



Victoria Mondloch



"Hormone-balancing and wellness helps us feel our best on the inside and the best aesthetics can help us look our best on the outside."

Doctor Victoria J. Mondloch: Making a Difference for Women through Hormone Balancing



Dr. Victoria Mondloch is making a difference for women in one specific way—by enhancing their health. She is a patient-centric Internal Medicine physician with a history as an OB/GYN, who believes in looking deeper, making decisions collaboratively and getting better outcomes. Just what is it that she looks at so closely? Our hormones—the different types that women have present, in what quantities, and all the ways they are utilized by our bodies throughout our organs, systems and receptors, and at varying ages.

"If hormones are so bad, then why does our body make them for so many years and then take them away? And why does the human body have hormone receptors in

every organ in our body?" Dr. Vicki says regarding the demonization of hormones. The fact that patients call her 'Doctor Vicki', because of her warm and personal bedside manner, is another reason she makes a noticeable difference.

Doctor Vicki is on a very special mission. She wants to share her knowledge, open women's minds, and empower them to take a more active role in their health and wellness destiny. She mentions that our first line of knowledge (about reproductive health) came from our mothers. They had been told you have hormones so you can have babies. After you stop having babies, things change. The next line was old-school doctors,

who told women if their hormones created problems, there were surgical interventions like a hysterectomy (with or without taking the ovaries) 'because your body won't need those hormones anymore once you get to menopause'. Later, women learned there were artificial hormone medications they could take to avoid surgery or treat certain problems like infertility or excessive bleeding. All this knowledge made women think they were in charge, but women were still in the dark.

Thanks to Doctor Vicki's tireless quest, women are learning to truly be in charge. She has a website and blogs, and patients have shared their triumphs, but a good deal of the understanding and empowerment comes from Dr. Mondloch's books. She has planned a series of four; the last to be devoted to male hormones, and the other three shedding light on the hormonal connection at different ages and stages of women's lives. Her Blossoming book is a mother-daughter guide to discussing what happens in adolescence to age 20 or so. The second book, which made its debut in November, is called Full Bloom and it covers the perimenopausal, menopausal and post-menopausal years from age 40 to 80 and beyond. These books are essential guides that help women learn the difference balanced hormones make—from feeling 'lousy, to 'just hanging in there' or feeling 'just okay', to living with true happiness and vitality while your body keeps you forever age 'age 45'.

In Full Bloom, Dr. Mondloch outlines the various hormone systems throughout the body and likens keeping your body balanced to a four-legged chair. If one leg is loose, it lists and you sit differently, avoiding that leg. If two are broken it falters and if all four are loose; 'Oops, you're flat on the floor—but you don't realize how you got there or how to get back up!

The presence of these different hormones influence: 1) the ovaries for our Estradiol, Progesterone, Total + Free Testosterone, 2) the thyroid gland for our TSH, Free T3, Free T4 and if there are thyroid antibodies present, 3) the adrenal glands for our AM Cortisol (by 9AM) and 4) the pancreas for our fasting blood sugar (FBS) and insulin.

When these 4 hormone groups are in good balance, women are like the chair; strong, solid, stable and able to bear stress. But if one or more are out of balance, the body will not adapt gracefully, and you spend more time trying to do the balancing act of staying on the seat of the chair without falling on the floor.

The chair is a very understandable way of explaining how the foundational health of our body works and the entire book is put together that way; written in easy to understand terms and not in medical or technical language. It is honest and it is relatable to every woman who will easily find herself in there. It is filled with checklists, charts, and diagrams that facilitate reading, understanding and absorbing that information. There are even chapters that debunk the myths about hormones and health.

One of the most intriguing parts of the book are the case studies. Dr. Mondloch breaks these case studies into the decades of the woman in her 40s, her 50s, her 60's and beyond. Why? Because the longer a woman goes without hormones, the more distinctly that woman will present, so it allows you to 'find yourself'. You will be surprised to read the medical conditions that women present with—including rheumatoid arthritis, fibroids, Hashimoto's (thyroid) disease, deep

atigue, skin problems, constipation, hair loss, abnormal weight gain and migraines—diagnoses you might never have suspected were rooted in your hormones, whether in balance, out of balance, or gone!

Dr. Mondloch says every woman will recognize someone they know—a friend, neighbor, cousin, coworker, or even themselves—in the case studies related in the book. The cases and advice help women as they begin their journey to optimal health, knowing which symptoms they have that point to loss of hormone, out of balance hormone, which tests to take, and then how to talk with their personal doctors to get the proper bloodwork and then get the help that they need.

NOTE: As the writer of this article I am a woman who has been Diabetic since age 15 and is now menopausal. My once in-control blood sugars are swinging wildly. I recognized myself and how hormones impact my pancreatic functions and insulin while I was reading Full Bloom.

Here is more of what I learned while speaking with Dr. Victoria J. Mondloch:

EP Mag: You've delivered hundreds of babies and led an OB/GYN group practice. What made you decide to become an independent practitioner?

VJM: I don't want to make any other doctor angry when I say this

because I still go to conferences and work with patient referrals. But in all honesty, too many doctors summarily dismiss women's health complaints as 'perimenopause and you'll soon be menopausal and then the curse will be over'. Others may tell you that they can do surgery for your issues like abnormal bleeding or a fibroid uterus.

