The 3-Step Process to Address Estrogen Dominance Transcript

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Introduction to Estrogen Detoxification

In this video, you're going to learn about estrogen detoxification and how it ties into estrogen dominance, a very common condition that women experience.

You're gonna learn how your liver and your gut work together to process estrogens, the crucial nutrients involved and why this process is so essential for your hormonal health.

I'm Dr. Mark Stengler, and I've researched and written 20 books on nutrition and functional medicine. Now let's talk about estrogen dominance. Maybe you've heard the term, but you don't know exactly what it means.

Likely you're a gynecologist or family doctor, I have never talked to you about what estrogen dominance is. But if you are having the following signs and symptoms I am going to list out to, you should be concerned.

When you have estrogen dominant, it certainly can accelerate aging. It can contribute to things like allergies, bloating, breast tenderness, especially around different parts of your cycle.

Symptoms and Meaning of Estrogen Dominance

It can contribute to depression, fatigue, foggy thinking, can predispose you to gallbladder disease, headaches can contributes to scalp hair loss, blood sugar problems like hypoglycemia, increased blood clotting, insomnia, irregular menses, so the timing of the cycle is off, you can get lighter heavy bleeding, irritability around your circle, low sex drive, memory loss.

Water retention can be a common symptom, and you get weight gain, specially in the midsection of body like your waist, hips and thighs. So let's talk about what exactly is estrogen dominance.

Well, as the name kind of tells you, estrogen is dominant, but dominant compared to what? Well the idea behind estrogen dominants is that there's an excess of estrogen in a relationship to its partner, a balancing hormone, progesterone.

The term estrogen dominant was created in 1996. At that time a very well known gynecologist by the named John R Lee, and he was a medical doctor, Harvard trained, he had a book called What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Menopause.

So in there, he talks about what's going on with estrogen dominance. And so estrogen dominant in women happens from one of three primary causes. First, estrogen levels are too high in the body relative to the counterbalancing hormone partner progesterone.

So this might happen because of environmental estrogens, such as synthetic hormones. A classic example would be birth control pills. But also estrogens from the environment such as xenoestrogenes like pesticides, the ones you get from plastics, for example.

Also, you can get excess estrogen from fat tissue. So if you're overweight, have too much fat, your fat cells make excess estrogen. As well, poor detoxification and elimination of estrogen in the body are big causes.

Now, another major cause is low progesterone production by the ovaries. So estrogen levels could be high, but the progesterone production is low. And a third reason could it be, well, your estrogen level are too high and then your progeterones levels are to low, so there can be different reasons as to why that happens.

But again, when you have estrogen dominance, you're more prone to auto-immunity. We know you can get breast

tenderness, fibrocystic breast disease. You can more be prone cervical dysplasia, which is a precancerous condition of the cervix.

Endometrial thickening or endometrial cancer. It contributes to endomatriosis. Infertility and miscarriages.

Causes of Estrogen Dominance

osteoporosis, pycystic ovarian syndrome definitely has estrogen dominance is one of its issues, TMS premenstrual tension syndrome which I've been describing here can also contribute to thyroid suppression like hypothyroidism and contributes to uterine fibroid so you can see how important it is.

Let's talk about these environmental chemicals though. We know so much more about called endocrine disrupting chemicals or EDC and these mimic estrogen at the cell receptors.

So pesticides, fungicides, plastics, plasticizers, industrial solvents, heavy metals, certain pharmaceuticals. The majority of these, environmental disrupt in chemicals are manmade, but some do occur naturally in the environment and they get into the womb into through the placenta.

in a growing baby. And as of 2017, the endocrine disruption exchange database noted there's almost 1500 of these chemicals in the environment. Again, these lead to hormone imbalance and more specifically the estrogen dominance that I'm talking about.

So this is a very, very serious thing. So these environmental disrupting chemicals at the most cellular level, what they do is they interfere with the body's hormone production, they interferes with release of hormones, the effect estrogen transportation, metabolism, binding action or elimination.

So you can see it's so key that we try and avoid these environment chemicals as best we can. but also because we can't get away from them totally, we need to be able to detoxify them.

So let's talk about how to best understand estrogen detoxification, because if you get this down, you're really going to maintain a better estrogen balance.

But before I go into that, let us just remember, estrogen is a very vital hormone for not only women, but men as well. And men can have estrogen dominance too, and that'll be for another video sometime.

