

Leah: Hey ladies, I'm excited to chat with you about progesterone. This is always one of the most wildly talked about I feel like in the holistic world because so many times women have issues with low progesterone and so we're constantly, you know, what should we do to raise it naturally and there's a few different things that we need to cover.

A. We need to understand what progesterone is. We need to understand how we produce it. And then there's a few different ways that we can go about supporting it. So that's going to be lifestyle, it's going to be supplements, it's going to be figuring out what's going on. So let's dive right on in and get started.

So progesterone is a sex hormone. It is made from pregnenolone. I think the best way to describe pregnenolone is the mother hormone from which other hormones come from. And a lot of symptoms of low progesterone are brown spotting, painful periods, really heavy periods, PMS, anxiety, you know, bloating before your period.

And when I'm looking at progesterone in a, on a Dutch test, which is going to be testing the metabolites, you will see the B. Pregnantodile and A. Pregnantodile. And the reason why I find this to be very useful when I'm looking at this is that B. Pregnantodile is the most abundant in the human body, but it's the A. Pregnantodile that helps with your sleep and anxiety. So that is specifically actually been correlated with PMDD having lower A. Pregnantodile. So you don't see this on a blood test. You would see this in a urine panel like... on the Dutch test.

And the reason why I say that is I have seen a lot of Dutch panels where B. Pregnantodile will be really, really high and A. Pregnantodile will be very, very low. But so then that average for your progesterone is normal, right? And we already know there's a difference between normal and optimal. But again, seeing that breakdown is really helpful because then you're like, well, this explains why my progesterone levels are normal even though I struggle with sleeping, I struggle with anxiety or I have PMDD, you know, all of those types of things. So that's something to kind of, you know, pay attention to when you're dealing with testing and we're gonna, we're gonna dive a little bit more into testing in a second.

But I want to talk a little bit more about the importance of progesterone. Okay, so we talked about a lot of symptoms that go along with progesterone. And one really, really big one is low progesterone can cause infertility. And that is where I think we get very caught up in with progesterone.

We tend to think if I'm not trying to get pregnant, I haven't struggled with getting pregnant or miscarriages, then I don't need to worry about my progesterone. We tend to just lump it into the fertility category and pregnancy, you know, because we always think about it there. And yes, progesterone levels are so, so important for... getting pregnant and sustaining that pregnancy because progesterone, like low progesterone, you know, can definitely be associated with some early term miscarriages, unfortunately.

But there's also so much that progesterone does. Progesterone really affects your moods. Progesterone affects your digestion. Progesterone affects anxiety. It affects your heavy periods and So we tend to just kind of not worry about it, you know, until we're trying to get pregnant, right? And then you're entering this stage of trying to get pregnant when we could have been working on all of these things a long time ago. But then on top of that, if we're just working on them right now in terms of a health standpoint, you're going to have a much happier life because you're not going to be dealing with all of these symptoms, right?

The American College of Obstetrics, oh my gosh, why is that so hard to say? And gynecology said that your menstrual cycle is your fifth vital sign. So when you're thinking about your progesterone and your period, you wanna be looking at them as a sign of your health, your fertility, and a sign of your fertility is a sign of good health, okay? So when things are off with progesterone levels, you know, things are off with your period, that's telling us that something is going on. That's your red flag to go, hey, what on earth is going on my body? Let me dig deeper. Let me see what I can do to support this.

And I really encourage you when you have symptoms like this, even if you don't have symptoms of this, so, your body support these hormones because hormones are later in the cascade of symptoms, you know, when you start having hormonal symptoms, when you start having bad periods, there is so much going on upstream that's causing that right? And we tend to go, oh, hormones are the issue. Hormones being off is because something is causing them to be off. Right? So you have to go farther upstream. So by the time we're having hormonal symptoms, by the time we're having period issues, things have gone off track much farther upstream. Okay? So really use your period, your cycle as your fifth vital sign to be like, hey, what on earth is going on? Okay?

So we already know, you know, we know where progesterone is coming from. And I also want to touch on pregnant alone because that comes from cholesterol. So yes, you do have to get those good fats in. This is also just something to know if you've recently gone through menopause, why you may see a difference in your cholesterol levels because you aren't making the same amount of hormones anymore which are coming from cholesterol. So just an interesting, you know, connection to kind of... touch base on for you there.

