

EP26: RAISING PROGESTERONE NATURALLY

Tue, 10/5 5:45PM 25:18

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

progesterone, low progesterone, hormones, period, luteal phase, test, eating, support, affects, podcast, important, pregnant, ovulation, symptoms, episode, progesterone levels, stress, temps, spotting, week

SPEAKERS

Leah Brueggemann



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Welcome to today's episode of the balancing hormones naturally podcast where we offer actions and steps you can take today to start supporting and balancing your hormones. This is your podcast host Leah Brueggemann. I'm honored and excited to be your guide on your way to a better understanding of hormone health and how it affects your everyday life.



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Okay, ladies, welcome back to another episode of the balancing hormones naturally podcast. I'm so happy to have you here. We're going to be chatting about raising your progesterone naturally, because I feel like we've had so many questions about that. So what you can expect we're going to be covering signs and symptoms of low progesterone, you know, why should you care about your progesterone levels, you know how that can be affecting your everyday life outside of maybe just your cycle. I think sometimes we only think about progesterone in terms of pregnancy, you know, we only kind of keep our eyes on it, because it's tested during pregnancy. But progesterone does so much more than just help you support pregnancy in that first trimester. progesterone affects your your anxiety affects your digestion, it affects depression, it affects bloating, and if can affect PMS, it can affect so many things. So progesterone is, you know, this hormone that we really want to pay attention to. But I feel like a lot of times people just don't think about it until they're pregnant. So I'm going to talk about it kind of outside pregnancy and why it's important, and why should why we should care about it. Okay. But first of all, I want to start with, if you have been enjoying this podcast, I want you to take three seconds for me because this would mean the world to me. And then secondly, it helps me be able to keep creating this content for you. Because as of right now, this podcast is not monetized. And so this is a labor of love for me. And I absolutely love doing it for you. But I also want to be able to get it out there to support more women. So I want you to take a screenshot of you listening and tag it and your stories, share it to your stories. That would be incredible. And then go to your podcast app on Apple, and rate and review. If you're like a and totally not reviewing, just leave a rating that really helps boost the algorithm for podcasts or so I've been told I actually don't know anything about that. But so I've been told that's actually really helpful. So that would mean the world to me. Alright, let's go ahead and dive in. Because I know we missed last week, I'm so sorry. I'm finishing up my certification to be a Functional Diagnostic nutritional practitioner, ft NP for short, and it is quite a bit of testing that I'm doing right now. So basically, I have a bunch of verbal tests that I have to take and pass and then I have a huge written final. And then if I pass all that, then I have a verbal final. So we're doing fine. We're knocking them out of the park. We're doing great. We have two more before the finals. But that's where I've been I've

been busy studying and I've had to put my focus on my clients. And then obviously my studying and my family. And sadly, some social media and everything had to take a backburner the past couple of weeks, but I appreciate your patience. So let's dive right in. So let's talk about some signs and symptoms that come from low progesterone. Okay. I think one of the most common ones that we see is going to be spotting in your luteal phase. So if you're like okay, remind me again what my luteal phase is. I'm about to do that. So after ovulation you had into your luteal phase and your luteal phase is from ovulation to your period. Okay, once your period starts, you're in menses, you're in a different phase, okay. And if you are spotting in that luteal phase, that is a sign of low progesterone. Now, let's talk about why. So think about progesterone as a grocery bag, and this is like my favorite analogy. So progesterone is your grocery bag, and it's holding everything in together right. Now. If your progesterone either doesn't reach peak so it doesn't get high enough, or it drops too quickly. You may deal with spotting in this luteal phase, your uterus is prematurely shutting, just like your groceries are leaking out of your grocery bag. Maybe your grocery bag has some holes or it's not as strong as it should be. And so this could be just spotting in that luteal phase that can be spotting before your period. You know, if you're spotting just like the day before your period is not really a red flag, but if you're spotting 234 or five days before your period, that can be a red flag for you to just kind of want to clue in and be like, Okay, why is this happening? And, you know, sometimes it's just some simple lifestyle shifts that can make a difference there. But that's one of the big signs that I do see for women. And it's really easy to identify, you know, if you're, if you're spotting before your period, you can be like, okay, you know, this, this is something that, you know, I may want to pay attention to here.



