clots.” An absolute height of negligence, and for this only, the entire healthcare industry should be taken to task.

Medical professionals recklessly advocating for artificially induced hormones should hang their heads in shame. Don’t they realise that they are jeopardising the heart health of patients? I guess not.

These birth control pills are stealthy ninjas waiting for the right moment to strike. Hence, it becomes pivotal to empower young women and equip them with the awareness of the harmful effects of artificially induced hormones. For years, the healthcare industry has preyed upon young, unsuspecting women and sold us lies. It is time us to reclaim agency over our lifestyles. Nutrition and exercise are thus crucial for reshaping community and healthcare policies to focus on prevention and safety. By prioritising healthy habits, we can foster a future where well-being is central to our lives and policies.

Ash Gul
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Pill Paradox
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Image Stylist & Post Production:
Anoushka Furia
Photographer: Jiawen Li
Photography Assistant: Alexia Wang
Talent: Bianca Sfondrini
Production Assistant: Nashwah
Turshin



THE OZEMPIC OLYMPIC

A DRUG CALLED 'CONTROL'S' HORMONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL PRICE

We scroll through our feeds and there it is again, another dazzling before and after post from someone who has been on Ozempic, and the caption reads, “Feeling lighter. Feeling Confident. Feeling myself.” Who wouldn’t want that transformation? However, we may be unaware of the stories that lie behind such reels: hormonal imbalances, physical discomfort, and, psychological strain.

What Ozempic Really Is and Why It Gets Complicated

Ozempic, is a drug originally developed to treat type 2 diabetes. It works by mimicking a natural gut hormone called GLP-1, which helps the pancreas release insulin when blood sugar rises, slows down how quickly food leaves your stomach, and signals your brain that you’re full. It also lowers glucagon, which helps prevent sugar spikes after meals. Together, this suppresses appetite and makes people eat far less without trying. And when you eat much less, you usually lose weight quickly.

That is where things get complicated. Ozempic wasn’t originally meant for people who don’t have diabetes, yet it’s now widely used as a “weight-loss shot.” However, your body is more than just its outward appearance, your internal systems, including your hormones, organs, and even the chemistry of your brain, struggle to keep up when you suddenly lose weight and crash your appetite. It’s like popping an anti depressant just because you saw your ex.

Another interesting fact is, GLP-1 hormones were first studied not in humans, but in the saliva of a desert lizard called the Gila monster, yes, your weekly shot has a wild origin.

Another interesting fact is, GLP-1 hormones were first studied not in humans, but in the saliva of a desert lizard called the Gila monster, yes, your weekly shot has a wild origin.

Physical and hormonal upheaval

Many women describe persistent nausea, bouts of vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, and stomach cramping. Others report headaches, fatigue, dizziness, and even hair thinning. They’re signs of a body under stress, especially your gastrointestinal system. When digestion is constantly disrupted, it can ripple through everything, from your sleep cycle to your energy levels, leaving you drained and depleted.

Hormones are delicate, especially for women, they govern not just the reproductive cycle, but also mood, sleep, libido, bone density, and long- term metabolic health. Rapid shedding of weight can disrupt hormonal balance. This may lead to irregular or missed periods, worsened pre-period symptoms, and changes in sexual desire. Such effects occur because weight loss can alter estrogen, progesterone, and other reproductive hormones.

Psychological Fallout

That rush of new confidence can feel powerful. Compliments pour in, and you feel lighter, more confident in your body, and attractive again. But beneath the surface, many women experience rising anxiety, irritability, insomnia, or a loss of interest in hobbies. Worrying trends can also appear, like signs of restrictive eating

patterns. Studies in Brain Sciences have found more social media content linking semaglutide’s use with disordered eating habits, like skipping meals obsessively or fearing weight regain. When your hunger cues vanish, it’s dangerously easy to ignore your body’s needs. These are the parts the glossy posts never show.

Ozempic may provide you with rapid, tangible outcomes, but it can subtly disrupt your hormones, energy levels, mood, and reproductive system. Sudden weight loss may leave behind nagging pains, irregular periods, perpetual exhaustion, and mental stress.

The sudden changes can be so tempting, but taking care of your body the proper way means so much more. Nourish your body with good foods, get your body moving in a way that is enjoyable, sleep well, and stay hydrated. Listen to your body, treat it gently, and give it the patience and kindness it needs because it really is worth it. And, remember, the finish line is not a cinched waist line.

Shilpi R
Psychologist
Delhi, India



Pulled by Opinions
Set: LCF Studios, London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist & Post Production:
Anoushka Furia
Photographer: Jiawen Li
Photography Assistant: Alexia
Wang
Talent: Bianca Sfondrini
HMUA: Yingxi Hu
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Turshin

HOW TO BREAK UP WITH YOUR GYNAC

ALT MEDICAL APPROACHES AROUND THE WORLD

Before Fitbit tracked our heartbeat or wellness became a hashtag, alternative medicinal approaches existed, which advocated a balanced perspective towards women's hormonal health. Let's tour nine stops around the world and see how ancient wisdom still lights the way.

India - Ayurveda

Way before the word 'holistic' was introduced into our dictionaries, India already showed us what it truly meant. That's right, I am talking about Ayurveda, which focuses on balancing the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) for whole-body harmony. And when they fall out of line? Total pandemonium. The essentials? Meditation, yoga, detoxification, herbal remedies and a proper diet. A textbook case of civilisational wisdom meeting modern wellness trends.

China - Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Travelling eastward, China also propounded an approach emphasising hormonal balance that revolves around the concept of yin and yang, two paradoxical forces. Just like a conductor leading an orchestra, everything has to be in sync with zero disturbances so that Qi (vital energy) flows smoothly. Acupuncture, tai chi and herbal teas are therefore essentials in ensuring that the Qi doesn't have to navigate through traffic jams worse than Mumbai's.

Japan - Kampo

Ever wondered why Japanese women have less severe menopause symptoms? According to *Lucy Notarantonio*, Japanese Kampo combined with self-care, mindful diets, and exercise has been known to mitigate the negative effects of menopause. Kampo advocates herbal formulas that restore Ki (vital energy) and get to the heart of the matter, rather than solely treating the symptoms.

mitigate the negative effects of menopause. Kampo advocates herbal formulas that restore Ki (vital energy) and get to the heart of the matter, rather than solely treating the symptoms.

Korea - Traditional Korean Medicine (TKM)

Like its neighbours, China and Japan, Korea champions an energy-balancing approach aimed at revitalising Ki. Besides acupuncture and herbal remedies, TKM includes moxibustion. Yes, burning herbs on your skin is a thing. Sounds crazy, but hey, it's been working for centuries.

West Asia - Unani

Meet the West Asian remix of ancient Greek practices - Unani. Its mission? Focusing on ensuring harmony across the four bodily humours considered the ultimate determinants of health: dam (blood), balgham (phlegm), safra (yellow bile), and sauda (black bile). Life's all about balance, right?

Sub-Saharan Africa - Traditional African Herbalism

Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, plant-based remedies are known to restore spiritual and physical balance. Did you know these traditional approaches even alleviate menstrual troubles and other gynaecological ailments? So much for those who underestimate the power of traditional wisdom.

Australia - Aboriginal Traditional Medicine

Rooted in Australia's flora Aboriginal traditional medicine has shown the world what holistic healthcare truly looks like. Combining healing with native plants like tea tree and Kakadu plum and Dreamtime spiritual practices, the Aussies certainly knew how to prioritise healing the body and spirit in one go.



Stretched
Set: *LCF Studios, London*
Creative Director: *Ash Gul*
Image Stylist & Post Production:
Anoushka Furia
Photographer: *Jiawen Li*
Photography Assistant: *Alexia Wang*
Talent: *Bianca Sfondrini*
Styling: *Anoushka Furia*
HMUA: *Yingxi Hu*
Production Assistant: *Nashwah Turshin*

C:/ Decompiling



I usually get angry or eat a lot of potatoes, and sometimes, get physically aggressive.

Cancel

Details

HAL 9000 error



I finish an entire tub of ice-cream and cry my eyes out!

Cancel

OK

Details

Computer Is Radioactive



I crave extra sugar and sexual satisfaction

Panic

Destroy Computer

Continue

Error



I tend to overreact unnecessarily and get angry and feel sad when I feel like I'm undergoing a procedure when I'm actually not.

OK

Bug found



I feel intensely emotional

OK

Ignore

Overload



I feel anxious due to PMS

Goodbye

Pants error



I usually get angry or eat a lot of potatoes, and sometimes, get physically aggressive

Yes

No

Ignore

Deploy



I crawl up & down the stairs

OK

Stop

Error



My "mood swings" intensify. I tend to behave irrationally. Perhaps, I get quite moody and angry

Confirm

Ignore



I've broken a couple of things, and smashed

Cancel

OK

Details

In Error



I get quite angry and impatient with my sons.

OK

Error



I wore a tampon and two pads during one night. I had to wake up, change my tampon twice that very night.

OK

!yeH

Iretupmoc eht ni deppart m'l pleH

Mediterranean - Balneotherapy

Why not learn a thing or two about cortisol regulation from ancient Rome? The practice of Balneotherapy encompasses mineral-water immersion for detox and hormonal support, which in turn stimulates the production of endorphins. Just sit back, relax and relish your steaming natural mineral water bath. Undoubtedly, one of the best wellness trends ever invented.

Germany - Homoeopathy

Whenever we hear the phrase 'alternative medicine', homoeopathy is the first thing that comes to our minds. Devised by German scientist Samuel Hahnemann, homoeopathy cures using super-diluted remedies that enable the body to heal on its own. In fact, it is known to improve and cure PCOS. Homoeopathy isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

Global - Naturopathy

Albeit impossible to pinpoint to a particular culture, naturopathy integrates elements from everywhere and supports the body's innate self-healing, without using any drugs. In a nutshell, healthy lifestyle changes, including dietary regulation, exercise and massages are to be prioritised above all.

No Shortcuts, Only Balance

Our version of 'Around the World in Nine Stops' conveys one fundamental message: hormonal health is all about balance; quick fixes aren't the solution. I think the way forward is clear for us. We need to

deepen our understanding of these alternative approaches and examine how we can integrate them into our daily lives while moving ahead. After years of pill-after-pill, I'm finally listening. These traditions aren't nostalgia, they're blueprints. Maybe breaking up with your Gynac isn't about ghosting modern medicine, but about dating your body again.

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative
Director
London, United Kingdom

BURNT OUT

WHY WOMEN DOUBT THEIR BODIES

Whenever my best friend and I rant about how we're feeling, our closing phrase is always: "Well I am in my [insert menstrual phase here]." A female's menstrual cycle is often described by four phases – menstrual, follicular, ovulatory and luteal – each defined by a specific concoction of hormones dictating the mood, diet, exercise and general health.

One of the most common health challenges females face are hormonal fluctuations and imbalance directly affecting their quality of life. A female's menstrual cycle is a report card for the rest of her body. Even if our body aligns with the phases, simply trying to interpret it (or explaining it to others) can lead to self-gaslighting and burn out.

It's easy to stay curious. Am I really wired or am I just stressed? Is this bloating hormonal, or am I just making excuses? Part of this dilemma is that hormone-related symptoms overlap with almost everything. Fatigue, mood swings, weight shifts, acne, hair loss and bloating – all could point to PCOS, thyroid dysfunction, or perimenopause or "just stress." Or even non-hormonal conditions that mimic hormonal symptoms such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and iron-deficiency anaemia disproportionately affect women. The overlap is so broad and messy that it is difficult to pin point what is hormonal and what isn't.

In a survey I conducted, respondents aged 19 to 30 shared experiences they later traced back to hormonal shifts including extreme depression before periods, cystic acne, fibroids, facial hair, brain fog, and skin issues. One respondent said, "I was put on the mini pill for heavy periods only for it to cause severe anaemia, vomiting and weight loss – all due to the hormonal changes caused by contraception."

Interestingly, 25% of respondents stated that they experienced symptoms that they initially believed were related to hormones but found out that they weren't. This demonstrates how hard it is to distinguish hormone-driven issues from other conditions. Another individual shared that she believed almost every health issue she had was hormonal since doctors would consistently claim hormones as the cause instead of looking any further.

"I sought advice for back pain and UTI issues which was all ruled down to my sexual activity and female anxiety. Two years later I found out that I had an infected kidney," she wrote. "It was clear that my concerns weren't taken seriously. I suppose I have been led to believe that any issue I have whether that be nausea, a headache or even the flu is somehow related to my hormones. Because I am a woman and I am young, thus it must be those hormones! It's super dehumanising."