Okay, so we know where progesterone comes from and how do we make it? Well, we make it by ovulating. So when you ovulate that follicle that released the egg forms what's called the corpus luteum and that's what produces your progesterone. If you are postmenopausal, it's your adrenals that are producing progesterone and we'll... Either touch on that a little bit later in this episode, or we'll have to make a whole episode for progesterone and postmenopausal. So the corpus luteum is what is producing your progesterone. Okay, so this is where knowing where you are in your cycle is so important when you are going to get your hormones tested.

Okay, because if you get your hormones tested on like cycle day three, they're going to tell you, wow, you have really low progesterone. Well no, duh, you have really low progesterone. You haven't ovulated yet. and you aren't going to be producing it. Or maybe you'll be told I need to

come in on cycle day 19 to get your progesterone and that's going off the mythical cycle. That's always 28 days and you always ovulate on cycle day 14. Well, if you ovulate on cycle day 18 and you get your blood drawn and your progesterone tested on cycle day 19, well, Of course, it's going to tell you have low progesterone. You literally just ovulated.

So you want to get your progesterone tested five to seven days after ovulation, which means you do want to be tracking your cycle so that you can confirm ovulation. By the way, I'm going to tell you if you are not signed up for the free challenge, the balancing hormones naturally free challenge. We are diving deeper into this under understanding your cycle and you can ask all the questions and tracking your cycle. So go to link in the show notes sign up for that. um that's why tracking is so important because you have to test at the right time so a lot of times if your progesterone levels are off it could simply be that you are um testing at the wrong time okay and then on top of that um let's say your progesterone levels are off or your progesterone levels are normal um but you still have all of these symptoms why would that be okay well number one progesterone could be getting up high enough and that's when you test it but then it's dropping too fast it's not staying up high enough for long enough.

Secondly, progesterone pulses so you could just have gotten it at it after a good pulse and you know it looks great but it's just not sustaining those levels. You also could have progesterone that's literally at optimal levels but estrogen is too high in relation to it you're not metabolizing and detoxing your estrogen very well. And so then of course you're going to have all these symptoms of low progesterone, but is it a progesterone issue or is it estrogen issue? Okay, so that's important to know when you're going into testing. This is something I do with all of my clients is we do look at labs. We look at these labs, but then also I'm looking at their symptoms and you have to put those puzzle pieces together. You can't just be like labs. okay, I'm going to put you on XYZ, you know, and no, let's also look at the symptoms and correlate and see what's going on. Put these puzzle pieces together. Okay.

And then I also want to touch on another symptom of really low progesterone is a luteal phase insufficiency. So after you ovulate, you are producing your progesterone and we are in what is called your luteal phase. Now, we really it's shorter than that, that is going to clue you in that you're going to have lower progesterone, but also that can make it hard to get pregnant because you aren't having that progesterone up long enough, you know, to support implantation and to support the baby because your corpus luteum is what produces that progesterone in that first trimester until it passes off the progesterone production to the placenta. Okay, so having that really strong ovulation, that strong corpus luteum is really going to impact your fertility because of implantation and progesterone production there. okay so that's something to keep in mind again when you are supporting progesterone is we're actually supporting egg quality and the strength of that corpus luteum because that's what's producing our progesterone. so what you're doing right now is going to affect your period your corpus luteum three cycles from now because of your 90 day follicle journey. So again, you have to be so consistent, you have to be so consistent.

Okay, so we have talked about what progesterone is, where it comes from, how you produce it, symptoms of low progesterone, when to test for progesterone. So why is it low? Well, number one, it can literally just be low because you aren't ovulating. So this is if you have PCOS or you have irregular cycles, this is a very good explanation as to why you have low progesterone. You literally aren't ovulating, so we're not producing it. Right? And so then what you have to do is then we need to figure out why do I have low progesterone? And or why am I not ovulating? You know, is this insulin resistance? Is this excess testosterone? Is it just stress? Is it lack of minerals? You know, what is affecting my ovulation? Is it a thyroid issue? Okay, so that is 100% where we need to start. What's affecting ovulation? What's suppressing ovulation?

