

The cover features a large, light-colored circle in the center, divided into four quadrants by a vertical and a horizontal line. The background is a gradient of warm colors, transitioning from a light pink at the top to a deep purple at the bottom. The text 'Flo28' is written in a white, cursive font, and 'Food Guide' is written in a white, sans-serif font below it.

Flo28

Food Guide

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Welcome!

I'm so glad you're here! You're about to embark upon a revolutionary process that will optimize your health, fitness, creativity, and productivity. In following your circadian biology and female biorhythms, you will take back your time, reclaim your energy and personal power, and you will step in to a new paradigm of living that puts your feminine nature at the center! Think of it as a cross between an intuitive time management system, an adaptable diet and fitness plan, and a gateway to your inner knowing, confidence, and power.

I started my first period club immediately after learning about my period in sixth grade sex ed class, and I had no idea where that ultimately would lead me. I'm thrilled to be able to bring the ultimate 'period club' to women everywhere so we can all learn to use our hormones to our benefit and massive advantage. The Cycle Syncing® Method guides you to eat, work, and live in alignment with the different hormonal phases of your cycle. FLO28 is the community of women who are changing the game when it comes to productivity, success, and making most of life in a female body.

I'm so excited to get to know you and practice this revolutionary way of life together. And who knows, perhaps together, we will shift our culture to even greater equality through celebrating our differences!

Food, Love, and Ovaries,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alisa".

CYCLE HORMONES 101

One of the foundations of cycle syncing is food.

You can eat to effect the changing moods, energy, and hormone levels our bodies experience throughout the month.

You'll want to eat differently for each of the four phases, because each phase demands a different kind of nutritional support to carry out basic tasks like:

building adequate levels of hormones
maximizing the efficiency to breakdown and detoxify estrogen
addressing changes in your resting blood sugar levels and mood

You'll know that your hormones are not functioning optimally when you experience any of these common symptoms:

- PMS
- Cramps
- Bloating
- Pain
- Heavy bleeding
- Irregular Periods
- PCOS
- Endometriosis
- Cysts
- Fibroids
- Infertility
- Early Perimenopause

And remember, if you're still struggling with any number of these symptoms that might affect your ability to cycle sync, be sure to check out the Period Problem Guide in the dashboard. Following just the cycle-syncing guidelines alone will improve your symptoms, but depending on the severity of your hormonal imbalance, sometimes more support is necessary and The FLO Living Hormone Center is dedicated in helping you put your period issues into remission naturally.



Before we dive into the specifics of cycle syncing your food, let's review the 4 phases:

Phase 1: Follicular

What's happening hormonally:

All hormones are at low levels and will slowly begin to increase in concentration. Follicular stimulating hormone (FSH) increases to help eggs mature in the ovary.

How food supports this phase:

Fresh, vibrant, light foods make you feel more energized during this phase. Think: pressed salads (kimchi and sauerkraut), plenty of veggies, lean proteins, sprouted beans and seeds, and nutrient dense, energy-sustaining grains like buckwheat.

Phase 2: Ovulation

What's happening hormonally:

The sharp rise and fall of FSH, estrogen and luteinizing hormone (LH) stimulates the follicle to release an egg. Testosterone begins to surge, driving desire, and then drops around ovulation.

How food supports this phase:

Fill up on raw veggies (for fiber) and fruit (for high levels of glutathione) to ensure your body easily metabolizes and eliminates any estrogen surplus. Stick to lighter grains like quinoa and corn. Ovulatory foods promote vascular and antioxidative well-being for your ovaries.

Phase 3: Luteal

What's happening hormonally:

Estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone reach their peak concentrations, and then begin to fall to their lowest levels right before bleeding begins. Estrogen thickens the uterine lining and progesterone keeps the uterine lining in place in anticipation of a fertilized embryo. PMS is a common - but not necessary - part of this phase, and results from too much estrogen in relation to progesterone production.