This uncertainty is prevalent within the healthcare system established on the male body as the default. Women's hormonal fluctuations were considered "too complicated" and "burdensome" for science, and so they were excluded from clinical trials. Fun fact: By 1993, researchers in the US were legally required to include women in medical trials. Yes, that is only 32 years ago.

The legacy is that there is still lack of research and funding for women's health, leading to less understanding of the female body and more dismissal of symptoms as "normal" or "in your head". As Caroline Criado Perez discusses in *Invisible Women*, even life-threatening conditions like heart attacks are misdiagnosed in women as symptoms manifest differently. Over 50% of women

experiencing a heart attack report the following "atypical" symptoms: subtle tightness in the chest, fatigue and nausea. These symptoms are often ignored, mistaken for stress or hormonal fluctuations.

In addition, re-introducing the menstrual cycle and its phases, Criado Perez explains how historically many clinical trials have rarely considered the impact of the menstrual cycle's phases. Drugs may have diverse impacts on the female body depending on hormones levels at the time, yet trials tend to treat the female body as static. Thus, for patients there is little guidance when navigating symptoms and an even greater burden of self-examination.

I have been struggling with gut issues for over two years. Bloating and abdominal cramping have unfortunately become a daily ritual and I am constantly retracing my steps to understand where it went so very wrong. There are a multitude of reasons why my stomach swells twice its size after most meals ranging from IBS to SIBO to hormone fluctuations to malfunctioning digestive enzymes. However, I still haven't received a direct answer from a doctor leaving me to figure it out for myself. I often wonder if I'm overreacting.

So, while my best friend and I joke about being "in a phase," beneath the laugh is a burn out from doubting our own bodies. For many women, trying to understand their bodies becomes a dangerous game of trial and error. Every possibility feels both too serious and too trivial at once. On one hand, you are crying out for attention and on the other hand you feel that you could be feeding the misconception that women's health complaints aren't to be trusted.

Gaia Marinaro
Editor, Fig Journals,
London, United Kingdom



My Other Half

Set: *LCF Studios, London*

Creative Director: *Ash Gul*

Image Stylist: *Ash Gul*

Post Production: *Anoushka Furia*

Photographer: *Jiawen Li*

Photography Assistant: *Alexia Wang*

Talent: *Jessica Tu*

Styling: *Ash Gul*

HMUA: *Yingxi Hu*

Production Assistant: *Nashwah Turshin*



CHARLOTTE WILLCOX:

DRAWING CHANGE THROUGH VULVAS, VISIBILITY AND VIBRANCE



Charlotte Willcox is an Oxford-born feminist illustrator whose first drawing, a vulva, set the tone for her bold, body-positive career. Her vibrant palette and cheeky silhouettes have appeared everywhere, from the Vagina Museum and Netflix's Sex Education to collaborations with Skinny dip London and Tampax UK. Through work that celebrates self-love and period pride, she urges women to embrace the beauty 'down there'. Mixing activism with accessible design, Charlotte turns everyday products and galleries into platforms for empowerment and dialogue.

I first heard of Charlotte Willcox at an event I attended. An acquaintance I met, who I casually mentioned to about my trip to the Vagina Museum earlier that evening, smiled and said, "Most of those incredible illustrations? Charlotte made them." When I was directed to Charlotte, a scroll later I was smitten by her vivid and unapologetic art.

Connecting with Charlotte didn't just land me an incredible illustration, it sparked a friendship rooted in shared ideals, dismantling taboos, calling out capitalism, and flooding the page with unapologetic vibrance. It felt less like networking and more like a serendipitous reunion.

Her mission is to normalise what the world keeps hidden. "Take a mirror and look down there," she laughs. "Not all vaginas are the same and we need to accept the beauty they showcase." I couldn't agree less, Vagina facials, catwalks, and porn are just plasters over real beauty.

With every stroke of her pen, she proves that art can be a revolution, and that our bodies deserve to be drawn, celebrated, and truly seen. Her art isn't just striking, it's an act of rebellion against the silence that still surround women's health.

I was curious to know Charlotte's inspiration behind sketching vulvas, "It gave me a rush," she told me, "and that's exactly what I want other girls to feel, that excitement and ownership of their own bodies."

Charlotte's own experiences with healthcare echo frustration. "Doctors often jump straight to the contraceptive pill without explaining alternatives." "There's a systemic laziness in women's health that treats our pain as an afterthought."

The pill nearly cost her everything. "I fainted and later found out I was at risk of a stroke because of the pill I was taking," she said. "Since then, I've been told I can never take the pill again due to the high risk of blood clots. This experience highlighted how little research there is regarding the varied effects of contraceptives on women."

Today, Charlotte channels those frustrations into her art and advocacy. "I'm more in tune with my body. I can predict my hormonal changes, and manage my symptoms," she said. "I want other women, especially young girls, to see themselves through my story and to feel empowered to seek answers for their health. Breaking the stigma and misinformation around menstruation and women's health is important to me."

Our conversation naturally slid from art to activism. We dissected pharma capitalism, especially the marketing of pain killers for period cramps. "An acquaintance who works in the pharmaceutical industry mentioned those pink-packaged 'period pain' killers are the same strength as regular pain killers."



Mood(y) Pills
Set: AI Studio, The Internet
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Generation & Post Production:
Anoushka Furia

Despite occasional backlash, “Mostly from men who feel threatened by my work,” Charlotte’s reception is overwhelmingly positive. Haters gonna hate but creators gonna create! “If someone reacts strongly, I know it’s impactful.”

Her biggest supporter is her boyfriend. “He’s my loudest cheerleader,” she said. Proof that not all men think their girl is just being moody.

Charlotte’s art has become both a megaphone and a mirror, bold lines that shout, colours that celebrate, and subjects that invite every woman to see herself unfiltered.

Listening to her, I realised I not only found a feature for Mood(y) Magazine, I found a friend whose ideology mirrors my mission, to mix science with sass, and to turn silence into solidarity. A reminder that our bodies deserve more than hush and hurry, they deserve truth and treasury.

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom

Balance

Set: LCF Studios, London

Creative Director: Ash Gul

Image Stylist: Ash Gul

Post Production: Anoushka Furia

Photographer: Jiawen Li

Photography Assistant: Alexia

Wang

Talent: Bianca Sfondrini

Styling: Anoushka Furia

HMUA: Yingxi Hu

Production Assistant: Nashwah

Turshin



VAGUS, VAGINAS & VIBES:

CYCLE SYNCING THROUGH YOGA, NUTRITION, VAGUS NERVE
ACTIVATION & EFT TAPPING FOR HORMONAL HORMON(Y)

Listening to the V's

Women's hormones don't run on a 9 to 5. They pulse, peak, and dip. Their rhythm is impulsive in nature and reckless in character. The art of cycle syncing is matching food, movement, and rest to each menstrual phase by turning a conditioned rhythm into an unconditional power.

These V-powered rituals invite us to tune in. **Four women** show us how.

From **Paridhi's** child pose to **Ayushi's pomegranate and dark chocolate bar**, from **Sarah's** taps to **Ruchi's** Om chanting, these women embody the truth, hormonal health is a conversation, not a condition.

Cycle *syncing*, backed by both ancient practice and modern science, asks us to stop fighting ourselves and start listening to our bodies.

Whether it's yoga for lowering cortisol, humming to activate the vagus nerve, EFT for clearing ancestral stress, or mindful nutrition for feeding the gut brain axis, the mantra remains the same, your hormones are not a glitch, they're guidance.

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom

Ayushi Shah is a gut goddess

and hormone whisperer. A functional health practitioner preaching nutritional values, based in Vadodara, Gujarat, India. Through her platform @wellnessbyayushi and her new healing space @ayus.clairveda, launched in collaboration with Greenr Café, she fuses nutrition with sound baths and infrared saunas. A space to *root, rise & return*.

She built this healing sanctuary to permanently escape the feeling of sorrow on returning from a journey of joy. I was curious to know the moment that inspired Ayushi to build Ayu's, Originally she dreamed of pursuing a career as a travelling yoga instructor but, "I was at a transitional retreat when I realised that I want to build something that I don't need to escape from but something that I feel the need to escape to" she said. Ayushi clearly doesn't feel post vacation depression like any of us.

Ayushi's glow began with struggle, hormonal acne and a pharmacy of quick fix pills. Hormonal acne in seventh grade set Ayushi on a life long mission to decode the gut skin hormone axis. Instead of hopping clinics, she turned inwards, through holistic nutrition and colourful food until she healed herself. Patients often lack patience, she laughs, "and I explain the need to slow down." In her world, healing is slow, rhythmic, and deeply kind, she says.

"In your experience, which everyday habits like stress eating, or skipping workouts, sneakily sabotage hormonal health?" I asked. "Untimely food intake affecting circadian rhythms, stress related anxiety, depression impacting gut health, and poor habits like drinking water with meals not only cause bloating but are big culprits" she replied. "Your hormones are messengers, not enemies," she insists.

Her Instagram is vibrant with antioxidant packed plates and soft rituals, a manifesto for gut love and hormonal harmony. A pomegranate infused dark chocolate bar is her go to and a must try!

Paridhi Gupta is a Fashion blogger turned yoga guru based in Delhi, India. @_paridhigupta found her calm beneath her chaos. After university, she developed severe back issues, doctors warned her, saying, she might never wear heels again. "I could barely do the bare minimum," she recalls, "but a few months of yoga and I was dancing in heels again." "That transformation was my true calling" she said. I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason. However, Paridhi, is a living experience, she suffered a chronic ailment only to align with her higher purpose. The universe had her back!

Yoga didn't just reshape Paridhi's body, it rewired her life. After years of crash diets and self critique, she found healing on the mat during the lockdown of 2020. "Yoga proved to be a powerful asset for my physical and mental recovery," she says. Now, she preaches sequences that honour each menstrual phase, from the energy surge post period to the deep rest of luteal days. "Yoga is not just about movement of the body, but the mind" she says. "Yoga is about routines and about unlearning those routines to start afresh again" the cycle of life as she explained.

Her rituals include mindful breathing, listening to her breath to quiet mental noise, and even counting backwards to declutter her mind. Paridhi emphasizes upon a practice she abides by, Jala Neti Kriya, an act of clearing morning mucus through saline water and deep breathing for a clear system, fresh mind and glowing skin.

Restorative poses like Child's Pose and Vajrasana soothe cramps and reset hormones, while her lively workshops prove that wellness can be joyful, social, and gloriously imperfect.

"Being moody isn't a flaw," she laughs, "it's Shakti, a feminine energy in motion."

Ruchi Khosla is a mind body match maker and nervous system healer based in Vancouver, Canada. @_ruchi_khosla specialises in healing chronic illness, anxiety, and hormonal chaos through breath work, meditation, face yoga, and Vagus Nerve Activation.

Her path began with a health scare in 2011, when pneumonia forced her to explore mind body healing. Life pinned her to bed. “I couldn’t move,” she remembers. “I was bed ridden and frozen, but truly chosen,” Ruchi said.

“Meditation and vagus nerve activation healed me,” she said. “The vagus nerve is the largest nerve, which influences every major organ and can soothe all systems,” she emphasized. Ruchi suggests humming, Om chanting, conscious breathing and face yoga as non-negotiables to soothe organs, drop cortisol, and tune into a meditative state.

She advises somatic meditation to activate the vagus nerve and the parasympathetic highway that regulates the “rest and digest” system. “Humming is one of the most powerful vagus nerve stimulators,” she explained. Her clients, even women with autoimmune thyroid conditions find hormonal balance through these micro-practices. “Meditation is as essential as brushing your teeth,” she said.

She advocates for theta healing and Raj Yog meditation, which helped her heal psychological trauma from chronic illness. Her workshops are a mixology of face yoga and breathwork, helping women Her workshops are a mixology of face yoga and breathwork, helping women calm hormones and reclaim

stillness. “To break the myth, we must try, or we’ll never know,” she adds with a grin.

Sarah Tobin is a Brighton based EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) Tapper. She is an author of Tapping into You: Transform Trauma & Rediscover Your Authentic Self, her tools are made for both the crumbling and the rising. Her feed, @sarah_tobin, is a warm invitation to tap away stress and ancestral patterns.

For Sarah, healing began with heartbreak. Her path was carved through grief. After losing her first child, she discovered EFT not as a trick, but as a lifeline, something that shifted her from the edge into space that felt livable again. “I felt a massive difference within myself,” she says. She is now a full-time practitioner, and guides women through tapping to release trauma and lower cortisol. Emotional release can realign hormones as effectively as any prescription.