Now, this is my big bone and this is very controversial, but this is my big bone to pick with. The functional world is that progesterone cream is handed out like candy. Now let me explain this because this can really just make people angry. I feel like you know you come from conventional medicine, you come to the holistic world and you have all these symptoms of low progesterone and they're like oh yeah we tested your hormones we did all the things. Let's put you on progesterone cream. Okay that doesn't solve the issue as to why we have low progesterone in the first place. Okay so that's not solving our issue. Those symptoms are going to crop up elsewhere.

Now let me be very clear about something. If you are pregnant and you have low progesterone you get your tush to the doctor and you get on progesterone. Okay, is not the time to like, be like, I'm gonna try and raise this naturally because your corpus luteus is already formed at that point. It's already producing the amount of progesterone it's gonna be producing, right? But if you are not pregnant and you are cycling and we're trying to fix this issue, going on progesterone cream isn't solving the issue. It's literally just a bandaid. It's like this little holistic bandaid. And I have had so many women... get be able to get off progesterone cream because we fix the issue. We fix the issue.

And the other thing to think about is a lot of times you'll get put on progesterone cream or progestin or anything like that. If you are not cycling to get a withdrawal bleed, you know, to protect uterine health, which if you haven't had a withdrawal bleed, you haven't had a period in a really, really long time. That's definitely something to check in with your doctor, check in with your provider. You wanna say, okay, for uterine health, let's shove this lining, let's see what's going on. But just cycling progesterone instead of again, figuring out why we aren't ovulating still is not fixing the issue. For that moment in that time of protecting uterine health, if it's something you need to do as you're digging deeper, do that. You know, always be safe first, but you still need to keep digging. I find that women will just take the progesterone cream. They'll start it on cycle day 15. They'll take it for 15 days. You know, they'll have a withdrawal bleed and they're like, oh, everything's normal. Everything's back to good. But you still aren't ovulating. Right. And then the other thing to think about is think about just and I don't think we often make this connection is that progesterone birth control, which is actually progesterone. Birth control can suppress ovulation, right? So if you are not ovulating and you are just taking progesterone cream, obviously before you are ovulating, that can affect you actually ovulating. Okay, so just

something to keep in mind, you know, I think that we go, oh, it's natural, it's bio identical, it's not going to have XYZ. Well, well, you know. Something to keep in mind there, okay?

It's really, really important. And I just really can't stress this enough that no matter what you choose to do in your health, it's your health, be your strongest advocate.

I encourage you to keep digging deeper, okay? I cannot tell you the amount of women that have, you know, permanently been on progesterone. And... they've just been on it for years cycling it. And they have all of these horrible issues if they ever come off it. And after starting working with them, they don't need it anymore and the issues are gone because when we figure out what's causing the low progesterone, that's the game changer.

So I wanna share with you, I actually have a client who, she... Whenever she would get pregnant, unfortunately, she would have a lot of miscarriages. And when she was working with a doctor, she did eventually get an amazing doctor that she worked very closely with, and she had to get so many progesterone injections. And it was just crazy the amount of support that she needed to get this progesterone up. And after we started working together, we were able to lengthen her cycle. We were able to regulate her cycle. You know, She was able to lose weight, her acne cleared up, mood was better, all of these things, and then she did get pregnant and her progesterone is so much more stable. And that really just speaks to her putting that work in and supporting. So I have countless stories of this. So it's really, I just encourage you to dig deeper. progesterone cream isn't going to fix your issues because it isn't fixing the issue as to why your progesterone is low in the first place. Okay?

So ovulating number reason why you have low progesterone, right? So if you are in that category, I encourage you to go listen to the episode on what to do when your period is gone or missing. Okay?

Now, let's say you are regularly ovulating. and you have low progesterone, what can cause that? Stress is a really big one, okay? And we'll dive into that. Thyroid disorder, mineral deficiencies, endocrine disruptors, dioxins, not eating enough, the level of estrogen to progesterone, endometriosis.