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And progesterone can be low in a few different ways. So we're going to go over that Next, let's go over the rest of the symptoms so that we can we can kind of see, if you're dealing with a lot of brown blood, the beginning and end of your period. Yes, it's old blood. Yes, is oxidized blood, but, or slower moving blood, but some questions you may want to ask yourself are, why is it slower moving? Why am I getting it? And I think so many times, you know, we just, we just write it off. And we know it's all blood, like, you know, that's the reason for that. But why are you kidding it and you really want to be seeing red healthy flow either cherry red deep wine red from beginning to the start of your period, that's a menstrual blood color that you're looking for. So if you're dealing with a lot of brown in the beginning, in the end, you know, that can be a sign of low progesterone for some women. Okay, so that's, you know, something else to keep in mind. Lots of brown bloods, the beginning under your period can also, if you're dealing with maybe a lot of bad cramps, too, could be a sign of an actually a tilted uterus, which is not even something to remotely freak out about. You can actually fix that. So you want to pelvic floor therapist who specializes in that can really help you in that area. So that's another one. Some other really big ones are going to be breast tenderness before your period, or really moody before your period anxiety before your period PMS before your period, really bad period cramps. All of these can be signs of low progesterone. So this is editing Leah to also come in and add that one of the other symptoms of low progesterone is really heavy periods. And this can especially be seen as you're heading into perimenopause. But that's a topic for another discussion. But



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low progesterone can cause really heavy periods. So it is definitely something to keep an eye on if you're having a lot of heavy periods, maybe something to bring up with your doctor as well. And low progesterone and estrogen kind of go hand in hand. So let's talk now about how your progesterone can actually be low, right? So your progesterone can be low in a few ways like, so after you ovulate, your follicles that released the egg forms what's called the corpus luteum, which is now what is producing your progesterone, okay. And so if, for example, you were going to get pregnant, the corpus luteum would be producing the progesterone for that first part of the pregnancy until the placenta takes over and it passes that baton. So that's why you often hear about progesterone in terms of pregnancy, because you know, it's very crucial in that first part of, you know, supporting that pregnancy. But your progesterone after you ovulate is going to go up and it's going to hit a peak, it should reach a certain peak, and then

it's going to like slowly be coming down. So you're going to think of an arch slowly come down until it fully lowers and that is what signals your period to start. So your progesterone could not be reaching that peak. So that could be too low of progesterone, or it could be reaching that peak, but it's not staying up on that slope long enough. And it's dropping too prematurely. Okay. So that's a few different ways. And then also, you could have low progesterone in relation to your estrogen levels. So you need a ratio of your estrogen to progesterone. So even if your progesterone is not bad, your estrogen could be so dominant, you could have a lot of excess estrogen in your body, and therefore you're still gonna have signs of low progesterone simply because that ratio is off. So those are kind of the ways that you can have it a few different ways that you could be having and dealing with symptoms of low progesterone. And I've even had women that will get their progesterone levels tested by by blood. And they're like, you know, my levels are fine, but I have all of these issues. And so you know, that's where you recommend maybe going and getting a Dutch test would be really helpful because that's not only testing your progesterone levels, through your urine, but it's also testing the pathways and you know how your body is metabolizing that progesterone which is really important. Another way would be to get a saliva test because that's going to show The bio availability, so the hormones that your body can use right then and there of the progesterone. So that can be really helpful. And then also always remember, you want always think about clinical correlation with your labs, like, you want to be looking at your labs, and then you also want to be looking at, you know, your symptoms. And that's, you know, a big difference when, when you go to a conventional doctor, you go to your medical doctor, you know, they're there to diagnose, and, you know, that's what their job is, and that's what they're running tests for. But if you go to like a naturopathic doctor, or even a practitioner, you know, they're going to be really looking at any screenings and any labs in relation to like your symptoms and what's going on. And they want to be looking at your your life and being like, Okay, how is this making sense with these functional tests that I was running here. So you really want to be looking at it in correlation to that, but progesterone also pulses. So you know, if you get your lab done at a time when maybe it was either right before the progesterone polls, it could be showing low when you're really kind of okay. Or maybe you got the lab drawn right after it poll. So it was like, Oh, you know, like, it's okay for right now. But maybe, you know, three hours from now your progesterone was not Okay, so, progesterone really fluctuates. Which is why, you know, sometimes just your typical blood draw is not maybe the most accurate way for you to get a reading on your progesterone. That's where, you know, I recommend maybe doing a saliva test, or the Dutch test if you really want to get in depth. And if you want to just kind of keep an eye on it. Even at home, you can get proof strips, which the founder of that company is amazing. She actually founded that company after multiple miscarriages. And it has you test your progesterone multiple days after ovulation leading up to your period to get a read on what your progesterone levels are like, especially if you're trying to get pregnant. So it's really really helpful to have that and it's really cost effective to do as well. Another way to get a read on it is to be tracking your time so basal body temps you guys you know, I talk about them all the time all the time. And you know, if your attempts you're not getting a beautiful temp spike after ovulation, that could be a red flag for you. Or if your temps are dropping prematurely in that luteal phase as well, that can be a red flag to kind of keep an eye out for you. And then also, some other things that you want to keep in mind there would be the length of your luteal phase. So you really want to be seeing from oscillation to your period, you really want to be seeing a luteal phase of about 12 days, okay. So that means after you've isolated until the day before your period starts, you want to be seeing 12 days in there. So it's all things you want to be keeping an eye on, to kind of get a to get an idea of what's going on. I know sometimes people are like, Oh my gosh, I just want to like run and get this test. And it's like, yeah, you know, test can be awesome. But also, like, let's take, let's take a step back and take a look at everything that's going on, you know, like, let's look at your cycle, let's look at your, like what's coming up before your period and your symptoms and make sure we have a really clear picture. So that you know, we're not just like jumping into these tests, blinded, and then if we come, we have a test come back. And it says something that you're not just like, oh, taking that as gospel, you know, you may want to either get a second test, or maybe you want to get a different type of test, you know, so I think it's really important to walk into these things with your with your eyes wide open. And just kind of see the differences between those tests. So you can always remember, you can do a saliva test, you can do Dutch test, you can get the proof strips, which you can do at home, just p r o v. Those are all amazing, obviously taking your basal body temps. If you are pregnant, though, and you want to get a read on your progesterone ASAP, that's when you do want to go for that blood test. Because you don't have time to wait for any other tests, like go ASAP and get that figured out. Okay, so we have covered signs and symptoms of low progesterone, we have covered different ways to see how your progesterone is low and to kind of

