



How do You Feel?

'I feel exhausted'

'I need my daily fix of chocolate'

'I have terrible mood swings that I can't control'

'I'm hungrier than I used to be, but never feel satisfied when I eat more'

'Sex drive? What sex drive?'

'I struggle to lose weight no matter what I try'

Sound familiar? You are not alone. These are complaints that I hear every day. Time and time again, they're caused by the same thing – hormonal imbalance.

Many of the women who come to my clinic are struggling to feel good, and are puzzled because nothing seems to work. Almost none of them suspects that a hormonal imbalance might be the cause of their anguish. Instead,

these women question their willpower, blame themselves and feel frustrated that this is their 'normal'.

Let's face it: we are stressed, exhausted and feel a low-grade variety of awful pretty consistently, especially during our menstrual cycle. This general malaise is not severe enough for us to see a doctor, necessarily, but it can make life less fulfilling than it could be. When we feel stressed and fatigued for so long, we forget how good we can actually feel. We have stopped listening to our bodies and working with their natural, cyclical rhythms, and instead

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Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

When Bad Moods Happen to Good Women

You will notice that many hormonal imbalances come with mood swings, irritability and anger. I'm sure we've all been there – one minute we're all sweetness and light, the next we're like fire-breathing dragons.

PMS is a complex syndrome of physical and psychological symptoms. They can occur anything from a few days to two weeks before your period, so that can be as much as half the month feeling less than your best. Symptoms can vary from month to month in intensity and will improve once menstruation starts, so you can find yourself wishing for your period.

Many jokes are made about women and PMS, but it can be a hugely debilitating time. There are over 150 symptoms associated with PMS, including emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioural complaints. The intensity of the symptoms can be so severe that they cause social dysfunction and/or affect work performance – some women experience such significant and extreme symptoms that they are diagnosed with a condition called premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD).

How Complicated is it?

In the 1980s, researcher Guy Abraham tried to create a classification of subgroups of PMS according to symptoms. He proposed four distinct groups:

PMS A	Anxiety, tension, irritability, anger, mood swings
PMS C	Food cravings, increased appetite, hypoglycaemia, fatigue, dizziness, headaches
PMS D	Decreased energy, depression, forgetfulness, emotionality, insomnia
PMS H	Abdominal bloating, oedema (swelling) of fingers/ankles, breast pain

While this classification highlights the many and varied symptoms involved in PMS, I'm not sure how helpful it is. If you regularly experience PMS, you're probably looking at it and thinking 'I have symptoms in more than one box'. And, in my experience, it's true that women rarely experience a symptom from only one subgroup. Although there is a wide spectrum of symptoms that are common hormonal patterns in women that have PMS, the complex interrelationships between our Sassy Six (*see* pages 20–31) mean our symptoms can be ever changing.

There are some truths, for example, low thyroid and elevated cortisol are common in PMS, as is elevated insulin from a high-sugar diet. But the takeaway message here is it's complicated – we're complicated – and the solution to PMS is not looking at individual symptoms but overall balance. Rest assured diet and lifestyle changes can have a huge, positive impact on your symptoms. Follow the Six Pillars on pages 60–81 and my four-week plan, and kiss goodbye to moods, bloating, cravings and more – for good.

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What Else Might be Causing Your PMS?

- low thyroid
- high cortisol levels
- excess oestrogen
- low progesterone
- impaired liver function
- reduced serotonin (a result of gut dysbiosis)
- increased testosterone
- increased prolactin
- low vitamin B6 levels
- low magnesium levels
- a low-fat, high-sugar diet
- stress
- smoking and alcohol
- VAT

Meal Plan: Week One

Pre-week Sunday cook off: Chicken Stock (*see page 166*), Purple Coleslaw (*see page 195*), Spinach & Cashew Pesto (*see page 199*), Hummus of choice (*see page 188*), Simple Sauerkraut (*see page 200*), Vegetable Frittata (*see page 130*), Blueberry Chia Jam (*see page 119*), Smoothie bags (*see pages 108–110*)