“Tapping switches off the fight-or-flight response,” she explains, “and lets the body return to hormonal balance.” Clients report relief from PMS, perimenopause symptoms, and even miscarriage related trauma. With online memberships and workshops across the UK and Ireland, Sarah proves that the nervous-system can feel as intimate as a heartbeat.

Her favourite success story? A 13-year-old boy who arrived mute from trauma and now chats and hoots after a series of sessions.

Sarah not only offers tapping into emotional freedom or preaches the art of release, but, she creates a space of belongingness where trauma and hormones co-exist, where tears are valid and where ancestral wounds transform from shadows to stories.

FOOD MOOD - BEARD:
BAKE IT TILL YOU MAKE IT

Food Mood
Recipe: Sunaina Dhir, The Rolling
Pin, Dubai, UAE
Illustration: Maria Rodriguez
Art Direction: Ash Gul

GLUTEN FREE OATS
1 1/2 CUP



SOAK

COCONUT MILK
1 CUP



FLAX SEEDS
1 SPN



SOAK



1/2 SPN
WATER



HAZELNUTS
HANDFUL



VANILLA EXTRACT
1/2 SPN



BAKING
POWDER
1/2 SPN



LOVE
ABUNDANT



CINNAMON
POWDER
1/2 SPN

WHISK!



HEAT



VOILÀ!

Concept: *Cynthia*
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Alexia Wang
Photographer: Alexia Wang
Photography Assistant: Jiawen Li
Talent: Ying
Styling: Ash Gul
HMUA: Yingxi
Production Assistant: Nashwah
Turshin



For as long as I've turned my head towards the night sky, I've felt a pull towards the moon. Myth, biology, and modern science, all hint at a subtle duet between lunar phases and hormonal rhythms. The Greek goddess Artemis also called Cynthia, has long symbolised this cosmic connection. Yet, when we asked women in London and New Delhi about their own cycles, most claimed that they track their periods but rarely think of its connection with the moon. The possibility of this connection is real, but, the awareness is rare.

Cynthia, The Goddess, The Guardian & The Guide

Cynthia was the Greek goddess of the hunt, childbirth, and untamed womanhood. Ancient Greeks noticed how menstruation often echoed the moon's 29 day rhythm. And so, Cynthia became a symbol of feminine strength and cosmic timing. Even today, her name evokes resilience and the elegant chaos of our hormonal tides. Worshippers hailed Cynthia as a guardian of women and children. She pulses a deep connection between lunar lights and hormonal rhythms.

Full Moon, Fuller Feelings

Modern research nods to what poets knew, the moon can stir up moods and nudge hormones. Clinical sexologist Michael Ra Bouchard links full and new moons to surges in sexual desire. No wonder its never a noon date but always a moon date or a date night! A subtle charge you can feel under the big white sky.

Menstrual Cycle Meets Lunar Lights

The lunar cycle is a cosmic reflection. New Moon is for Menstrual reset, the sky clouds, we retreat, bleed, and reboot. Perfect period

FULL MOON, FULL MOOD
EKADASHI FAST, FULL MOON FLOWS & CYNTHIA'S GLOW

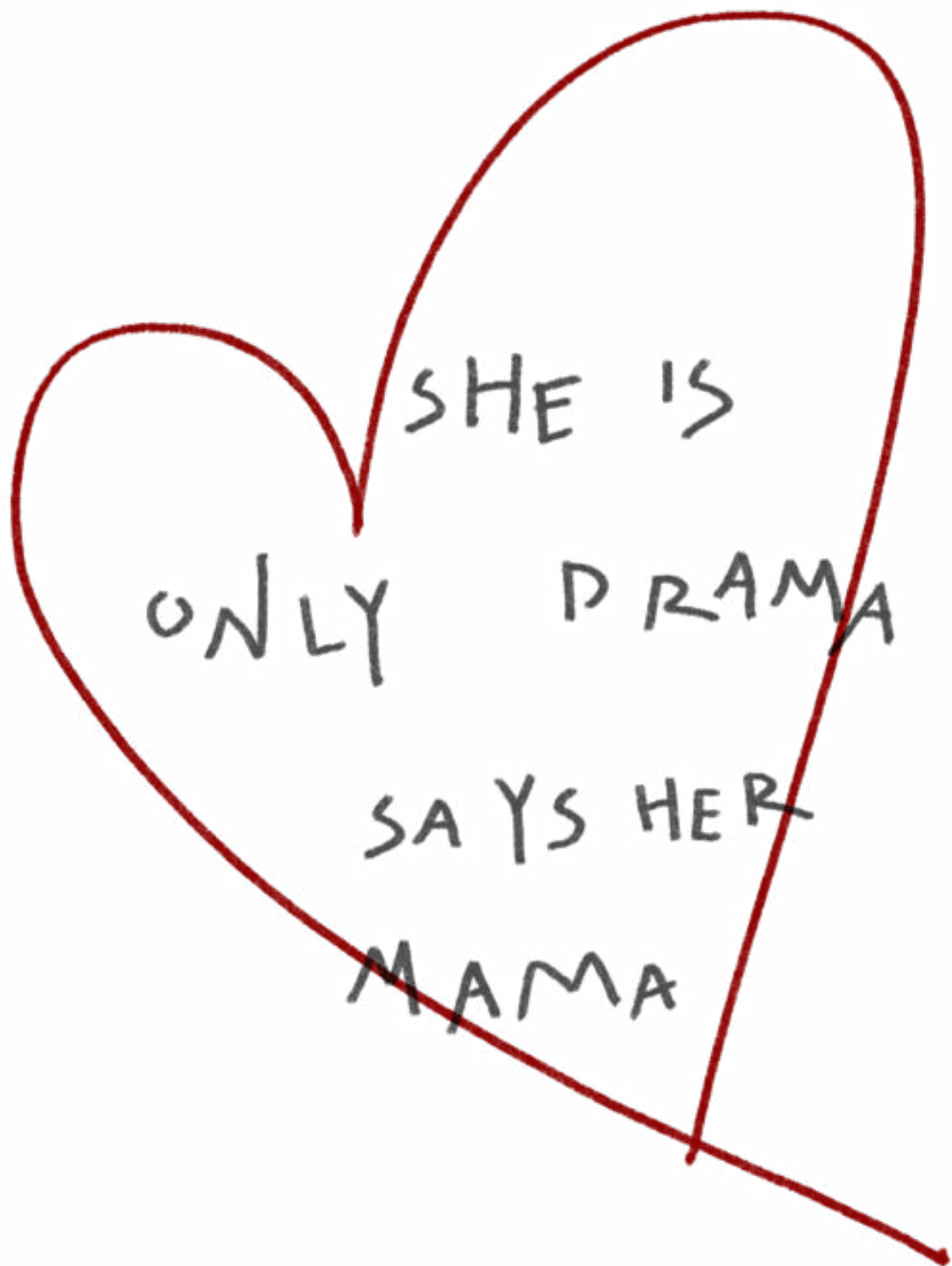
to cancel the plans you once made. Waxing Moon is for Follicular lift, estrogen rises, energy builds, and ideas spark. Suddenly you're Marie Kondo, rearranging your closet at midnight. Full Moon is for Ovulation glow, fertility and libido peak. No wonder why star gazing is such a romantic sport. Waning Moon is for Luteal programming, progesterone climbs, moods mellow, and the body turns inward to prepare for the next stain. The phase when, snack drawers are emptied, and text replies are optional.

A survey of women, aged between 22 to 36, across London and New Delhi revealed natural cycles averaging 25 to 35 days. Three quarter of the lot, track their periods through apps, but only a few actively follow lunar phases. Limited exposure to natural moonlight might blunt any subtle effect. In the case of which, If menstrual lunar alignment exists, it's real, but rarely perceived.

Ancient Rituals for Modern Hormones

Ekadashi Fasting: Hindu tradition offers a fascinating fusion of spirituality and endocrinology, Ekadashi fasting, observed twice a month on the lunar calendar. When practiced mindfully, it can improve insulin sensitivity, moderate glucose, and balance estrogen. But overdoing it can cause cortisol spikes, throwing ovulation off the grid. As mentioned by Dr. Shilpa Arora, Hydration and gentle nourishment keep the practice both smart and sacred.

Sattvic Nutrition: Kitchari always hits home. Its almost like an India risotto. Rice and lentils combined with seasonal veggies, soothe the nervous system and steady hormones. Garnish with coriander, butter, gur (jaggery and some pickle.



SHE IS

ONLY DRAMA

SAYS HER

MAMA

Yoga: Under the full moon, hormones naturally lean towards a slower, more restorative rhythm. Full moon yoga enhances that energy with gentle and grounding poses like Child's Pose and deep breaths. A misfit for a leg day. But an auspicious time to calm the nervous system, steady the mood, and let the body sync in with the moon.

Sound Baths: Crystal bowls and gongs activate the parasympathetic system, lowering cortisol and inviting emotional release. Guilty of finishing four tubs of tiramisu on your first day? Maybe a sound bath could rinse all the sins.

Moon Bathing: Absorbing moonlight outdoors calms the mind and nurtures reproductive rhythms. Aligns "rasa" and "soma," Ayurvedic codes for vitality and rejuvenation. If you can see the moon right now, don't walk, RUN! Since the time my homeopath asked me to sit beneath the moon, my hormones have not only found hormon(y), but I, a friend. If you're scared of your chats with chat GPT being caught, I'm scared of being caught by my mum hearing me talk to the moon.

Meditation & Mindful Movement: Moonlit breath work, tai chi, or a slow dance drop stress hormones and boost oxytocin. If you're single try pranayama, but if you're double, try salsa over cigarettes after sex.

Grounding Walks: Soak up melatonin's magic barefoot under moonbeams. An elegant antidote for anxious nights.

The moon offers both, poetry and physiology.

So, flow into the glow, dance to the moon's quiet beat, each step, a whisper of the magic, your body already carries.

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom

GLOW INTO

PERFECT SKIN IS A
ARE HERE T

It's easy to break out right before your period, it's a common struggle every diva goes through. Its like having a beauty bombshell subscription which got cancelled the minute we hit puberty. But have you ever thought about why sometimes you feel like Anne Hathway, while other times like Cruella de Vil? The answers lie within the happiness of your hormones.

Hormones do far more than cause acne, they're multitaskers. Studies show that estrogen helps the skin look plump, boosts collagen production, and keeps it elastic and glowing. That's why during ovulation, when estrogen peaks, women's skin, complexion, facial symmetry, and even attractiveness tend to improve. Which explains why some days the mirror is an enemy, and the others a best friend.

INTERRUPTED

MYTH AND YOUR HORMONES

GO PROVE IT

In the hormone and skin soap opera, a never ending saga of questioning one's own beauty, there are episodes where hormone imbalances win and skin loses. Progesterone increases oil production and can cause bloating, which is why skin often looks dull and breaks out before a period. If the ovaries or adrenal glands produce too much testosterone, that can lead to acne, larger pores, or even excessive hair growth. But don't worry, testosterone production in women is completely normal, and as long as it stays in balance, it actually supports muscle strength and bone health.

For me personally, my emotions don't feel directly controlled by hormones, but the physical changes often trigger appearance-related anxiety. Not knowing when a breakout or bloating will suddenly hit feels like a lottery, you never know if your period will come with candy truck tons of pain or not. Sometimes I wonder if I used the wrong product or had an allergic reaction, but then I realize, it's my period which is around the corner. Every month, we go through a stretch of unstable skin and the looming uncertainty of cramps or discomfort. Isn't that a challenge in itself?

Hormones are closely tied to how women perceive themselves and their self-confidence, hormones don't just mess with skin, they mess with egos. We all know looks aren't everything, but when we care about beauty, the ups and downs of our appearance inevitably affect our mood. The fix? Know your cycle, stop the guilt, and own both sides, cause darling, you're a goddess on every day of any week.

As an East Asian woman, flawless skin is almost a universal beauty standard. The ideal baby-like skin, smooth, soft, poreless, wrinkle-free, and naturally radiant, glowing like a K drama lead is a common fascination. Natural hormonal fluctuations make minor skin issues seem incompatible with the idea of “perfect skin,” which only deepens appearance anxiety.

This anxiety is amplified in the age of social media. On Instagram, TikTok, or Xiaohongshu, we rarely see unfiltered skin. Filters and editing apps are the norm, making faces look smooth, poreless, and perfect. The result? Our everyday faces feel “less than,” and every glance in the mirror turns into a comparison with an unrealistic version of ourselves, feeding endless anxiety.

