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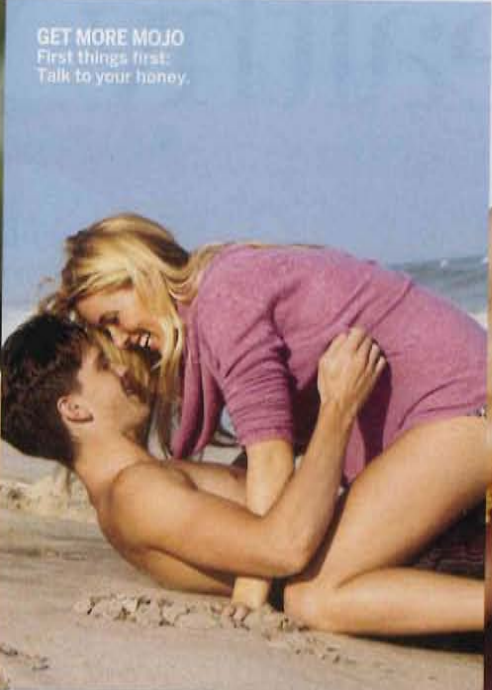
Jennifer Hudson's Weight Loss Diaries

- Personal Food Logs & Recipes
- Amazing 3-Move Workout
- Her Keep-It-Off Advice! p. 46





ZAP ZITS
Even if they pop up every month.



GET MORE MOJO
First things first: Talk to your honey.



CURB CRAVINGS
Check your sleep schedule.

Is it my hormones?

Cranky? Wheezy? Famished? It could be a matter of chemistry—or not. Know when your cycle is driving your behavior and you can be healthier all month long. **By Maura Corrigan**

My face is an oil slick

IS IT MY HORMONES? Could be

If blemishes often crop up right before your period, it might be the postovulation progesterone uptick. The hormone “helps develop an oily base for the uterine lining that’s great for a potential pregnancy, but it can also make skin oily,” says Ranella Hirsch, M.D., a dermatologist in Cambridge, Massachusetts. But if pimples plague you randomly, it might be due to other hormones—an overweight body can have more testosterone, which can create acne; stress ups cortisol, increasing oil. Or it might not be hormonal at all: Acne agitators include genetics, overwashing or bad products.

FIX IT If your breakouts and periods are regular, take advantage of that clockwork, suggests Dennis Gross, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City. Apply salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide for a few days before your period to help stop acne before it starts. If your breakouts are sporadic, allaying stress and watching your weight can help. If you can’t get your skin under control on your own, see your dermatologist.

I have zero interest in sex

IS IT MY HORMONES? Probably not

Low libido can be hard to fix—and difficult to explain. Some women have diminished desire because of too-low “estrogen, which makes you want to be intimate, and testosterone, which can contribute to sex drive,” says Andrew Goldstein, M.D., director of the Centers for Vulvovaginal Disorders in Washington, D.C. For some, altered hormones from the Pill or fertility treatments could affect desire. But most often, a sputtering sex life stems from relationship problems, Dr. Goldstein says. Feeling

stressed or depressed, having a poor body image and not getting enough sleep can all play a role in your lack of lust, too.

FIX IT If you’re on the Pill, your ob/gyn might suggest a non-hormonal birth control like a diaphragm or an IUD. But Dr. Goldstein says it’s even more important to examine your relationship, especially if you’re in a rut: “Try something new together, like an exotic cuisine, that stimulates both partners,” he advises. “And remember, work-related stress can distract you from really connecting with your partner. The best aphrodisiac is the weekend.” Don’t forget to pump up libido-lifting dopamine with regular exercise; if that weren’t awesome enough, working out can also help with passion killers such as stress, body image and sleep problems.

My asthma flares up every month

IS IT MY HORMONES? Very likely

If your wheezing ramps up the week before your period, your changing ratio of estrogen to progesterone may be at fault. In a study in the journal *Chest*, some asthmatic women at that point in their cycle were found to be breathing out more nitric oxide than usual, which is a sign that their airways might be inflamed. Women in the study who were on the Pill (which may have kept their hormone levels stable) *didn’t* show substantially changed inflammation. But not everyone experiences more flare-ups before their period, says lead author Piush Mandhane, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics respiratory medicine at the University of Alberta. **FIX IT** Try the Pill. If that’s not an option and your asthma drives you nuts the week before your period, head it off with an inhaler or a nonsteroidal asthma controller for the last couple weeks of your cycle, Dr. Mandhane suggests. Ask your doc for details.