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Maca: the perfect food for balancing our hormones

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(NaturalNews) In today's world of widespread pollution and gender-bending chemicals, it can often be difficult to keep our hormones in balance. Even the most health-conscious of us are assaulted on all sides by a large number of poisons, such as BPA, that can disrupt our endocrine systems and cause havoc in our bodies. Consequently, many people have resorted to hormone-balancing drugs to help improve their health, which often cause even more problems in the long run due to their unnatural ingredients.

Thankfully, nature does provide us with a small number of foods that contain noted hormone-balancing properties. Perhaps the most potent of these foods is maca, a plant native to the Peruvian Andes that bears edible taproots. The indigenous Peruvians have long considered the root of the maca plant to be beneficial for hormone health, and a great deal of modern research confirms these allegations.

Maca for balancing female hormones

A large amount of research shows that maca can stabilize and boost female hormones. For example, a double-blind, placebo-controlled study published in the *International Journal of Biomedical Sciences* found that organic maca stimulated the production of estrogen, suppressed follicle-stimulating hormones and reduced the severity of menopausal symptoms (especially hot flashes and night sweating) in postmenopausal women. These results led the researchers to conclude that maca offered "an attractive non-hormonal addition to the choices available to early-postmenopausal women in the form of a natural plant alternative to Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)."⁽¹⁾

Another double-blind, placebo-controlled study published in *Menopause* in November 2008 discovered that [maca](#) "reduces psychological symptoms, including anxiety and depression, and lowers measures of sexual dysfunction in postmenopausal women independent of estrogenic and androgenic activity."⁽²⁾ In other words, maca benefited the female subjects' moods and libido

without negatively affecting their sexual hormones.

Maca for balancing male hormones

Research also shows that maca can balance and enhance male hormones, though most of these studies are confined to sexual health issues. For example, a study featured in *Andrologia* in October 2006 showed that black maca extracts could increase [sperm](#) count at the epididymal level after one day of treatment and an increase in sperm count in the vas deferens after three days of treatment. The researchers observed an increase in daily sperm production after one week of treatment, though testicular testosterone remained unaffected. "In conclusion, Black maca affects sperm count as early as 1 day after beginning of treatment," wrote the authors. ⁽³⁾

A study published in the *Asian Journal of Andrology* in December 2001 also discovered that maca tablets could improve sperm production and sperm mobility in adult men. Specifically, treatment with maca "resulted in increased seminal volume, sperm count per ejaculum, motile sperm count, and sperm motility."⁽⁴⁾ The researchers noted that serum [hormone](#) levels were not affected with maca and that there wasn't a correlation between sperm count and the number of maca tablets consumed.

Taking maca as a supplement

If you're interested in taking maca for its hormone-balancing benefits, it's best to consume organic, powdered maca that has been gelatinized. "Gelatinized" maca is simply maca that has had its starches removed, resulting in improved potency and bio-availability. This is actually how maca was traditionally prepared; even the indigenous Peruvians rarely consumed maca raw, because it is much harder to digest.

Sources:

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Michael Ravensthorpe is an independent writer whose research interests include nutrition, alternative medicine, and bushcraft. He is the creator of the website, [Spiritfoods](#), through which he promotes the world's healthiest foods.