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH		DINNER	SNACKS (only if needed)	LIFESTYLE TIPS
MONDAY <i>Prepare salad for lunch and breakfast for the morning</i>	Berry Breakfast Porridge (<i>see page 114</i>) Wake-up Smoothie (<i>see page 110</i>)	Vegetable Frittata & Speedy Salad (<i>see page 130</i>) <i>Prepared the night before</i>		Lemon & Rosemary Chicken with Purple Coleslaw (<i>see pages 156 and 195</i>)	Hummus and veggie sticks (<i>see page 188</i>)	Plan ahead and follow the Five Ps (<i>see page 95</i>) – look ahead to the next day and see what you need to prepare in advance
TUESDAY <i>Prepare lunch for tomorrow</i>	Coconut Chia Porridge & Blueberry Chia Jam (<i>see page 119</i>) Green Boost Smoothie (<i>see page 109</i>)	Chicken Salad (<i>see page 157</i>)		Lemon & Dill Salmon with Cauliflower Mash (<i>see page 150</i>)		Stop and breathe if things start to feel overwhelming
WEDNESDAY <i>Prepare breakfast and lunch for tomorrow</i>	Energy Eggs (<i>see page 128</i>) Smoothie of choice (<i>see pages 108–110</i>)	Flaked Salmon Sandwich with Purple Coleslaw (<i>see pages 142 and 195</i>)		Chicken & Vegetable Stir-fry with Rainbow Salad (<i>see pages 162 and 192</i>)	Chop Chop Salad (<i>see page 192</i>) and a mug of bone broth	Snack only when you are actually hungry, and choose snacks that will help maintain your energy levels and stave off those hunger pangs
THURSDAY <i>Prepare lunch for tomorrow</i>	Raw Oat, Fruit & Nut Porridge (<i>see page 114</i>) Green Machine Smoothie (<i>see page 110</i>)	Chicken & Vegetable Stir-fry with Rainbow Salad (<i>see pages 162 and 192</i>)		Butter Bean & Courgetti Salad (<i>see page 179</i>)	Red Pepper Hummus and veggie sticks (<i>see page 188</i>)	Have a look at the week ahead and buy all the ingredients needed
FRIDAY <i>Prepare lunch for tomorrow</i>	Quinoa & Berry Porridge (<i>see page 116</i>) Green Machine Smoothie (<i>see page 110</i>)	Butter Bean & Courgetti Salad (<i>see page 179</i>)		Pesto & Almond-crumbed Cod with Minty Peas and Chop Chop Salad (<i>see pages 140 and 192</i>)	Boiled egg and olives	Eat some Sauerkraut (<i>see page 200</i>) as a condiment to your evening meal
FRIDAY <i>Prepare lunch for tomorrow</i>	Mini Oat Pancakes (<i>see page 127</i>) Beetroot Smoothie (<i>see page 110</i>)	Pesto & Almond-crumbed Cod with Minty Peas and Chop Chop Salad (<i>see pages 140 and 192</i>)		Cauliflower Pizza with Rainbow Salad (<i>see pages 160 and 192</i>)	Handful of nuts and seeds, and a Spiced Matcha Latte (<i>see page 112</i>)	Schedule in some 'me time' and stick to it
SUNDAY <i>Start prepping your lamb wraps for tomorrow</i>	The Best Brunch (<i>see page 126</i>) Smoothie of choice (<i>see pages 108–110</i>)	Cauliflower Pizza with Rainbow Salad (<i>see pages 160 and 192</i>)		Slow-cooked Lamb & Roots with Steamed Greens and Creamy Salad (<i>see pages 198, 196 and 176</i>)	Pesto (<i>see page 199</i>) and veggie sticks	Download a period tracker to keep tabs on your cycle (<i>see page 34</i>)

Lunches & Dinners

Vegetable Frittata & Speedy Salad

I love eating eggs daily, as they're high in hormone-healthy fats. My super-speedy salad makes a tasty and versatile side, too. The delicious addition of creamy avocado also helps to keep the body topped up with healthy fats.

2 servings

2 tablespoons coconut oil
1 small red onion, thinly sliced
1 red pepper, deseeded and thinly sliced
1 medium carrot, thinly sliced
25g sun-dried tomatoes in oil, drained and roughly chopped
1 medium courgette, thinly sliced
3 large organic free-range eggs
1 tablespoon coconut milk or almond milk
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 large tomato, sliced
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the speedy salad

2 handfuls of rocket
1/2 red onion, peeled and chopped
1/2 ripe avocado, peeled and chopped
10 cherry tomatoes, halved
extra virgin olive oil
balsamic vinegar
sea salt and black pepper

Heat the oil in a 20cm (8 inch) ovenproof omelette pan. Add the onion and cook gently until softened and golden brown.

Add the red pepper, carrot, sun-dried tomatoes and courgette, and cook for 3–4 minutes until softened.

Whisk together the eggs, milk and spices and season with salt and pepper. Pour the mixture into the pan and cook gently for 8–10 minutes, or until the frittata is browned underneath and almost set.

Meanwhile, make the salad. Put the rocket, onion, avocado and cherry tomatoes into a salad bowl and toss with a drizzle of olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

Remove the frittata from the hob and lay the sliced tomato on top. Place under a medium grill for 3–4 minutes, or until set on top and lightly browned.

Sprinkle the rocket salad with salt and pepper and serve with the frittata, cut into wedges.



Turkey Meatballs & Butternut ‘Spaghetti’

This is comfort food at its finest. Herby meatballs served up with a rich, hearty tomato sauce, tossed with butternut ‘spaghetti’. Simple, healthy and utterly delicious.

