

Well-Being Newsletter

Second Quarter 2025



This quarter, we take some time to recognize and appreciate the unique complexities of the human body, as well as the importance of preventive health.






We also honor April’s **Stress Awareness Month**, May’s **Women’s Health Month**, and June’s **Men’s Health** and **Brain Health Awareness** months. These national awareness events provide a dedicated time and space to recognize the value of tuning into what is happening in our bodies and what it means for our health. A little self-awareness allows us to take a more proactive approach toward addressing our health, leads to more informed decision making about our health, and fosters an overall sense of our well-being.

Did you know hormones play a role in preventive health?

As we mark the quarter’s national awareness months, we can’t help but consider the importance of hormonal health. To better understand hormonal health, a little refresher on the endocrine system may be useful.

The endocrine system is like your body’s internal messaging network. It uses hormones as “chemical messengers” to regulate everything from energy levels to mood, metabolism and growth. The influence of these messengers can’t be understated. In fact, they can influence the way we think and act on a day-to-day basis. Hormones are also essential for maintaining homeostasis, or a state of balance, in the body.

Key Glands and Functions

	Pituitary Gland = The Master Gland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🔍 Located at the base of the brain and controls other endocrine glands.⚙️ Regulates growth, stress response, and reproductive functions.
	Thyroid Gland = The Metabolism Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🔍 Located in the neck and produces hormones that control metabolism, energy, and body temperature.⚙️ An underactive thyroid, known as hypothyroidism, can cause severe fatigue and weight gain, while an overactive one, known as hyperthyroidism, can lead to weight loss and anxiety.
	Adrenal Glands = The Stress Responders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🔍 Located at the top of the kidneys and release adrenaline and cortisol.⚙️ Help manage stress, energy levels, and blood pressure.📅 <i>April is National Stress Awareness Month, click here for more information on cortisol and how it affects the mind and body.</i>
	Pancreas = Blood Sugar Regulator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">🔍 Provides insulin and glucagon to balance blood sugar levels.⚙️ Imbalances can lead to diabetes or blood sugar spikes/crashes.
	Ovaries & Testes = The Reproductive Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⚙️ Ovaries (in women) produce estrogen and progesterone, influencing menstrual cycles as well as a wide range of other organs and mechanisms in the body.📅 <i>May is Women’s Health Month, click here for a robust resource highlighting menopause. Click here for an insightful resource on menstrual cycle syncing.</i>⚙️ Testes (in men) produce testosterone, supporting muscle growth, mood and health.📅 <i>June is Men’s Health Month, click here for additional information on addressing men’s health.</i>

Tips for maintaining a healthy endocrine system:

Although it's not possible to prevent all types of endocrine system-related conditions, here are some steps that can help support overall hormonal health:



Maintaining a weight
that's healthy for you



Exercising regularly



Getting proper,
quality nutrition



Getting quality sleep



Limiting or
avoiding alcohol



Avoiding or
quitting smoking

Chemicals called **endocrine disruptors** can also affect your hormonal health. Learn more about the impact some common everyday products may have on your health with this resource [here](#).

To learn more about possible hormonal imbalances, [check out this article](#) published by UCLA Health.

Understanding Stress Hormones

What are stress hormones?

When we encounter stress, our body activates the fight or flight response, a survival mechanism that releases stress-related hormones.

In our daily lives, we may encounter many stressful demands and situations that can make us feel as though we are under attack. This perceived threat prompts the hypothalamus in the brain to send a message to our adrenal glands (on top of your kidneys) that hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, should be released.

Main Stress Hormones

Cortisol: The primary stress hormone; regulates your metabolism, blood sugar, and inflammation.

Adrenaline (Epinephrine): Increases your heart rate, blood pressure, and energy supply.

Norepinephrine: Heightens your alertness and focus.



Cortisol

Cortisol is produced by the adrenal glands. It follows a daily rhythm, being at its highest level in the morning and lowest at night.

Functions of Cortisol:



Manages metabolism & blood sugar



Reduces inflammation



Helps with memory formation



Regulates blood pressure



Supports the sleep-wake cycle

Chronic Stress & Cortisol Imbalance

When stress is ongoing, cortisol stays elevated, and that can be harmful to your body over time.