But the good news is, hormonal skin changes are not unsolvable. By tracking and understanding our hormone cycles, we can plan skin-care strategies to give our skin what it needs. For example, before your period, when progesterone rises and sebum production increases, gentle exfoliating acids like BHA (salicylic acid) or AHAs can help control oil and clear pores. Cutting down on sugar or dairy, sleeping earlier, and reducing late nights can also help lower cortisol levels. During menstruation, when both estrogen and progesterone drop, it’s better to focus on soothing care, ingredients like centella, chamomile, or ceramides. Drinking warm water, getting enough iron and vitamin B, and boosting circulation can also help restore skin vitality.

Hormones aren’t villains, they’re moody directors running the play backstage. If we stop expecting our skin to imitate an Estee Lauder ad, and start respecting our body’s rhythms, we’ll save ourselves the anxiety of a toxic relationship between ourselves and the mirror. Perfect skin is a myth, but balanced skin is a win.

Jessica Tu
Beauty Editor, Suie Magazine
Taiwan





Concept: Unshaved & Unfiltered
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist & Post Production:
Anoushka Furia
Photographer: Alexia Wang
Photography Assistant: Jiawen Li
Talent: Anonymous
Styling: Ash Gul
Production Assistant: Nashwah
Turshin

Hate to break it to you sisters, but your lip glaze is more detrimental to your health than your situationship.

Consider this analogy. Imagine there's a dedicated group chat, with all of your hormones chiming in. For instance, estrogen pings you when it's time for your period, insulin synthesizes the sugar from your vanilla iced latte, and cortisol prompts your fight or flight responses while you navigate your day-to-day. But here's when the chaos ensues, certain uninvited chemicals, termed "endocrine-disrupting chemicals," crash the group chat. These impostors don't just lurk but also cosplay your real hormones, mimicking them, stirring in drama.

The result? Total hormonal anarchy. Your period ghosts you, your skin throws tantrums like a sequel to *13 Going on 30*, and down the line, you're looking at red flags redder than your ex, fertility struggles and hormone-fueled cancer, all because a few shady chemicals decided to crash the party. These cunning endocrine disruptors are lurking on your kitchen counter and bathroom shelf like roommates who never pay their rent.

Let's get real. Your body is basically a bestselling novel, and these chemicals are out here scribbling in plot twists you never signed up for. The *Wall Street Journal* calls it a "fertility crisis," but it feels more like a hostile takeover of your biology. Consider your makeup bag. It isn't just helping serve looks; it's sabotaging the endocrine system. Each time you swipe lipstick across your lips, know that it is accompanied by a side of parabens and phthalates, cosplaying as estrogen, gradually worming its way into your hormonal group chat and stirring up chaos. We

are addressing real people, real heartbreak, PCOS, infertility, cancer risks, and miscarriages.

Take your gel manicure, for example. Europe just pulled the plug on TPO, the chemical behind many gel polishes, officially banning it in 2025 after labeling it a reproductive toxicant, according to an article published by CNN. And your alleged "self-care" supplies? Those lotions, shampoos, and potions may be doing more harm than good— a compromised skin barrier with a dash of carcinogens for an extra kick. Not cute. Consider giving them the same in-depth, compulsive analysis that you would if you were stalking your ex's Instagram at two in the morning. Believe me, those ingredient lists conceal just about as much juicy drama.

Now that we've unmasked these toxic squatters, what's a girl supposed to do? live barefaced, bathe in oat milk, and cook out of clay pots? Sure, going full monk-in-the-mountains has its appeal, but let's be real: you don't need to ditch lipstick or lattes to live healthier. Replacement, not renunciation, is the key. Smarter shopping, smarter swaps. No cosmetology degree is necessary to decipher a label, all you need is a little curiosity and the ability to read fine print. Think of it as a lifestyle makeover. Glass or stainless steel bottles are safer, sleeker, and much more chic than those dubious plastic ones that seem like they came with a gym membership. Non-stick pans? Out. Cast iron or ceramic? In. They last longer, add a subtle vintage glamour to your kitchen, and won't sneak chemicals into your food. And when you're strutting through the beauty aisle, let your eye gravitate to the phrases "paraben-free" and "phthalate-free." Trust me, it's the new form of

form of label lust. (If you need receipts, the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics has the cheat sheet.) Here's the tea: endocrine disruptors aren't just a personal inconvenience, they're the industry's dirtiest scandal, dressed up as innovation. Put another way, you've been presented with chemical martinis that pass for self-care.

Looking back on my PCOS diagnosis, each new symptom felt like a message from my body, urging me to pay attention. I've learned to treat my well-being as essential and make choices that truly nurture my health.

Jasmine Khanna
Beauty Writer
Delhi, India

Concept: Glossed & Tossed
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Anoushka Furia
Photographer: Alexia Wang
Photography Assistant: Jiawen Li
Talent: Bianca Sfondrini
Production Assistant: Nashwah
Turshin



LIPSTICKS & LIES
WHEN YOUR BEAUTY BAG TURNS AGAINST YOU

You won't be dancing in the mirror or singing in the shower once you find out that it's the estrogen in your bathtub responsible for the hair in your hairbrush. Every drop of water that touches your skin could be hiding more than just heat and moisture. So ladies, before you start your daily pampering routine, think about this: your shower may be sneaking in chemicals that act like estrogen, leaving behind scars of pain. Your 6-step Korean hair care routine might be demanding more time in the shower, messing with your hormones and making you tired faster.

Many medical organisations have been warning the public about endocrine-disrupting chemicals, that are present in the water supply all around the world. These chemicals have not only been found in shower

water but also tap water. They include 17 α -ethinylestradiol (a synthetic form of estrogen found in birth control pills), biphenyl A (BPA), and DEHP from plastics. A Chemosphere review from 2024 looked at more than 40 studies from around the world and found that these estrogenic compounds are dangerous, with long-term exposure linked to problems with reproductive and developmental health. These chemicals are linked to infertility, changes in metabolism, and problems with the immune system.

This toxic relationship between your skin and your shower may cause you more trauma than your ex, especially since your skin is the biggest organ in your body and the most fun to flirt with in the shower. PubMed has

published studies that show how natural estrogen keeps your skin thick, hydrated, and strong. It helps make collagen, increase flexibility, and scare wrinkles away. Women in the NHANES study, who were on estrogen therapy, had even lower chances of getting dry skin and wrinkles as they got older. But when estrogen levels drop, especially during menopause, the skin starts getting attached to dryness, sag, and show all signs of betrayal. Now mix in hot water, chlorine, and small amounts of EDCs. It's like washing your face with bad chemistry. It's no surprise that you sometimes get out of a "relaxing" shower and see that your reflection is tired, your skin is tight, and your mood is somewhere between relaxed and rebellious.



Concept: *Hooked on Hormones*
Set: *LCF Studios, London*
Creative Director: *Ash Gul*
Image Stylist: *Ash Gul*
Photographer: *Lila Cobryn*
Production Assistant: *Nashwah Turshin*

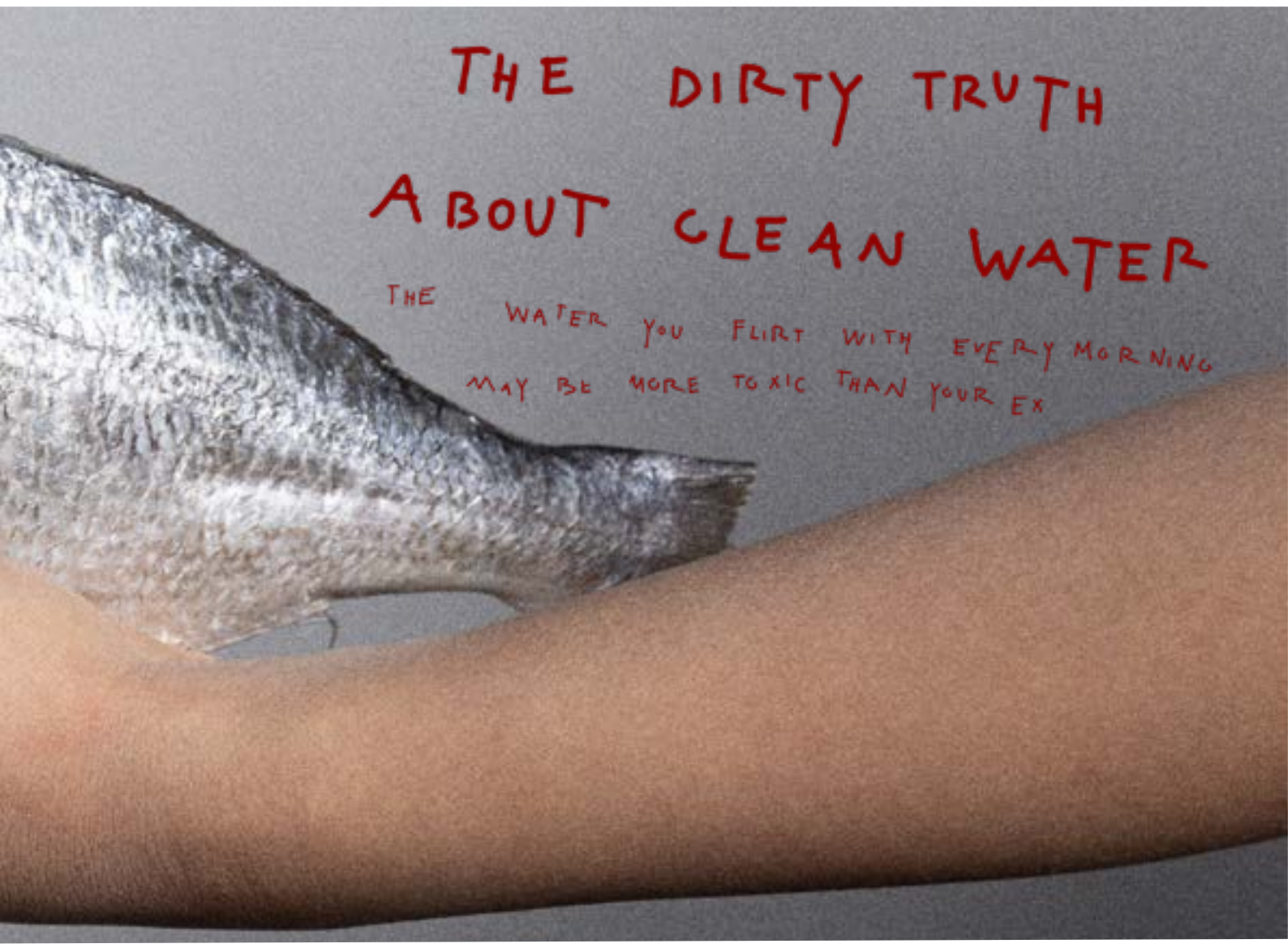
A 2020 PubMed review talked about how EDCs that sprout from water can cause girls to have irregular periods. So, while you rub conditioner into your scalp, natural estrogen is slowly trying to creep its way, fighting for control over your hormones.

In a survey I conducted, data represents worrying trends among young women aged 22 to 29 who live in London. Two-thirds of respondents (67%) reported that the existence of hormones and endocrine disruptors such as estrogen in tap and shower water was “news to them.” It’s surprising that so many people were unaware, especially since the same number of people said they had hair loss or thinning, which could be a sign of hormonal disruption.

But let’s not forget about the feminine urge. Imagine yourself in the shower, with the steam swirling around you like romantic fog and the water running down your shoulders like a Himalayan waterfall.

It feels great. But a gentle reminder is that giving in to temptation can sometimes incur hidden costs. It’s almost Shakespearean how tragic it is that the very place where women go to find peace, clarity, and confidence could also be a subtle cause for hormonal interference. What looks like pampering could be pushing your skin towards dryness, your cycles towards irregularity, and your hair towards dullness. Although, the good news is that you can protect yourself by filtering your water. You can turn this threat into a warning. A caution for your next skin care exhaustion.

**Gayatri P.
Researcher
Kerala, India**





Spill the Pill
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Anoushka
Furia
Photographer: Alexia Wang
Photography Assistant: Jiawen
Li
Talent: Bianca Sfondrini
HMUA: Yingxi Hu
Production Assistant: Nashwah
Turshin



PUKING FOR PEACE

KUNJAL KRIYA FOR HORMONAL BALANCE

Do you ever feel like your body's less 'temple' and more 'toxic' especially after a greasy binge? Kunjal Kriya is hitting the body's reset button, instead of a full software reboot, you're flushing your system with warm salty water and letting your stomach thank you later. This ancient yogic hack is less about theatrics and more about scrubbing your insides.