And I really want to just... quickly touch on cell sensitivity to progesterone. So you can have progesterone resistant cells. And typically that goes hand in hand with estrogen sensitive cells, where this is where someone would have completely normal optimal levels of progesterone and completely optimal normal levels of estrogen. But at a cellular level, your progesterone cells are just like, what do we do with that? We don't know how to do that. but very overly sensitive to estrogen. One of the big causes of this is dioxins. I'm going to encourage you to go listen to, here we go, another episode where we dive deeper into this and it is the episode on endometriosis. So go back, listen to that one. It was done, I think the tail end of 2022 or the first episode of 2023. We'll link it in the show notes. Because... that is a whole, you know, other topic that we can, you know, touch on.

Another thing that I want to touch on actually, which I don't think we listen or hear about enough is melatonin actually. So really high melatonin can actually affect your ovaries producing enough progesterone. Now, did you know that melatonin is primarily made in your gut? only a very small amount is made by the pineal gland at nighttime. So if we have a ton of melatonin production, we want to see what's going on in the gut. So is there literally inflammation, I like to call it fire in the gut when things are just out of control down there. And that can be a big one. Another really big cause for really high melatonin is mycotoxins. So those are the toxins. produced by mold. So if you've had mold exposure, currently living in mold, and I know that sounds crazy, but there is a percentage of the population, about 25%, who cannot detox mycotoxins by themselves, and you literally have the mycotoxins just populating and growing inside you. It's kind of disgusting. But that's 100% going to be affecting your hormones, right? And I see two camps with mold whenever I'm dealing with this with clients, I'll have clients with like an overdrive of all the hormones of the inflammation your body's like, what is going on? And then I have clients where this has been going on for a really long time and it's just chronically like no hormones, no hormones being produced. It's just like none, done, gone. Okay?

So really when you're dealing with low progesterone, you have a lot of areas that you can look into as to what is causing this for you. Okay. And let's come back to stress. Okay, so let's talk about the main one, emotional stress, right? So why is this? That's because remember, pregnant alone, our mother hormone all the way up there produces cortisol, and it also produces progesterone. Your body is always trying to keep you alive always. So your body is going to prioritize making cortisol. fight or flight hormone more than it's going to prioritize making progesterone which is a sex hormone. okay so we have to optimize, regulate, unload our stress bucket. now stress can come from so many ways. i think all the time i hear this people like i just have high cortisol. i have high cortisol. my stress right? and then they get a panel done and their cortisol really low and they just don't understand why or it looks completely normal.

And this is again, reading labs is an art. It is a science, but it's an art, putting it together. And now we have to look at your DHEA to your cortisol. What are those levels? Have we maybe had chronically high stress for a really long time and now your body goes, yep, no, we're not gonna keep circulating that. That's not great because cortisol is catabolic, which means it breaks down your body. We need it. You know, it gets you up in the morning, keeps you alive, but we don't want it in excess amounts and your body's smart. So now we have this hiccup between your hypothalamus, pituitary and adrenal axis, and now you aren't producing enough cortisol, right? And so when people automatically think, oh, I just have high cortisol, I am going to take cortisol-lowering supplements that may not actually be... you know, the issue here, okay? It depends on how long this has been going on.

But emotional stress is a big one. And that, you know, you come back to regulating your nervous system. And we're going to talk about that in a second. Stress can come from other areas, though. Stress can come from endocrine disruptors. Because that's literally causing a stress on your body, your body has to filter out those toxins. Toxins, just toxins in general, heavy metals are a big one, right? parasites of stress on your body. Emotional stress, we already talked about that one. Food sensitivities, stress on your body, which again comes back to gut

issues because you have food sensitivities because of gut issues. Inflammation, 100%, 100%. And then also think about, do you have maybe an MTHFR gene mutation? No matter what variant you may have of that, that's going to affect how your body detoxes, right? So maybe your toxin... intake isn't that high, but if our liver is not keeping up, you know, if we have issues with detoxing and our drainage pathways, you're gonna really struggle with that. Okay, so those are some things that you want to look at and you want to see what's going on.

