

Recognising the Key Role of Hormones in European Health: the Milano Declaration – Annex I

# 10 recommendations for good hormone health

In May 2022, on the first European Hormone Day, the European Society of Endocrinology (ESE) and the European Hormone and Metabolism Foundation (ESE Foundation) published the Milano Declaration, '[Recognising the Key Role of Hormones in European Health](#)'. The declaration highlights the important role of hormones in public health, and provides recommendations to decision-makers on how to strengthen national and European health policies.

This Annex complements the Milano Declaration by providing 10 recommendations on how each of us can take relatively simple steps to ensure better hormone health. It should be considered alongside any specific recommendations issued by your local health authorities. If you have any questions, please speak to your doctor.

## ADOPT A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

**Physical activity, a balanced diet and regular sleep are all essential for endocrine health**

1. **Physical activity** is essential for a healthy hormone balance. Exercising 1.5-2.5 hours/week helps the body produce hormones naturally and regulate their levels. Small changes to daily habits can also make a big difference, like walking or cycling instead of driving when possible, and taking the stairs instead of the lift.
2. **A diet rich in whole, unprocessed foods** can help to maintain or improve hormone balance. Eat lots of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and keep processed foods to a minimum.
3. **Regular sleep** is paramount for maintaining the hormone balance. Aim for at least 7 hours of uninterrupted sleep at the same time every night and you will be waking up fresh and full of energy! Having an early dinner and avoiding screens for a few hours before bed will help you achieve this goal.

## PREVENT AVOIDABLE HORMONE DEFICIENCIES

**Vitamin D, iodine and calcium are essential for a healthy endocrine system**

4. **Maintain vitamin D intake** by eating oily fish like salmon and sardines. Consider taking vitamin D supplements like cod liver oil in fall and winter months when sun exposure is low.
5. **Eating iodine-rich foods** such as seafood, seaweed, eggs, and dairy can help keep your iodine levels up. Switching to iodized salt is a good and inexpensive alternative to avoid iodine deficiency, especially in pregnancy.
6. **Eating calcium-rich foods** such as yoghurt, almonds, beans, and dark leafy greens will help protect your bones and teeth. Ask your doctor if calcium supplements would be appropriate for you.

# REDUCE EXPOSURE TO ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS

## Endocrine disrupting chemicals can be found in plastic packaging, in the air and in cosmetic products

- 7. Plastic packaging** is a common source of endocrine disruptors. To reduce exposure, look for BPA-free and BPS-free labels. Use glass or stainless steel containers instead of plastic containers and bottles. Drink tap water instead of bottled water. And never microwave plastic!
- 8. The air in and outside the house** can contain endocrine disrupting properties. To minimise exposure at home, regularly vacuum, dust and ventilate to reduce the presence of dust particles.
- 9. Care products and cosmetics** can have an endocrine disrupting effect. Check the ingredients and try to avoid buying cosmetics that contain endocrine disrupting chemicals such as phthalates, parabens and triclosan.

# BE AWARE OF EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ENDOCRINE DISEASE

## Early detection and treatment can help prevent more serious conditions

- 10.** If you experience any of the below symptoms, it is important to see a doctor to get an accurate diagnosis.
  - Unexplained weight gain/loss
  - Sensitivity to cold
  - Changes in appetite
  - Brittle hair and nails
  - Fatigue
  - Dry and flaky skin
  - Onset of depression
  - Excessive thirst
  - signs of early or late puberty (outside age 8–13 in girls and 9–14 in boys)
  - Adult-specific: loss of libido, irregular menstrual cycles, infertility

These recommendations are also available as a poster and as social media graphics.

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