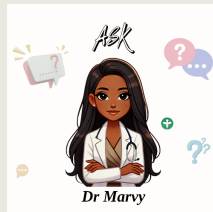


THE HORMONAL BELLY CHECKLIST

Could Your Hormones Be Behind Your Belly Fat?

Find out the 5 hidden hormone imbalances keeping African women over 35 stuck, and what to do about each one



Board-Certified Lifestyle Medicine Physician

Dr Marvellous Njoku-Adeleke | Dr Marvy

If you have been eating less, moving more, and the belly fat still will not go. Your hormones may be in charge.

You wake up tired, crave something sweet after almost every meal, feel bloated by evening, and cannot remember the last time your clothes felt truly comfortable.

You have tried cutting carbs, fasting, detox teas, yet the scale barely moves.

The truth is that when your hormones are out of balance, your body holds on to fat, especially around your belly, no matter how hard you try. And this can cause serious health problems over time.

The good news is that once you understand what is happening, you can fix it. Gently, naturally, and sustainably.

A personal note from Dr Marvy

I know this pain personally. I lost my father to diabetes-related complications. That is why helping Africans prevent and reverse chronic disease through fat loss is not just my career. It is my calling.

THE M5 FORMULA: YOUR BLUEPRINT FOR HORMONE BALANCE

When your hormones are out of balance, it means a hormone is higher or lower than it should be, and that small shift can change everything from your energy and appetite to where your body stores fat.

The good news is that balance can be restored through everyday choices, not pills. My M5 Formula helps you rebalance them naturally through five daily habits:

M1	Mindset	Change your beliefs about your body and what is possible for you.
M2	Meals	Build balanced plates using the 1-2-3 Plate Method (1 portion carbs, 2 protein, 3 vegetables). This stabilises insulin, reduces cravings, and supports steady fat loss.
M3	Movement	Combine strength training and daily walks to boost metabolism and insulin sensitivity.
M4	Mood	Manage stress and prioritise sleep to keep cortisol calm.
M5	Monitoring	Notice changes to your energy, mood, and waistline, not just the number on the scale.

THE 1-2-3 PLATE METHOD

1 Portion Carbs	2 Portions Protein	3 Portions Vegetables
Eba, yam, rice, plantain, Ofada rice	Fish, eggs, chicken, beans	Ugu, efo riro, okra, cabbage, spinach

HORMONE: INSULIN | The Fat Storage Switch

SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE OUT OF BALANCE

- Constant carb cravings
- Fat gain around your waist
- Energy crashes after meals
- Dark patches on neck or armpits (acanthosis nigricans)
- Feeling hungry soon after eating

WHAT TO DO: M5 FORMULA

- Eat using the 1-2-3 Plate Method at every meal
- Add a 10-minute walk after eating to lower blood sugar
- Strength training 3 to 4 times per week
- Reduce ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks

EAT MORE OF THESE - NIGERIAN AND DIASPORA FOODS FOR INSULIN

- Beans and lentils, low glycemic: clears excess glucose
- Ogbono soup: soluble fibre slows insulin spikes
- Okra: viscous fibre reduces post-meal blood sugar
- Boiled plantain in small portions over fried
- Ofada rice over white rice, lower glycemic index

Insulin is the master fat storage hormone. When insulin is chronically high, your body cannot access its fat stores. Lowering insulin is the first and most important step in hormonal fat loss.

HORMONE: CORTISOL | The Stress Hormone

SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE OUT OF BALANCE

- Always stressed or on edge
- Stubborn belly fat even with exercise
- Sugar or salt cravings under pressure
- Sleep problems, difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Feeling wired but exhausted

WHAT TO DO: M5 FORMULA

- Practice deep breathing for 5 minutes daily
- Choose movement that energises you, not exhausts you
- Prioritise 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night
- Reduce caffeine after midday

EAT MORE OF THESE - NIGERIAN AND DIASPORA FOODS FOR CORTISOL

- Dark leafy greens: magnesium supports cortisol regulation
- Eggs: B vitamins support adrenal function
- Oily fish: omega 3 reduces cortisol response to stress
- Herbal teas: chamomile and ginger calm the nervous system
- Avoid: energy drinks, excess coffee, processed snacks

Short-term cortisol spikes are normal. Chronic cortisol, from sustained stress, poor sleep, and over-exercising, directly causes belly fat storage. Managing stress is a fat loss strategy, not a luxury.

