

## Part 1

### What Are Hormones and Why Are they Making Me Crazy?

Hello everyone, its Dr. Sara Gottfried and I'm so glad that you decided to the very important step of Fast-Tracking Your Hormone Cure. I wrote *The Hormone Cure* and then created this accelerator program. Because, I believe that we each have the power to bring our bodies back into balance and we can amplify the innate intelligence of the body to make this happen faster than you might imagine.

Quite importantly we don't need surgeries, or magic pills, or fad diets, to do it either. We need information, excellent medical care, and a desire to make feeling hormonally balanced more important than feeling sick, fat, unsexy, moody, and tired.

I called this program Fast-Track Your Hormone Cure because I want to help you feel better right away. I don't want you to get mired down in the science of this and forget to take action. Women have a tendency to get distracted, perhaps you've noticed.

Then we go through perimenopause and it's as if we have a new diagnosis of attention deficit disorder or ADD. I've created these eight audios for you and they cover the most important aspects of the book and many more aspects that couldn't possibly fit into the book. My editor asks me to cut these because; well if you're a female of a certain age you know what I mean by this.

When you're hormonal, sometimes your life already feels like a 432 page book and the last thing you want is a big book to work through. You want the core ideas. You want the simple version, the needle-movers laid out for you on a silver platter. I know what that feels like because I've had nearly every hormonal problem a woman can possibly have.

This is how it works in Fast-Track Your Hormone Cure, you can listen to each audio if you want or you can listen just to the ones that are relevant to you right now, whichever you do I want you to commit right now in this very moment to taking action all of these words and all of the information I'm sharing mean nothing if you don't apply it. My hope is that you'll listen, you'll apply it, and then you'll share it with all of your best girlfriends. I want to bring a million women back into hormone balance this year and I want to start with you.

Now a little bit about the format. I decided to do these audios in an interview style because when I sat down to create a program I thought that would serve you best as I thought back through my 20 years as a practicing physician and sitting in my office

where women are asking me questions about their body and health. I just realized that every time I talk to a woman about their health certain questions just start pouring out.

While I can't invite each and every one of you into my medical office, I can share the very best of what I know with you and pull together the most frequently asked questions that I've gotten from working with over 20,000 patients in the past 20 years.

In each of these hormone audios you're going to get the down and dirty about imbalance. What causes it, how to know if you have it, what to do about it, and then how to know once you've reached hormonal nirvana? If you want to get down and dirty with the science of all of it you can certainly read the book which is why I gave it to you as a bonus. But Fast-Track Your Hormone Cure is designed to create the shortest distance between how you feel now and how you want to feel. So let's get this party started and dive into part one of our first audio.

Let's dive into part one. What our hormones and why are they making me crazy?

Question: You wrote *The Hormone Cure* for women, why are women so much more vulnerable to hormonal imbalances than men?

Dr. Sara: Great question, you know many women have hormone imbalances and they don't know it. I've learned that if you feel lousy and by that I mean you feel overwhelmed, cranky, tired but wired, premenstrual, or like sex is the last thing on your mind, you want to start by looking at your biology.

Now this is true for women of all ages from 18-88 and it can even start earlier and persist way beyond your 80's. What I mean is starting before puberty, so for me I started puberty at age 10, but it can also show up later on, the good news is that you're always able to get into natural hormone balance there's not an age at which it's not an option for you.

The other point that I think is important about hormones is that many women blame themselves when they feel fat or irritable and here's my request of you. I want you to stop that right now. I want you to start by looking at your biology, which is what we're going to do together in this course.

Let's talk about the differences between men and women. What I find is that men and women are different from a biological perspective. Some of this is obvious, right? I mean women get pregnant, they have babies of course, we also have way more estrogen than men do, but here is the part that a lot of women don't realize.

Stress favors men and we've got quite a bit of science to show this. I'm making a journalization of course, because there's certainly some women who do better than some men in terms of stress but as a whole, women are more vulnerable. Women are

also more likely to have problems coping with stress, more anxiety, more depression, higher rates of issues with sexuality.

So according to some of the national polls that have been done women have higher rates of stress especially because of our role as caregivers, of children of parents, of loved ones, we have more hormone problems. Our hormones are way more complex and just to give you an example of this we have a fifteen fold increased risk of thyroid problems with your thyroid slowing down and I'll explain more what I mean by that in a moment.

