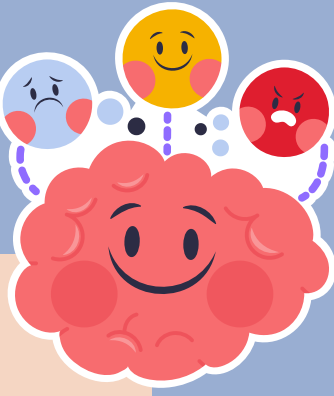
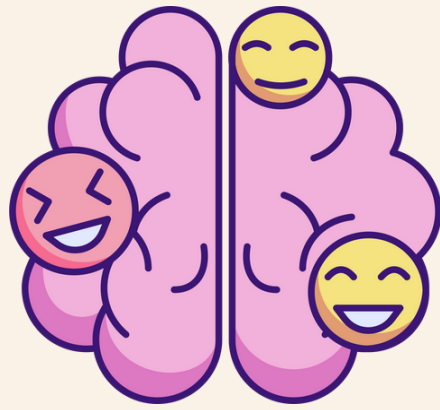


HORMONES AND MENTAL HEALTH



What are hormones?

Hormones are chemical messengers in your body. They are made by special glands and travel through your blood to tell different parts of your body what to do.



Think of hormones like instant messages your body sends to itself - they are impactful, fast and important!

Hormones and the brain

Hormones don't act alone - they interact with the developing brain, especially areas like the amygdala (for emotion processing) and prefrontal cortex (for decision-making and impulse control).

This can lead to: mood swings, heightened emotional responses and increased sensitivity to peer approval or rejection.

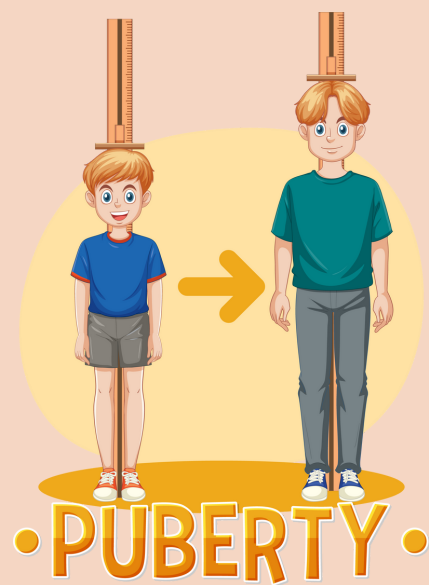
Impact on mental health

Hormonal fluctuations during puberty play a major role in shaping how we feel emotionally:

What do hormones do?

They help to control things like:

- Growth
- Mood
- Energy
- Sleep
- Puberty
- Stress

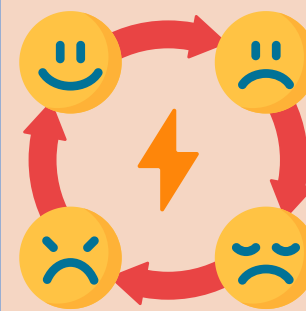


Hormones are always working behind the scenes to keep your body balanced. Puberty kicks off a surge of hormones which trigger physical changes like growth spurts, body hair and sexual development.

These hormones also have powerful effects on the brain and behaviour. This is totally normal, and there are ways to help manage this!

Mood Swings and Emotional Sensitivity

- **What it feels like:** You might feel super happy one moment and suddenly sad, angry, or anxious the next - without knowing why.
- **Why it happens:** Estrogen and progesterone affect brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine, which control mood. Fluctuations can make emotions feel more intense, especially for females. Testosterone surges can intensify emotions for males.



Anxiety and Stress

- **What it feels like:** You might worry more about school, friends, or how you look. You may feel overwhelmed or panicky in situations that didn't bother you before.
- **Why it happens:** Cortisol (the stress hormone) rises during adolescence, and hormonal shifts can make your brain more sensitive to social stressors.



Low Self-esteem



- **What it feels like:** You may feel uncomfortable in your body, compare yourself to others more, or feel less confident.
- **Why it happens:** Hormonal changes can affect how you perceive yourself and how emotionally reactive you are to social feedback.

Which hormones should I know about?



- **Testosterone:** This hormone helps your body grow and function. Everyone has it, but males have much more of it, especially during puberty. Fluctuating levels can lead to feeling irritable, impulsive or emotionally intense and can also be linked to low mood and fatigue.
- **Estrogen:** This hormone also helps your body grow and function. Everyone has Estrogen too, however females have much more of it, especially during puberty. Fluctuating levels can lead to feeling sad, anxious or emotionally sensitive. Estrogen plays a key part in the menstrual cycle and can influence mood changes before and during periods.

For helpful strategies to manage hormone changes please turn over 😊 ...

7 TIPS TO MANAGE HORMONE CHANGES

Physical Activity

Regular exercise improves emotional regulation (balances our mood) and reduces stress by balancing hormones like cortisol (stress hormone) and boosting endorphins (feel-good chemicals).



TIP: Aim for 30 minutes of movement each day - connecting to sports, walking your dog and dancing in your room all count towards this!



Healthy Diet

Eating a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins helps stabilise blood sugar and supports hormone production.

Research suggests that teens who increase nutrient-rich meals experience fewer hormonal symptoms like, acne, irritability and irregular periods.

TIP: Remember to have breakfast! - When we skip breakfast this can disrupt hormonal rhythms that influence mood, cognition and emotional regulation.

Good Sleep

Good sleep helps regulate the circadian rhythm, which influences hormone release.

Poor sleep can worsen mood swings and sensitivity to stressors.



TIP: Avoid screens 1 hour before bed to support the production of melatonin. Melatonin is the hormone that tells our brain and body it is time to sleep!

Mindfulness

Practicing mindfulness helps us to recognise our emotional patterns and respond calmly, even when hormones are fluctuating.



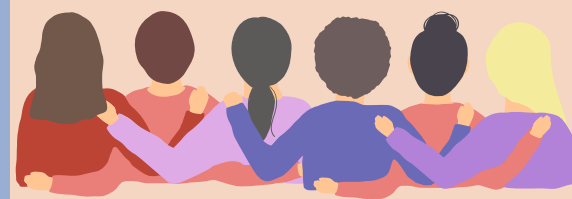
TIP: Practice the 5-4-3-2-1 technique: Name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste.

Emotional Awareness



Understanding our emotional fluctuations helps us to anticipate and manage hormonal mood swings better.

TIP: Keep a mood journal to identify mood triggers and patterns. This builds emotional awareness, improves our understanding of how we feel and helps us to be more in control of our emotions.



Social Support

Social support helps us to feel understood and less alone in our experiences. Connecting to others or talking about our emotions with a trusted person can reduce stress and improve coping.

TIP: Reach out to a trusted person this week and ask if they would like to connect, this could be for a chat, to go for a walk or perhaps take part in a interest you both enjoy.

Connecting to Interests



Engaging in our hobbies and interests helps to regulate hormonal shifts by reducing stress hormones (cortisol), boosting feel-good chemicals (endorphins and dopamine), improving our self-esteem and lowering anxiety.

TIP: Choose hobbies that feel fun and not forced. Whether it's skateboarding, baking, coding or playing guitar the key is consistency and enjoyment. Aim to connect with these a few times a week.