How to Increase Progesterone Naturally

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Low progesterone is a primary cause of miscarriages. According to a study 753 infertile women participated in, 62 percent had low progesterone, and in this study, their low progesterone was identified as the main cause of their infertility. In such cases, women with low progesterone levels should strive to increase progesterone naturally before reaching for hormonal support.

How to tell if you need to increase progesterone for a successful pregnancy? In this article, we’ll look at natural ways to increase progesterone.

What is Progesterone?

Progesterone is a steroid hormone produced by the corpus luteum, a temporary hormone-secreting structure in the ovary. The hormone progesterone plays an important role in the menstrual cycle and in regulating the early stages of pregnancy. Progesterone stimulates blood vessels in the uterine lining to produce nutrients to nurture the embryo when the egg is fertilised. It is also responsible for preparing the uterine lining for implantation and for maintaining the endometrium for the pregnancy's duration.

Luteal phase is the post ovulatory phase characterized by increased progesterone production which is also called the secretory phase. During this phase corpus luteum (the left over of the burst follicle which released an egg during the ovulation) is producing progesterone, which is preparing the endometrium (the inside lining of the uterus/womb) for implantation, should the egg become fertilized.

If there is not enough progesterone being produced to sustain implantation, pregnancy is unlikely. This can also be attributed to abnormal thyroid function and the role it plays to increase progesterone. There is a gradual increase in progesterone over the course of secretory phase of the cycle.

How do Low Progesterone Levels Lead to Infertility?

Even though the woman can ovulate and the egg can be fertilized, the endometrium is not prepared for implantation due to the lack of progesterone. Furthermore, even if implantation takes place, there is not enough progesterone produced to sustain pregnancy and miscarriage can occur. Which is why it is important to increase progesterone levels before your next conception attempt.

What are the symptoms of progesterone deficiency?

- Spotting before periods
- Breast tenderness
- Sugar cravings
- Irregular periods
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- Ovarian cysts
- Water retention
- Low body temperature
- Miscarriage

How to increase progesterone naturally

Ensure you are getting enough micronutrients.
For optimal progesterone production, the body requires adequate intake of B-Complex vitamins, in particular, vitamin B6.
The other key nutrient in progesterone production is magnesium.
Eat plenty of organic dark green leafy vegetables, almonds, black strap molasses, seeds, nuts, and beans. They are all good sources of B vitamins and magnesium.
Eat a serve of good quality organic protein, the size of your palm 3 times a day.
Hormones are made of protein so you want to make sure you are getting plenty in your diet.
Chart your cycles, to see if your temperature rises in the second half of your cycle.
Avoid dairy and non organically grown meat and eggs. Animal products are the highest source of hormones in the human diet. One study found that a major source of animal-derived estrogens in the human diet are milk and dairy products, which account for 60-70% of the estrogens consumed.

We usually associate dairy and drinking milk with calcium, and never think about what else we may be consuming along with the calcium (and dairy, by the way, is not the best source of calcium). Here is a list of hormones which have been found in cows milk:

- Prolactin, somatostatin, melatonin, oxytocin, growth hormone, lutenizing releasing hormone, thyroid stimulating hormone, estrogens, progesterone, insulin, corticosteroids and many more. Excess consumption of all these hormones could disrupt your own hormonal balance.

Most of these hormones are found in the animal, but many are also given to the cows by the farmers to make them grow big and fat so that they get more money when they sell the meat.

Other ways to naturally increase progesterone levels

In addition to the above, here are other things you can do to help boost your progesterone levels naturally:

- Reduce stress. When under stress, the body produces stress hormones like cortisol. Since the body prioritises the production of cortisol when your body's under stress, the adrenal glands may convert progesterone into cortisol. You can reduce stress by increasing physical activity, meditating or through breathing techniques.
- Exercise but don't overexercise. While exercise is great in helping you maintain an ideal body weight, increasing your fertility and in keeping stress levels at a minimum, too much exercise can do the opposite.
- Maintain a healthy weight. An increase in body fat leads to the production of more estrogen in
the body, which in turn may cause an imbalance in your progesterone levels. Keeping a healthy weight can help correct this hormonal imbalance.

**Foods that increase progesterone naturally**

The following foods can help you increase progesterone naturally as they are rich in zinc, magnesium, and B6 the crucial building blocks of progesterone.

**Zinc**

An important mineral in fertility, zinc is essential in maintaining hormone balance in the body. Zinc plays a role in pituitary function, regulates FSH and LH secretion and also affects progesterone production, according to one study.

**Foods rich in Zinc:**

- Pumpkin seeds
- Grass-fed beef
- Oysters
- Flax seeds
- Spinach

**Magnesium**

Magnesium helps in progesterone production in the body. It also helps regulate the production of cortisol and helps manage the body's stress levels.

**Foods rich in Magnesium:**

- Leafy greens
- Avocado
- Dark organic chocolate
- Beans
- Most nuts and seeds

**Vitamin B6**

One of the main benefits of vitamin B6 is to keep the corpus luteum healthy and prevent luteal phase defect. Since it is the corpus luteum that manufactures progesterone, Vitamin B6 is key to progesterone production because of its benefits to the corpus luteum.

**Foods rich in B6:**

- Wild salmon
- Bananas
• Organic free range Chicken breast
• Sweet potatoes
• Garlic

Also, make sure to include food sources of good quality saturated fats which are necessary for cholesterol production. Cholesterol is used to produce steroid hormones like progesterone, estrogen, and testosterone. Low-fat diets can predispose to depletion of steroid hormones. Good sources of fat are grass fed butter, coconut oil, and MCT oil and fermented cod liver oil.

In general, eat a diet abundant in organic fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds, good quality fats and protein sources and drink 2L of filtered or mineral water a day (I personally use and recommend the Aquasana drinking water system and this shower filter). Consult your naturopath if you wish to take supplements. Practitioner grade supplements are of higher quality than over the counter products and you’ll get better value and result for your money.

If you have low progesterone, take these steps to help increase your progesterone and increase your chance of a healthy pregnancy.

What is your thought on this common fertility issue? Have you tried to increase progesterone naturally? What was your experience with natural remedies for increasing progesterone and which ones did you use? Would love to learn more about you and your experiences.