Effects of Chronic High Cortisol:



Anxiety, depression



Digestive problems



Weight gain (especially belly fat)



Muscle tension



Sleep problems



High blood pressure



Weakened immune system



Blood sugar imbalances

Things You Can Do to Help Regulate Cortisol



- ✓ Practice relaxation exercises such as yoga, [mindfulness](#) or meditation
- ✓ Get regular physical activity
- ✓ Prioritize sleep
- ✓ Eat a balanced diet

- ✓ Connect with a [professional counselor or well-being coach](#) to support your stress management skills
- ✓ Spend time in nature
- ✓ Limit caffeine and alcohol consumption

How Can You Participate in Women's Health Month and Men's Health Month?

In May, we recognize **Women's Health Month**, raising awareness of women's health issues and encouraging women of all ages to prioritize their health and well-being.

Reminders:

- ✓ Schedule your yearly well-women exam
- ✓ Stay up-to-date on cervical cancer screenings
- ✓ Schedule your mammogram

[Click here](#) for more information on preventive health for women.



Men's Health Month is observed in June to raise awareness of common challenges to and support for men's health and well-being.

Reminders:

- ✓ Schedule your yearly physical exam
- ✓ Stay up-to-date on preventative screening exams

[Click here](#) for more information on preventive health for men.

Check out [ComPsych Huddles](#) for group sessions on topics that matter most to you!

Ways to Engage:



Attend educational events that focus on health and well-being topics



Get active: Try a new workout or take a walk outside



Practice mindfulness, meditation and breathing exercises



Cook a new healthy meal



Build a support system.

Surround yourself with positive influence and like-minded individuals with shared life experiences.



Listen to a podcast



Try something new; explore a new hobby



Share with your loved ones



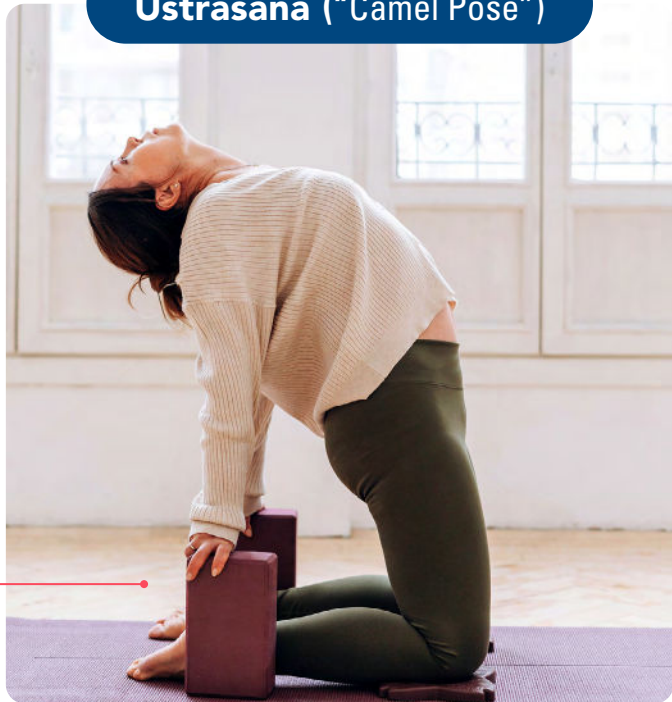
Make small changes to refresh your daily routine

For more tips and information, visit the following resources: <https://womenshealth.gov/nwhw>, and menshealthmonth.org.

Yoga Pose of the Quarter

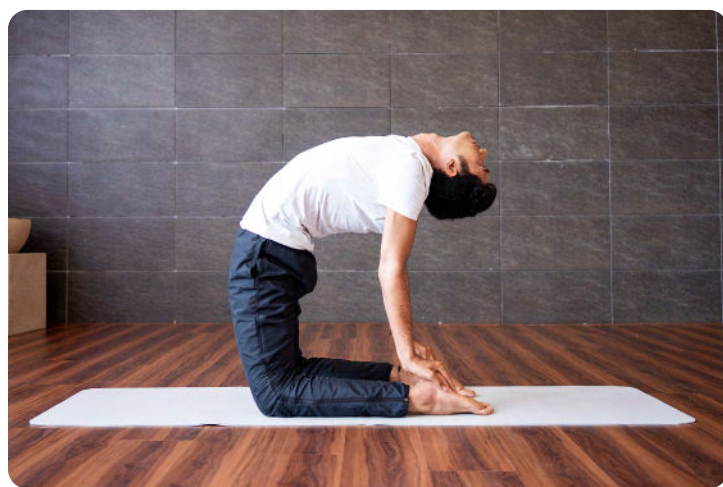
Ustrasana, more commonly known as the “**Camel Pose**,” is a backbend that helps open your shoulders and strengthens your core and back. Many day-to-day activities involve our spines rounding forward and this pose can be helpful to those who experience tightness in the upper back. It helps stimulate the thyroid and parathyroid, hormone-producing glands in your neck area.