Phases continued on the next page...

Luteal Phase continued...

How food supports this phase:

Emphasize foods rich in B vitamins and complex carbs to stave off sugar cravings. Eat leafy greens to boost your calcium and magnesium while reducing fluid retention. Add roasted or baked root veggies to help your liver and large intestine flush out estrogen more effectively.

Phase 4: Menstrual

What's happening hormonally:

Hormone levels decline quickly to their lowest concentrations, causing the lining of the uterus to leave the body and to signal the body it's time to begin the next cycle of ovulation.

How food supports this phase:

Now that your body is involved in the intense process of menstruation, focus your diet on foods that add nutrients. Protein, fats, low glycemic index veggies and fruits keep your blood sugar steady while adding fiber and antioxidants. Seafood, kelp, and nori can help remineralize your body with iron and zinc, which you lose during menstruation. Cook more soups and stews.



So, here are a few more things to note before we begin:

Make sure you've downloaded and are using the [MyFLO App](#) to track your cycle daily and stay in tune with which phase your body is in. Looking at the calendar on the app can also help you to see the month ahead and know which weeks you'll be focusing on which shopping lists and food phases. For those of you who want more data, our [hormone-testing kit](#) is also an option to go deeper.

In your monthly recipe packet, we've provided sheets for you to use to help meal plan and track your days. If you're a paper and pen kinda gal, print these out! If you like keep it digital, you'll be able to type right into the sheets.

Keep in mind that this is not a one month fix, and it might take a bit of time to get in the flow with this new kind of eating and living. Go slow and stick to what feels doable at first. It's learning a new skill and no one expects you to do that all at once! Be patient and be willing to mess it up at first. I promise you, it will get to be like second nature!

While we are basing this on a classic 28-day cycle, we also recognize that cycle length can vary, so everything you see here is easily adaptable to whatever length your cycle is. The more you cycle-sync, the more you'll get to know your body and the subtleties of how long each phase is. If you're not sure, feel free to stick to the general week by week guidelines and add on days to a phase if it's lasting longer. You can also blend recipes and foods from different phases when you're in the transition from one phase to another. When in doubt, write into the online community and get support!

Finally, we highly recommend creating a cycle wellness journal, a place where you can get to know yourself during each phase and track how well you're doing. The MyFLO App can help you track your symptoms, and your journal can be the place where you reflect and respond to some of the lifestyles suggestions we share in other portions of FLO28. Set aside time each month during menstruation for a "period audit," where you'll review your symptoms, check in with how you're feeling, and assess what progress you've made and what tweaks you can add in for the upcoming cycle.

And most importantly:

Cycle-syncing is meant to connect you to your cyclical nature and your unique biochemistry, it's meant to get you in the flo in your day to day life. The whole philosophy of Flo is built on breaking the cycle of constrictive diets. While we are recommending specific foods for specific phases, it's not that you have to be perfect about it. The idea is that you are emphasizing certain foods during each phase. And overall, it's really more about the awareness and care you give yourself throughout the month during these different phases. In other words - You can't screw this up! Not eating a certain food or eating the "wrong" food during a certain phase will not mess you up. Enjoy the experience of eating to support your cycle!

We are SO glad you are here and look forward to continuing this cyclical journey together.

KEY DIET CHANGES

No matter what phase you're in, here are some important guidelines to learn and follow and throughout the month, that will help keep your foundations of hormonal balance in check.

Timing

- To keep your blood sugar balance stable, it's really important to have breakfast within the first 90 minutes of waking up. Going for longer than that will set you up for a day of sugar cravings! Start with a big glass of water with lemon first thing in the morning.
- If you wake up very early or do your workouts in the morning, you might want to choose a smoothie option pre-workout or first thing in the morning, and then one of the other hearty breakfast options for after the workout or later in the morning. It's ok to eat two breakfasts!
- In general, you don't want to go more than 3-4 hours without eating. So this means that snacks might be necessary in between meals.

