Hormones are your body’s chemical messengers. They travel in your bloodstream to tissues or organs to help them do their work. They work slowly, over time, and affect many different processes, including:

- Growth and development
- Metabolism – how your body gets energy from the foods you eat
- Sexual function
- Reproduction
- Mood

To find out much, much more about your hormones and the endocrine system, visit hormone.org

At any age, it is important to recognize changes in your body and talk to your healthcare provider about them.

### Hormones and Young Girls
- bone growth and health
- body matures
- eggs mature and release

### Hormones and Childbearing Years
- weight control
- pregnancy
- muscle mass changes

**Overweight + pregnant? You’re at risk for:**
- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- heart disease
- stroke
- gallstones
- high cholesterol
- gout
- cancer

### Hormones and Menopause-Age Women
- estrogen and progesterone levels drop
- infertility
- bone loss

**Side effects of menopause:**
- hot flashes, night sweats
- sleep problems
- mood changes, lower libido
- vaginal dryness/discomfort
- urinary problems

**Side effects:**
- mood changes
- acne
- menstrual cramps
- breast tenderness

**Side effects of hormonal imbalances:**
- weight gain
- lower energy, lower libido
- mood changes
- skin changes
Exercise and a healthy diet are most helpful for overall good health, including natural hormonal development. Follow these tips for better health:

- Reduce portions of foods high in fat or sugar.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Eat three meals each day, including breakfast.
- Spend 30 minutes a day in moderate physical activity.
- Find ways to be more physically active. Take the stairs, or park farther away.

**Side effects:**
- voice deepens
- acne
- new hair growth
- shoulders widen

**Side effects of hormonal imbalances:**
- weight gain
- lower energy, lower libido
- mood changes
- skin changes

**Overweight? You’re at risk for:**
- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- heart disease
- stroke
- gallstones
- high cholesterol
- gout
- cancer

**Side effects:**
- erectile dysfunction (ED)
- reduced energy
- lower libido
- loss of hair

Visit hormone.org to download your copy of *Major Hormones – What They Do* Quick-Reference Guide.