



# *Self Care for Maintaining a Normal Healthy Menstrual Cycle*

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## **LOVE YOUR LIVER**

What your Liver does? Detoxification of drugs, chemicals, and poisons. The Liver produces bile and stores vitamins. Breaks down, excretes and recycles hormones. The Liver converts estradiol, an active form of estrogen, into estriol, a safer form of the hormone. High estrogen has been associated with an increase risk of endometriosis. So, loving your Liver helps lower the active form of estrogen.

What does loving your Liver mean?

Protecting the Liver cells by providing the nutrients it needs with a balanced diet. The nutrients the liver needs to stay healthy are anti-oxidants (Vitamin C, E and Selenium,) and beta-carotene. These nutrients can be found in seeds, nuts, berries, and other fruits.

Improving bile flow: This can be done by eating

more bitters. Foods that are bitter include: dandelion leaf and root, endive, radicchio, mustard greens, and beet greens.

Improving detoxification: Eating foods that contain sulphur compounds which induce enzyme reactions in the liver that help with detoxification. Some sulphur containing foods are garlic, dandelion, cabbage, and brussel sprouts.

Eating ground Flax seeds daily can help your body bind the excess estrogen and get rid of it. Flax seeds contain lignans in them which bind to the extra estrogen. Flax seeds are also a stool softener and can help prevent constipation.

## **REGULAR BOWEL MOVEMENTS**

So, the liver does all this work to convert estrogen into a safer form and then it leaves the body through the feces. Your body can take back that estrogen when you don't have a regular bowel movement.

To help your body with regular bowel movements means eating things with fiber. Foods high in fiber include vegetables (e.g., asparagus, broccoli, carrots, collard greens) and grains (e.g., bran, barley.)



## IMPROVING THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

In endometriosis, macrophages (part of your immune system) go to tissues and clean up the debris caused by infection or inflammation. Macrophages can prevent fertilization of ovum, increase the rate of adhesion formation, and increase prostaglandin E 2 which increases inflammation, causing more pain. Increasing the flow of lymph can help prevent macrophages from sitting in the uterine cavity.

Castor oil packs daily to your pelvic area increases the flow of lymph. A castor oil pack is made by putting 2 tablespoons of the oil on a piece of flannel and applying it directly to the pelvic area, with a towel on top, and a heat pack atop for 30 to 40 minutes daily.

A decrease in Natural Killer (NK) cells has been associated with Endometriosis as well. NK are helper cells which eliminate harmful debris. Excess estrogen can decrease Natural Killer cells. So, helping your liver process estrogen comes into play again.

## PROVIDING PRECURSORS FOR ESTROGEN AND PROGESTERONE

Eating two tablespoons of ground flax seeds or pumpkin seeds that first 14 days of your cycle (Day 1 of your cycle is the first day of bright red bleeding) and taking two tablespoons of Fish oil provides Essential Fatty Acids (EFA's) that are needed for the estrogen hormones in the first half of the cycle. Eating 2 tablespoons of ground sunflower seeds or sesame seeds and two tablespoons of Evening Primrose oil or Borage oil provides EFA's for the progesterone hormones from day 14 of your cycle until

the first day of your period. Starting this rotation can help your body establish and maintain a better ratio of progesterone to estrogen.

The changes from the seed cycle are not instantaneous. It can take a couple of cycles to see the seed cycle work. These are long-term changes that help your body maintain a healthy cycle.

## EATING AN ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DIET

Foods contain chemicals that aid inflammation (prostaglandin E 2.) Eating more Omega 3 foods (e.g., fish) promote anti-inflammatory chemicals. Some inflammation is good. Having too much inflammation is bad. Too much prostaglandin E 2 can cause more uterine muscle spasm and dilates blood vessels increasing blood loss and pain.

## REGULAR EXERCISE

Regular exercise decreases the rate of estrogen production.

These are some lifestyle choices you can incorporate into your life that can aid you in your journey through endometriosis and other hormonal imbalances. Also, it is important to check with your provider to see if there are any specific protocols you should follow for your situation. Please note that the seed cycle can interfere with absorption of other supplements and should be taken away from pharmaceuticals.

- 1) Marz, Russell. 2002. *Medical Nutrition*. Omni-Press. Portland, Oregon.
- 2) Thom, Dick. 2007. *UNDA NUMBERS: An Energetic Journey to Homeostasis and Wellness*, JELD Publications, Portland, Oregon.
- 3) Trickey, Ruth. 1998. *Women, Hormones and The Menstrual Cycle*. Allen and Unwin, Australia.