Hydration

- Drinking water is SO important for keeping your liver functioning well and flushing out toxins from your system, not to mention keeping your skin glowing!
- Be sure to drink at least 8 cups of water per day.
- If you're going to drink bottled water, it's best if it's from glass or BPA-free containers, not plastic, as plastic may leak chemicals into the water.
- If you want to be a water pro - invest in a Berkey filter.

Sugar

- It's best to avoid the white stuff, i.e. pastas and breads made from white flour. Why? Because they've been through a process that strips away the fiber of the grain, leaving you only with the glucose-heavy component, which will cause sharp spikes in your blood sugar, followed by crashes.
- When it comes to sugar as a sweetener, make good substitutions by using stevia and sparing amounts of coconut nectar, honey, or maple syrup.
- Having one healthy carb per meal (meaning whole grains and complex carbohydrates) will help to reduce your craving for sugar.

Soy

- Because of the phytoestrogenic properties of soy which mimic the shape of an estrogen molecule and could contribute to hormonal imbalance, it's best to avoid soy products unless specifically indicated for a hormonal issue.

Key Diet Changes continued...

Caffeine/alcohol

- In general, it's best to eliminate or reduce the amount of caffeine and alcohol you consume. This might be a let down for some, but I promise you, it ends up feeling way better!
- If you must have caffeine, be sure to have it AFTER breakfast. This will reduce the impact on your blood sugar and adrenals.
- Especially during the luteal phase, your body is less able to eliminate the caffeine/alcohol from your bloodstream, which means it lingers longer, adds more stress to the liver and adrenals, and interferes with your body's natural detoxification process.
- Because both caffeine and alcohol affect your blood sugar levels, they can easily disrupt your hormonal balance, incite cravings for sugar and carbs, and deplete your energy. In fact, caffeine and alcohol usually go hand in hand, because the caffeine becomes a temporary solution to waking you up after the grogginess of a morning after drinking, and then drinking wine in the evening because a way to "calm down" after being hyped up all day on coffee. It's a vicious cycle, but once you wean off of it, you'll notice increased energy all around!
- If you're a coffee drinker, try weaning off, first with decaf, then into black or green or kukicha tea. Kukicha, which is Japanese twig tea, is my personal favorite because it's lowest in caffeine and has a delicious flavor to it. If you are a fan of the roasted flavor, you might also enjoy Teecino or Dandy Blend, which are grain-based coffee substitutes.
- If you're a wine/beer/liquor drinker, it's best to wean down a wine spritzer - half wine, half sparkling water, with red wine instead of white because it's lower in sugar. Sake, which is rice wine, is also a better choice because it's the most alkaline of all alcohol, yet it still will give you that sugar spike, so beware! If you do drink alcohol here and there, be sure to drink lots of water during and after, and take extra good care of your liver the next morning.

Endocrine disruptive chemicals

- From beauty products to cleaning products, there can be hidden chemicals in our most used and most loved brands. Chemicals like Bisphenol A (BPA), petrochemicals, sulfates, parabens, fragrance, and more, can get into our system and undo all the work we've done with food and cycle-syncing to balance out our hormones! In chapter one of Womancode there's a list of specific chemicals to look for and avoid. Here are some quick links:
- [Natural home and cleaning products](#)
- [15 Chemicals to Avoid in Skin Care](#)

Choosing organic

- It's best to choose organic when possible in order to eliminate more endocrine disruptors creeping into your system from the pesticides used on non-organic produce and other foods. (If you can't find organic produce or are being financially conscious, at the very least, go by the Environmental Working Group's list of "the Dirty Dozen" avoiding the top 12 produce items that are most heavily contaminated.)
- When it comes to animal protein (meat) it's especially important to choose organic or else you might be consuming antibiotics or excess hormones that are often given to the animals.

Key Diet Changes continued...