We also have as women higher rates of autoimmune problems which is when your immune system starts to attack itself such as your thyroid. Overall we know that one in four women takes a prescription for anxiety or depression or lack of sleep verses one in seven men. If we just take the piece of sleep we know that women are twice as likely as men to have difficulty falling asleep or maintaining sleep. Although before puberty there's no difference at all so there's definitely a hormonal component when it comes to sleep.

Now your question about why is a little harder to understand completely, but we know that women are wired to be caregivers and not all of us are designed to cope well with the volume of stress that we have on our shoulders.

Some of you already know it can really be overwhelming, you know when stress is high that makes your cortisol rise. I'm over simplifying of course, but cortisol is the main stress hormone and when cortisol is persistently high that causes more problems in women. It's almost like a text message to your thyroid to make it slow down to burn calories more slowly. It's like a text message to your ovaries to stop ovulating every single month and making the right mix of hormones.

There's many ways in which women are more vulnerable to hormone imbalances than men those are a few of them.

Question: What do you mean by hormonal cross-talk and how can we get our hormones talking to each other in kinder, gentler ways?

Dr. Sara: Yeah, hormonal cross-talk. Okay, this is such a good topic. I think about cross-talk as the fact that our bodies are really complex and inter-related, interdependent, and these hormones actually work really closely together. I don't want you to think about the hormones that we've got in this course as being totally separate entities, separate things, they actually dance together. If one is off it can reduce, block, or totally derail the production of another hormone.

Let me tell you about one of my patients, Joan, who had high cortisol. She's a lawyer who doesn't like her job, 37 years old, got married the year before and she came to me

because she wants to have a kid. She would tell me that she comes home from work and she'd pour herself a glass of wine or two and she noticed that she's gained about 10 pounds in the past year, since getting married. She also feels like she's premenstrual and it's getting worse.

What we found was that her high cortisol was blocking the function of other key hormones such as her thyroid, the master of her metabolism, and this was causing weight gain and also it was blocking her progesterone which is the main anti-bloating hormone that also soothes the female brain and prevents PMS. So you can see how this can snow-ball.

When you target and adjust several hormone simultaneously, and by that I mean you're hormonal Charlie's Angels, your cortisol, thyroid, and estrogen which are coming from your adrenals, your thyroid, and your ovaries that's where you get better results.

Question: So there seems to be a pretty big gap between the struggles women have with getting their bodies on track and what mainstream medicine offers. Why is that and what can women do to advocate for better care?

Dr. Sara: I love that question, you're absolutely right that there's gaps in what women are wanting and what's on offer from mainstream medicine. Here's my belief, I really believe you deserve a body that simply works like a smooth operator as Shaddai says.

You deserve a trustworthy partner for your health care adventure and by that I mean you deserve a practitioner who's really taking care of the shop with you, someone that you're partnered with.

In The Hormone Cure I've tried to create a guide to your best sexy, ripe, and delicious life regardless of your age and here is what I know for sure. Women really need more choices not less.

When I struggled with my own hormone issues back in my 30's I had PMS and low sex drive I was a total stress case. When I went and saw my doctor about these problems I got offered a birth control pill, an antidepressant, and I was told to exercise more and eat less. That was exactly the wrong advice.

Nobody checked my hormones and it was at that point that I had my defining moment when I decided to take that medical training that I had and really turn it on myself. What I found was that my cortisol was really high, my thyroid was low it was underactive, my thyroid hormones were low, and I had estrogen dominance. I figured out my way out I fixed this in about four weeks and you can do the same.

I really feel like mainstream medicine is great for broken bones or for a life threatening bacterial infection or a heart attack. But as we've gotten increasingly technical,

specialized, and downright vocational about the way that we approach health we've lost something.

The average appointment with the doctor is seven minutes long in the United States—seven minutes. I cannot deliver the care that I was trained to provide in seven minutes. I just can't. So yes, there are so many different gaps that I see in what mainstream medicine offers and I really find that for women for the kind of health issues that we have the complexity that we have with our hormones we really need to have more than what's on offer.

I want to encourage you to really make sure that your doctor is spending enough time with you that you're able to ask all of the questions that you have about your symptoms that you have a doctor who explains your options, the risks and benefits, and alternatives and also the science behind them. If they're not interested in listening to you and helping you become an informed patient then find a new doctor.

I really feel like a lifestyle based approach is not valued in mainstream medicine and we've got to change that. We've got to start a revolution and just say you know what prescriptions such as the latest antidepressant or the latest sleeping pill it's a way of masking symptoms, it's not actually getting to the root cause of the problems that you have. Let's get to the root cause that's what I want to do in this program that we're working through together.