HORMONE: LEPTIN | The Hunger and Fullness Hormone

SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE OUT OF BALANCE

- Always hungry, never truly satisfied after eating
- Constant snacking throughout the day
- Difficulty stopping eating even when full
- Strong food cravings especially at night
- Feeling tired regardless of how much you sleep

WHAT TO DO: M5 FORMULA

- Add protein and fibre to every single meal
- Avoid constant snacking: allow gaps between meals
- Prioritise sleep: leptin is produced during deep sleep
- Reduce ultra-processed foods which disrupt leptin signalling

EAT MORE OF THESE - NIGERIAN AND DIASPORA FOODS FOR LEPTIN

- Fish such as mackerel: omega 3 improves leptin sensitivity
- Eggs. High protein reduces hunger hormones
- Beans: protein and fibre combination maximises satiety
- Ugu soup: fibre slows digestion and supports fullness
- Drink more water: thirst is often mistaken for hunger

Leptin tells your brain you are full. When leptin resistance develops, often from chronic overeating of processed food, the signal breaks down. You eat more but feel satisfied less.

HORMONE: OESTROGEN | The Female Hormone

SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE OUT OF BALANCE

- Heavy or painful periods
- Bloating and water retention
- Fat stored on hips, thighs, and lower belly
- Mood changes, irritability, or anxiety
- Breast tenderness

WHAT TO DO: M5 FORMULA

- Eat cruciferous vegetables daily to clear excess oestrogen
- Increase dietary fibre to support oestrogen excretion
- Exercise regularly: movement helps metabolise oestrogen
- Reduce alcohol: it impairs oestrogen clearance

EAT MORE OF THESE - NIGERIAN AND DIASPORA FOODS FOR OESTROGEN

- Cabbage, available everywhere in Nigeria and abroad: helps clear excess oestrogen
- Kale and broccoli: contain compounds that metabolise oestrogen
- Cauliflower: supports liver detoxification of hormones
- Flaxseeds: lignans bind excess oestrogen for removal
- Beans: high fibre helps excrete oestrogen through digestion

Oestrogen dominance, too much oestrogen relative to progesterone, is extremely common in African women over 35. It is associated with fibroids, PCOS, heavy periods, and stubborn lower body fat.

HORMONE: THYROID HORMONES | Your Metabolic Controller

SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE OUT OF BALANCE

- Persistent fatigue even after rest
- Cold hands and feet
- Unexplained weight gain
- Hair thinning or hair loss
- Low mood, poor concentration, or brain fog

WHAT TO DO: M5 FORMULA

- Add selenium-rich foods to support thyroid hormone production
- Manage stress: cortisol suppresses thyroid function
- Ask your doctor for a full thyroid panel, not just TSH
- Avoid crash dieting: it severely restricts thyroid activity

EAT MORE OF THESE - NIGERIAN AND DIASPORA FOODS FOR THYROID HORMONES

- Eggs: excellent source of selenium and iodine
- Fish such as mackerel: rich in selenium and omega 3
- Sardines, selenium rich. Available fresh or tinned
- Chicken: lean protein with selenium
- Beans: plant-based protein that supports metabolism

An underactive thyroid slows your entire metabolism, making fat loss feel almost impossible. Thyroid disease is significantly underdiagnosed in African women. Ask for a full thyroid panel, not just TSH.

START HERE – YOUR FIRST STEP STARTS TODAY

Before anything else, focus on one thing: balancing your insulin.

