

Mastering Hormonal Harmony With Maca

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH
with **Deanna Minich, MS, PhD,
FACN, CNS, IFMCP**



Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

Hello, and welcome back to the summit. I am your co-host, Dr. Carrie Jones, and I am very excited to talk to you today with my friend Dr. Deanna Minich from Symphony Natural Health. All about my favorite root Maca. Yes, many of you may think Maca is an herb or a plant, but the part that we use is the root, and as I said, it is one of my absolute favorites. There is a lot of misinformation out there, and there is a lot of interesting information out there. We are going to bust the myths summits with Dr. Minich. Deanna, welcome to the summit. I'm so excited to have you here.

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Hi, Carrie. I'm so excited about this conversation because there are so many myths about Maca.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

That is the truth. Let's start with that. What is Maca and what isn't Maca about women who are trying to become pregnant?

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes. Well, first and foremost, I just want to mention to everybody that we just published a 46-page paper titled; Not All Maca Is Created Equal. Many people, just think Maca is Maca is Maca. However there are 17 different phenotypes of Maca, and they all have different functions. Not all Macas are the same. Our research on specific Maca phenotypes has shown that different phenotypes have different DNA, different analytical profiles, and different physiological effects.

Carrie, here's the takeaway for people, most people think it's just one plant, but because there are so many different varieties and phenotypes. There are different types. One phenotype can affect fertility in men, another can support fertility in women, and one phenotype can support prostate health. Two of them can support bone health. Then there are specific ones for

menstrual health, and then some for menopausal symptoms. Here's the thing. If women are taking Maca just from the grocery store, they may have an undesired effect. They might get acne; they might get hair loss.

For women with PCOS, estrogen dominance, or thyroid issues, the wrong type can make those conditions worse. It makes sense to use a type of maca that has been clinically tested so that you know what you're getting. Because otherwise, it's a plant. Plants have lots of different phenotypes and different phytochemicals. Femmenessence is an actual, clinically tested blend of phenotypes. Ideal for women's health.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

This is so helpful because I've heard from women in this summit who say, I just walked to the store. I bought a Maca. I heard it's good for whatever adrenals, hormones, or stress, and exactly that I broke out, or I don't feel it worked. I took it for a month, and nothing happened. I thought I bet what they did is they just bought a conglomeration of a blob of different Macas, didn't know it, and they are possibly competing with each other, knocking each other out, or it's geared towards one phenotype that isn't helping women's health.

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Bingo. I think you got it there where you said it's just one phenotype that isn't helping women's health. The type that you might get in the grocery store, and Carrie, one of the things that we found from doing this paper is that most Maca products don't define what they are on the label, so you don't know what you are taking.

With the type of Maca that is known to be adaptogenic. I'm sure that most people listening know what adaptogen is. It's a plant compound that can help adapt the body's response to stress. Well, certain types of Maca do just that. They support the adrenals, but then other types of maca help to nourish the hypothalamus, the pituitary, the thyroid, the adrenal, and the ovary axis so that they do a bit more. If you're only stimulating or modulating the adrenals, you might change other systems. It may not be ideal. What you want to do is balance the endogenous production of hormones within, and that's what Femmenessence does.

Again, Femmenessence is three separate products. There's one designed for premenstrual health, and it's based on two pre-clinical trials, and four published clinical trials. Most recently, we just published four case reports on the main active Femmenessence. What we know about the one for premenstrual health, which is called a Femmenessence MacaHarmony, is that it helps to balance. For a woman with estrogen dominance who can't get pregnant, she can safely take Femmenessence because what it will do is recalibrate the different hormones in her body to optimize her hormones for her. It's not going to make things worse. It'll recalibrate.

Oftentimes, it'll take 2 to 4 cycles for women to reestablish their periods, and initially, we've had people who will have written into our medical team. One woman in particular, I can think of, was trying to get pregnant. She started to make Femmenessence, and she wrote to the medical team after two months of taking feminism, she said, This product made my period worse. It shortened my cycle; it made me bleed heavier. I want my money back. I don't think this product is working well.

Our medical team walked her through this a little bit more because, as we know, as the body, especially hormones, start to recalibrate, there can be all kinds of changes. There could be shedding, and there could be changes in the different ratios of hormones. There can be this shift that requires a little bit of time. Our medical team worked with her a bit and said, Just hang in there, just have a little bit of patience, and continue to take the product. Well, within three months, we got an email from her saying that she hadn't told anybody yet, but she was pregnant.