Or they can put you on artificial hormones like the pill or an IUD to 'cover up' those bothersome symptoms; but those artificial hormones can cause NEW symptoms like depression and weight gain. Oh, but they have medication for that too! And suddenly you find yourself on more and more medication that doesn't make you feel better; in fact, you still have the same symptoms but now you have NEW symptoms on top of the original symptoms. So, you'd guess the only answer is surgical, 'let's take it all out'. But wait, maybe that's not what you want, but you're told there is no other good option for you. You are never even told that your hormones are out of balance because your hormone levels aren't even checked. Aren't doctors supposed to be scientific in their approach?

Where is the science if our hormone levels are never even checked? The truth is that most doctors are not even aware of what your hormone levels are doing or how to manage them. And to make matters even worse, if they are limited by the bureaucracy of the hospital systems that they work for, they have time limitations on how long they can see you and quotas for how much surgery they need to do. And what is the role of the insurance companies? Interestingly, insurance will pay for your hormone bloodwork and will even pay for your hormone medication just like it will pay for your artificial hormone medication, it's just not offered to you as an option.

I needed to make the decision that I wanted to be free to make medical

decisions based solely on the patient and what I believe is best for them. In my own private practice, I can do that; I set the timeframe to see and counsel my patients so that the focus is on hearing each patient's issues to then develop an individualized and personalized treatment plan designed for them, addressing their needs.

EP Mag: What do you view as your greatest achievement?

VJM: I have achieved much in my life, starting with going to and finishing medical school at a time when few women were encouraged to follow that pathway. I then became a busy and successful OB-GYN at a busy and growing practice that grew from 4 to 8 physicians. I pioneered patient centric care into my approach to patients such as perineal massage as a standard delivery room practice to avoid the need for a surgical cut. I raised three wonderful and highly successful daughters while working full-time with the support of my loving husband of over 40 years. I've helped patients both avoid the pitfalls of swinging hormones and to emerge as stronger and more confident women so that they can continue to function at a high level of mother, caregiver and career woman—women who wear many hats in their day and are the nerve center of the family. So, it's hard for me to pin down just one thing. I will say I am thrilled to be part of your *Women Making a Difference* series. I am also quite proud to have become an author, with my books so well received. My patients all want copies and they are thrilled to be able to have their own autographed copy.

EP Mag: What inspires you?

VJM: Honestly, it's when I get thanks and positive feedback from my patients. Knowing I have helped them keeps me going, because I too am one of those women who looked for the same answers that they are looking for—and I didn't know how to help me! One woman called recently. She had moved out of state and her daughter was having menstrual problems. "There just aren't any doctors like you that I can take her to here," the mother said. She agreed that if I would be able to look at her daughter's test results and advise and treat her daughter, then the parents would fly her back to Wisconsin 3 or 4 times a year. You can't imagine what that feels like, when someone shows that kind of confidence in your work.

EP Mag: The book *Full Bloom* opens with your personal hormone drama. Tell be about what happened to you in your 40's.

VJM: I woke up one morning and my face was on fire. My eyes were swollen too, just little slits. I wondered how I could handle doing surgery and my full office load of patients like this. I had rampant skin inflammation, more than just my rosacea. It made me think back to my teenage years, and skin problems that had been misdiagnosed as just acne.

I realized this was my skin reacting to my own hormonal swings of my early 40's even though I showed no other perimenopausal symptoms yet; THIS was my first symptom. I had to use ice packs in

between patients that day and smiled when my patients tried to diagnose me! Solving the puzzle was a real 'a-ha' moment; it helped me decide on my future course—supporting women with a scientific approach to their perimenopausal and menopausal issues. I began to intently research hormones, and what happens when they are out of balance. And along the way, I discovered that our hormones impact every organ system in our body and what every organ system can do or say in response to no longer seeing that level of hormone that they are used to seeing!

EP Mag: Were you ever influenced by another doctor or a certain medical research study?

I didn't do the traditional route of college straight into medical school. Instead, I didn't know how the politics of getting into medical school worked, so I did medical research for 2-3 years. It was the MD who ran the research lab that I was working in who took an interest in what I wanted to do with my life and helped me navigate my way into medical school. And that early exposure to research and the scientific method of approach to every single patient that has helped me do the work that I now do.

EP Mag: I'm sure you work long, hard days in the clinic, but what do you like to do with your free time?

I work in 2 clinics: my own medical clinic 4 days a week, and then I am the medical injector for an aesthetic skin clinic. Many patients ask me how I can justify that? Easily; hormone-balancing and wellness helps us feel our best on the inside and the best aesthetics can help us look our best on the outside. And why can't we present ourselves at our best?

My free time is spent as much as possible with my family. We still try to

Vvacation together, wherever that may be, and I am blessed that my adult girls and their significant others value spending their free time with us as well. We are all drawn to the water-oriented sports but truly also enjoy the winter sports too, as I was born, raised and still live in a great 4-season climate.

EP Mag: What do you have planned for 2020?

I am working on continued exposure for my books and the message that it has for all women; that means internet blog radio shows, traditional radio and hopefully television exposure. My hope is to get Blossoming and Full Bloom into the hands of every woman who is not getting the answers that they need to be their best. And I hope to continue this work by putting together a women's institute to help train more like-minded healthcare providers to do this same hormone balancing-- so that we can reach every woman who needs the help. Through a women's institute, we can also attract the research partners that we need to continue this important work for our daughters and granddaughters to come.

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