



# Period PIECES

HORMONAL MYTHS OF THE MENSTRUATING WOMAN

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Hormones are complex and interdependent chemical messages in your body that drive many of its actions, from emotion to appetite to menstrual cycle. And while it seems hard to believe, it is not so very long ago that women's hormones and menstrual cycles were not thoroughly studied, leaving both medical professionals and women with limited understanding of how these systems even worked. Symptoms brought by female patients to their doctors, sadly, were often dismissed as made-up or as overreactions to normal bodily processes, which, ironically, were the very processes that were not fully understood.

Fortunately, research has been more robust in recent years, although there still remains a conventional lack of understanding that has allowed some hormonal myths to persist in the media, in our education systems, and even within our families. Here are five hormonal myths commonly associated with menstruating women, and the *actual facts* of the matter.

## MYTH #1: YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO HAVE A HORMONE PROBLEM

You are never too young to experience hormonal imbalance. An adult may experience imbalances at any point, while a teen may experience hormonal issues around the debut of menstruation. One increasingly common condition is *polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)*, an endocrine and metabolic disorder. PCOS is a condition that warrants careful attention to your period and often requires blood work or an ultrasound.

To be diagnosed with PCOS, you must exhibit at least two out of three criteria: