
The

THE HORMONE CURE

DR. SARA GOTTFRIED, M.D.



Dr. Sara's Blacklist: 10 Foods to Avoid that Cause Hormonal Chaos

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We all know that eating a healthy diet is essential for good health. We all know that Big Macs and cheesecake are unhealthy. But as a Harvard-educated physician, a yoga-powered champion of your health and a mother, I have discovered 10 foods, some of which may surprise you, that are serious bad guys – they'll hijack your hormones and your health and if you want to hit the hormone reset button fast, then getting rid of them is one of the best things you can do.

Here's my list of the 10 foods you need to remove from your diet yesterday.

1. Alcohol

Lots of adults use alcohol to relax. I used to be guilty of this myself! But a nightly glass of wine (or three) may be doing more harm than good. Alcohol consumption is linked to premenstrual anxiety, mood problems, and headache. More than 3-6 servings a week raises bad estrogens and slows metabolism. It also raises cortisol in men, for up to 24 hours! Stick to



three glasses a week or fewer to keep your cortisol in check.

So ditch the vino and say good bye to belly fat, mood swings, headaches and stress!

2. Sugar

Refined carbs raise cortisol, the main stress hormone.

And what does high cortisol mean? A slower metabolism, a

messed-up sleep cycle, and a lagging sex drive. Be like Oprah and follow a no-white-stuff-diet for a calmer mind and a happier body. High fructose corn syrup contains mercury, which can hijack your thyroid and adrenals.



3. Sugar Substitutes

That's right: no sugar, and no sugar substitutes either. This is one case where you can't "fake it 'til you make it." All sugar substitutes do is mess

with your body's ability to communicate with itself. Diet drinks and aspartame lower serotonin, the feel-good neurotransmitter. And you want serotonin: it's responsible for improved mood, sleep, and appetite. In



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essence, your body responds to a sugar substitute in the same way it does to real sugar: You get a spike and that's not what you want. Stevia, a naturally occurring sweetener, is your best alternative.

4. Gluten

GF, or "gluten free" foods are starting to crop up everywhere.

Don't dismiss this as another crazy diet fad; GF has some serious scientific backing.

Eliminating gluten can help your thyroid function. You have a lot of delicious options, but the idea is to shift to whole, unprocessed foods such as fruits and vegetables with lean protein at each meal, and gluten-free carbohydrates, such as brown rice or quinoa in moderation.

If cutting out gluten makes you feel fabulous then you may have gluten sensitivity or intolerance. Consider getting tested to see how much gluten could be affecting your health.

5. Dairy

Got acne or bloating? Ditch the dairy. Milk, cheese, and eggs have been shown to increase matrix metalloproteinase (MMK), which drums up inflammation, which leads to higher androgens and acne. You can take antibiotics to block MMK,



but I suggest removing dairy for six weeks to see if it helps your symptoms.

Here's another scary development: because we've been exposed by the food industry to so many of the same species of cows, many people develop dairy intolerances are allergic to alpha S1-casein, a protein found in cow's milk. Holstein-Friesian, Ayrshire and Red breeds of cattle most commonly produce milk that contains A1 caseins.

6. Caffeine

I know I sound like a broken record but did you know that drinking caffeine, even the small amounts that come in a soda or a coffee,



can increase cortisol levels in your body and increase insulin resistance? Caffeine intake also lowers progesterone in women, leading to painful periods.

I know some of you think you need caffeine to get through your day (I used to think so too), but consider at least reducing your dose. There is a generous middle ground when it comes to your morning cup. If you suffer from insomnia, anxiety, or bruxism, which is clenching or grinding your teeth at night, I suggest you wean yourself off caffeine. If those aren't a problem, challenge yourself to find the smallest amount of caffeine that will help your productivity without harming your health.

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7. Processed Foods

This is a big umbrella, but it's an ugly one to live under.

No more boxed cereal, frozen pizza, or Lunchables. As much as you can, stick to whole, unprocessed foods.

Not only are they more nutrient- and vitamin-dense, but the extra fiber and water content will keep your metabolism humming and keep you feeling full longer.



