

# Women's Hormone Lab Guide

Understanding estrogen, progesterone, cortisol & more — by Sonya M., CLS

■ This guide is for educational purposes only. Always consult your healthcare provider before making medical decisions.

## Key Female Hormones and Lab Values

Hormone levels vary significantly based on age, cycle phase, and menopausal status. Always interpret with your doctor.

- Estradiol (E2): Follicular phase 19–144 pg/mL; Luteal 94–290 pg/mL; Post-menopause <59 pg/mL
- Progesterone: Follicular <1 ng/mL; Luteal 2–25 ng/mL; Post-menopause <0.2 ng/mL
- FSH: Follicular 3–10 mIU/mL; Mid-cycle 4–25; Post-menopause >23 mIU/mL
- LH: Follicular 2–15 mIU/mL; Ovulation surge up to 100 mIU/mL
- Testosterone (total): 15–70 ng/dL in women
- DHEA-S: 35–430 mcg/dL (varies by age)

## Cortisol — The Stress Hormone

Cortisol follows a daily rhythm — highest in morning, lowest at night.

- Morning (8 AM): 6–23 mcg/dL
- Evening (4 PM): 3–16 mcg/dL
- Chronic stress keeps cortisol elevated — affecting weight, sleep, immunity
- Signs of high cortisol: belly fat, poor sleep, anxiety, sugar cravings
- Signs of low cortisol: extreme fatigue, low blood pressure, salt cravings

## Insulin and Blood Sugar Balance

- Fasting Glucose: 70–99 mg/dL (optimal < 90)
- HbA1c: < 5.7% (normal); 5.7–6.4% (prediabetes); > 6.5% (diabetes)
- Fasting Insulin: < 5 uIU/mL (optimal); > 10 suggests insulin resistance

Insulin resistance is common in women with PCOS and perimenopause.

## Signs Your Hormones May Be Imbalanced

- Irregular or absent periods
- Severe PMS or mood swings
- Difficulty losing weight despite diet and exercise

- Low libido
- Hair thinning or excess hair growth
- Skin changes (acne, dryness)
- Sleep disturbances
- Brain fog or memory issues
- Hot flashes or night sweats

## Questions to Ask About Your Hormones

- Can we do comprehensive hormone testing including cortisol?
- Should my hormones be tested at a specific time in my cycle?
- Do my results suggest perimenopause or menopause?
- Is hormone replacement therapy appropriate for me?
- How do my hormones affect my thyroid and metabolism?

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