

Menstrual Hormones

PHASE 1: MENSTRUAL

"not pregnant"

all hormone levels are low as the body sheds the old uterine lining

PHASE 2: FOLLICULAR

"preparing for pregnancy"

hormone levels rise as the ovary prepares an egg for ovulation

PHASE 3: OVULATORY

"likely to become pregnant"

many hormones peak (and rapidly drop) to trigger the egg release

PHASE 4: LUTEAL

"potentially pregnant"

the uterus lining thickens to nourish a (potentially) fertilized egg

FOLLICLE STIMULATING HORMONE (FSH)

stimulates the ovary follicle to prepare an egg for ovulation and estrogen release

LUTENIZING HORMONE (LH)

triggers the ovary to release an egg at ovulation, which leaves an empty follicle (now called the corpus luteum)

ESTROGENS

prepares the uterus lining for possible pregnancy and thins cervical mucus (so sperm can enter)

PROGESTERONE

thickens and maintains uterine lining, turns off LH/FSH, triggers menstrual bleeding when it drops

TESTOSTERONE

much lower in women than men, but peaks around ovulation to increase libido (when she is most fertile)