When you're at the grocery store ask yourself, "Would my great-grandmother have eaten this? Would she even know what it is?" This will help you shift to nutrient rich foods such as spinach and kale, instead of rich, sugary, and calorie-dense foods like ice cream.

8. Liquid Calories

It's easy: always chew your calories.

A lot of the liquids we consume have hidden calories, and not very healthy ones at that.



A daily grande frappuccino from Starbucks clocks in at a whopping 430 calories, but with none of the fiber, protein or minerals found in whole foods. The same goes for fruit juice.

Whether it's a juice box for your child or an "adult" smoothie from the health food section, you're paying for more sugar and less fiber than if you ate the fruit

itself. Another reason to avoid juice in your diet is its glycemic index; the high carb count in juice causes a spike in blood sugar, which is never a good thing.

Also be wary of condiments.

Store-bought or restaurant salad dressings, ketchup, mayo, and other add-ons may be sneaking in carbs and calories you don't want. Read the labels, ask for the ingredient list and when you can, make them yourself!

9. Meat

It's not that meat is bad for you...it's that too much meat is bad for you. A diet high in conventionally raised red meat and refined carbs can cause



estrogen overload, whether because of hormones in the meat, or from the type of bacteria cultivated in the gut by people who eat a lot of meat.

The "wrong" bacteria - the kind that doesn't metabolize estrogen - are predominant in people who consume large amounts of meats and refined carbs. That's why I often recommend a modified hunter-gatherer (or Paleo) Diet. It puts an emphasis on pastured meats and dairy that lack synthetic hormones and antibiotics, and avoids the "white carbs" (sugar, HFCS, white flour). I call this approach the Paleolista Food Plan, which also emphasizes nuts and fresh, low-glycemic fruits and vegetables.

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10. The Dirty Dozen: The Most Contaminated Fruits and Vegetables

Conventionally grown fruits and vegetables are often billed as health food, but come carrying traces of toxic pesticides. Buy organic versions of the following produce when you can. Or, if you've got a yard, start a garden!

Apples

Over 40 pesticides have been found on apples, in applesauce, and in apple juice.

Removing the peel does remove a lot of the toxins...but it also removes most of the fiber and vitamins!

Celery

Strawberries

Strawberries can carry up to 60 pesticides on their cute red skins, although frozen strawberries often show lower levels.

Peaches

Opt for canned peaches for lower levels of the pesticides found on the skin of this fruit.

Spinach

Frozen spinach isn't any cleaner, although canned spinach has shown lower levels of pesticide residue.

Lettuce

Kale

Imported Nectarines

Imported Grapes

Sorry – nature's candy raisins show equally high levels.

Bell Peppers

They're easy to grow at home, so don't miss out on the great flavor and antioxidant punch of these colorful veggies.

Potatoes

Try sweet potatoes for fewer pesticides and a delicious taste!

Blueberries

Frozen blueberries are somewhat safer, but still often show traces of many pesticides.



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*Bonus: Avoid Any Foods
that Make You Feel Less-
Than-Fabulous*

Every woman has a unique genetic make up and there is no one-size-fits-all diet (as much as beauty magazines would like you to believe). Some women are gluten-intolerant, others suffer real addictions to sugar and carbohydrates. Caffeine is a mild pick-me-up for some, a must-have-it-or-I'm-going-to-crash need for others.

That's why I recommend avoiding any foods that make you feel tired, sluggish, or wrong. We all need an approach to diet and health that works with our specific needs, so pay attention to which foods make you feel

vibrant and energetic...and those that make you want to take a nap or turn your stomach into a gurgling monster. You can find more customized diet recommendations, supplement ideas and food-focused advice in *The Hormone Cure*.

Say adios to these diet-damagers, and in no time you'll be sleeping better, losing weight and singing along with me in the car:

*They say you are what you eat, so I strive to be healthy
My goal in life is not to be rich or wealthy
'Cause true wealth comes from good health, and wise ways
We got to start taking better care of ourselves*

- Dead Prez, Be Healthy