test it and see. But now let's talk about like, what can you do? Or like maybe what's causing low progesterone, and this is really going to be unique to you. Okay, so you know, for some people, the driver of their low progesterone could be endometriosis, it could be a thyroid issue. It could be not getting the correct nutrients, right. And that's really going to be you working with your doctor to figure out what your unique issue is okay? That's not my job to diagnose or treat you. That's not what I do. That's something you can go to your doctor for. But we also want to think about just commonly like how does our body make progesterone was progesterone is job. Justin's job is to get your uterus ready for pregnancy. You know, if you think about our sex hormones, their job is in the reproductive system and their reproductive cycle. That's their job. That's what they're supposed to do. So even if you aren't trying to get pregnant, your body is geared for that. Right. And so even if you aren't trying to get pregnant, it's so important to make sure all of this is working correctly because it says something about your health. So that's why when people have low progesterone there, they think nothing about it if they're not trying to get pregnant, but it affects your mood. It affects your breast tenderness that affects depression, it affects anxiety, it affects PMS. So like



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editing Leah is popping in to also say, to remember to remind you that progesterone calms your brain, and therefore can really help with anxiety, and promoting sleep, helping reduce inflammation, it builds your bones. And because remember, it burns that extra 279 calories, it's increasing your metabolic rate. And it helps keep estrogen and check progesterone. So important, you guys. These are all things you know, that have nothing to do with getting pregnant. Which is why when I say track your cycle, and pay attention to your cycle, I know so many women are like, Well, I'm not trying to get pregnant, like why should I care about that? Because it affects every single aspect of your life. Okay, that's why, okay, mini mini rant over. Okay. So let's think about some common ways, though, of like, how progesterone is created and like, why why, okay, so if we think of our hormone food chain,



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we have cholesterol, you know, we eat cholesterol, which from cholesterol, we make pregnenolone. Just like, think about it as the father of our hormones, it's from which so many of our hormones come. And then later on down the food chain, we get progesterone, right? So that is why eating good quality fats is so important, because that is how we make progesterone. We need fat to do that. We need it, we need it, we need it, we need it. So you need all of your major food categories, you know to fuel your hormones. So don't be going on any of these like I'm gonna cut out carbs today, I'm going to cut out fats today I'm going to cut out this No, no, your body needs all of these things. And specifically, I just love showing you we have cholesterol from which we get pregnant alone from which we eventually get progesterone. Okay, so eating your good quality fats is going to be so important here. Remembering that after ovulation, you're burning upwards of about 300 calories. I think the exact estimate is like 279 calories per day, per day, per day, per day. And I know sometimes you go whoopy Woo, this is awesome. I'm just gonna lose weight here. It's gonna be right. Yeah. But if you are in too low of a caloric deficit, your body is going to be like, Oh, no, we're starving. Hold on to everything. And we should not create progesterone. And we have to hold on to every bit of food that you're eating because we we are in too low of a caloric deficit. Yeah, so that's why you need to remember you're burning upwards of an extra 279 calories per day, and you need to compensate, eat some more extra good healthy fats, especially in that phase, okay. And then secondly, cortisol and progesterone are both made from pregnenolone, right? We talked about that grandfather or father hormone. And it's not that progesterone steals, or cortisol steals from us making progesterone but but but but our body prioritizes making cortisol over progesterone, because cortisol is our stress hormone. It's our fight or flight hormone. So your body is going to save you from the bear more than is going to want to help you make a baby. Okay? So that's why stress is such a huge driver of low progesterone. And I know you're like I'm sorry, Leah. My life is stressed everything stressed. What do you want me to do about it? Honey? Let me tell you. It's not like our stress is going to magically go away. I wish it was I wish our stress could just magically go away, but it's not going to. So we have to learn how to manage and the Rive and learn how to survive through this stress. Okay. So does that mean you're going to do some EFT tapping? Does this mean you're going to be doing