But when estrogen levels become too high, or when it's metabolized down harmful pathways, again it contributes to the conditions or health issues I talked about.

PMS, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, certain cancers, even mood disorders. But the good news is that the body has a sophisticated system for breaking down and eliminating excess or problematic estrogens.

And so estrogen detoxification is built into our bodies, and we need to support that. So this process primarily happens in your liver and it's completed with the help of your gut.

And we can think of it as a three-phase cleanup operation, if you will. Phase one, where we get the first breakdown. In phase one the liver takes estrogens and begins to break them down into smaller intermediate metabolites.

Health Risks Linked to Estrogen Imbalance

This is like taking a large piece of furniture, for example, and breaking it into a smaller parts. The process is carried out by a family of enzymes known as cytochrome P450 enzymes.

And basically in biochemistry they add a hydroxyl group to the estrogen molecule and this makes it more reactive. However, some of these intermediate metabolites can be more toxic or damaging than the original estrogen if they are quickly processed in phase 3 and 2.

This is where certain nutrients can become critical. Now in phase one, key nutrients that you should know about that are involved in estrogen detoxification include vitamins B2, B3, B6, b9 known as folate and B12.

They're essential co-factors for the enzymes involved estrogen. Also, we need antioxidants to protect against the byproducts of estrogen metabolism. We know vitamin C and E are very important on minerals like selenium, which is an antioxidant is very And in addition, magnesium is a vital cofactor for many of the enzymatic reactions involved in phase one detoxification of estrogen.

Now in Phase two, our liver is going to make estrogen more water soluble. And this is helping with the intermediate metabolites that need to be excreted out.

So there are what we call conjugation pathways where your body attaches a water-soluble molecule to the estrogen metabolite. This is kind of like putting all those furniture pieces into clearly labeled sealed boxes ready for transport.

Now this phase ensures the estrogens become less toxic and can be easily flushed out of the body.

Environmental Endocrine Disruptors

So key nutrients or foods for phase two include, number one, the cruciferous vegetables, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, Brussels sprouts. They all contain powerful compounds like indultery carbonyl and its metabolite dimethane, also known as DIM.

And these substances help to promote healthy estrogen metabolism, so you need to get them in your diet on a regular basis. Also, sulfur compounds are involved in sulfation and breakdown of estrogen, as you get in garlic, onions, for example.

Also again in cruciferous vegetables. You also need amino acids like glycine, taurine and methionine to help in these different conjugation pathways. glucuronic acid and this is a major component for estrogen elimination and again you can get this in a diet that's rich in plant foods now in phase three we have the final elimination so after being conjugated in Phase two these water-soluble estrogen metabolites are secreted in your bile and your urine to be excreted out of the body for efficient elimination though a healthy digestive system is absolutely critical you see the processed estrogens are primarily eliminated through your stool And this is where the health of your gut plays a final crucial role.

You need fiber, both soluble and insoluble fiber from foods like flax seeds, chia seeds fruits, vegetables and whole grains because the fiber binds the estrogen in your digestive tract, the excess estrogen and prevents it from being reabsorbed and ensuring that it leaves your body through the stool.

If not, it gets re-absorb in the large intestine back into the bloodstream. Also, your gut microbiome is very, very important. Your gut bacteria produce an enzyme called beta-glucuronidase.

And if you have an imbalance in your got flora, this enzyme can become overactive.

How Estrogen Detoxification Works

When that happens, it breaks the bond on those conjugated estrogens, releasing them back into your body to be reabsorbed. This undermines all the hard work your liver did in phases one, in phase two.

But eating fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, kimchi, or taking a probiotic supplement can help maintain a healthy gut balance and keep the beta-glucuronidase enzyme levels in check.

So understanding these three phases shows just how interconnected your diet, liver health, and gut health are to maintaining optimal estrogen balance.

By supporting these pathways with the right foods and nutrients, you can significantly improve your hormonal health and help to prevent or alleviate that estrogen dominance.

There's another factor I want to talk about and goes back to the digestion and detoxification and that's bile production and flow. We use herbs that increase bile, production, and bile flow Choluretic herbs are those that stimulate the liver to produce more bile which is essential again for digesting fats and eliminating waste products like the estrogen metabolites.

A good example is artichoke leaf. It's one of the most well researched choluretics. The active compound Cynarin has been shown to significantly increase bile output from the liver, aiding in fat digestion, but also again helping to eliminate those estrogen metabolites.