Insulin is the master fat storage hormone. When it is high, your body cannot burn fat. The fastest way to bring it down is to balance your plate at every meal.

1 Portion Carbs	2 Portions Protein	3 Portions Vegetables
Small eba, small scoop of rice, or small portion of yam	Fish, eggs, chicken, beans, or any combination	Ugu, efo riro, okra, cabbage, or any leafy green

That is it. Start with your next meal.

You do not need to change your food. You just need to rebalance it. This one shift begins to lower your insulin, reduce cravings, and signal to your body that it is safe to start releasing fat.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: A small wrap of eba with generous egusi soup loaded with ugu and two pieces of fish. That is a hormone-balancing Nigerian meal. No starvation. No suffering.

NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

This checklist shows you the hormones that could be behind your belly fat. And the 1-2-3 Plate Method gives you your first practical step.

But if you want to understand exactly how each hormone works, why your body has been storing fat instead of burning it, and which hormone is most likely working against YOU specifically - watch my free training.

THE FAT LOSS SWITCH

How To Turn Your Body From Fat Storing To Fat Burning

Free. 15 minutes. In plain English. With Nigerian food examples.

It will make everything in this checklist make complete sense.

Watch it here:

<https://page.askdrmarvy.com/15webinar>

Love always, Dr. Marvy

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

1. American College of Lifestyle Medicine. (2023). Lifestyle Medicine Practice Competencies and Recommendations for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management.
2. International Diabetes Federation. (2022). IDF Consensus Statement on Lifestyle Management in Type 2 Diabetes.
3. Velloso, L. A., et al. (2021). Insulin resistance, obesity and metabolic syndrome. *Nature Reviews Endocrinology*, 17(8), 507-520.
4. Kuo, T., et al. (2015). Cortisol and chronic stress: Metabolic implications. *Journal of Endocrinology*, 226(2), R43-R56.
5. Pan, H., and Guo, J. (2020). Leptin resistance and obesity. *Frontiers in Endocrinology*, 11, 579.
6. Witzke, K. A., and Snowden, M. (2023). Estrogen dominance and metabolic risk. *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 66(1), 123-135.
7. Chaker, L., et al. (2022). Hypothyroidism and metabolic health. *The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology*, 10(6), 366-378.
8. Lemoine, M., and Spoletini, I. (2023). Insulin and leptin cross-talk in energy balance. *Metabolism Clinical and Experimental*, 141, 155369.
9. Hall, K. D., et al. (2022). Protein distribution and metabolic control. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 115(3), 612-620.
10. World Health Organization. (2022). WHO Global Report on Obesity and Physical Activity.

This checklist is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Please consult a qualified healthcare professional for personal medical guidance.

ABOUT DR MARVY



Dr Marvellous Njoku-Adeleke

Board-Certified Lifestyle Medicine Physician

Founder, Ask Dr Marvy Community

After losing her father to diabetes-related complications, Dr Marvy turned her pain into purpose - dedicating her career to helping Africans prevent, control, and reverse chronic disease through sustainable fat loss and lifestyle change.

Her approach blends medical science, real-life practicality, and faith-based encouragement. She simplifies the complex science of metabolism and hormones into everyday habits that help people burn fat, balance hormones, and restore long-term health.

Her work focuses on the connection between excess body fat and chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, PCOS, and heart disease - showing how targeted fat loss can powerfully improve blood sugar, blood pressure, fertility, and overall wellbeing.

CONNECT WITH DR MARVY

WhatsApp Nigeria	https://wa.me/2348060043328
WhatsApp UK	https://wa.me/447442832615
WhatsApp Channel	https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbBUFv09MF95LqvvAw0i
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/askdrmarvy
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/share/1HHAjsdAd1/
TikTok	https://www.tiktok.com/@askdrmarvy
Email	drmarvy@askdrmarvy.com
Website	www.askdrmarvy.com

Love always, Dr. Marvy