Question: In the book you talk about the five principles of hormone balancing. What are they and what can we begin to do today to apply them to our lives?

Dr. Sara: Hmm, Yes. So I have five principles that I think are so important when it comes to hormone balancing and I'm loving that we've got this in the introduction because I want all of you to hear this loud and clear.

Just as in positive psychology where you want to amplify the positive things that are really working in your life. We want to do the same thing when it comes to health and especially when it comes to natural hormone balancing.

Here are the five principles.

1. I want you to recognize the inherent wisdom of the body your innate intelligence
2. I want to help you identify the root cause of your hormone imbalance. Now there may be more than one but there's usually a main problem we want to identify that main problem as well as additional secondary causes.
3. I want you to be systems oriented, proactive, and really smart about replacing hormones. We don't want to just slap on every hormone that you're missing. We want to

start with The Gottfried Protocol which is to really focus on a systems based functional medicine approach where we're filling in nutritional gaps and we're making the lifestyle tweaks that are really going to move the needle for you.

4. Is to do no harm, I mean that is basic hippocrates<sup>101</sup> and yet when I look at some of the medications that we prescribe. When I look at statins, when I look at the medications for osteoporosis or the antidepressants what I see is that they're not necessarily good for us. Many of these medications have been shown to affect the brain. We know that antidepressants for instance can increase your risk of breast and ovarian cancer. We want to be careful about that.

5. I want you to be an active partner by that I mean I don't want you to passively accept what your doctor tells you. If it doesn't feel right, if you get the intuitive hit that it's not a good idea for you—listen to that. If you feel like you can't be an active partner I want you to move on to another practitioner.

Question: What is The Gottfried Protocol and what kind of results can someone expect to get if they follow it? What makes it so different from all the other strategies out there that women get from traditional and nontraditional practitioners?

Dr. Sara: Hmm, The Gottfried Protocol is the product of the past 10 years of my intensive work and research. It's the method that I developed to access support and maintain hormonal balance for myself and for my clients.

I define, tested, and refined this particular approach its progressive, it's tiered, and it's systematic. The cool part is that the results are repeatable and I'm only using proven techniques. I'm using the interventions that are proven in randomized trials and if they're not proven in randomized trials which is the best evidence that we have then there so safe that you don't have to worry about the risks.

What I do is I really like to start with step one. Which is lifestyle redesign and that's looking at how you eat, move, think and supplement. We start with your food, your food plan, and identifying and filling in the missing precursors to your neurohormonal communication in your body.

We also focus on the targeted exercise for your particular symptoms. And when we start with these lifestyle tweaks like diet and exercise and then move onto natural supplements and only if those aren't working do we move on to bioidentical hormones. When we do that what I find is that you get a new lease on life, in fact, I find that about 80% of the time most women don't need bioidentical hormones. They're able to resolve their symptoms just with step one with the lifestyle tweaks and filling in nutritional precursors or with step two which is the proven botanicals. Step three is bioidenticals.

The cool part is women who work in this way feel better and they're also more stable they de-age. I also find that if they follow the steps correctly they don't need, if they get to step three, they don't need the bioidentical hormones at the full doses, they often need a much lower dose and they need it for a shorter duration.

The cool part about The Gottfried Protocol is that it combines modern science with ancient practices and it focuses on addressing the root cause of your symptoms and not just masking the symptoms that you have.

Question: So what happens to somebody who goes from having multiple hormonal imbalances to being fully balanced?

Dr. Sara: Yeah, so if you have multiple hormone imbalances what we want is to really look at how these hormones interact with each other, the cross-talk that we were just discussing. I really believe that if you have a science based approach that you're more likely to really step into change that's sustained and even sometimes miraculous.

When you address multiple hormone imbalances, I gave you that example from my practice of the woman who had the high cortisol which was slowing down her thyroid and it was also causing blockage of her progesterone receptors, so she was having more PMS. When you fix the high cortisol in that situation the cool part is that the other symptoms resolve as well. You unblock the progesterone receptors, the PMS resolves, the thyroid starts working better when you fix the cortisol.

That's what I mean by the multiple hormone imbalance. I really feel like when you are correcting those you step into the best version of yourself. Let me just give you a snapshot of that. For the women who balance their hormones they feel vibrant and happy, their hair is thick and shiny, their skin glows, they wake up in the morning really feeling restored and they feel like they've got more than enough energy to deal with whatever the day throws at them. They have a stable mood, a healthy sex drive, and their metabolism is humming. That's a super cool way to kind of look at what happens when you get multiple hormone imbalances back into balance again.