And one of the things that I always start with when it comes to this with my clients is htma testing. I know I talk about hair tissue mineral analysis all of the time. But when you have implemented the foundations and you have literally done all the things, I have so many clients who've come to me and they've been avid researchers. They're like, literally they can take an entire Google doc and tell me all of the things that they have tried. They have tried everything. And I'm like, okay, let's come back to our basics and let's dig in a different direction and a little bit deeper because you tried all the supplements and you tried all the hormone things. But when what I love about hair tissue mineral analysis is it's this one test that can guide me in which area we want to go. Oh wow. Your body is not regulating and adapting to stress really well. Oh wow. Your thyroid hormone is great, but like at a mineral and a cellular level, your cells are not utilizing it or your adrenals are not getting the to do their job or maybe you know your heavy metal exposure and what is in your body is just through the roof. You know there's it gives us so many different clues on where we need to go and I it's that just secret sauce. I love it for that. So that's a great place you know to start ditching the toxins like getting rid of the endocrine disruptors in your house. Go back and listen to like the greenwashing episode and series that we had in looking for ingredients and download the switch and ditch guide and look at the ingredients in there that you should avoid by lowering your toxic intake, you guys, you're lowering the stress on your body, right?

And then you know, you can start supporting the drainage pathways of how things get out. Are you pooping? Are you peeing? Are you sweating? Do you have clean water? Do you have a water filter? A Brita water filter is not a good filter. It doesn't filter out anything. We need a whole episode on water. Do you have quality air? Like have you cleaned your air ducts? Do you have an air purifier? Your respiratory, your lungs are another detox pathway. So these are just some great ways to just start and see how you can support your body. Reducing the toxins, reducing the endocrine disruptors, eating whole foods. cleaning up your water, cleaning up your air, right? Supporting those drainage pathways. Are you pooping? Are we peeing? Are we sweating, right? And then coming back to support the nervous system.

Okay, I feel like we have beaten to death how to reduce your stress, right? Go back and listen to the episodes that we have on that. But I want to talk about something else in terms of stress management and that is finding joy and finding laughter. It's crazy to me how many of us myself included I'm raising my hand here will we just stop doing things that we put in the quote unquote unproductive category, right? So that is not productive. It's not in any way, you know, shape or form moving a needle forward in an area. So you go, I'm just not doing that anymore. And that could even be a hobby that you're putting money into. right? And so we stop doing these things

and laughter is literally food and medicine for your soul, okay? And for your heart and for your body and for your nervous system.

So you can literally sit down right now, well please don't do this if you're driving, and I want you to write down all the things that you've done in the past that brought you joy and laughter. playing board games is that I'm totally blanking you guys board games just kind of stuck in my head have you guys ever played Catan or Catan I don't know how you say it but I love that board game it is so fun I am I'm obsessed I actually signed up for a this was a while ago signed up for a game board subscription and it would come once a quarter and they would send you board games that you could have for two players so my husband and I could play because most board games are for three or four and so it wasn't very conducive so we have tried so many cool board games and found some new favorites so definitely recommend that you can't play Catan with only two people it's quite sad but anyways um finding more joy uh maybe you like hiking Maybe you like you want to take a cooking class or maybe you really like painting or drawing, whatever it is. You know this can be something you know that you're paying money for that's a hobby or it can be a free hobby but find more joy even if it's just like doing a dance tutorial on YouTube by yourself and learning something new or maybe it's um watching like hilarious cat videos. I don't know. Caitlyn, I like spammed her on TikTok the other day and I sent her probably six videos in a row that made my sides hurt. I was laughing so hard and she's probably like, oh, Leah, this is not funny because everybody's idea of funny is different, but just find things that make you laugh more. Laughter is good. Okay. And it doesn't you know, if you want to sit and read a fiction book versus a self development book versus like a book on health, do it, do it do more things that bring you joy and laughter. Okay. So important in the lifestyle support.