2 servings

For the meatballs

500g (1lb 2oz) turkey thigh mince
1 red onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
a handful of fresh parsley, finely chopped
6 fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1½ teaspoons paprika
a pinch of cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons ground almonds
1 egg, beaten
sea salt and cracked black pepper
steamed greens, to serve (see pages 196 and 198)

For the sauce

1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed and minced
1 red onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
1 courgette, finely chopped
1 x 400g (14oz) BPA-free tin of chopped tomatoes (the best quality you can afford)
5 large plum tomatoes, cut into quarters
2 teaspoons dried oregano
a handful of fresh basil leaves, plus extra to garnish
sea salt and cracked black pepper
juice of ½ lemon

For the butternut ‘spaghetti’

2 teaspoons coconut oil
2 fresh sage leaves, finely chopped
½ large butternut squash, peeled and spiralized (you can buy this ready-made)

Using your hands, mix together all the meatball ingredients in a bowl, adding some seasoning. Shape into 10–12 meatballs, then place in the fridge to chill for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Heat the oil in a saucepan on a medium heat. Gently fry the garlic, stirring often, for about 1 minute. Add the onion and fry until softened. Add the red pepper and courgette and fry for a further 5 minutes. Tip in the tomatoes, along with the oregano, basil and seasoning. Bring to a slight boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the sauce has thickened and the fresh tomatoes have started to soften. Using a spoon, squash the fresh tomatoes into the sauce, then stir in the lemon juice.

Tip the sauce into a roasting tin or casserole dish and set aside. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.

Heat a little more oil in a frying pan. Fry the meatballs for 1 minute or so on each side. Place them in the sauce, then bake, uncovered, for about 15 minutes, or until the meatballs are cooked through.

For the ‘spaghetti’, melt the coconut oil in a pan and gently fry the sage leaves until crisp. Stir in the squash, season and fry for 3–5 minutes to heat through.

Serve one portion with your choice of steamed greens or a side salad, if liked. Pack away the second portion for lunch the next day.



Cauliflower Pizza

Who said pizzas have to be unhealthy? Mixed with protein-rich quinoa flour and ground almonds, cauliflower creates a deliciously crisp base – all without gluten or added nasties. Perfect with tomato sauce and your favourite toppings.

2 servings

140g (5oz) cauliflower florets
100g (3½oz) quinoa flour or gluten-free flour
50g (1¾oz) ground almonds
¼ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon aluminium and gluten-free baking powder
¼ teaspoon paprika
1 egg white
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For the marinara sauce

½ tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, crushed and minced
1 x 400g (14oz) BPA-free tin of chopped tomatoes (the best quality you can afford)
juice of ½ lemon
1 teaspoon dried oregano
4 fresh basil leaves, chopped
sea salt and cracked black pepper

Toppings

grilled and sliced chicken breast
sliced tomatoes
sliced red or yellow peppers
fresh basil leaves

Start by making the marinara sauce. Heat the oil in a pan, add the garlic and cook, stirring often, until golden. Add the remaining ingredients, seasoning to taste, and simmer uncovered on a low–medium heat until the sauce thickens. Stir often as the sauce can catch and burn easily.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/
gas mark 6.

Place the cauliflower in a food processor and pulse until it resembles rice. Transfer to a mixing bowl and combine with the flour, ground almonds, bicarbonate of soda, salt, baking powder and paprika.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg white, oil and 50ml (2fl oz) of water.

Make a well in the middle of the flour mix, then pour in the egg white mixture. Mix well to form a dough, adding a splash more water if it feels dry.

Divide the pizza dough between two 25cm (10 inch) non-stick round baking trays, pressing down with the back of a spoon to ensure an even thickness. Bake for 20 minutes, or until golden. Flip the pizza bases over and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes to bake the underside, then turn out on to a cooling rack.

Once the pizza bases have cooled slightly, set one base aside. Spread the other base evenly with half the sauce, add your toppings, then return to the oven until golden brown and the toppings are cooked through.

Scatter the pizza with basil leaves and serve with a large mixed salad. Pack the remaining base away for topping and cooking the next day.



Baked Apples with Vanilla Cashew Cream

There's something so comforting about a sweet, baked apple, and it tastes extra special when served with spoonfuls of my vanilla cashew cream. Full of vitamins, minerals and healthy fats, and a great way to use up any older apples.

2 servings

2 large apples of choice
1½ teaspoons raw honey
a drizzle of lemon juice
½ teaspoon coconut oil, melted
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 tablespoons chopped walnuts, to serve

For the vanilla cashew cream

140g (5oz) cashews, soaked in water for
3–4 hours, then drained
1 date (optional)
3½ tablespoons coconut milk (or water)
juice of ¼ lemon
seeds from 1 vanilla pod, or 1 tablespoon
sugar-free vanilla extract
a pinch of sea salt

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/
gas mark 4. Line a baking tray with
greaseproof paper.

Using a sharp knife, carefully slice
the top off each apple. Place them
on the prepared tray and drizzle over
the honey, lemon juice and coconut
oil, then sprinkle with the cinnamon.
Bake for 20–30 minutes, or until
softened and the juices are oozing.

Meanwhile, make the cashew cream
by putting all the ingredients into
a blender and blitzing until smooth,
scraping down the sides of the blender
as you go. Add a splash more water or
coconut milk, if needed, until you reach
the desired consistency.

Once ready to serve, spoon the cashew
cream over the apples and sprinkle with
the chopped walnuts.