Kunjal Kriya is a key yogic practice to cleanse the body by drinking warm saline water and gently inducing vomiting to flush out toxins from the stomach and the lungs. For women, it can aid digestion, support hormonal balance, regulate thyroid, and enhance fertility, while easing acidity and respiratory discomfort.

This practice is best embraced as part of a holistic lifestyle, alongside yoga, pranayama, hydrationbalanced diet, and occasional fasting. Advocates such as

Akhilesh Aggarwal, a Naturopathic health practitioner, in conversation with Mood(y) Magazine, highlight that both practices, including Allopathy and Naturopathy were discovered by Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician often called the "Father of Medicine." "Today, pain killers are served as pop tarts and antibiotics as apples" says Akhilesh. "Allopathy was invented for emergencies while Naturopathy as remedies" explains Akhilesh. "Patients demand quick fixes while Pharma delivers quick results" elaborates Akhilesh. "If Naturopathy gets half the funding and recognition Allopathy does it can do wonders" says Akhilesh.

When it comes to women's hormonal wellness, these natural approaches offer gentle support and caution against over reliance on birth control pills. Simple, safe, and transformative, Kunjal Kriya works like a full-body reset.

Benefits of Kunjal Kriya

One salty gulp at sunrise and suddenly you're clearing out more than just last night's regrets including drunk dialing your ex. For women, it's a real hormone imbalance hack. A happy gut means smoother estrogen and adios bloating. By flushing out toxins and improving nutrient absorption, Kunjal Kriya gives your hormones the spa day they desperately needed.

During Kunjal Kriya, sometimes the water you expel comes out green, proof that your system just kicked out a stash of excess bile that's been messing with your digestion and mood.

But Kunjal Kriya isn't just about vacuuming your stomach, it's also working some magic on your nervous system. By stimulating the vagus nerve, it taps directly into the hypothalamus. Bottom line, less cortisol running wild, smoother cycles, and a much calmer version of you.

On the emotional front, this practice doubles as a natural "shock therapy." That quick flush jolts the mind into release mode, easing anxiety, softening phobias, and even lifting low moods. Over time, it cuts off drained out frenemies like fear, jealousy and simmering rage.

Method

Mix 1 litre of lukewarm water with about 2 teaspoons of salt.

Start with a test glass to see how your body reacts, then down the rest quickly. Once you're full, lean over a basin and trigger the gag reflex by gently nudging the back of your tongue with two fingers. The water will come up in spurts, think of it as your stomach's version of a spring cleaning. Keep going until most of the water is out, leaving you light, refreshed, and oddly energized.

Pro tip: mornings on an empty stomach are prime time for this cleanse.

Precautions

As powerful as it is, Kunjal Kriya isn't an everyday habit. Skip it if you've got heart issues, blood pressure, gastric ulcers, reflux, or hernia. Women should avoid it during pregnancy or menstruation, and it's a no go for kids under 18.

Hygiene matters too, make sure your hands are squeaky clean before inducing the gag reflex. And after practice, give your digestive system a 30 minute break before eating, so it can settle back into balance.

Kunjal Kriya isn't just a stomach cleanse, it's a way to reset your gut, hormones, and mood. Simple, salty, and a little dramatic, leaving you lighter, calmer, and more balanced inside out.

Ash Gul

Editor in Chief &

Creative Director

London, United Kingdom

PILATES POSTURES

Pilates Postures
Poses: *Monica Rastogi, Studio*
Pilates Retreat, Delhi, India
Illustration: *Maria Rodriguez*
Art Direction: *Ash Gul*



When PCOS barged in, dragging sleepless nights, breakup blues, and a hormone circus, I clung to control like it was a Birkin on sale. I scrubbed counters till they squeaked, then let laundry pile like modern art. Some days I was a silent hermit, other days I was the loudest extrovert in the room.

Eat like a nun or devour the pantry. Turns out it was OCD, ADHD, and an identity crisis.

My homeopath explained the science, when your periods ghost you, your body's rhythm glitches.

The brain panics, while hormones freestyle. So you bleach the sink at 2 a.m. or alphabetize the spice rack because if you can't control your ovaries, at least you can control the cutlery.

Fast forward to my grownish self: a routine is still my love language, but now it's sacred, not frantic. Morning starts with a made bed, sun gazing hello, and a quick chat with the ladybirds outside. I thank my breakfast before biting in. I drop five silent gratitude thoughts into every glass of water, call it spiritual electrolytes. Daily charts, colour coded drives, guided meditation, long walks is my current playlist for sanity.

But here's the catch, perfection is a glittery trap. Patterns need breaking as much as making. Some days the dishes wait and I let them. Because a routine should hold you, not handcuff you.

So yeah, hand me a paint roller and I'll edge that wall straighter than a laser beam.

But I've learned that real balance isn't a spotless kitchen, it's the messy, magical choice to rest when your hormones demand a plot twist.

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom



CONTROL FREAK CHIC

HORMONAL HAVGG



Rose
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Alexia Wang
Photographer: Alexia Wang
Photography Assistant: Jiawen Li
Talent: Yingxi
Styling: Ash Gul
HMUA: Yingxi
Production Assistant: Nashwah Turshin

For sixteen years, I was an early sleeper, snoring by ten, glowing by seven. Then PCOS crashed the party like an uninvited guest. Suddenly I was transformed into a night owl with a noon wake up call and naps so random they deserved their own calendar. Stress? Break down? Break out? Snack break? Joy? My answer was sleep. Not the cute beauty kind, the life is too much kind.

Hormones are shady like that. One diagnosis and my circadian rhythm packed its bags. Night thoughts ran a rave in my skull, grades, boy drama, and what ifs. My relationship with sleep went full toxic situationship, intense, unpredictable, and impossible to quit.

Fun fact my homeopath swears by: if you keep dreaming that you're flying, your body might be waving a tiny red flag about an infection. So if I ever text "Just flew over Paris," please hand me a thermometer.

Fast forward to now, touch wood, we're on civil terms. Lights out around eleven, dreamland by midnight, sunrise around seven. And because I refuse to let hormones ghost me again, I treat bedtime like a spa.

The ritual is borderline cinematic, coconut oil body massage and magnesium bath soak. Aloe vera skincare, ear beads, face yoga, and EFT tapping. Sage cleanse and moonlit barefoot stroll for afterthoughts with my lunar therapist. Gratitude journaling and deep breathing. Jasmine tea, a date or two for hormonal love. Essential or magnesium oil foot massage. Cinnamon candle, Ikigai pages, and Dr. Bach flower essence for the win. Pillow spray, soft jazz or maybe a chakra healing meditation finale.

It sounds extra because it is, but so are hormones. And honestly? My 16 year old circadian queen deserved this comeback tour.

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom





Dreamgirl
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Alexia Wang
Photographer: Alexia Wang
Photography Assistant: Jiawen Li
Talent: Yingxi
Styling: Ash Gul
HMUA: Yingxi
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HORMONAL HAZARD

WHEN YOUR EX DELIVERED CYSTS INSTEAD OF ROSES



Veronica
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Alexia Wang
Photographer: Alexia Wang
Photography Assistant: Jiawen
Li
Talent: Yingxi
Styling: Ash Gul
HMUA: Yingxi
Production Assistant: Nashwah
Turshin



My homeopath once said thyroid flare ups, PCOS, and all other hormonal cliff dives often trace back to parents or partners. Lucky me, I had both daunting me at once.

Cue the perfect storm, teenage drama, family pressure, and a boyfriend whose idea of a gift wasn't Prada or Tiffany's but polycystic ovaries. Women get diamonds for breakfast, I got a disorder for dinner.

My parents mantra: be productive or be reproductive. Mind upset, body followed. A hormonal ouroboros.

I became the poster child for "moody." Aggressive, snappy, verbal. Everyone tossed the word around like glitter: she's so moody. What they didn't see was a girl clinging to ground that kept tilting. Being "moody" wasn't cute, it was biochemical warfare. It was cortisol, insulin, estrogen doing the math while I tried to breathe.

Relationships and hormones are a two way street. Pick the wrong person, and your skin, gut, and ovaries will RSVP to drama. Toxic friend? Instant bloat. Stressy situation? Enjoy that acne flare. Trust me, I blamed my ex for every pimple and strand of hair in the drain, and honestly? He earned the credit.

So yes, call me moody. But know that beneath the moods is someone fighting for equilibrium. If you love a hormonally challenged human, be gentle. If you are that human, guard your guest list.

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Director
London, United Kingdom

Degeneration

Set: London

Creative Director: Ash Gul

Image Stylist: Ash Gul

Post Production: Alexia Wang

Photographer: Alexia Wang

Photography Assistant: Jiawen Li

Talent: Ying

Styling: Ash Gul

HMUA: Yingxi

Production Assistant: Nashwah

Turshin



FROM DELIVERIES TO DISCOVERIES

IN CONVERSATION WITH NANA BANANA

Talking about taking matters into your own hands, my nana became a Gynaecologist to figure out her own body. Fifty years of delivering dozens of babies later, she jokes that the female body still keeps its secrets.

Back in the day, hormonal health wasn't a headline. Aches, moods, missed periods? Swept under the rug. Fertility, on the other hand, was front-page drama. She still laughs about the patient who stormed in insisting she was pregnant, only for the scan to reveal nothing but gas. "Such hysteria was common," she recalls, rolling her eyes. Fast forward to today, and hormones seem to be throwing a wild party no one asked for. Stress, junk food, chemical cocktails, and climate chaos have all RSVP'd. Birth control, once a last resort contraceptive, somehow became the magic pill for every female woe. As she puts it, "It's not always just the doctor, patients want quick fixes too." She admits she never gave alternative medicine a second glance. "There wasn't much research back then," she shrugs. But watching me experiment with yoga and naturopathy, she concedes, "Now I see it differently, when I see you." For all her wisdom, she had blind spots. Stress relief once meant a tranquilliser, not a walk in the park.

And, she was oblivious to the long shadow of birth control in her own family. My mother's ovarian cancer, my aunt's fibroids, things she wishes she had seen coming.

Still, Nana has always been our first port of call. A stomach ache, a scare, a doubt, we run to her before Chat GPT. Because under her crisp white coat, she isn't a doctor, but a woman humble enough to admit medicine doesn't have all the answers. Women's bodies, she reminds me, are still a mystery.

What I find most fascinating is how she has managed to straddle two very different worlds. On one hand, she's a no nonsense doctor trained in a time when science was king, when a prescription pad was the ultimate weapon. On the other, she's a grandmother learning to unlearn, opening herself up to practices she once dismissed as "folklore." It takes a rare kind of humility to do that after five decades of being the authority in the room.

Her stories are living history. She has seen childbirth without ultrasounds, mothers who delivered at home with nothing but faith and hot water, and the slow creep of modern medicine turning birth into an over medicalised event. She has witnessed science saving lives and, at times, silence women's voices. Through it all, she never lost her humour, her sharp tongue, or her stubborn belief that women deserved to be heard, even when medicine wasn't listening. And maybe that's the real legacy she leaves me with, the courage to question.

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom

Treatment and Retreat
Artist: Meet Ahluwalia



Menstruation through Mythology

As a history enthusiast, I've been keen on exploring and writing about women's hormonal health from a mythological as well as a religious perspective. And, this is where I begin!

From the Hellenistic Gaia to the Egyptian Maat, from the Christian Virgin Mary to the ancient Mesopotamian Lilith, Ereshkigal, from one to Ishtar, and in Hindu tradition, from Shakti to Lakshmi women have always been revered as divine embodiments of creation's force.

This isn't just a scholarly exploration, it is an attempt to understand how these mythological figures shaped how society views women's hormonal health, especially menstruation.

Let's be honest, menstruation is a simple biological rhythm, but centuries of myth have smothered it in layers of meaning, some glowing with reverence, others shadowed by taboo. Those myths don't just lie dormant, they shape real-life responses to menstrual health, often skewing diagnosis or treatment of issues

Mythological Views of Menstruation

These myths are old. Across cultures, menstrual blood was rarely seen as mundane. It was potent, holy, punitive, creative, or downright dangerous, depending on where you looked. But that power came with a price, exclusion from the decisions and rituals.

Within Norse mythology, menstruation was viewed as a cosmic force. Thor, the king of the gods, sought immortality and illumination by bathing in a river of menstrual blood from ancient Giantesses, primordial matriarchs referred to as the "Powerful Ones". The story as mentioned within Science Direct's 'Cultural Aspects and Mythologies Surrounding Menstruation and Abnormal Uterine Bleeding Positions', positions menstruation not as an accident of biology but a sacred, transformative act.

