



FOLLICULAR PHASE WEEK 1

by Laura Martin

THE 'SPRING' PHASE OF YOUR CYCLE



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WEEK #1 – FOLLICULAR PHASE

SPRING

WHAT IT IS

The follicular phase commences with the onset of your menstrual period and typically spans 10 to 12 days. Picture it as the "spring" phase of your menstrual cycle, where your ovaries diligently prepare and nurture an egg.

During this phase, the pituitary gland releases follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), which prompts the maturation of follicles housing a woman's eggs in one of the ovaries. Subsequently, the pituitary gland initiates the release of luteinizing hormone (LH), a key player in the ovulation process. Normally, only one of these follicles will reach maturity.

At the follicular phase's outset, estrogen and testosterone levels are typically low, gradually ascending as the phase progresses. This hormonal shift brings about increased energy, an uplifted mood, and enhanced cognitive abilities. Confidence surges and a willingness to take risks become more apparent. Testosterone, in particular, sparks libido while instilling a sense of boldness.

As ovulation draws near, the uterine lining thickens in preparation for potential pregnancy. The cervix, initially low and closed, gradually opens and begins producing higher-quality, wetter cervical fluid.



OPTIMAL NUTRITION FOR THIS PHASE

This period is pivotal for incorporating foods that support the burgeoning estrogen production. Choices like pumpkin and flax seeds contribute to estrogen synthesis, along with pomegranates and sprouted beans.

Crucial healthy fats from sources like avocado, coconut oil, nuts, seeds, and grass-fed ghee or butter play a vital role. They aid in regulating leptin levels, your satiation hormone, crucial for sustaining the menstrual cycle and providing ample energy for follicle development and release.

Given the heightened oxidative stress before ovulation, a vibrant, well-rounded diet featuring vitamin C-rich foods such as citrus, grapes, bell peppers, and berries, alongside sulfur-rich vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, bok choy, and cabbage, becomes instrumental. This combination combats free radicals and supports the detoxification process.

Cap off your nutritional regimen with a spectrum of nutrient-rich options. Root veggies, lentils, and gluten-free grains like oats, quinoa, and millet join the ranks alongside salmon, eggs, nuts, seeds, and oysters. This ensemble delivers a bounty of vitamins and minerals essential for priming the egg maturation process and fortifying your uterine lining.

CORE EATING PRINCIPLES

- **Wholesome Choices:** Direct your focus towards whole foods that maintain a steady blood sugar level without drastic spikes.
- **Carbohydrate Switch:** Swap simple carbohydrates for complex counterparts to mitigate blood sugar fluctuations.
- **Balanced Proteins and Fats:** Integrate fats and lighter proteins into each meal to assist your body in sustaining a healthy blood sugar equilibrium.
- **Consistent Meal Schedule:** Regular meals at fixed times contribute to balanced blood sugar levels.
- **Hydration is Key:** Ensure ample water intake—aim for at least half your body weight (in pounds) in ounces daily for optimal hydration and overall well-being.

HERBS + SUPPLEMENTS

- Nettle Tea: Aids in replenishing iron stores post-menstrual cycle, supporting recovery from blood loss.
- Holy Basil Tea: An adaptogen that contributes to blood sugar regulation and boosts immunity.
- Schisandra: An adaptogen with post-menses nourishment for the kidneys, stress hormone reduction, and energy elevation. Available in tincture or powder form.

MOVEMENT

Your energy peaks, so channel it into vigorous activities like HIIT, spin, kickboxing, or CrossFit.

LIFESTYLE

While it might not win popularity points, consider minimizing alcohol consumption during this phase. Alcohol competes with the liver in estrogen detoxification, potentially leading to estrogen dominance and significant PMS symptoms.

Take note that the estrogen surge boosts dopamine levels, making the desire for alcohol more pronounced during this phase. While indulging is natural, excessive intake can disrupt hormones and affect your fertile window.