Yes. We followed that case through. She did have a healthy baby. We have this term, Femmenessence-baby. For a woman who has been trying to get pregnant for about 12 months, and essentially, she starts taking Femmenessence. Then within 4 to 6 months, she gets pregnant. I was just talking to one of my colleagues, Dr. Kim Ross, about this. She was at a booth for Symphony, and at the show, a woman came up to her and had the baby with her. It's possible that once we start to balance our cycles with a known marked phenotype such as the ones in Femmenessence, we recalibrate. It's when we get in there and tune the hypothalamus to signal things better.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

I love that. This was my next question because I know women are thinking, Well, what if I have low progesterone? What if I don't ovulate? What if I struggle with egg quality? What if I'm struggling? There's a lot of, maybe somebody was thinking, Well, I don't think estrogens might issue, but I think it's these other things. Could Femmenessence work for me as well?

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Well, first and foremost, I want to say everything that everybody has been listening to in this summit, so when we talk about nutrition, sleep, relaxation, and goodness, stress is so important for women trying to get pregnant. I was just talking with Dr. Marc Sklar, who's on our medical team, yesterday about the role of stress. We can create over-exercising, we're just too much stress. All of these things are important that everybody's been listening to. But what makes Femmenessence different from all of this and why a woman with high estrogen, low progesterone, or all these many imbalances doesn't need to be concerned about what it is because the Femmenessence has the intelligence from the plant to go in and essentially rework, recalibrate, and get things in alignment?

If high estrogen is the issue, then bring that estrogen down to a healthy level. We just had a published case on PCOS. When I think of PCOS, I think of high cortisol, high insulin, and high testosterone. Even seeing that Femmenessence can help in the case of PCOS. A lot of women get nervous, especially if they have PCOS, to try something Maca because it's backfired before. Maybe they went to the store. We even had somebody from Whole Foods who was working in the natural products section of Whole Foods, and she had PCOS and was very reluctant to try Femmenessence.

She talked with our medical team. They said, Don't worry, this is about recalibration. It's not about inflating your hormone levels. It's a thermostat in a house. It's like how you're in a room and you set it to 70 degrees, and then the house furnace or air conditioning unit does what it needs to do to keep it at 70. That's essentially what Femmenessence is doing. This woman at Whole Foods who was using it for PCOS, essentially, thought it was great because, well, when the team talked with her when you read through her testimonial, for years and years she was just off in her cycle. She said within four weeks, just within that one-month timeframe, she started cycling again, and she started to reduce a lot of her symptoms.

That's typically what we see. For women with mood issues around their period, we tend to see about a three-week turnaround time after starting Femmenessence. Then, and for women that have issues with their cycle, whether or not they're cycling, they have heavy bleeding, all kinds of issues. It depends on the woman and what has been going on for her, what the actual root causes would be, and how long she's had those issues. But that can be between one and four months. The idea is not to be on Femmenessence forever. What we want to do is get into that thermostat and change the recalibration of the hypothalamus. Then, once she has been having some regular cycles for 3 to 4 months, she starts to transition on and off, and then she goes on perhaps a maintenance dose or just goes off of it entirely.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

I love that you use the word calibration because, in a lot of this summit, we've been talking about brain health. We talk about this input into the brain; even with you and Marc Sklar talking about stress, all of that comes into the hypothalamus, and then the hypothalamus acts as that leader board again, that master thermostat, and decides: What are we doing with our hormones today? I don't think people fully realize that when hormones get communicated, it's a pulse. It's Morse code as opposed to a hose. It's not like you turn on a garden hose and out comes all this hormone, all this estrogen, or all this progesterone. But if you get the Morse code wrong, if you send that text message wrong, we know, obviously the body will completely misinterpret it. Now perhaps it's PCOS, or perhaps it's a lack of ovulation, or perhaps it's too much estrogen.

I appreciate it and always have since I learned about Femmenessence years ago. The recalibration point. Because sometimes there's a lot that happens in the brain that we just don't know. We just don't know what signals are coming up there, or whether the brain is reading and

scanning and then sending out incorrect Morse code or reactive Morse code is the better word. I love that Femmenessence is intelligent. The intelligence of the plant, the root to say, Okay, let's straighten this out, let's take some time, let's file correctly, let's clean up these desks, let's get rid of the trash. Let's do all the things we need to do and recalibrate the hormones.

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes, I like that, starting with the hypothalamus, because the hypothalamus-pituitary junction is the master gland nexus that informs the rest. That's important. What has happened for most women who are experiencing infertility is that they have a break in the feedback loop. The hypothalamus might be working just fine, but then the ovaries communicating back up to the hypothalamus-pituitary are not working so well. There's a break in communication. In functional medicine, we talk about hormones as communicators. Where is the communication? Off in the body.