CYCLES OF POWER
AND TABOO
MYTHOLOGICAL ROOTS OF MENSTRUAL STIGMA

On the other hand, in Hindu mythology, Indra, who slays both a drought demon and a Brahmin named Vritra, accrues the sin of 'Brahmahatya'. He divides his sin into four parts, allocating one part to women, and the rest to trees, fire and water. Suddenly, menstrual blood becomes a signifier of inherited cosmic burden. Yet culturally, there's a softer side. In South India, a girl's first period often comes with ritual, celebration, gifts, and paradoxically, rules, no cooking, no temple entry, and certain social boundaries. In fact, the Bharatanatyam padams within the South Indian tradition, channel the deep emotional landscape of the nayika, her vulnerability, boldness, anticipation, and longing, which mirror not only personal, cyclical experiences akin to menstruation but also echo narratives from Hindu mythology and the Kama Sutra. Each piece intertwines themes of feminine power, societal taboos, self-assertion, and sacred union, often using symbolism to represent transitions, desires, and bodily changes. By expressing love, separation, confidence, and spiritual union, these dances celebrate womanhood's complexities, making the art form a living bridge between mythological, cultural, and erotic traditions. In the northeastern state of Assam in India, 'Kamakhya Devi' is worshipped as the goddess of menstrual blood, fertility and creation. It is widely believed that during the month of June, annually, the waters of the Brahmaputra river near the Kamakhya Devi temple turn red, signifying the menstrual blood of the goddess herself, as mentioned by the Better India India's 'The Legend of Kamakhya: How the Bleeding Goddess Celebrates the 'Shakti' Every Women Has'. Moreover, the Raja Parba





Shakti

Set: Delhi

Creative Director: Ash Gul

Image Stylist: Ash Gul

Post Production: Anoushka Furia

Photographer: Pranav Kher

Talent: Veena Kumar

Styling: Veena Kumar

HMUA: Veena Kumar

Production Assistant: Achintya

Majithia

Moreover, the Raja Parba festival in Odisha is symbolic of the celebration of the menstrual phase of Mother Earth or 'Bhudevi', as mentioned within Kaleidoscope's 'Raja Parba: Celebrating Odisha's Royal Festival of Womanhood'.

That's the weird brilliance of these myths: sacred, yet restricting. Deeply powerful, yet mirroring the limitations society placed on women.

Kamasutra

Referring to the Hindu Blog's 'Kamashastra In Ancient Hinduism' and Lybrate's 'Kamasutra - Can It Help In Treating Sexual Dysfunction?' Kamasutra lists a variety of sexual positions intended to address and resolve sexual difficulties as well as improve the emotional and sensual bond between partners.

In addition to these physical methods, the pituitary gland, which produces hormones, is stimulated by exotic scents like lavender, jasmine, and patchouli, which can greatly increase sexual drive and performance. Jasmine is known for boosting mood and treating conditions like coldness, impotence, and early ejaculation, while lavender, in particular, increases blood flow to the genitals and heightens female sensitivity. A valuable supplement to the intimate arts covered by Kamasutra is aromatherapy, an ancient practice that is being used to enhance sexual and relaxation experiences.

Menstruation in Ancient Civilisations

Greece and Rome

Ancients in Greece and Rome gave menstruation mythic and medical wings. Elder took it further, imagining a menstruating woman walking nude through a field, and storms and pests just withering away. That's dramatic. Then comes Salpe, Laïs, Sotira, the women who claimed menstrual blood could cure rabies, malaria, epilepsy and even render a donkey infertile. Remedy recipes included menstrual fluid on black ram wool or smoothed on someone's feet without them knowing.

Egypt in Antiquity

Ancient Egypt approached this with nuance. The word hsmn hints at purification more than impurity. Papyri shows menstrual blood was sometimes mixed into cosmetics or healing oils, maybe protective, maybe sacred.

Yet, men were cautioned not to launder menstrual clothes. In such seemingly small details you glimpse broader gendered boundaries. Menstrual blood was both prized and pushed away, depending on the context.

Aztecs and Mayans

Aztecs saw menstruation as moon-goddess influenced, spiritually elevated but socially limited. Women during their period were under divine guardianship, but barred from rituals, from certain spaces.

The Maya thought menstrual blood carried a destabilizing spiritual charge. Women were kept away from sacred spaces and ritual circles, a precaution balance between respect and fear of cosmic disorder.

Religious Narratives on Periods

With Sikhism being a notable exception, globally, most religions frame menstruation with layered taboos and ritual limits. From purity laws to temple bans, the spectrum is vast, and deeply ingrained.

Christianity

Most Christian denominations offer few clear restrictions, but in some Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox traditions (like the Russian, Greek, Ukrainian and Indian branches), women are encouraged to abstain from Holy Communion during menstruation.

One story cuts through every stigma, the woman bleeding for twelve years who reached for Jesus' cloak, and He called her "daughter" and healed her. Emphatic, inclusive, and deeply human beyond ritual barriers.

Islam

Islam approaches menstruation (haidh) with compassion and clarity.

Women still participate in family life, they eat, sit together, but abstain from sex until the period ends and ghusl is undertaken, as highlighted within 'Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 6'. They skip prayers and fasting, without needing to make up for them later. Islamic law marks menstruation between three and ten days. Anything beyond that, istihazah, has rules, but doesn't exclude participation.

Judaism

In Judaism, niddah is enshrined. Menstruation requires separation until immersion in a mikvah. Even today, some communities observe closely, others apply it more symbolically. But whether strict or relaxed, the structure is consistent, respects the cycle, awaits ritual completion and resumes connection.

Menstruation has always been more than just a cycle. In Norse tales, it was transformative. In Hindu mythology, a cosmic burden, yet, with a sacred, feminist approach, highlighting Kamasutra, the first-of-a-kind approaches in history towards sex positivity, that aligns with the overall hormonal health of women. In Greece and Rome, a medicine. In Egypt, a mystery both honored and shunned.

And in spiritual traditions, it's mapped into purity laws, compassion, ritual, and redemption. Christianity lights the path of healing and belonging. Islam draws clear, gracious lines. Judaism keeps ritually sacred space.

These are not distant relics. They echo in health clinics, in home rules, in whispers around periods, in whether women seek help or hide their cramps..

If you had an enjoyable read, I'd give the credits of your appreciation to every woman whose menstrual journey is stigmatised and treated like a taboo. For, we should never forget the womb that nourishes and endures us all for an entirety of nine months until we're born!

Achintya Majithia
Historian
Delhi, India



REVERSING PCOS

THE CALM BEYOND THE CHAOS

The Storm

Sixteen summers, bright but thin,
a pastel pill invited in.
Gloomy clinics, quiet lies,
promised balance, hid disguise.

Twelve new kilos, tighter jeans,
high school pressure, shattered
dreams.
Boyfriend drama, shouted shame,
parents worried, friends to blame.

Media mirrors, and home sick,
fed me comparison sharp and
quick.
Ovaries dancing out of beat,
doctors handed me defeat.

Acne bloomed like midnight
scars,
hair a map of fallen stars.
Sleep was smoke, my grades a
sigh,
I lost my laughter, didn't know
why.

Three long years of chemical
song,
pills that hummed but pulsed all
wrong.
Antibiotics dulled my core,
six months bleeding, endless
more.

A cervix scan that seared like fire,
pain that burned through every
wire.
A number flashed, thirty two,
ovaries swollen, spirit blue.

The Calm

Homeopathy an exit plan,
a hormonal havoc's final ban.
Tiny salts, a naturopathic art,
teaching body, soul, and heart.

Gluten gone and sugar too,
dairy waved a last adieu.
Juice and vegetable feasts each
day,
fed my cells the gentle way.

Pilates stretch, and the yoga
bend,
movement turned to medicine.

Eating with hands, the oldest
grace,
mindful bites in sacred space.

Meditation, under sunlight's ray,
purpose lighting up the grey.
Microneedling and laser beams,
a skin's holy dream.

Month by month the tides
aligned,
ovary size to normal signed.
Now my body hums in rhyme,
steady heart and sacred time.

I am not a passing trend,
I am storm and I am mend.
From crimson rivers, sleepless
cries,
to clear horizons, open skies,
I rise, I heal, I choose, I own,
the quiet power of seeds I've
sown.

Anonymous



Agni
Set: Delhi
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Anoushka Furia
Photographer: Pranav Kher
Talent: Veena Kumar
Styling: Veena Kumar
HMUA: Veena Kumar
Production Assistant: Achintya Majithia

Dhyaan
Set: Delhi
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Post Production: Anoushka Furia
Photographer: Pranav Kher
Talent: Asis Narula
Styling: Asis Narula
HMUA: Asis Narula
Production Assistant: Achintya
Majithia



When most people think of a “doctor,” they picture white coats and filled prescriptions.

When I think of a doctor, I think of Dr. Manjari Rao. I picture someone who actually listens, and someone who flips the script on what treatment should be. She not only treats pain, but the fear and confusion that comes with it. She factors in genetics, mental health, diet, and lifestyle, aiming to support the immune system. No one size fits all formulas, no magic drops, just personalised care.

The Fairy Godmother

After a carousel of wrong turns, my aunt tossed me a lifeline, her homeopath & her ally, Dr. Manjari. One meeting and an ocean of belief later, I could not only confidently count on homeopathy, but thank it for all it's done for my family. She didn't just hand me remedies, but she handed me hope and knowledge. She questioned my blind faith in pharma and reminded me that real healing starts on the inside, not on a prescription pad.

And here's the tea on Dr. Rao's medicinal approach, it refuses to be rushed. In a world that loves a quick fix, she dares to linger, asking the uncomfortable questions about stress, cycles, and what you've been swallowing. The first thing she checks isn't your heartbeat but your tongue. She'll reference peer reviewed studies and then hand you a recipe for a cumin infused tea that not only tastes like a warm hug but helps hay fever. That blend of rigor and ritual is why her advice sticks.

As much as I love dropping in for a catch up, Dr. Manjari teases, “Why are you back so soon?” She hates the idea of patients clinging to her, and sends you off with an emergency list so you're more independent. “If you're going to pop an antibiotic, don't bother coming back,” she warned me once. And she's right, one quick fix can undo months of careful work. Fever? Nothing to fear. She calls it a friend, a natural hormone reset. That tough love isn't gatekeeping, it's respect, for the process, and for my body. I've learned to regard it, not resent it.

Homeopathy isn't a placebo party trick, but like any other science, it demands belief. Just how, The fall of an apple was gravity, but its realisation, was a belief. Healing's the same, your trust is part of the cure, and your belief, the ideal supplement.

A LOVE LETTER TO MY HOMEOPATH

THE REDISCOVERY OF MY HEALING PATH

The Road to Healing

PCOD didn't magically vanish, but it finally loosened its grip. Two years in, my periods show up on time, my acne's a memory, and I feel at home in my own skin. No glittery packaging, just tiny salts and tissue that work with the body, not against it.

Dr. Manjari taught me resilience and self awareness, She became a co pilot in my health journey. Women's wellness is a marathon, not a sprint. Homeopathy lets your ovaries set the pace, without any short cuts or tolls.

My aunt, once battling thyroid, now cradles healthy twins. My grandmother, my lifeline, once weighed down by Alzheimer's mood swings, now FaceTimes me daily with a laugh I thought was gone. I'm endlessly grateful. From kidney stones, to dengue fever, she's been my lever.

Her Instagram is full of medicine and mischief (@realhomeopathy).

- . Calls out "miracle" heel creams for sneaking in hormone disruptors.
- . Drops myth busting reels on estrogen, reminding us it's not the villain.

.Preaches gut health as the real hormone HQ.

.Finds all magic recipes and formulas from seed cycling to south asian treats.

It's the kind of content that makes you learn, laugh, and maybe double check your shampoo's ingredients.

A Special Thanks

This is more than a shout out, it's an open invitation to her kind of care.

Dr. Rao isn't just a health practitioner in my story, she's the reason I believe in rewriting the narrative. She revived my faith in my own body and the discipline to nurture it. Without her, there might be no platform to question the pink pill culture or champion integrative care. Because if a physician with decades of training can admit that women's bodies are still mysterious, the rest of us have every right to demand better answers, and better care.

