



Overcoming Estrogen Dominance

Magdalena Wszelaki, CH, HHC



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Rebekah Kelley: Welcome to the Humanized Podcast, Your Health Personalized. I'm your host, Rebekah Kelley. Today I'm excited to talk with our guest, Magdalena Wszelaki.

Before I introduce Magdalena, I want to remind everyone to subscribe, to get all our variety of casts in audio, video and transcription at [HumanizedHealth.com](https://www.humanizedhealth.com). I'd also like to thank our lead sponsor, Village Green Apothecary at [MyVillageGreen.com](https://www.myvillagegreen.com).

A little bit about our guest. Magdalena Wszelaki is the founder of Hormones Balance, a thriving, online community dedicated to helping women balance hormones naturally. Magdalena is a nutrition coach, certified herbalist, a published best-selling cookbook author, speaker and educator. She is passionate about helping women find hormone balance with her food, books, online programs and education.



Thank you so much, Magdalena, for being here with us. We're so excited.

Magdalena Wszelaki: Thank you. I'm super excited about anyone who wants to talk about something that bothers almost 90% of the women out there in some way. And yet nobody's talking about it.

Rebekah Kelley: No one is. But you wrote a book about it, *Overcoming Estrogen Dominance*. Thank you, first off – as a woman, I'm so appreciative. When I read it, it was eye-opening. I've already started implementing some of your suggestions. I want to ask you, what led you to writing *Overcoming Estrogen Dominance*?

Magdalena Wszelaki: Two main reasons. One is my own story with estrogen dominance. Also, I've had family members on both sides die from estrogenic cancers. They had estrogen dominance for a very long time.

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I realized, talking to my parents, that no woman in our family on either side has held onto her uterus after age 45 or 50. So it is my own story. But also, it is a highly underestimated space and no one is really talking about it. It's kind of normalized.

If you have fibroids and lumpy breasts or thyroid nodules or other different symptoms of estrogen dominance, it's dismissed as just part of being a woman. If you've got PMS, it's part of being a woman. I've discovered through my own research that, A) that's not necessary and, B) you can do a lot of things to reverse it.

Rebekah Kelley: So true. Why do you think people aren't talking about estrogen dominance as a cause of women's health issues? I feel like it's a vacuum .

Magdalena Wszelaki: I think it's because, largely, there was no specific pill, no one pill that can solve all of that. The best we can do is put women on birth control pills, which were designed for contraception and not for medical conditions. Or they can put us on anti-depressants or anti-anxiety medication when you're having that time of the month. I think we've only had just those specific solutions. And as you know, allopathic medicine doesn't focus on things like balancing your gut health or supporting your liver, which is so instrumental in estrogen dominance.

Rebekah Kelley: Right. What types of testing do you recommend for women who are struggling with potential estrogen dominance symptoms?

Magdalena Wszelaki: The first thing I will say is that when I was in private practice, I had a lot of women walking in with their blood work and showing it to me and saying, "Look, my doctor says I have no problem with hormones." And yet this person would have a history of thyroid nodules and fibroids, or terrible PMS, or she had her period for 20 days in a month. All are symptoms screaming of estrogen dominance, yet she was told everything is fine. So, blood work for steroid hormones is a pretty useless diagnostic tool.

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Much more effective, my favorite, is urine testing to show levels of estrogen. It also shows how your body breaks down those estrogens, which is really, really important. I also like saliva testing because that shows you the true levels of progesterone. In the case of estrogen dominance, the level of estrogen progesterone, it's actually really important to understand how these two correlate. And so saliva testing, it's a pretty decent test too.

Rebekah Kelley: Okay. Are there three things you would suggest women can do to start taking control of their hormone health?

Magdalena Wszelaki: There are so many more than three. But if we just want to talk about three, I think the first one that makes a huge difference is addressing how your body breaks down estrogen. Internally you produce estrogen already, right? And I just want to clarify one thing. Let's not demonize estrogen. I'm grateful for that term, "estrogen dominance," that it is recognized as a condition, but it also misleads women to thinking that just because I have estrogen, it's a bad thing. I would not be here having a conversation in a meaningful way if our estrogen was too low. Right? As we know, when your estrogen is too low, you're going through menopause, which is no fun.

So estrogen is not to be blamed. There are various forms of estrogen dominance. One of the most significant to look at and understand is how your body breaks down estrogens, which makes a very big difference. You've got clean estrogens that are protective; they build, support and protect. And you have dirty estrogens that cause all the symptoms that we mentioned. Guess where predominantly the breakdown of estrogen happens? In our liver.

So to your top 3 points. The first is, support your liver. Look at your daily diet. Incorporating anything that is bitter and has a bitter taste to it can be a wonderful support for the liver.