Portion Sizes

- If you envision your plate, think of filling one half with veggies, and then divide the other half with protein and complex carbohydrates. Healthy fats are like the icing on top of it all!
- As a general rule, a serving of protein could be the size of the palm of your hand, fingers not included, roughly 3-4oz.
- Your need for complex carbs will vary during the different phases of your cycle. Expect to add in more during your Luteal phase. A serving of legumes or grains can be 1 cup to ½ cup depending on your phase. While root veggies can be more generous of a serving from ½ cup to ¾ cup.

80/20 Rule

- All my type-A perfectionists can take a deep breath on this one. You don't have to do it perfectly all the time! I like to use the general guideline that 80% of the time I stick to the plan, and allow the other 20% for going off it. Life will throw curveballs at you, and it's not always possible to do things as exactly as we plan, so plan to go off the plan sometimes! Your endocrine system can handle small deviations so long as it's being supported nutritionally most of the time.

Supplements

- A fantastic way to keep your hormones balanced, regardless of the things that happen in your life that might throw you off course with your diet, is through ensuring you're getting essential micronutrient support in the form of supplements. Think of them as your personal insurance policy against any lingering endocrine disruptors that might cross your path (knowingly or unknowingly). Check out our 5 recommended formulations here!

FOOD TIPS

Creating your meals

For those of you who love the idea of Sunday meal prep ... great! We have a detailed guide for you to make this process seamless.

For those of you who feel less agile in the kitchen or can't imagine spending that time cooking... great! We're also including tips for eating out and saving time with your shopping.

The next part of this guide will take you through the ins and outs of all of it.

Meal prep guide

Step 1:

Choose your prep day! If you work in a Monday-Friday kind of setting, we recommend setting aside time on Sunday to do meal prep. If your work week varies, adjust the day to the time of the week when you have more downtime.

Step 2:

Make your shopping list. Use the template provided here for choosing which recipes you'll use and building out the shopping list from there.

Step 3:

Get the groceries! Go to the store (the old school way) or place your order on Fresh Direct for whatever grocery delivery service you might have access to. Note that you might need 48 hours or more of notice for delivery, so plan accordingly!

Step 4:

Do the prep. Cook up a batch of grains and chop up all the veggies (even if you don't cook them all right away, it's helpful to have them washed and chopped so they are ready to go throughout the week).

Step 5:

Cook it up now, or later. If you're someone who doesn't have much time during the week for meals, feel free to batch cook recipes on Sunday. This means, cook A LOT of things in one day, and then store them in glass containers (storage suggestions below). If you prefer to cook daily, you can store the chopped veggies and other ingredients in the fridge and then take them and cook them as needed throughout the week.

Tips Continued...

Food Storage

It's worth investing in a set of Pyrex food storage containers that are made of glass. They will keep the food fresher for longer, and you won't be risking contamination with BPA, a chemical that is frequently used in plastics. If you do use plastic storage containers, be sure to not put food into them while it's still hot! The heat from the food will cause the plastic to leak chemicals.

Stovetop vs. Microwave

Same goes for microwaving - it's a no-no to microwave anything in plastic because of those BPA concerns. Stovetop cooking is ideal, but if you really need to nuke something, be sure to use glass or other microwave-safe containers that are not plastic.

Best cooking oils

- Certain oils are made for cooking, while others are made for dressing. The reason being, if you overheat certain kinds of oil (like olive oil and toasted sesame oil), you are causing the oil to oxidize, which makes it more carcinogenic to the body.
- To avoid that, be sure to only cook with the following oils:
 - Grapeseed
 - Coconut oil
 - Sesame oil (untoasted)
 - Avocado oil
- Use olive oil and toasted sesame oil to dress veggies after they are out of the pan and off the heat only.

Recipes

Each month we'll provide you with 3 recipes each - why? If you use all 3 and double batch them, it will be enough to make 2 servings of each recipe, fresh one day and leftover the next. This covers you for 6 days, and the 7th day is the time to relax, eat out, and meal prep! (See our guide below for restaurant and take-out suggestions.)