Truth is, she's one of the reasons I'm here making Mood(y). Not just because she's a doctor who rescued me, but because she's a woman, a mother, a quiet revolutionary who proved that healing starts when someone finally listens. She's my guide, my rescuer, my forever reminder that medicine is more than prescription, it's curiosity.

Ash Gul

Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom

GLOW WITH THE FLOW

NATURAL SKIN . UNAPOLGETIC SHINE , ZERO STRINGS

Growing up in a digital epoch, drowning in the pool of self doubt, body dysmorphia, and social pressure amplified by the hormonal changes during the magical 'girl to womanhood' phase, we are bombarded with skincare solutions for problems we did not even know were supposed to be problems. These 'so called' magical fixes were packed with not so magical ingredients, which while fixing a problem, gave birth to many more, just so corporate companies can shimmy up that Forbes ladder.

Now, running around like headless chickens, chasing the 'ideal skin' while using products that cause turbulence, we are out here thinking that we're doing skincare but our skin is just like our emotionally unavailable ex that doesn't care, while your skin is trying to hit you up, you're found being on airplane mode.

Modern skincare is packed with nasty chemicals that will knock the health and well being right out of your skin. The cocktail of all these chemicals can cause major damage to not only your skin but also your body. Man, if you think vodka is bad, you should hear what parabens are capable of.

According to Chemtrust,

Estrogen mimicking chemicals such as parabens are known for causing menstrual irregularities, lowering fertility, and PCOS flare-ups.

.The horror doesn't stop here, Triclosan can interfere with thyroid hormone signaling fatigue, weight changes and mood swings.

. PFAS in long wear makeup may also impair thyroid function.

. Endocrine disruptors increase estrogen dominance or androgen imbalance that leads to worsening acne, oily skin, breakouts around jawline and chin. Long-term exposure to estrogen- mimicking

chemicals has been associated with early puberty and possible breast development changes in teens.

When we hear those Instagram trends calling us by our legal names we are ready to set fire to our bank accounts. It's easy to market toxic concoction especially in a pretty packaging that looks aesthetically pleasing and our dating history is a testimony of that hypothesis.

Now, don't lose yourself in a labyrinth of toxic modern skincare avenues. We shouldn't live under the assumption that all skincare is produced in Satan's lab, there might just be a solution to this skincare apocalypse. Sometimes, you just need to go back to the basics and teleport yourself to a time before the inception of the chemical villains.

The tried and tested safe skincare has been given a lot of names over the years. Skincare that has been proven to be beneficial and soothing has not been artificially concocted in a petri dish but has been extracted from nature and has been used for generations. The viral trends of K beauty, Indian beauty and Moroccan beauty have been making a lot of noise lately, but the main denominator is that they are naturally fermented with skin soothing properties. Natural skincare is less likely to contain endocrine-disrupting chemicals that mimic or block hormones. They support healthy cycles, fertility, thyroid balance, and reduce long-term risks.

According to Vogue and Allure, natural ingredients like aloe vera extract, turmeric, rose water, green tea and argan oil are packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and fatty acids that nourish skin, fight oxidative stress, and promote healing. Instead of masking symptoms, natural skincare often works with your skin barrier, & helps in balancing oil production, calms inflammation, and supports natural glow. It also contributes to the environment as it is biodegradable with fewer pollutants, and often sustainably sourced. With natural skincare you know what you get, because of shorter ingredient lists. It's easier to understand so you don't get intimidated by the fancy chemical jargon and you know what's going on your skin and into your body. Lastly, they add ritual, self-care, and mindfulness to skincare.

The ancestors were in their apothecary, brewing recipes to keep their skin and body's well being intact. The star ingredient in the natural skincare book has always been 'Haldi' or turmeric, it's anti-inflammatory and leaves the skin looking so glowy that you'd want to include this as your pre-bridal ritual. Indian weddings often start with a 'Haldi' and 'Henna' ceremony before the wedding takes place. All you have to do is pair it with a little chickpea flour or 'Besan' mixed with curd and apply the paste.

The most talked about DIY Indian face pack, is 'Ubtan', it's a paste of gram flour, turmeric, sandalwood powder, milk, and rose water. It acts as a natural exfoliate while leaving the skin bright and polished.

- . Rice water cleansers, centella creams & ginseng serums focus on hydration and help provide the highly coveted glassy skin.
- . Kumkumadi oil is a blend of herbs infused with sesame oil or saffron oil that help brighten skin, reduce pigmentation and support barrier repair.
- . Argan oil is rich in vitamin E and fatty acids that moisturize, calm inflammation, and balance oil production.

Black Soap is made from olives & olive oil which is used for deep cleansing, exfoliating, and nourishing. Beldi is often used in 'Hammam' rituals as a detox.

- . Rose Water Mist helps in hydrating, soothing, & balances skin's pH levels.
- For my acne prone queens, you must try 'Neem' for eczema, and inflammation as it's a miracle herb for acne.

My magical manifesto: In an era of high-tech skincare, natural beauty rituals remind us of the power of simplicity, nature, and routine. It's a rebellion against the corporations that prioritised our health over their stock price and gaslit us into thinking 'we' were the problem, it's about taking our power back, and choosing our health over 'their' ideal beauty standards.

Asis Narula
Beauty Writer
Delhi, India



Generational Secrets

Set: Delhi

Creative Director: Ash Gul

Image Stylist: Ash Gul

Post Production: Anoushka Furia

Photographer: Pranav Kher

Talent: Mother & Daughter

Styling: Asis Narula

HMUA: Asis Narula

Production Assistant: Achintya

Majithia

SEROTONIN SKINCARE

Serotonin Skincare

Skincare: *Dr. Namrata Ghai,
Sunshine Wellness Clinic, Delhi, India*

Illustration: *Maria Rodriguez*

Art Direction: *Ash Gul*

Product list:

Laneige Water Sleeping Mask

La Roche Posay Cicaplast Baum

Twinings Earl Grey Tea

Fable & Mane Rosemary Hair Oil

Jenki matcha

Sol de Janeiro Rio Deo

Kama Night Cream

Kama Brigandi Hair Oil

Dr. Jarts Hydrafacial Mask

Caudalie SPF 50 Sunscreen

Innisfree Aloe Vera Gel

Palmers Coconut Cream

Aveda Cherry Almond Shampoo

Celine Hair comb

Gisou Honey Candle

Marvis Toothpaste

Bioderma Micellar Water

Stanley Tumbler



Peel the Truth

Set: LCF Studios, London

Creative Director: Ash Gul

Image Stylist: Ash Gul

Photographer: Lila Cobryn

Production Assistant: Nashwah
Turshin



Have you ever wondered why your skin suddenly breaks out, or why your sleep feels so fragile, or why your cycle seems like a mystery? The answer often lies deeper than lifestyle stress or seasonal change, it lies in the hormones.

Hormones: The Quiet Currents Within!

Hormones are like unseen currents, carrying signals that steer mood, metabolism and menstruation, small messengers with mighty missions. They control our cycles and our sleep, our skin and our stress, our weight and our womb. Women's health is guided by a wide range of hormones, cortisol that rises with stress, leptin and ghrelin that control hunger, melatonin that promotes sleep, oxytocin that nurtures connection, thyroxine that drives metabolism, serotonin that steadies mood, and insulin that manages blood sugar. Alongside these, estrogen, progesterone, and prolactin remain the key female hormones, supported by small amounts of testosterone, luteinizing hormone (LH), and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) to regulate ovulation. When these chemical chords are in tune, life flows effortlessly! And, when they falter, women face irregular periods, fatigue, mood swings, acne, hair loss, or even infertility. Hormonal health is a luxury. It is the hidden thread that holds well-being together.

Meals, Mugs and the Messages they Carry

Every sip and every slice speaks to our hormones. Dairy delivers natural estrogens and insulin-like growth factor, which, in excess, may inflame skin and influence cancers of the breast and womb. Meat may carry traces of growth hormones, safe in small amounts but still stirring scientific and social debate, especially in Europe where hormone-treated beef is

BITES, BREWS AND BALANCE

THE ROLE OF THE F&B INDUSTRY IN WOMEN'S HORMONAL HEALTH

banned. Sodas and sugars tell another story. Studies show even one sweetened soda a day, can lift estradiol levels by 16%, silently disrupting the regularity of cycles. Caffeine, beloved for concentration, can lower estrogen in some women, raise it in others, and rob away our body's restful sleep. It can effectively manipulate our mental state which later affects our physical and emotional health as well. Gluten, for the sensitive, sparks gut inflammation that unsettles mood and menstruation. And Vegan choices, kind to animals, yet risky without key nutrients. While avoiding animal hormones, they may whisper new worries, missing B12, iron, or omega-3, all essential for reproduction and resilience.

On the other hand, wholesome foods, leafy greens, seeds, pulses, fish, and fruits, give our bodies the nutrients needed to produce and balance hormones more smoothly. In short, every meal and every mug matters, food and beverages are not just fuel, but constant messengers to our hormones.

Healing Heritage and Modern Mindfulness

Across the seas, Britain's food story has its own lessons. From rationing in the 1950s to the flood of fast food in the 70s, from the coffee craze of the 90s to the wellness wave of vegan milks and zero-alcohol drinks today, the foodscape has changed, and so have the hormones it touches.

Cultural choices matter. Regulations matter too. Interestingly, the UK takes a stricter stance on hormone-treated meat than the Americans. Policy, is not just paperwork, it is a public health safeguard, shaping what ends up on women's plates. At the same time, the rise of veganism and plant-based diets in Britain



Fizzy & Frazzled
Set: *AI Studio, The Internet*
Creative Director: *Ash Gul*
Image Stylist: *Ash Gul*
Generation & Post Production:
Anoushka Furia

£1

£1

echoes Ayurvedic ideas from India. This cross-cultural exchange reminds us, women's hormonal health is not only personal, but also political. It is shaped by trade, policy and public awareness across borders.

Long before science named hormones, Ayurveda noticed the rhythms. Across time, women's lives have been marked by phases, from Childhood and Menarche, to Motherhood and Menopause.

“What we eat heals us, and what heals us should be what we eat”, this simple, phrase echoes Ayurveda's truth which is healing through food! Ayurveda emphasised balance between the doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), and recommended tailored foods to regulate menstrual cycles, support fertility, and calm mood swings. For instance, sesame seeds for warmth, turmeric for reducing inflammation, and ghee for overall vitality, kitchens were clinics and spices were support. Across Indian cultures, menstruation is marked with rules around food, from avoiding sour pickles and spicy “hot” foods to encouraging soothing fruits and vegetables.

In Conversation with Harshita Joshi, Founder of Jogurt, India

Harshita Joshi's journey from IT to Jogurt began with her own struggle which was PCOS and the search for hormone-friendly food. Disappointed by hormone-unfriendly foods and fake-tasting yoghurts that lacked protein and probiotics, she turned to A2 milk, easier to digest and kinder to inflammation, as the base for her creations. Each batch is crafted with care, with pure milk, live cultures, and double-straining for creamy texture. Probiotics are added not as a label claims but as living combats for gut and

hormonal balance. Harshita chose quality over compromise, recyclable paper cups over plastic, natural flavours like monk fruit or cacao, and real fruits over artificial ones. With eleven distinct varieties, Jogurt has become a symbol of taste, trust and thoughtful choices. For women, it offers not just yoghurt but a friend to hormones, a reminder that food can heal and empower. As Harshita says: “Moody means being aware of our bodies and needs. I'm not on mute, and our food shouldn't be either.”

Therefore, each bite and beverage bends the balance of our body. For women navigating challenges like PCOS, infertility or menopause, a balanced diet and supplements can gently guide hormones back towards balance.

A Gentle Conclusion

So, what story are we writing with our meals? Are we feeding harmony or fuelling havoc? And where does this leave us? Perhaps with a reminder, what we eat is not just about calories or cravings. For women, food is a daily dialogue with our hormones. The lesson is both ancient and modern, food is not just fuel. It is a faithful friend, or a fickle foe, to our hormones. When we eat with awareness, we gift ourselves balance. When we sip with sense, we safeguard sleep, skin and cycles.

“If your plate could speak to your hormones tonight, what would it say?”

Perhaps it is time we let it sing of balance, beauty, and well-being, and to choose foods that not only fill us but also heal us. Because when our hormones are in harmony, we thrive not just in fertility, but in every facet of life!

