

Welcome

Firstly thank you so much for signing up to my 5 foods to avoid if you have PCOS.

Hormonal imbalance is one area I specialise in in my clinical practice. Having dealt with thyroid problems in my past and issues with my cycle I can relate to the frustration when your hormones seem to be working against you.

PCOS especially is an imbalance that I see many of my clients dealing with.

One client told me that in desperation to lose weight after trying many diets, having seen many doctors and health practitioners she joined a "health camp" for one month in an attempt to shed some pounds.

At the end of the month she had lost only 1 kilo whilst the others in the group had lost stacks.

She shared with me her humiliation when one of the instructors implied that she:



must have smuggled food into the camp and cheated along the way.

They were her very words to me and my heart sank for her.
As you know, when you have PCOS it is definitely not about calories in vs. calories out.

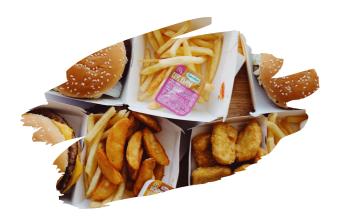
That particular client went on to lose 17 kilos once she supported her hormones and learnt how to eat to switch on her metabolism.

So let's sink our teeth into the foods that are disastrous if you have PCOS.

Getting your food sorted is the absolute foundation of managing your PCOS.

Foods that came with civilization and that weren't part of our hunter-gatherer way of life can cause catastrophic hormonal disruption and can be harmful to your overall health.

Many of the foods that have been recently created (i.e. with agriculture and civilization) can even cause what is called an "antigenic" response in your body.



A food antigen is essentially an unrecognised molecule whereby the immune system sends the signal alert: 'foreign body'. It literally sends inflammation signals, which I liken to 'fire' signals.

This can really impact not only your hormones but also your digestion (think, IBS, gas, bloating, pain), your energy, and of course, how you are feeling as well.

1. Fructose

Our hunter and gatherer ancestors did not eat excessive amounts of fructose. Neither did our recent ancestors like your great grand mum or grandmother.

When you eat high fructose corn syrup products or eat excessive amounts of fruit, your body and hormonal axis has no idea how to cope with this sugar.

Your liver is not designed to process copious amounts of fructose.

This then results in weight gain (especially around the middle) and in turn, metabolic and hormonal imbalance.



Fructose doesn't send the signal to the brain that you are full.

It will therefore contribute to more overeating, which is devastating to a hormonal imbalance that is already driven by insulin.

Sugar

Sugar is quite possibly public enemy number one for hormonal health. Sugar in all its forms includes:

- Cane sugar
- Table sugar
- Maple syrup
- Brown sugar
- Coconut sugar
- Agave (super high in fructose
- Molasses
- Honey
- Corn syrup
- And anything ending in 'ose or dextrin.

In my mind, sugar is like a class "A" drug in that it is highly addictive making you think about it all the time and therefore crave it and eat it.

In turn, sugar will put you into a fat storing metabolic state.

It does this by stimulating your brain's pleasure and reward centres through the neurotransmitter dopamine.

As it causes your insulin levels to spike, and when this occurs on an ongoing basis your cells become insulin resistant, causing weight gain, and with PCOS it signals the ovaries produce more testosterone.

For this reason, sugar - more than anything else you eat - causes PCOS and all the associated issues with the hormonal imbalance.



2. Soy

Soy is a phytoestrogen (plant estrogen) and as a result, has a hormonal-like effect in your body. This means it "mimics" estrogen and can mess with your body's normal hormonal signaling.

For some women, soy can cause a dramatic rise in oestrogenic activity. This can cause an **estrogen-excess** state.

Interestingly, soy can also cause testosterone to be converted to estrogen in your cells.

This phenomenon leads to PMS, mood swings, sore breasts, and menstrual cramps in many women.



The ostrogenic activity may be useful, for example for some women during menopause. However, this oestrogenic activity disrupts natural hormone signaling, especially in younger, fertile women.

If you are of reproductive age, it is crucial that you have a natural hormonal cycle and signaling occurring.

Without a natural cycle you can have significant underlying hormonal issues taking place without you ever finding out.

In a nutshell, soy is a powerful hormonal food that can cause imbalance and disrupt natural hormonal signaling. This is why it is best avoided in PCOS.

3. Grains

I know that this category of food is highly controversial to list as a no-no for PCOS, as grains have formed the foundation of what is considered a healthy food model for so long.

Now, nutritional medicine is questioning the validity of this as grains, in particular those that contain gluten, can be inflammatory to many.