If you're less of a recipe-follower (like me!) you can also be spontaneous and choose certain food from the list, prep a bunch of grains, veggies, and proteins, and improvise day to day as you go along.

How do you know if a recipe is FLO28-friendly?

If you'd like to use some of your own recipes throughout the month, refer to the sheet in the monthly recipe packet that gives you a checklist to determine whether or not the recipe is in FLO.

Tips Continued...

Pantry List

Having a range of condiments and non-perishables in your pantry is a huge plus when it comes to cycle-syncing. You'll do less food shopping on a weekly basis, because many of these items will be called for in different recipes. Condiments also make the food more fun - and more supportive for the phase you're in! Here's a list of some of our favorites.

Condiments/oils:

- Oils for dressing: Olive Oil and Toasted Sesame Oil
- Oils for cooking: Coconut Oil, Grapeseed Oil, Avocado Oil
- Apple Cider Vinegar
- Organic dijon mustard
- Tamari (gluten-free soy sauce)
- Primal Avocado Mayo

Pantry items:

- Nut butters (almond butter, cashew butter, tahini)
- Grains (quinoa, brown rice, etc.)
- Dried lentils, beans
- Our favorite spices (organic): sea salt, pepper, turmeric, cumin, thyme, basil
- Beans: lentils, mung beans, chickpeas, black beans, white beans (organic bpa free cans)
- Canned wild salmon and sardines
- Teas: kukicha, dandelion root, rooibos, raspberry leaf, coffee substitutes if needed (Teechino, Dandy Blend)
- Organic spices

Restaurants and Takeout

This section is for those of you who'd rather not cook too much, who are easing into the idea of cooking and eating differently, or who just need a break from cooking every once and awhile!

- Look for pre-cooked, pre-prepared food items at the grocery store:
- Trader Joe's and Whole Foods have premade lentils (that aren't canned), frozen cooked brown rice, cauliflower pizza crusts, and more
- Most grocery stores now have a section with pre-chopped veggies, although check to be sure they are organic!
- If you're going to go with canned beans, choose cans that are BPA-free and the beans are made with sea vegetables, which made them easily digestible and more mineral dense
- Applegate Farms makes organic sliced turkey and chicken breast, which are great protein options on-the-go

Tips Continued...

- Organic chicken or turkey sausage is also a great option for less prep-intensive animal proteins
- Buy pre-made foods in bulk:
- Get giant tub of lentil soup and it could last you all week long for lunch or dinner options.
- Pick up a whole organic rotisserie chicken at Whole Foods or wherever you shop, and use it as your protein through the week: with veggies and sweet potatoes for dinner, as part of a salad the next day at lunch, mixed in with a soup base for a second dinner option.
- Fill up containers at your local health food store's salad bar. They often will have salad, cooked veggies, cooked grains, and proteins. Instead of just making one meal, fill up an entire container with just veggies, one with just grains/quinoa salad, and one with some beans or cooked fish. That could create 3 or more meals throughout the week, depending on much you have!
- Canned salmon and sardines are essential protein pantry staples!

While fresh is best, frozen meals are great in a pinch. Try:

- evol. bowls with options like grilled chicken, red rice and vegetables
- Amy's bowls with options like brown rice and vegetables

FOOD CHARTS

The following charts list out phase-appropriate foods for each of the 4 phases of your cycle. Print them out and keep them on your fridge for easy reference! Once you do so, move on to your monthly recipe packet and get started!

Keep in mind that the foods listed here are recommended to emphasize (i.e. include more of them) during the specified cycles. It's not that you aren't allowed to eat other foods - these are just the foods that are more beneficial during each of the cycle phases.

Each Season's Food Chart can be found on the following pages...

