

# The *Science* of your Cycle

Day 2: Intro to your hormones



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# Day 1 recap

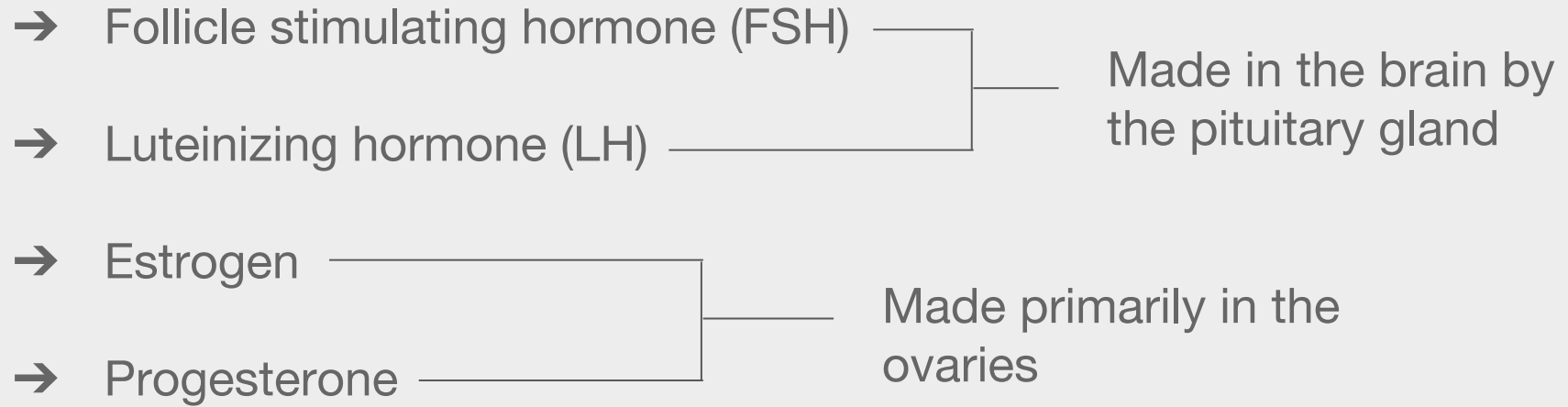
- The **CERVIX** is the lower portion of the uterus, and it produces a special fluid that makes pregnancy possible (amazing, right?!)
- The **UTERUS** sheds its lining during your period
- The **OVARIES** are almond-sized sacs that house eggs and make very important sex hormones

# Today's goals

- Name the female sex hormones & understand their roles
- Gain a basic understanding of why period problems happen
- Lay the groundwork to help you spot a problem in your own menstrual cycles

Even if you already know the basics of the female reproductive system, I **urge** you to continue with this course. In the coming days, we'll cover info that will put your sex ed class to shame!

# The 4 main female sex hormones



# What do these hormones do?

- Follicle stimulating hormone (FSH)
  - ◆ Responsible for **stimulating** the growth & development of **follicles** (which are sacs that each contain an egg) inside the ovaries, hence its name
  
- Luteinizing hormone (LH)
  - ◆ Responsible for **triggering ovulation**, which is the release of a matured egg from one of the ovaries

# What do these hormones do? (cont'd)

## → Estrogen

- ◆ Produced primarily in the ovaries by maturing follicles (egg sacs)
- ◆ Causes **changes to the cervix** (the lower portion of the uterus) that make pregnancy possible

## → Progesterone

- ◆ Helps prepare the uterus for a potential pregnancy
- ◆ **Counteracts the effects of estrogen**, including reversing estrogen's effects on the cervix
- ◆ Causes your body to **heat up** (we'll discuss this more later)

Your body needs to maintain the delicate balance between estrogen and progesterone. Since these hormones counteract one another, too much or too little of one (or both) can throw off the whole reproductive system!



# Hormone problems → period problems

- Painful periods
- A heavy flow
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
- Endometriosis
- Fibroids
- Amenorrhea (lack of periods)
- Infertility
- Low libido
- Mood disorders

When you understand how your periods work, it becomes easy to determine if hormone problems might be the root cause of period problems.

# My personal experience

- I experienced years of severe cramps, constipation, out-of-control mood swings, and low libido.
- Understanding the menstrual cycle helped me heal years of whacked out hormones.
- It can do the same for you...knowledge = power, baby!

# Day 2 Summary

- FSH stimulates the development of follicles (egg sacs)
- LH triggers ovulation
- Estrogen creates changes in the cervix
- Progesterone prepares the uterus for pregnancy, counteracts estrogen, and heats up the body
- At the most basic level: changes in estrogen and progesterone levels are triggered by changes in FSH and LH

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

Estrogen and progesterone counteract and balance one another. Proper balance is necessary for a healthy menstrual cycle (and healthy body).

ARE YOU FEELING IT YET?!