Again, what I love about the name of our company, Symphony Natural Health, is that we reestablish that symphonic messaging, that communication, the music inside the body. It's almost like your endocrine system is an orchestra. You've got the violinist, you've got the pianist, you've got, and if there's one access, whether it's the ovaries or it's the adrenals or it's the thyroid that's out of alignment, out of tune, it's that you hear it through the whole orchestra. It's because they're all very interconnected.

Femmenessence to me is the overall, the composer, and helps to align that orchestra. It's the conductor who gets all of that symphony going. The other thing, Carrie. I'm glad that you brought up the brain aspects because I think that's a very important point to re-establish. We also know that because it's helping to tweak hormones, it could change some of the cognitive and mood aspects of the menstrual cycle. The other point that I think you and I agree on a lot is detoxification. The other thing that Maca is known for is its phytochemicals.

One of the classes of phytochemicals within Maca is glucosinolates. Now Glucosinolates, Maca most people don't know this, but Macas is a cousin to broccoli, cauliflower, and kale. They're all within the same family, the Brassicaceae. It's just that they're not interchangeable. If you have maca, you can now stop eating your broccoli. They have different glucosinolates and different phytochemicals. In Femmenessence, the beauty of Femmenessence, and this is what you won't find in just your standard maca powder at the store, is that the glucosinolates have been concentrated, so there are up to ten times greater concentrations.

We know that part of the dysregulation that can happen, whether it is dysmenorrhea or amenorrhea, and infertility can also be how we metabolize hormones. It's not always just a balancing act. Sometimes it's the detoxification process. It's almost, what Femmenessence, is doing: it's giving a two-pronged approach. The first prong is, yes, being the conductor and getting that orchestra going with that inner endocrine symphony. That's good because it's

balancing hormones no matter where we are; it's meeting us where we're at. Then, secondly, at the point of the liver, the liver is responsible for that phase one, and phase two, detoxification of hormones. Maca happens to be, at least in Femmenessence, we know, highly concentrated in glucosinolates, and they are even standardized to glucosinolates. The amount is guaranteed in Femmenessence. Whereas if you bought Maca at the store, you don't know what you're getting in your glucosinolates because they're very susceptible to degradation. They can break down very easily.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

Now, how would somebody listening start taking Maca? Is there a loading dose? Is there a basic dose? What's our general recommendation for women looking to become pregnant and get their hormones back in a symphony?

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes, well, it depends on the woman. First and foremost, Let me just mention that people can always contact our medical team at Symphony Natural Health and talk through the nuances of their case. But in general, one of the Femmenessence MacaHarmony twice per day is all that is required. The way that people take it is that they take one in the morning upon rising, and they take that about 30 minutes before they have a meal with about 8 to 16 ounces of water. The second dose would come after lunch before that afternoon dip in energy that most people have, or if they don't have an afternoon dip, then by 3 p.m. Keeping that same pulsatile rhythm that we typically see with hormones.

Now with birth control and how the different pills in the packet are primed with different levels of hormones, it's changing up your body, it's giving you the hormones, and it's moving you along in that cycle. Those are hormones whereas the Femmenessence is not hormones. You can take Femmenessence, once or twice a day throughout the month. You don't have to change up the cycle depending on the day of your cycle at all, just once or twice a day. For some women and some clinicians increase that to two or twice a day. In that same rhythm, in the AM and then in the early PM. Okay, so again, let the body do its thing within those first couple of months. There might be some changes in the cycle, and there might be some differences in bleeding. But overall, after waiting through that period for about four months, there should be some positive change there.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

I love that. I'm going to ask you another question, but I want to also remind women that when you have what's called a pre-antral follicle, which is the one that's waiting, it's ready to grow up to become the one that ovulates to get from a pre-antral follicle to the chosen one. The month of ovulation is about a three-month, 90-day cycle. Anything, I suggest in women's health, Femmenessence included, which is why I love talking with Dr. Deanna because you've got to get at least three months through for that pre-antral follicle to grow up to be big, strong, and healthy

enough to then kick out the egg that's going to ovulate. The same goes for Femmenessence. Stick with it or for a good 3 to 4 months. Don't judge it too hard. If stuff happens, just know that your getting started is getting shifted, getting cleaned up. Now, can you take Femmenessence, with other products? For example, you take it in the morning, maybe about 30 minutes before food. What if somebody has to take thyroid medication at the same time?