For most, wheat or gluten intolerance will not show up in pathology testing as it will be an intolerance as opposed to a full blown allergy response where your immune system is involved.

As a species, we only began consuming grains in the past few thousand years and so it



is still difficult for us to digest and process this unfamiliar food in our bodies.

The best way to determine if grain products are in fact causing damage to your health and hormones is to eliminate them for a minimum of three weeks.

For many, after eliminating grain products for weeks and months they often report:

higher energy levels, improved sleep, less digestive irritation (gas, bloating, constipation, diarrhea, poorly formed stools) and faster weight loss.

Gluten also causes irritation to the digestive lining by compromising the integrity of what are called "tight junctions" in your gut wall, thereby setting up a phenomenon called "leaky gut."

Dr Alessio Fassano from Harvard has identified and established the relationship between gluten consumption and increased gut permeability in turn creating widespread inflammation throughout the body.¹

Your gut is a 15 to 20 foot delicate, hollow tube, which is only one cell thick. This lining must remain intact whilst acting as a conduit for signals between your gut bacteria and your immune system.

What happens when the gut wall integrity becomes compromised is that toxins, chemicals, and microbes that are supposed to stay in your gut end up "leaking" through your gut wall and move into your bloodstream.

They then travel freely through your body, causing issues in the brain, the joints, the skin, and pretty much anywhere.

Your gut is like a bouncer at the bar.

They only let certain, wanted people in whilst weeding out the crazies.

This is exactly what your gut wall is designed to do along with the microflora in your gut.

So, grain sensitivity is something that could be obvious to someone if they experience painful digestion, but it could also be currently happening in many people unnoticed, silently creating inflammation and leaky guts. This can create autoimmune diseases on top of these other problems down the road.

Grain products are predominantly carbohydrates, which cause your insulin levels to rise when consumed. For PCOS, this is disastrous and can put you into a fat storing metabolic state.

¹ A. Fassano, "Zonulin and It's Regulation of Intestinal Barrier Function: The Biological Door to Inflammation, Autoimmunity, and Cancer." Physiol. Rev. 91 no 1 January 2011: 151-175.

Here is an extract from a previous blog I wrote:

Cereal Leads to More Cravings Later In The Day Leading To More Calories

These foods destroy your hormones, zap your energy and pile the weight on.

If you are already focused on health and vitality, then I am pretty sure that you already know to avoid the sugary, white, fluffy carbohydrates like white breads, cereals, biscuits, lollies, chocolate etc.

But what about the breakfast cereals, flakes and crackers that are heavily marketed as "rich in fibre, heart healthy and rich in vitamins and minerals?"

One of the most shocking things about cereals even the "whole grain, high fibre" varieties is that they cause a significant spike in your blood sugar levels. This

means they switch you into a fat storing metabolic state.

And even worse than this they cause you to crave more sugar or starch later in the day. This further aggravates the cycle of energy fluctuations throughout the day and weight gain.

If you care deeply about your waistline and how much body fat you have, then there are **better alternatives** to be had.

The starches in wheat, corn or rice based cereals break down quickly into your bloodstream into sugar and do as much harm to your blood sugar as if you ate 40-60grams of pure corn syrup or pure table sugar.

This spike and the insulin surge that occurs as a result of your morning cereal makes your body try to get all of the sugar out of your blood and into your cells (usually fat).

This causes a big drop in your blood sugar as the day progresses, making you crave more carb-based or sugary foods later in the day.

This roller coaster of 'up and down energy' will lead you to consume even more calories.

Is Your Breakfast Making You Older Than You Really Are?

Even worse, the *massive*spike in your blood sugar
accelerates the ageing
process by damaging your
cells through a process call
glycation. This affects your
joints, skin, organs and
EVEN YOUR BRAIN.

Cereals Can Cause Gut Inflammation and Damage

I've seen enough cases with clients whereby they cut out grains from their diet and their health rapidly improves and their waistlines shrink.

I believe this is because our paleo ancestors didn't eat them and they have only been farmed for 10, 000 years.

It takes 40 thousand to 100 thousand years to create a shift in our genes, physiology and structure, so from an evolutionary framework we are still cave men and women.

Grains can be inflammatory in nature and can contribute to weight gain especially around the middle but also they can cause bloating, symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and many develop food intolerance reactions to them.

So, what are healthier alternatives that are still as easy as pouring cereal into a bowl?

Try having a bowl of organic natural yoghurt that is rich in probiotics and add half a cup of berries. You can also add a little stevia if you need it and a scoop of protein powder. The yoghurt will be beneficial to your bowel flora, which in turn is essential for digestive health.