Question: Can you tell us a little bit about your story and why you wrote this book?

Dr. Sara: Yes, there's two parts to my story. My first part is that I didn't come up with all this stuff myself. I had a great-grandmother who actually was maybe the original Gottfried Protocol because she was a whole foodist, she ate amazing healthy food.

I grew up in suburban Maryland and she would come to our home with suitcases of kale and lemons. She would have hot water with lemon juice every morning and every night before she went to bed. Little side note, when you have hot water with lemon it's really alkalizing, it's super good for hormone balancing and it also stimulates the gastrocolic

reflex and that's the response that allows you to have a bowel movement in the morning. It's really important that you have a bowel movement at least once a day.

Getting back to my story, I had this great-grandmother who really was the embodiment of radical health. She practiced yoga, she died very peacefully in her sleep at age 97, and I really learned from her that you don't find the answer to health in a pill bottle—you find it with your fork and how you construct your day with your thoughts and with how you feel and how you move your body.

I really felt like that came home to me when I was in my 30's and I was practicing Mc-medicine. I was seeing 30 patients a day and I was struggling and I had two kids. I blamed my husband for how I felt. I had PMS and no sex drive and I just really felt like life was hard. I felt older. I felt way too young to feel so old. That was the point at which I went to my doctor and was offered the prescriptions that I mentioned. And it was so important to me to figure out, okay, my issue is that my hormones are out of whack it's not that I'm somehow failing at life it's that my hormones are out of whack.

That led to me taking the success, you know it took me about a month to get my hormones into balance, and that was such a pivotal point for me. I realized that the prescriptions that I was very skilled at giving out to patients were not the answer to health. So I started to bring these ideas that The Gottfried Protocol to my next 10,000 patients over the next 10 years and that's the success there, the wild success with how women felt transformed as we balance their hormones naturally. That's what led to me writing the book and wanting to share it with more women.

Question: You have a different approach than lots of traditional medical providers and that you believe that the best first step you can take is to self access even before you get any tests done. What do you recommend that route?

Dr. Sara: Yeah, so it's super important for you to take our quiz. We've got a quiz that we want you to do you're going to see that as more as we go. It's the most important way to figure out the root cause of your problems. If you hear nothing else today in this introduction in part one. I really want you to know that we've got to get to the root cause of the symptoms that you have. If we don't get to the root cause we're not going to be able to get a cure for you. If we just mass symptoms we're not going to get a cure for you.

You want to start with the quiz and when you figure out what your hormonal root causes are that's a very powerful way to move forward and to figure out okay here is my situation. My thyroid is low what do I do? Then we've got The Gottfried Protocol for you to figure out what the next steps are. You start with step one of The Gottfried Protocol.

Another really important piece here which is something that we've just been learning about in the past year is something called hormone resistance—hormone resistance.



You might have heard of insulin resistance before it's basically where your cells become numb to that particular hormone. With insulin resistance your cells become numb to insulin and then insulin rises to try to drive the hormone into the cell and it doesn't work very well. When this happens insulin because it's a fat storage hormone will make you lay down more fat no matter what you do. You get a similar sort of thing with PMS you get progesterone resistance. There's such a thing as cortisol resistance if you're someone who is a stress case like I was in my 30's and you don't turn the ship around. There's also genetic situations where you're more likely to have cortisol resistance such as something called the short serotonin transporter gene. There's also thyroid resistance.

So we want to think about these different hormone resistances and the cool part there is that the quiz actually gives you a better clue than just checking your levels. You really want to go with your own experience and that's what the quiz gets to. If you haven't taken the quiz yet I want you to pause the audio and go to the following URL and get that quiz done right now.

Here is the URL it is [www.saragottfriedmd.com/ftquiz](http://www.saragottfriedmd.com/ftquiz) fast-track quiz as in fast-track quiz. So [saragottfriedmd.com/ftquiz](http://saragottfriedmd.com/ftquiz). You can pause the audio here and the rest of this is going to make so much more sense to you and be so much more interesting for you if you know what your hormone imbalances are.

Question: What do hormones do?