AS Shalini,
Author
Delhi, India



MY UTERUS

IS ONLY A SAINT

FOR

LAURENT

HORMONE FRIENDLY GROCERY RECEIPT

Mood Mart, Everywoman Lane

Date: Cycle Day 17 Time: 11:11 PM

Cashier: Estro G

S No.	Item	Price
1.	Magnesium	Chamomile tea
2.	Vitamin D	Sweet Potato
3.	Antioxidants	Berries
4.	Omega	Salmon
5.	Zinc	Quinoa
6.	Iron	Spinach
7.	Probiotics	Yoghurt
8.	Fats	Avocado
9.	Protein	Tofu
10.	Hydration	Water

Tax: £0 (health is priceless)

Subtotal: Balanced Hormones

Valid Until: PMS stops ghosting you

No returns or refunds

Note: Your hormones don't like junk.
Feed them right. And maybe your PMS won't
feel like a full-time job.



The Squeeze

Set: *LCF Studios, London*

Creative Director: *Ash Gul*

Image Stylist: *Ash Gul*

Photographer: *Lila Cobryn*

Production Assistant: *Nashwah
Turshin*





ORGASM OVER
CHOCOLATES

MORE THAN JUST A MOMENT OF PLEASURE

more than one orgasm in a row, as I like to call them 'limited edition string of come backs'. For many, it's about exploration like cracking open the kama sutra and indulging in oral sex, trying new positions, sharing fantasies or talking openly with a partner. Physical touch combined with emotional trust is often the birthplace of this phenomenal energy.

Interestingly, one of the researchers at the University of California, Davis, found that sugar can also lower cortisol in women, at least temporarily. Maybe that's why a chocolate bar is such a common remedy for 'Monday blues.'

So ladies, this valentine's, you can go with either 'Ben & Jerry' or 'Ben & Jerry's rocky road' either way your cortisol will take a plunge, in a way that you decide.

Serotonin, the brain's natural mood stabilizer, tends to dip during certain phases of the menstrual cycle. That dip can bring low mood or anxiety. Sweet cravings can temporarily bump serotonin and lower cortisol.

Over time, repeated sugar spikes can promise insulin resistance. That drop can leave you tired, shaky, or craving for more, making you cuckoo for cocoa.

A high-sugar diet creates more inflammation. Sugar shares attachment issues with skin proteins like collagen and elastin, the ones that keep your skin soft, and speed up aging, that Toblerone is gonna get your skin in trouble. Before you know it, fine lines are gonna crash your youthful skin party. Here's where orgasm comes in as a unique stress buster.

According to Rashi Chowdhary, regular orgasms can help rebalance hormones, unlike sugar, orgasm doesn't leave a metabolic hangover. Instead, its benefits tend to stick around, less stress, better mood, even healthier skin. So, forget rocky road, and ride your wild mustang all over climax boulevard.

For the ladies, who want to commit to a healthy life but not an unhealthy partner, are grateful for the life saving tool, the 'vibrator'. Fun fact, vibrators weren't always about pleasure.

The word orgasm hasn't always rolled off the tongue so easily. Today, we describe an orgasm as an outwardly experience. It's the magical moment that sends thrilling tremors down your body. An intense rush of physical and emotional release that happens at the height of sexual arousal. The ecstatic moment that hijacks your brain and body, almost feels like an angel's way of leading us to heaven.

Our bodies are wired to react to sexual stimulation. When the tension builds, the heat rises, the body surrenders and there it is, a flood of release, so powerful, you might feel like you're levitating. You can call it 'climaxing,' I'll call it 'coming,' but it's simply our body's way of 'exhaling.'

When the sensual fire ignites, it isn't just the physical response. Behind the scenes, the brain lights up like a 70s disco ball, flooding itself with dopamine and oxytocin. Together, they create a wave of calm, reduce pain, heighten trust, and even make you feel closer to whoever you're with. We all know that true magic unfolds behind closed doors, if you know what I mean.

There's a persistent myth that women need an orgasm to get pregnant. Biologically, that's not the case because if that were true, the world population would be half of what it is right now.

Plenty of women will tell you, getting there during intercourse alone isn't always straightforward. Taking time with foreplay, getting to know your own body, and focusing more on clitoral stimulation is usually what'll get you through the finish line.

Female orgasm is complex, part physical, part psychological. What's fascinating is that women can, in some cases, experience

They started out as medical tools. Records of this idea go back to ancient Egypt, and Greek physicians like Hippocrates and even Plato helped cement it. Plato famously spoke of the “wandering womb,” the belief that a uterus could move around the body and wreak havoc if a woman didn’t bear children. I believe, ‘wild assumptions regarding a woman’s body’ and ‘mansplaining’ went hand in hand back in the day.

By Victorian times in Britain, hysteria was a widespread diagnosis for talking about women’s sexual needs as it was taboo. Many who were ‘treated’ for hysteria were simply dealing with sexual frustration.

The miracle remedy was pelvic massage by doctors, performed until the patient experienced what was delicately termed as “hysterical paroxysm”, or what we call it in the modern terms, an orgasm. The method worked, but demanded time and stamina and we all know that isn’t exactly a man’s strong suit. That demand for efficiency eventually inspired the invention of mechanical massagers, vibrators.

The early devices weren’t sold as sex toys. They were clinical tools, designed to spare doctors’ hands while delivering the same ‘relief’. Only later did the vibrator shed its medical framing and take on a very different cultural meaning.

Orgasm offers a more natural, lasting form of stress management and hormonal balance. It’s a healthy habit worth recognizing, not just a moment of indulgence.

My flatmate played the role of a successful subject in an experiment conducted to test this theory. Orgasm one night, chocolate the next. She was surprised at my gesture of offering her a pack of Maltesers after her one of many one night stands. On the wild, toe curling orgasm night, there was no crash, no guilt, only ecstasy. The salmon she baked for me that night, was one of a kind. On the Chocolate night? “Ash, could you please dispose the garbage” The usual rollercoaster. So, no more maltesers. Even though, I dont get along with Ben or Harry but at least that keeps her fit and healthy!

Dear reader, after great research and wild experiments, the climax is,
Off you go, grab your boyfriend, girlfriend, significant other or your manicured hands and get busy. It’s doctor recommended!

Ash Gul
Editor in Chief & Creative Director
London, United Kingdom

Men just don't listen. If he wanted to, he would. This sort of rhetoric is spewed throughout the TikTok algorithm daily. On one rare end of the spectrum, this isn't true. Yet on the other end, it is. All men recall their most joyous moments from high school. For me, it was playing in front of a sold-out crowd at homecoming during my senior year. It most definitely wasn't health class.

I've heard every story. Putting condoms on a banana. Lectures getting out of control. Pure chaos, the moment a scientifically accurate image beams from the projector. It's during this period of time that a man's knowledge of his own anatomy either suffers or excels. At no point during this era does a man wonder about the other side. It isn't until they become active in the dating pool. Even then, they don't take the time to research what their other half is going through. The extent of most men's knowledge is that for one week every month, a woman is going to feel "off". Which, in all honesty, is the downplay of the century.

A group of researchers from Michigan and Ohio surveyed 70 men aged 17-29 years old. The aim was to quantify just how much men knew about the female menstrual cycle. Just under half said they learned about menstruation as a concept through family members. Over 70% believed educating other men on this topic was essential. The most critical numerical value that stuck out was when each man was asked what the common symptoms were. Cramping was answered by 93.6%. Mood changes by 80.9%, and 36.2% vaguely answered "hormonal" changes. An obvious issue that stands out is how surface-level their takes were. Particularly worrisome is the fact that the majority of these men advocated for more education.

The latter being the biggest problem. As a man, I have to give my gender grace. We experience a trial by fire when it comes to the female productive system and how it affects those around us. The aforementioned side effects, like mood changes and cramping, are something that we've never dealt with. At most, we suppress the former until it bubbles up and we explode. That explosion comes in the form of tension in relationships. Whether those are sexual or platonic. The lack of understanding from men and how we deal with the problems at hand comes to fruition in two ways. First is gamifying a woman's symptoms. In North America, people ask their partner if it's "shark week?" in reference to the totally normal menstrual flow. On the other hand, there's anger being manifested through a lack of education.

At the end of the day, a woman shouldn't have to ask their partner to support them during their menstrual cycle. They often have no issues doing so for the other three weeks. So why stop now? At its most basic level, men's attitudes about a woman's hormonal changes stem from a lack of education. When we learned how to kick a football, we were taught. The same way we're taught how to open our first beer bottle with our teeth, or to drive a manual car. The first step in curbing this phenomenon is to teach young men that it's normal. People differ in their symptoms. But when there's a base level of understanding, the magnitude of the problems that you create in your own head drops significantly. If you've aged out of the school system, then put down your phone and start understanding the woman next to you.

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISN'T JUST A HINCE PROMPT
SHE LIFTS CYCLES HEAVIER
THAN YOUR WEIGHTS

Marcus Mitropoulos
Fashion Editor, Pause
London, United Kingdom

She lifts cycles
heavier than your weights
Set: London
Creative Director: Ash Gul
Image Stylist: Ash Gul
Photographer: Lila Cobryn
In Frame & Styling: Marcus Mi-
tropolis

GYMSHARK

SHE LIFTS
CYCLES HEAVIER
THAN YOUR WEIGHTS

NEW
BURLINGTON
STREET W1
IN WESTMINSTER

THE FITNESS AND COMMUNITY BRAND

GYMSHARK

UNOFFICIAL OF
CHAMPION IN GREAT BRITAIN
SINCE 2010



Aries: The World

The world is your oyster, and your hormones are craving freedom too! You'll feel energised and charged up, so free yourself from rigid routines. It's a great time to invest in your body, because a balanced you = a glowing you. Travel may demand extra energy, so keep your hydration and rest in check.



Taurus: Knight of Swords

Feeling the chaos? Slow your roll, Taurus! Cortisol loves drama, but you don't have to feed it. Breathe, ground, and let the experts weigh in before you make any big health calls. Patience shall be your secret superpower.



Gemini: Four of Swords

Your body is calling for a timeout, twin star! Burnout messes with melatonin. Prioritize rest, naps, and beauty sleep. Cut down on extra responsibilities, cozy up in your cocoon, and let your system reset. Self-care isn't lazy it's your magic recharge button and hormone hack.



Cancer: Nine of Pentacles

Luxury is a love language, and yours counts too! A little "me time" boosts your oxytocin even when you're solo. Treat yourself, whether that's a spa day, a fancy dessert, or just saying "nope" to others' demands. You deserve to feel like a million bucks, guilt-free.



Leo: The Star

You don't need the spotlight 24/7, Leo, your glow is already undeniable! Instead of chasing applause, focus on grounding rituals that keep your dopamine cravings in check. Trade competition for quiet courage. You've already done enough, now let your nervous system exhale.



Virgo: Seven of Wands

You've sparred enough, Virgo, time to play chess, not boxing. Keep cortisol and adrenaline chill with structure: plan ahead, protect your focus, fuel regularly, and sleep on schedule. Hard work's fine, but set boundaries, mute the noise, and let logic lead (not the mood).



Libra: The Hermit

When life feels hazy, Libra, your inner wisdom is the best hormone whisperer. Give melatonin a chance to work its magic, rest, reset, and embrace quiet time. Balance and clarity will follow when you honour your need for solitude and deep sleep.



Scorpio: Knight of Pentacles

Think tortoise, not hare, Scorpio. Slow, steady steps are your secret weapon right now. Oxytocin vibes kick in when you stick with habits that feel good, so nurture routines, treat your finances kindly, and chase the kind of happiness that lasts longer than a sugar rush.



Sagittarius: The Chariot

You've been sprinting after goals like it's a marathon with no finish line. Swap the hustle for meditation, breathwork, or just a long, soul-soothing pause. Think dopamine reset: let your money grow slowly, and keep a little mystery with your next move.



Capricorn: Ace of Sword

Big brain energy incoming, clarity, epiphanies, and that sweet sense of freedom. You're cutting ties with controlling vibes. Fuel this fresh start with hydration and clean eats. Keep moving, don't let a sedentary streak mess with your serotonin flow.



Aquarius: Page of Pentacles

Life's been a whirlwind, change, travel, movement, it's a lot! Love may feel a little messy, so lean into connections that feel safe, steady, and drama-free. The good news? Money looks fab, with possible extra income streams. Stay grounded, keep your nervous system calm, and let oxytocin lead the way in love.



Pisces: Queen of Wands

You're finally stepping out of a stressful chapter, go you! Mood swings may still pop up, but stability, money wins, and celebrations are lining up for you. Put on that power outfit, swipe on some lipstick, and let your confident glow trick your brain into boosting serotonin.

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There are good ships and there are bad ships and there are ships that sail the sea, but the best ships are partnerships and may they always be. To conclude it all, God's plan was our clan!

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