This will leave your blood sugar more managed, meaning you will have more energy, and fewer cravings throughout the day.

Or, try having a combination of eggs, avocado and veggies. This is a quick to prepare breakfast that's delicious and much more nutrient dense than a bowl of cereal.

On some level, grains are most probably causing some metabolic disruption to you. At worst, they are creating inflammation, weight gain and further aggravating your PCOS.

4. Bad Fats

Bad fats are omega 6
vegetable oils (canola, corn,
soy, safflower, sunflower);
think of the cooking oil aisle
at the supermarket that is
lined with highly refined
vegetable oils in plastic/ glass
clear bottles.

Omega 6 fats are called essential fats as you need to have them in your diet, meaning you do not manufacture them internally but they are essential to health. They are found in nature in vegetables, plants, and in animals. In this small amount, they are good for your health.

Where the issue lies is in the volume that is ingested and in the processing.



The Western diet has a significantly higher quantity intake than what is needed, as they are cheap to manufacture and have a long shelf life.

Other bad fats include trans fats and deep fried foods.

Trans fats are particularly nasty as they are manufactured and are therefore completely foreign to your metabolism. They are found in baked goods, margarines, cakes, biscuits, pies (packaged foods) and deep fried foods.

Deep fried foods are toxic to you because they are usually made out of vegetable oils and also cooked at high temperatures, which renders the fat rancid and oxidised.

All of these oils and fats are inflammatory and in turn disrupt hormones and cause weight gain.

In fact,

inflammation is one of the major contributors to insulin resistance, elevated testosterone and weight gain. If you want to look and feel younger and keep your hormones in check, then inflammation is something you want to turn the dial down on.

The best way to think about inflammation is it is like the story of the frog on the slow boil.

The poor old frog being dropped into boiling water will immediately high tail it out of there and jump for its life.

Just like the frog, if you have sudden acute inflammation you will know about it and you will experience pain, swelling, redness and will take IMMEDIATE ACTION. You will tend to not think about it you will just react.

But if you are slowly simmering away to boiling point, like the frog that stays in the water as it increases in temperature, then inflammation can spread through your body and can be insidious in nature, silently damaging your skin, organs and your brain for years before you start to notice any effects.

It is this **chronic smoldering inflammation** that slowly simmers away and leads to rapid ageing and **major health CRISES.**

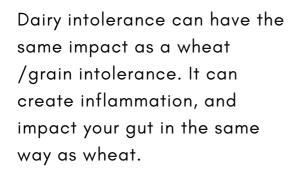
What are some signs you maybe on slow simmer?

- Ongoing bloating, IBS, stomach/gut pain
- Chronic fatigue
- Hormonal imbalance period pain, endometriosis, PCOS, adenomyosis
- Persistent headaches
- Auto-immune conditions rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, hashimoto's thyroid
- Elevated cholesterol
- Allergies
- Eczema
- Pain anywhere in the body
- For women, a waistline above 88cm
- For the gents, a waistline above 100cm

With simmering inflammation, your body is always trying to repair itself, is on constant alert, driving hormonal imbalance and subsequently, PCOS.

5. Dairy

Dairy is another major food sensitivity for many. Some people are lactose intolerant, whilst others are sensitive to the proteins casein and whey that are found in dairy products.



The way that dairy is processed today is far removed from its natural state. The pasteurisation process that is done in order to kill harmful bacteria in fact denatures the fats in the dairy products. This makes the fat become like trans fat which are unrecognizable to the body and therefore disrupts metabolism.



Are You Ready To Take Care Of Your Own Hormonal Health and Beat PCOS?

If you are sick of being overweight, growing facial hair, looking in the mirror and seeing acne staring back at you or you have no idea when your next period is going to be and are worried about your fertility then schedule a complimentary initial consultation with me or one of my team to help you once and for all balance your hormones.

I have helped thousands of women balance their hormones since 2007, with many ending up with a baby at the other end (if they wished).

PCOS is complex, and without the right advice it can be difficult to overcome. Once you get to the root cause and wrap an effective treatment plan around it, you can balance your hormones and become healthy. Your underlying issues may be:

- Insulin resistance
- Stress
- Hypothalamic amenorrhea
- Hypothyroidism
- Androgen excess
- Effects of birth control

And the list goes on...

Sort it out, and you will be on the journey to feeling more vibrant, healthier, slimmer and more confidant.

Click below to organise a free initial consultation today to learn how my team and I can help you:

https://victoriaosullivan.co m.au/awaken-call

I look forward to connecting with you.

In Health,

Victoria O'Sullivan