Ustrasana (“Camel Pose”)



Helpful Tips:

Warm up your body before trying this pose
Keep shoulders open and away from your ears
If your neck is straining, try placing your toes turned under against a wall and rest the crown of your head against the wall.



3 Camel Pose Modifications You Can Try:

- **Tuck your toes:** This allows for your heels to lift, making them more reachable.
- **Keep your hands on your lower back.** You will still feel the benefits of this pose.
- **Try using blocks.** Place yoga blocks next to your feet at their tallest height, providing you with a little more lift.

Steps

1. Begin by kneeling with your knees and feet hip-distance apart and your thighs perpendicular to the floor.
2. Extend your big toes straight back, pressing down with all 10 toes. Without moving, energetically try to draw your ankles toward one another.
3. Turn your inner thighs toward one another and gently release your tailbone toward the backs of your knees. Your pelvis should be neutral, neither tipped forward nor back.
4. Bring your palms together in front of your sternum and drop your chin toward your chest.
5. Inhale to emphasize the lift of your chest and the length of your spine.
6. With the next exhalation, begin to arch your upper back and open your shoulders. Let both arms fall back at the same time and reach your fingers toward your heels. If you can't reach your heels, tuck your toes to lift your heels higher. (Do not reach back with one arm first and then the other; twisting into this pose can cause injury.)
7. Press your shoulder blades forward and up to lift your chest even more if it's comfortable.
8. Having created more space/extension in your upper back, keep a slight tuck of your chin as you let your head drop some more.
9. Continue pressing down with your feet and lower legs to lift up with your thoracic spine and chest.
10. Remain in the pose for 5–10 breaths. Then, leading with your sternum, use an inhalation to come up, allowing your head to rise last.

Dear **Coach**

Question: *I am trying to manage my blood sugar but don't want to give up flavorful foods. What condiments can I eat that are both tasty and balanced?*

Coach Bella's answer: Great question! Managing blood sugar doesn't mean sacrificing flavor. The right condiments can enhance your meals while supporting stable glucose levels. Here are some great options to keep in your pantry and fridge:



Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar and balsamic vinegar add tang to dressings and marinades and may also help improve insulin sensitivity and reduce post-meal blood sugar spikes.

Try this: Drizzle balsamic vinegar over roasted vegetables or mix apple cider vinegar with olive oil for a simple salad dressing.



Nut & Seed Butters

Almond, peanut, and sunflower seed butters provide protein, fiber, and healthy fats. Just be sure to choose natural versions without added sugars.

Try this: Spread almond butter on apple slices or mix peanut butter into Greek yogurt for a protein-packed snack.



Salsa

Fresh tomato salsa, especially homemade without added sugar, adds a lot of flavor with minimal impact on blood sugar.

Try this: Spoon salsa over scrambled eggs or mix it with black beans for a quick side dish.



Mustard

This low-calorie, sugar-free option comes in many varieties—Dijon, yellow, whole grain—offering bold flavors without added sugars.

Try this: Spread mustard on a turkey and cheese lettuce wrap or mix it with Greek yogurt for a tangy dip.



Hummus

A fiber-rich, protein-packed dip made from chickpeas and tahini, hummus makes a delicious spread or dressing that won't spike blood sugar levels.

Try this: Use hummus as a dip for cucumber slices or as a spread on a whole-grain wrap with veggies.



Hot Sauce

Most hot sauces are naturally low in sugar and calories. Just check labels to avoid added sugars and excessive sodium.

Try this: Add hot sauce to avocado toast or mix it into a homemade marinade for grilled shrimp.



Pesto

Made with heart-healthy olive oil, fresh basil, and nuts, pesto is a flavorful choice rich in healthy fats that can help with blood sugar control.

Try this: Toss pesto with zucchini noodles or use as a spread on grilled chicken.



Guacamole

Avocados are a great source of fiber and healthy fats, making guacamole a blood sugar-friendly way to add creaminess and zest to meals.

Try this: Spread guacamole on whole-grain toast or use as a topping for grilled fish.



Tahini

Made from ground sesame seeds, tahini is rich in healthy fats and adds a creamy texture to dressings, dips, and spreads.

Try this: Drizzle tahini over roasted cauliflower or blend it with lemon juice and garlic for a quick dressing.

When selecting condiments, check labels for hidden sugars and additives. Look for simple, whole-food ingredients to keep your meals flavorful and balanced. Enjoy experimenting with these tasty options! **Stay well!**