

Hormones and Mental Health

A quick guide to understanding how hormone changes can affect your mood, focus, and well-being.

How Hormones Affect the Brain

Hormones like estrogen and progesterone are chemical messengers. They don't just affect your reproductive system — they also influence how your brain works.

They can impact:

- 1 Mood and emotional sensitivity
- 2 Sleep and energy levels
- 3 Stress response and regulation
- 4 Memory, attention, and focus

If you live with ADHD, anxiety, or depression, these effects can feel more intense.

Why Your Mood Might Shift

Hormones naturally rise and fall throughout your life. These changes often create patterns of emotional sensitivity or dysregulation, especially during:

- 1 Before your period (premenstrual phase):** mood changes, irritability, or anxiety
- 2 After giving birth (postpartum):** emotional crashes or overwhelm
- 3 During puberty:** big emotional shifts during early hormone exposure
- 4 When starting or stopping birth control:** brain adjusting to new hormone levels
- 5 During perimenopause (ages 40–55):** unpredictable symptoms like brain fog, sleep issues, and mood swings

These patterns are common. They are biological responses, not personal failures.

What You Might Notice

- Feeling different week to week without a clear reason
- Increased ADHD symptoms or emotional overwhelm before your period
- Mood crashes or disconnection after childbirth
- Brain fog, forgetfulness, or emotional shifts in your 40s
- Mood changes tied to birth control or hormonal treatments

These experiences are valid and worth tracking. They offer useful information about how your brain responds to hormonal change.

How to Start Noticing Patterns

Track Your Cycle and Symptoms

Use a free app (like Clue, Flo, or Me v PMDD) or a paper tracker. Write down:

- Mood and emotional state
- Sleep and energy levels
- Focus and ADHD symptoms
- Sensory sensitivity or stress tolerance

Look for patterns over a few cycles.

Talk to Your Therapist or Doctor

Bring in your notes and share what you're noticing. Ask about:

- Emotional shifts that feel sudden or intense
- ADHD symptoms that change throughout the month
- How your cycle, birth control, or life stage may be affecting your mental health

Therapists can help you identify emotional patterns and develop strategies. Medical providers can support with hormonal care if needed.

Common Hormone-Linked Experiences

What You Feel	What Might Be Happening
Emotional spirals before your period	Progesterone drop can affect mood regulation
Numb, weepy, or disconnected after birth	Hormone crash, sleep disruption, life stress
Forgetful or foggy in your 40s	Perimenopausal changes to estrogen and sleep
ADHD symptoms feel worse mid-cycle	Lower estrogen affects dopamine and focus
Mood shift with new birth control	Everyone reacts differently to synthetic hormones

In Therapy, We Can...

- Review your hormone history
- Identify emotional or focus patterns linked to your cycle
- Build support strategies for vulnerable times
- Practice regulation tools and planning ahead
- Coordinate care with your medical provider if needed

If You're Struggling

If you're feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, or having thoughts of self-harm — especially after childbirth — talk to your provider right away.

 **National Maternal Mental Health Hotline:** 1-833-943-5746

 **Crisis & Suicide Lifeline:** 988

Help is available, and you're not alone in this.

Final Note

Hormonal changes can make emotions harder to manage. These shifts often follow patterns you can learn to track, understand, and plan for. With the right support, you can feel more stable, prepared, and connected to what your body and brain are telling you.