FOLLICULAR PHASE

(7-10 days)

Grains	Barley, Oat, Rye, Wheat/Spelt/Farro (If gluten-free, Quinoa, Rice, Brown Rice Pasta, or other phase grains are ok here)
Vegetables	Artichoke, Broccoli, Carrot, Lettuce: Romaine, Parsley, Garden (Green) Peas Rhubarb, String Bean, Zucchini
Fruit	Avocado Grapefruit Lemon, Lime Orange, Plum/Prune Pomegranate, Sour Cherry
Legumes	Black Eyed Peas, Green Lentil, Butter (lima) Bean Mung Bean, Split Peas, (all sprouted, if possible)
Nuts	Brazil, Cashew, Lychee
Meat	Chicken, Eggs, Chicken (Liver), Beef (Liver), Lamb (Liver)
Seafood	Fresh-Water Clam, Soft-Shell Crab, Rainbow Trout
Other	Nut Butters, Vinegar, Olives/Oil, Pickles
Meal Prep	Sauerkraut Sprouted/Fermented Foods
	Sauteed, Steamed, Raw, Juiced, Grilled, Pureed

OVULATORY PHASE

(3-4 days)

Grains	Amaranth, Corn, Popcorn, Quinoa
Vegetables	Asparagus, Red Bell Pepper Brussels Sprout Chicory, Chive Dandelion (tea), Escarole, Okra, Spring Onion (scallion), Tomato, Chard, Eggplant, Spinach
Fruit	Apricot Guava Raspberry (leaf tea), Strawberry Cantaloupe, Fig, Coconut (i.e. Coyo Yogurt)
Legumes	Red Lentil, Best Daily Protein Sources for Vegans: Pea Protein, Sacha Inchi, and Hemp, protein
Nuts	Pistachio, Almond, Pecan
Meat	Beef, Lamb
Seafood	Shrimp, Salmon, Tuna
Other	Alcohol (moderate), Dark Chocolate <70%, Turmeric
Meal Prep	Sauteed, Steamed, Raw, Juiced, Grilled, Pureed

LUTEAL PHASE

(10-14 days)

Grains	Rice (Brown Basmati), Sweet Rice Millet,
Vegetables	Cabbage Cauliflower Celery Cucumber Daikon Garlic Ginger, Leeks, Onion Mustard Green Radish, Spring Greens (collards) Parsnip, Pumpkin, Squash, Sweet Potato, Watercress
Fruit	Apple, Peach, Pear, Date, Raisin
Legumes	Haricot/Baked (navy) Soybean/Tofu/Tempeh Cannellini (similar to Great Northern, Chickpea/ Hummus
Nuts	Walnut, Pine Nut, Pumpkin Seeds
Meat	Turkey, Beef , Eggs
Seafood	Cod, Flounder Halibut
Other	Mint, Mochi Peppermint Spirulina Flaxseed (1 Tbsp daily), Dark Chocolate <70%
Meal Prep	Baked, Braised, Sauteed, Roasted, Soup, Stew

MENSTRUAL PHASE

(3-7 days)

Grains	Buckwheat (Kasha), Wild Rice
Vegetables	Beetroot, Burdock, Sea veggies; Dulse/Nori/Hijiki / Kelp/Kombu/Wakame, Kale, Mushroom: button, shitake, Water Chestnut,
Fruit	Blackberry, Blueberry, Cranberry, Concord Grape, Watermelon
Legumes	Adzuki, Kidney, Black Soybean, Black (turtle)
Nuts	Chestnut, Sesame Seeds/Oil, Sunflower Seeds (daily)
Meat	Duck, Ham, Pork
Seafood	Catfish, Clam, Lobster, Crab, Mussel, Octopus, Oyster, Sardine, Scallop, Squid
Other	Kukicha Tea, Miso, Sesame Oil Salt/Tamari Rooibos Tea, Holy Basil Tea, Dark Chocolate <70%
Meal Prep	Baked, Braised, Sauteed, Roasted, Soup, Stew