some meditation? Does this mean you're going to start taking up gentler exercises? Are you going to start doing stretching? Are you going to be doing journaling? Whatever it is, you have to learn how to manage the stress in a way that is productive for you. And I do not say that lightly. Okay. I know I know. I know. I know that so often. We're just like, I just need to get through this week I need to get through this week. But you keep saying that every week. Okay, something's got to get you have to learn to manage. You have to learn how to thrive and you have to learn how to get through this stress and not just try and block it out. Okay. We did an episode I think it's either the last episode or two episodes back with Mayor, Rosemary Alvarez and she went over the emotional side of healing and different ways that you can support your body. And so I think that would be an absolutely good lesson for you there. So I would recommend to listen to that. And then also just take note of where your stress levels are at and how you can support them. Some things that you can do physically to support managing stress is going to be magnesium and potassium. Potassium is our first mineral to get depleted by stress. And you should be eating, I think it's 4000 milligrams, I think is the correct number there. But if you want to know the exact number, go listen to the minerals episode by Victoria, but it gets depleted by stress. And so eating potassium rich foods throughout the day is going to be super beneficial for you. As well as maybe taking a potassium magnesium bath at nighttime. Not only is that going to be relaxing, but hey, you're going to be replenishing your minerals. So I would highly recommend that. So fat, lowering stress levels, magnesium, potassium, and then lastly, vitamin C has been proven to help support a rise in progesterone. And so eating vitamin C rich foods is going to be super beneficial for you. And then maybe even supplementing with an amazing food based source of vitamin C could be really helpful for you and making sure you're absorbing it.



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You'll notice that I actually don't recommend a progesterone cream there. And it's for a very specific reason because something is causing you to have low progesterone. And progesterone is farther down on this string of events. Remember, all of the hormones that come before progesterone. And when you just willy nilly go, Oh, you have low progesterone, great, let me put you on this supplement. Something is still causing her low progesterone, and coming farther down the chain of events. To supplement they're opposed to going up the chain of events upstream to figure out what's going on. those symptoms are just going to crop up everywhere else. And I'm specifically talking about menstruating women here. But you'll notice that that was not a recommendation I gave. So that would be my recommendations there to kind of support your body. But remember, your progesterone starts with a strong corpus luteum and a strong corpus luteum comes back to your ovulation. So I know a lot of times when we think about progesterone, we're only thinking about progesterone after ovulation, but you need to be thinking about it before because making that strong corpus luteum. So you can have a strong or a good strong ovulation so you can have a strong corpus luteum that produce adequate progesterone. You know, that starts before ovulation. So that's where making sure you're supporting your thyroid with nutrition because your thyroid does affect ovulation making sure you're eating adequate amount of carbs because we need carbs for ovulation. So nutrient dense foods are so important when it comes to your hormones. And no, not crash dieting, and really eating to thrive. And eating to serve your hormones is not just like for a week out of your cycle when you're about to get your period it's it's a whole long. It's a whole long process throughout every phase of your cycle. And remember that what you're doing now is affecting your period and affecting your progesterone and that oscillation three months from now because of your follicle having that 90 day journey. So it's really important to stay consistent with what you're doing and not just do it for a couple days or a couple weeks and then be like this is not working. You have to be consistent give it that full 90 days so eat more good fats you know start eating for your cycle, go back and listen to the cycle thinking episode for hormonal balance, getting your magnesium and potassium out managing your stress. Eating vitamin C rich foods is going to go a long way to supporting your body and I have seen women simply do this and get rid of food sensitivities because food sensitivities cause inflammation. And they've lengthen their luteal phase I've been seen spotting go completely away doing this I've seen women completely able to stabilize their moods I've seen them be able to get rid of the anxiety and the PMS and get rid of their cramps because low low progesterone really does cause a lot of PMS symptoms and we don't like to feel like we're entering shark week you know we don't like to feel like our periods gonna take over our life and I want you to take back control of your hormones and take back control

of that and you can okay and eating and thriving for your hormones. Okay, so love for you to share this episode. If you have any questions or any thoughts Feel free to pop into my messages I like chatting with you guys about the episodes and if you want more support on this, always feel free to reach out and either put you on a waitlist or if I have any openings we can chat about some coaching but let me know if you have any questions and thank you so much for listening.



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Thank you for listening to today's episode of bounce hormones naturally if you found this helpful I would love for you to share it with a friend and post it on your stories and tag balancing hormones naturally podcast so we can get this message out. You can find me on Instagram @Leah_Brueg and I would absolutely love to hear from you