Dr. Sara: Hmm, well hormones are these chemical messengers that move around the body and tell your cells to do certain things. They drive what you're interested in and I'll give you a couple of examples. I think about progesterone as being nature's valium it calms you down, it keeps you from getting bloated. All of these hormones have job descriptions. Cortisol for instance has three main jobs it raises your blood sugar so you can run, it raises your blood pressure so that you have enough blood going to your big muscles like your leg, you know if you have to run from a tiger for instance and it also modulates your immune system.

Hormones drive what you're interested in and then they also have these specific tasks in your body.

Question: I love how you refer to the big three hormones as Charlie's Angels. So what are they and what is their role?

Dr. Sara: Yeah, so when it comes to these three big hormones, your hormonal Charlie's Angels are your cortisol, your thyroid, and your estrogen. By the way in men it's slightly different I call it the Three-Amigos and that is your cortisol, your thyroid, and

testosterone. These three hormones have some really important jobs I just mentioned the jobs for cortisol.

Thyroid is in charge of metabolism the rate at which you burn calories and it's also in charge of keeping the hair on your head. Another thing that's important with thyroid is that it's involved in your mood.

And then finally your third Charlie's Angels estrogen has many, many, many jobs about 400 and it controls about 9,000 genetic actions. The main jobs, if you think back to puberty, are that number one it makes you grow breasts and hips. Number two it makes you grow the menstrual lining that either is going to support a pregnancy or be shed as your period.

Question: Hormones sound really complicated. Since so many women have more than one hormone out of balance how do you know what steps to take first to get them working together again?

Dr. Sara: Another great question. You know I think the most important thing when you go through the quiz is to figure out, okay, what do I have the most yes answers to and that is the number one hormone imbalance that you want to address first. That's your top priority.

Often there is some secondary hormone issues, you know I've mentioned for instance, the patient that I saw this week who had the high cortisol and that was slowing down her thyroid and also causing her progesterone receptors to be blocked. So it's really important to figure out what your primary issue is. And if you have, you know like a tie for first place, then you can certainly address both at the same time that's not a problem.

When you're trying to figure out what steps to take first to get your hormones working again what I generally recommend is that you start with cortisol. I mean all paths lead back to cortisol and cortisol the stress hormone is what makes us hypervigilant. It makes us, you know, a little wiggly as women we're really vulnerable there. So we want to calm down we want to figure out, okay how are we going to hit the pause button. What's the best way if I give you a menu of all the different ways for you to calm down what's going to be the most appealing? And it's important for me to give you a lot of different options on that menu.

For some people it's tiara-time where they put a tiara on their head and they signal to their family and their husband that they are going to take some time for themselves 15 minutes four times a week. For other people they like to use GPS For The Soul and that's one of my favorite free apps on the iPhone where you can use the little camera on your iPhone and you can measure your stress response and this is a super great technique to help you lower cortisol if cortisol is your problem.

Another way to calm down the vigilant centers is orgasm and you probably have heard me talk before about orgasmic meditation it's one of the ways that you can get cortisol back into that Goldilocks position of not too high and not too low.

The other part that's really important when you have multiple hormones out of balance is to focus on circadian rhythms and getting them back in sync again. By that I mean you're not watching TV shows that get you super activated at night and maybe you're even limiting the amount of artificial light that you have after the sun goes down that really helps you a lot with your circadian rhythms.

Another thing you can do is to limit your use of laptops or tablets after the sun goes down. Put yourself on a curfew I think that can be really effective.

Question: What the heck is perimenopause and why do I always feel like crap?

Dr. Sara: Oh My Gosh! So when it comes to your hormonal Charlie's Angels, you know a lot of people will have issues with just one or two of their Charlie's Angels and then they hit perimenopause and it's just like you're a hormonal—you're a hormonal train wreck.

I consider perimenopause for some women to be the perfect storm because these three hormonal Charlie's Angels all start to affect each other.

Women who are in their 40's this can start anytime between the ages of 35 and 45 what they find is that there much more likely to feel stressed out and overwhelmed. They also start to have less progesterone because their ovaries just aren't making as much as they used to. And you just heard me describe progesterone as being nature's valium so you can imagine if you have less valium on board you're going to feel more anxious.

Then the third part that happens is something that my friend Mary Shomon calls thyropause and that's basically where your mood, your weight, and your energy really starts to change. A lot of women will feel like they're mildly depressed, maybe they don't want to have sex anymore, they start to gain weight, very common between the ages of 35 and 45. In perimenopause all of these three hormonal Charlie's Angels typically will start to change and it'll make you feel like crap. The key is to really figure out okay how do I get these Charlie's Angels working for me again not against me.