With confidence-boosting hormones (estrogen/testosterone) on the rise, capitalize on this phase for:

- Initiating new projects at work or home.
- Making crucial business and personal decisions.
- Engaging in brainstorming and problem-solving.
- Strategizing in business or at work.
- Being socially active and connecting with others.
- Participating in strenuous physical exercise.

A pink bowl filled with granola, sliced strawberries, banana slices, blueberries, and peach slices, topped with a layer of white milk. A silver spoon is placed on the left side of the bowl.

RECIPE IDEAS FOR FOLLICULAR PHASE



MAPLE ALMOND BUTTER GRANOLA CLUSTERS

Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Grain-Free, Paleo, Refined-Sugar-Free, Vegan

Servings — 12

Cook Time — 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup raw, organic cashews
- 1 cup raw, organic pecans
- 1 cup raw, organic pumpkin seeds (swap for sunflower seeds beginning week #3)
- 1 cup coconut flakes, unsweetened
- 2 tbsp ground flaxseed powder (swap for sesame seeds beginning week #3)
- 1 tbsp Ceylon cinnamon
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1 medium overripe banana, mashed
- ⅓ cup creamy almond butter, unsweetened
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- 2 tbsp organic coconut oil, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat your oven to 325 F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add nuts to a food processor and pulse several times to "chop" them into a crumbly texture (make sure not to overmix).
3. Add coconut flakes and pulse a couple more times until well mixed.
4. Transfer pulsed nuts and coconut to a large mixing bowl and stir in the remaining dry ingredients (flax or sesame seed, cinnamon, and sea salt).
5. Whisk the mashed banana and wet ingredients in a separate bowl until smooth. Pour this mixture over the dry ingredients and stir well until thoroughly moistened.
6. Spread the mixture evenly on a parchment-lined baking sheet in a single layer. You want it to clump together to achieve those clusters.
7. Bake for 15 minutes, then remove and gently stir to turn over (the key here is gentle to keep those clusters intact).
8. Bake another 10 minutes, until golden brown.
9. Remove from oven and let cool at room temperature; it will crisp up as it does.
10. Store in a tightly sealed glass jar for 2 weeks in the cupboard.
11. Remember to use flax and pumpkin seeds the first 2 weeks of your cycle and swap for sesame and sunflower the last 2 weeks of your cycle.

MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP SMOOTHIE

Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Grain-Free, Paleo, Refined-Sugar-Free, Vegan

Servings — 1

Cook Time — 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup unsweetened cashew, hemp or full-fat canned coconut milk (add more for a thinner texture, or less for a thicker, smoothie-bowl option)
- ½ cup frozen spinach or leafy greens
- ½ cup frozen zucchini (can swap for additional greens)
- 1 small frozen banana
- 1 scoop of clean vanilla collagen protein powder
- ¼ of an avocado, pitted and diced
- 1 heaping tbsp coconut butter (can be swapped for another nut butter or oil)
- 2 tbsp cacao nibs
- 1-2 tbsp fresh mint leaves (depends on how minty you want it)
- 1 heaping tbsp flaxseed (week #1-2) or sunflower seed (week #3 - 4)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- Optional 1-2 dates to sweeten

DIRECTIONS:

1. Add all ingredients to a high-speed blender and mix until smooth.

CHICKEN SALAD + APPLE CIDER DRESSING

Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Grain-Free, Paleo, Sugar-Free

Servings — 2 Cook

Time — 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

For The Salad:

- 1 delicata squash, rinsed and dried
- 2 cups fresh arugula
- 1 cup organic rotisserie chicken
- 1 tbsp avocado oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- ½ cup walnuts, chopped
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds
- sea salt + black pepper to taste
- 1 avocado, peeled and chopped

For The Dressing:

