

# MAJOR HORMONES AND WHAT THEY DO:

## A QUICK-REFERENCE GUIDE

Endocrine glands, which are special groups of cells, make hormones. The major endocrine glands are:

**Hypothalamus:** Produces hormones that control body temperature, hunger, moods, release of hormones from many glands (especially the pituitary), sex drive, sleep, and thirst

**Pituitary:** The “master control gland,” makes hormones that affect growth and the functions of other glands

**Pineal (thalamus):** Produces the serotonin derivative melatonin, a hormone that affects sleep patterns

**Parathyroid:** Controls the amount of calcium in our blood and bones

**Thyroid:** Produces hormones that control the rate at which the body burns calories and how fast the heart beats

**Thymus:** T-cells, critical to the adaptive immune system, mature in the thymus

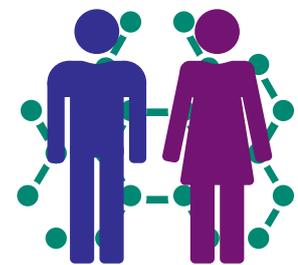
**Pancreas:** Produces insulin, which decreases blood sugar

**Adrenal:** Produces sex hormones and cortisol, which helps you respond to stress and has many other important functions

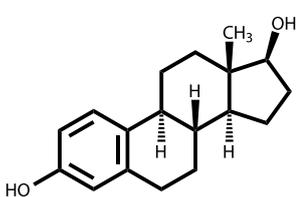
**Ovaries (women):** Secrete estrogen, testosterone and progesterone, the female sex hormones

**Testes (men):** Produce sperm and testosterone, the male sex hormone

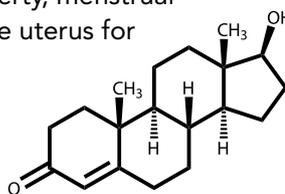
To find out much, much more about your hormones and the endocrine system, visit [hormone.org](http://hormone.org)



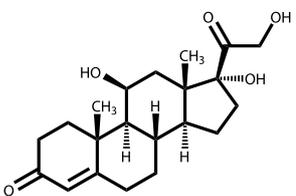
Some important hormones include:



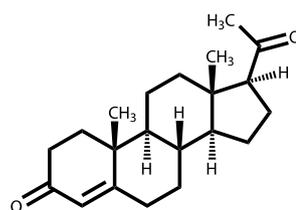
**Estrogen (Estradiol):** Main sex hormone of the female body. In females, it causes puberty, menstrual cycle, and prepares the uterus for fertilization



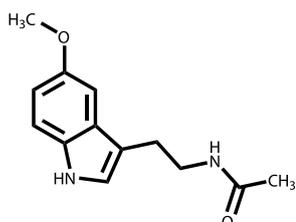
**Testosterone:** Main sex hormone in males. Causes growth of muscle mass and strength, increased bone density, deepening of voice, growth of beard



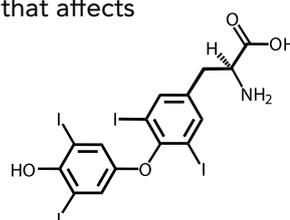
**Cortisol:** helps you respond to stress and has many other important functions



**Progesterone:** Not main sex hormone, but similar to estrogen. Helps maintain menstrual cycle



**Melatonin:** a hormone that affects sleep patterns



**Thyroid hormones:** control the rate at which the body burns calories and how fast the heart beats, among other important functions

**You have questions. We have answers.**

The Hormone Health Network is your trusted source for endocrine patient education. Our free, online resources are available at [hormone.org](http://hormone.org).