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I always say get rid of the lettuce in your salad; substitute that with bitter greens. That could be something like arugula or baby kale, or mustard greens. Chop up some turnips and radishes and put that into your salad. Put in things like corn or zucchini or cucumber, which are nutritionally on the lower side of the nutritional spectrum but with bitter quality.

The liver really loves the bitter, so use herbs that are of high bitter quality. Things like digestive bitters before a meal, or a burdock and dandelion roots tea after a meal. If you walk into a health food store, you find different herbal teas. Some of them that support the liver would have a lot of bitter herbs. And I will tell you, there are a number of women in our community who said that they didn't think of doing a tea like that, but once they started doing it, as part of our protocol, they said they'd gotten really addicted to it in a good way.

They just fell in love with it, they kept asking for it. Because they felt their bodies responding to it. They were saying things like, "I'm so grateful when you have that tea," and, "Bring it on!" So I would say, bitters for the liver.

The second important point is that we should eliminate external sources of estrogen. Because that's always a big issue. Throw away all your skincare products that are from brands that advertise on television mass media, companies that can afford to be in top shelves in stores. They'll spend multimillions of dollars on advertising. Switch to brands that are really clean. You can look it up on the EWG.org website under "skincare," the listing on how clean the skincare brands are – and there are so many of them. Elimination of that is a huge thing.

The third thing is sleep. Having high quality, deep sleep is when your body rejuvenates, your liver has a break, you're producing new estrogens, and you're producing progestins. Getting sufficient sleep, and fixing your sleep, for a lot of women after they reach 35, 40 or 45 years of age, when sleep starts declining, is a problem. Fixing that is something that I have found gives a lot of women great improvement.

Rebekah Kelley:Wow. Those are all wonderful suggestions. It's very hard to find bitter; you have to actually go out and find it because it's not necessarily something that we easily find on the menu typically.

Magdalena Wszelaki:As an herbalist, I'll be the first to say that the bitter flavor is a forgotten flavor in the Western culinary spectrum. We obviously have a lot of sweetness, we have a lot of salt. We have a little bit of sour. But bitterness is something that is frowned upon. But once you bring it in, your body really starts feeling the difference, not just from a liver perspective, but your bowels improve. Your food is not just sitting there anymore. You start getting a lot more energy after having a meal. So the benefits are endless.

Rebekah Kelley:That's amazing. Why do you think that PMS is assumed to be just part of being a woman?

Magdalena Wszelaki:Yes. I think it's a big part of our culture. And to what I said earlier, it's because we don't have a solution to it, unless you're put on the pill. And a lot of women don't want to be put on the pill. I would say that's absolutely not necessary. What I want to acknowledge is that if you look at a chart of our hormones throughout a cycle, for a woman who is still menstruating, it goes up and down. I want to acknowledge that when you are going through that cycle, it's normal to have times of being really open and dynamic and want to exercise a lot. And there are times during a period when you really feel shut down. But it just means that you want to be quiet. Maybe you want to be alone. Maybe you don't want to go out and party and meet friends. But it doesn't mean you have to be in a fetal position on the floor with three bottles of painkillers, right? But let me tell you, when you do fix your estrogen dominance, your PMS becomes an event that occurs to you and it doesn't destroy your life.

Rebekah Kelley:Right. Well, how about on the other side? Why do women in menopause with low estrogen often experience estrogen dominance? Because it seems counterintuitive. If your estrogen is going down, how are you estrogen dominant?

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Magdalena Wszelaki: That's a very common question we get on our website, and it's a valid question. We have a quiz and people ask, "I'm in menopause and I'm estrogen dominant? I think there is something wrong with your quiz!"

It's nothing wrong with our quiz. You can be estrogen dominant. And if you think about it, most breast cancers in developed countries are due to estrogen dominance. We call it estrogen receptor positive breast cancer. And the highest demographic are women 55- 75. If you think about it, those women have very low estrogen, so estrogen dominance can happen. As your hormones drop, how you break down those estrogens, however little you have of them, still makes a difference.

As we age, our liver does, too. And if our liver is unsupported for all these years, then it makes it much harder for the body to break down estrogen. So you can be low in estrogen, but still breaking it down in unfavorable ways, producing too many dirty estrogens. The second way this can happen is that even though both estrogen and progesterone drop during this time, progesterone unfortunately drops faster and more-so than estrogen does. So the proportion of estrogen to progesterone in menopausal years tends to be very unbalanced.

Think of estrogen and progesterone as two dancing partners. You can watch it down to the end of the competition; if the guy is too flamboyant and overdressed, and the woman is timid, it doesn't look right. Right? You have to dance together.

Rebekah Kelley: Well, thanks, Magdalena. Those are really valuable insights. Magdalena Wszelaki can be found at www.HormonesBalance.com . Let me remind you to subscribe, and get access to, all Humanized videos, podcasts and transcriptions from all of our thought leaders on personalized health at HumanizedHealth.com.