- 1 cup apple cider (look for one with no added sugar)
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp minced shallots
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp sea salt
- black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Slice delicata squash in half lengthwise, scoop out seeds, then cut into small pieces (so that they look like the half-moon shapes pictured above).
3. Toss squash with a tbsp of avocado oil, garlic cloves, sea salt, and pepper (and optional maple syrup) and spread evenly in a large baking pan. Roast at 425 for 20 minutes, then remove, flip, and add the walnut pieces. Place back in the oven and roast for 10 minutes or until golden brown.
4. While squash is roasting, combine the apple cider, apple cider vinegar, and minced shallots in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook for 8 or so minutes, until cider is reduced to approximately one cup. Turn off the heat, and whisk in the remaining dressing ingredients.
5. Place arugula in a large bowl or serving platter and add roasted squash, toasted walnuts, pomegranate seeds, avocado, and chicken. Pour dressing over and toss to combine.

BUILD YOUR OWN BOWL + ROMESCO SAUCE

Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Grain-Free, Sugar-Free, Paleo + Vegan Option

Servings — Depends

Cook Time — 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

For The Bowl:

- Base: leafy greens (spinach, arugula, butter lettuce, romaine)
- Veggies: roasted bell peppers or asparagus, artichokes, green beans, peas, eggplant, zucchini, summer squash, fresh cucumber, cabbage, broccoli, Brussels
- Proteins: wild salmon, roasted organic chicken, lamb, quinoa cooked in bone broth
- Fats: nuts and seeds, avocado, extra virgin olive oil, greek or coconut yogurt/kefir

For The Sauce:

- 2 large organic red bell peppers (you can buy in a jar pre-roasted to skip the cooking step if preferred)
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup slivered almonds (no skin)
- ½ cup walnuts
- ½ cup tomato paste
- ¼ cup sherry vinegar
- ¼ cup chopped Italian flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 2 tsp sea salt
- Red chili flakes to taste
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS:

1. If cooking bell peppers at home (vs. buying them pre-roasted in a jar), rinse, slice them in half, de-seed them, and coat them in avocado oil and sea salt. Roast in a pan at 425 for 30 minutes. Remove, let cool, and peel off the skin.
2. Add all remaining ingredients except olive oil to the food processor. Mix, slowly adding olive oil while the motor is running. Mix until combined; the sauce should still have a thick, slightly chunky texture.
3. Keeps well in the fridge for 2-3 weeks.

SEED CYCLE BLISS BALLS

Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Grain-Free, Paleo, Refined-Sugar-Free, Vegan

Servings — 15-20 balls, depending on size

Cook Time — 10 minutes + 1 hour to chill

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup pumpkin seeds (week #1 + #2) or sunflower seeds (week #3 + #4)
- ¼ cup flax seeds (week #1 + #2) or sesame seeds (week #3 + #4)
- 1 cup pitted + coarsely chopped Medjool dates
- ¼ cup creamy cashew or almond butter
- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted
- ¼ cup unsweetened coconut flakes
- 2 tbsp coconut flour
- ½ tsp sea salt
- Optional -- 2 tbsp cacao powder to add a chocolatey taste or 2 tbsp coconut shreds

DIRECTIONS:

1. Add all of the nuts and seeds together in a food processor and mix until a flour-like mixture has formed. Remove and set aside.
2. Pulse the dates in the food processor until a sticky ball has formed. Add nut butter and melted coconut oil and continue to pulse until creamy.
3. Add back in the ground nut/seed flour and remaining ingredients, processing until well mixed.
4. Remove dough and roll it into balls. Option to coat in cacao powder or coconut shreds (I like to do half and half).
5. Store them in the fridge for 2 weeks or in the freezer for up to 2 months.



Thank you

It is my hope that you find this information useful and helpful in your healing journey. I am here to support you. I would love to work with you and help you attain your goals of balancing your hormones while navigating the restoration your health. I have also incorporated a photolight therapy patch system to correlate this restoration and balance. Please reach out to me to learn more.

Laura Martin