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes, there are no contraindications for taking Femmenessence, so that's a good thing. It is a supplement. It can be taken with other supplements. It can be taken with other medications. The only thing is that if somebody is taking thyroid medication or other medications, it might be a good idea. What we typically advise is to take Femmenessence, one hour away from that medication. Whenever you would typically take it. To take Femmenessence, away from food too is how we have tested it in the clinical trials. That also seems to help make it with enough water.

Those are just some other tips, but yes, taking it about an hour away from other medications. I also want to mention, Carrie, that if women are on oral contraceptives, they may be able to taper their dose. As you talk about medications, they may even be able to taper their thyroid hormone. I would say to be on the lookout because you're changing the overall endocrine axis. You might want to check in with your clinician about changing up your thyroid hormone if things start to change or if you're on an oral contraceptive of some kind, changing that up. However, Femmenessence can be taken concurrently with those medications.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

Okay. If somebody finds out, or when somebody finds out they're pregnant, do they need to stop Femmenessence or can they take them?

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes. Bringing down the dose to one. Just one time a day within that first trimester and then just not taking it after that first trimester. You just want to slowly wean off it. If somebody is taking it once or twice a day, then they find out that they're pregnant. Now starting to transition to just once in the morning and then within that first trimester, continue with that once in the morning and then stopping thereafter and then not to take Femmenessence, if pregnant, then thereafter or even if nursing. But it can be resumed after the pregnancy.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

Okay. Then last question about pregnancy. What if somebody is going through IUI or IVF and is struggling? Maybe they've gone through a couple of cycles. It's getting expensive. It hasn't worked out. They're thinking, This might be a great opportunity for me to add Femmenessence to it. What has been your experience with that?

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes, I can talk firsthand. I was just talking again with Dr. Marc Sklar yesterday, who uses Femmenessence. We have a men's product as well, called Revolution. He uses them to prepare people for optimizing their IVF outcomes. Indeed, I mean, there can be a whole protocol. What he does is use acupuncture, use different nutrients, and bring Femmenessence to women. He brings in Revolution for men. The case that he presented to a man yesterday looking at sperm motility was that looking at the overall number of sperm, it was so fascinating just to see how, again, within that 90-day timeframe, you can start to see substantial changes with these types of protocols. Yes, it could be a helpful modality to include in a protocol to help optimize the chances of a successful IVF.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

I love this, and I'm glad you brought up Revolution. I know the focus is on Femmenessence, but those sperm—they're there. One sperm is 50% of this equation. Of course, we want it to be the best, smartest, strongest, and healthiest sperm possible. I love that. There is a men's product to support them as well. Revolution.

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes. Again, Dr. Marc Sklar has a lot of experience with using both of these products for men and women. The Revolution product would help with increasing testosterone. It would help with increasing sperm characteristics. sperm motility and morphology. He also mentioned, and we also know this at Symphony, that for some women who want to increase testosterone, Revolution has been used. He has used that. But that's not something we do; it's not a product that is intended for women. They're very distinct. Because, again, if a woman were to take a Revolution where she didn't have indication taking it, she could have undesirable effects. Back to the acne, hair loss, and the androgenic effects. Staying with the particular product and even within Femmenessence, again, we have three products, and they're all different. They have the intelligence inside that has been studied, but each one has been tweaked in marker phenotypes to determine whether it's the balancing effect or women going through menopause and postmenopause. There are other kinds of phenotypes to include there. It's important to be sure that you are on the right product for you, it will give you the effects you want. When we're talking about fertility, it's Femmenessence MacaHarmony.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

I love that Femmenessence MacaHarmony. Well, Dr. Deanna Minnich, I so appreciate you coming on today. Of course, the next natural question is: Where can everyone get Femmenessence?

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Yes. Well, we have a Femmenessence website. I would say to go to SymphonyNaturalHealth.com. On the Symphony Natural Health website, you're going to see all of the Femmenessence

products. You'll also see the Revolution product. We also have a Herbatonin product, which is a plant melatonin. Some people are also advocating melatonin use for helping with fertility outcomes. That might also be something to discuss with your clinician.

Carrie Jones, ND, FABNE, MPH

Amazing. Well, again, I thank you so much for coming to this summit today. This has been a wealth of information. For everyone listening, I have known about and have been using Femmenessence and a lot of the Natural Symphony products for years and years. It was such an honor to talk with you about a product that I know and love. Thank you again.

Deanna Minich, MS, PhD, FACN, CNS, IFMCP

Thanks for having us, Carrie. It's great to be part of the summit.