Turmeric is also very effective. It's anti-inflammatory and a choleretic. it stimulates the livers cells to produce more bile, which again will help to limit those estrogens metabolite.

Dandelion root is another one you can find commonly in teas or in supplements. traditionally used as a liver tonic, and it gently stimulates bile production.

So besides helping with digestion, again, dandelion root has been used in European and naturopathic medicine for estrogen dominance. And then we have the herbs, which also stimulate bile flow.

And the herbs that stimulate bile flow are known as colagog herbs. And they stimulate the gallbladder to contract and release stored bile into the small intestine.

There's many herbs, especially bitter herbs have this effect. Milk thistle is one of the more well studied ones.

Phase One and Phase Two Liver Support

Not only is it liver protective, thanks to its compounds known Sillimarn, but also again acts as a cologarg. Again, it will help to release that bile and help get rid of those estrogen metabolites.

Now the other factor which is very simple in helping to improve estrogen dominance is just plain old exercise. Exercise is a powerful tool for improving estrogen balance through several interconnected mechanisms.

So here again are some of the key ways that exercise helps to regulate estrogen. Number one, it reduces estrogen producing body fat. Fat tissue, also known as adipose tissue is not just inert storage, but it actively, the cells actively produce estrogen.

An enzyme in fat cells called aromatase converts androgens into estrogen, The mechanism is that the more body, fat a person has, you're going to have the aromatase activity leading to higher overall estrogen levels.

And this is a primary driver of estrogen dominance. This is what happens in overweight women. How does exercise help? Well, besides, you know, using cardiovascular and strength training exercise, obviously it's going to reduce body fat and then that's gonna help with the decreased production of these excess estrogens.

But exercise also enhances liver detoxification. The liver is the primary organ again for breaking down estrogens and requiring the liver function for metabolizing them and eliminating them.

So if you have an overworked or sluggish liver, you cannot efficiently process hormones. Well, regular physical activity increases blood flow, not only throughout the body, but also including the livers, which enhances liver functions.

And so not always it helped to prevent liver diseases, But again, it's going to improve liver metabolism and activity and it is going peak its function to metabolize estrogen.

There's another factor you have with exercise in relation to estrogen dominance in that exercise improves insulin sensitivity.

Phase Three Elimination Through the Gut

Now insulin resistance and high blood sugar levels are closely linked to hormone imbalances, including estrogen dominants. And so high insulin levels can lead to increased fat storage and lower levels of sex hormone binding globulin.

That's the protein that binds up estrogen in your bloodstream. So exercise, especially resistance training and High Intensity Interval training make your cells more sensitive to insulin.

So then this helps lower circulating blood sugar and insulin levels. That in turn helps to increase sex hormone by inglobulin, which is going to attach the estrogen and then that supports a healthier estrogen to progesterone ratio.

Exercise also promotes regular bowel elimination. So again, the liver is working better, you get better elimination from the bowel being produced and you're not going have the constipation which leads to estrogens being reabsorbed back into the bloodstream from gut.

So physical activity, especially moderate aerobic exercise, like brisk walking or jogging, stimulates peristalsis, the muscular contractions of your intestines.

And that again will promote regular bowel movements, ensuring that harmful estrogen metabolites are efficiently moved from the body. Now I mentioned sex hormone binding globulin, and again, that's a protein that binds the hormones, including estrogen in the blood.

So when estrogen is bound to sex-hormone binding globulin, it becomes inactive.

Bile Flow, Herbs, and Exercise for Hormone Balance

So low levels of sex hormone binding glybulin mean more free or active estrogen is available to exert its effect on your body tissues, which can contribute to estrogen dominance.

So the nightstand mode exercise has been shown to consistently increase your levels, of this sex, hormone, binding, glyblin. And that will effectively manage your estrogen supply by ensuring less of it is free and active at any given time.

By addressing these five key areas with exercise, with a regular exercise routine, you're going to have much better balanced hormones. Now, there are some women who their body weight is good, they have good detoxification, but for other reasons, their progesterone levels are too low and that's leading to estrogen dominance.

And you can naturally boost pro gestional levels with your Vitex in premenopausal women. Again, we always can use bioidentical pro testosterone as a hormone if need be for really severe cases of estrogen dominants.

That does work well. Well, hope you found this information helpful. If you did, hit the like button and subscribe for more evidence-based health information.

Thanks for watching.