Another lifestyle support this one's gonna sound really weird you guys but sleeping in complete darkness. not like just putting something over your eyes but literally sleeping in complete darkness. Turn your wi-fi off at night and you can get those little outlets with timers turn your wi-fi off at night. Put your phone on airplane mode. Put your phone away from you out of the room use an old your basics, you know, balance your blood sugar, get in enough protein. Seed cycling, great one to do to support your progesterone. And seed cycling, you can go back and learn about that in an episode and deep dive in there or you can just take the cliff notes which is one tablespoon of pumpkin seeds, one tablespoon of flax seeds, one tablespoon of each whole organic, grind them right before eating them. One tablespoon every single day from period to ovulation, then switch to sesame and sunflower seeds. One tablespoon of each grind before eating from ovulation to your period. You guys all know I use Fungate Wellness Seed Cycline Kit. I've been using them for two and a half years at this point. Two and a half years. It's been a very long time. I really, really like them. And I think they're always linked in the show notes for you, but you can use my name, Leah15, to save money with them. But anyways, that's a great way to start. If you're like, no, I don't want to do that, you can buy them from your store, you guys, you can. Just buy them whole, organic, and grind them before eating them. And remember that they taste better from Funk It wellness. That's just what I've heard from people. But you can 100% buy them from your store. Just please make sure they're whole and organic. Okay, vitamin C retreats. that has been proven to help support progesterone production. Vitamin C rich foods. Vitamin C is also not a vitamin that you can store so you do want to be focusing on



getting that in every single day. You know I have a very weird thing to tell you here but you don't just have to get vitamin C in through citrus like kiwi is really high in vitamin C, red peppers are really high in vitamin C, don't discount those okay. Vitamin E is another fabulous one, another fabulous support for progesterone production. Guess what has vitamin E in it? Your sesame and sunflower seeds. So vitamin E is another really good one. Potassium rich food. Now I'm going to stress here that I'm saying potassium rich food not potassium supplement okay potassium rich food and you know what's an amazing source of that? Parsley, coconut water. avocados, spinach, coconut milk, and stinging nettle tea. This is a really gross one but aloe very good for your gut and also very high in potassium. Does it taste disgusting? 100% does but you know just throw a couple tablespoons in your in your water in the morning. Potassium is your stress mineral right so remember we talked about stress and hormones so definitely coming full circle here. Magnesium is your relaxation mineral. So definitely going to indirectly help your progesterone here because the more you're able to relax, the more your body is able to help regulate stress because magnesium deficiency makes you more susceptible to stress. The more stressed we are, the more magnesium gets depleted from inside the cell. So magnesium is one I do actually typically recommend for supplementation. And... You do have to be careful here with your brands. You want to make sure you're getting one that's low in arsenic, you know, third-party tested and all of those things. Always check with a provider before you're adding in any type of supplementation. I in the show notes there is it's get your supplements at a discount at full script. If you make a free account there, you'll see I believe it's on the left. There's all of these quote-unquote protocols. not actually protocols. They're just categories for different brands for different things that I like and there's one for magnesium. And another vitamin that's really helpful for production of progesterone is vitamin B6. And there is one of the brands of magnesium in there. I believe it's the Seeking Health one is called magnesium plus. They have magnesium and they have vitamin B6. So you can kill two birds with one stone and one supplement, which is nice. um and the other thing to think about is B vitamins help your absorption of magnesium so you know also killing multiple boards with one stone here so those are my go-to's um that are relatively safe um again always talk to your provider before you um start supplementing you know you have to make sure you know what is good for you i typically use anywhere to like from like three to five milligrams or three to five times my body weight in milligrams for magnesium. On the lower end if you're someone that's really struggling with detoxing and again making sure you're getting in potassium rich food which is really important. Not potassium supplement. I know I said that before but I really feel like I need to really stress that. Okay so this is where I would start. this is where I would start with progesterone. Okay, I feel like we might have beaten stress and blood sugar balance, you know, dead in past episodes, but so important come back to these basics you guys. But then, you know, start adding in maybe some other things if you haven't started removing endocrine disruptors and finding laughter and opening our drainage pathways and maybe there's some supplements you maybe want to add in or maybe you're like, Time for me to dig deeper. I've been doing all these things. Now I need to like, you know, run some testing and I wanna talk to Leah about that and you know, put these puzzle pieces together and see what's going on. But this is where I would start and remember that you can make a difference in your health and you're fully capable of that and it really just comes down to you being consistent, being consistent and trusting your provider. and practitioner or whoever you're working with because then you can really put your

all into your protocol and just you know trust your process there so anyways hope this was helpful.