

1. Hormone App Interview Guide – Lena Obeid

Lara Matalka

Research Goals

- Understand how people experience hormonal shifts in their daily lives.
- Explore the connection between hormones and food choices.
- Identify challenges, frustrations, and coping strategies related to hormones and diet.
- Learn what users want from a supportive hormone-focused tool, without assuming a solution.
- Uncover opportunities beyond food that may also support people in managing their hormones.

1. Welcome & Comfort

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I'm interested in learning about your experiences with hormones, food, and daily life. There are no right or wrong answers—please share only what feels comfortable.
- Before we start, what name and pronouns do you like me to use?

She/her, Lena

2. Daily Life & Hormones

1. How do hormones or your cycle usually affect your daily life?
I have PMDD, so the week before my period is really exhausting. And then the rest of my cycle is pretty normal. But the week before is very difficult and tiring.
2. What physical or emotional changes stand out most for you?
Probably like exhaustion, fatigue, irritability, increased sensitivity, brain fog
3. What feels most challenging about managing these changes?
Maybe that they are very sudden. So like sometimes, I don't know that I am PMSING. I'll get really tired, and feel confused. Then I'll check my tracker and realize but it usually catches me by surprise. My energy levels don't feel consistent.
4. Have you found anything that helps you feel more balanced?

Honestly, microdosing mushrooms has been really helpful. Beyond that, making sure I am eating enough, getting enough sleep, scheduling enough rest time and not over committing.

3. Food & Hormones

5. Do you notice changes in your appetite, cravings, or digestion during your cycle?

When I am on my period, I will have random cravings. Usually for like sweet or salty foods. And then the week before, I don't have much of an appetite at all. I think being more intentional with protein and taking supplements and just making sure I am eating has helped a lot.

6. Have you ever tried adjusting what you eat based on hormones? What worked or didn't work?

Yeah, I've started to be really intentional about eating a lot of protein. Lots of spinach, greek yogurt, eggs, very protein heavy for breakfast especially week before or week of. I feel like that has helped a lot with brain fog. Making sure I eat breakfast is the hardest part, but it really helps.

7. What gets in the way of eating in a way that feels supportive to your body?

Honestly, its when youre really fatigued. Its just hard to make food. I forget to eat sometimes, because I have adhd and I will just completely forget and then by the time I realize, I am starving so I end up eating anything. Planning is hard too.

4. Current Tools & Approaches

8. Do you use any tools, apps, or routines to manage hormones, symptoms, or diet?

I use a period tracker but that's it.

9. What's helpful about them, and where do they fall short?

The one that I use isn't a real tracker, it's basically a calendar that I made. It doesn't send me reminders. I think something that tracks and also gives me heads up. Like reminders about sleep, getting groceries. I would love an app that used food to track hormones.

5. Future Support & Opportunities

10. If an app could suggest recipes based on your hormones or cycle, what would you want it to include?

Maybe like options to pick recipes that you like, or pick foods that you like and suggest recipes based on that. Like if someone hates spinach or is allergic to something, to suggest alternatives based on their interests or prioritize rather.

11. Beyond recipes, what other support would feel valuable—like reminders, mood tracking, or self-care tips?

Reminders would be nice. Self-care tips would be so cute.

12. How would you want an app like this to fit into your daily routine?

Maybe like you pick the day that you go grocery shopping, like it reminds you on the day that you pick. Or a reminder saying that your period is coming up, a reminder to stock up on certain things that will help. Time related cues are more helpful than random notifications.

6. Wrap-Up & Reflection

13. If you could change one thing about your experience with hormones, what would it be?

Just the very dramatic swings, you know? It would be nice if things were nice and consistent.

14. Is there anything important about your experience with hormones or food that we haven't talked about?

Mmm, not really.

15. Thank you so much for your time today, would it be okay for me to reach out in the future to gain feedback on early wireframes/prototypes?

Yes, please do!!

2. Hormone App Interview Guide – Maya O.

Lara Matalka

Research Goals

- Understand how people experience hormonal shifts in their daily lives.
- Explore the connection between hormones and food choices.
- Identify challenges, frustrations, and coping strategies related to hormones and diet.
- Learn what users want from a supportive hormone-focused tool, without assuming a solution.
- Uncover opportunities beyond food that may also support people in managing their hormones.

1. Welcome & Comfort

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I'm interested in learning about your experiences with hormones, food, and daily life. There are no right or wrong answers—please share only what feels comfortable.
- Before we start, what name and pronouns do you like me to use?
Maya, she/her

2. Daily Life & Hormones

1. How do hormones or your cycle usually affect your daily life?
I feel like, for me, I don't really have the intense crashes. I do try to understand when that's happening but really, it effects my life a lot the week before and the week of my period.
2. What physical or emotional changes stand out most for you?
So physical changes – bloating, back pain, breast pain, and I get acne towards my period. Emotional – I feel like I have kind of learned to regulate it because I know its hormonal. Im more impatient and everything makes me cry, the week before I am a mess.
3. What feels most challenging about managing these changes?
I guess just like now that I am not on any form of birth control, I don't have a way to control it – I just have to deal with it. Particularly the pain and back pain.
4. Have you found anything that helps you feel more balanced?

Definitely working out or just being active in general eases some of the physical pain for me. I also think I get a serotonin boost.

5. If you could manage your hormones, how would you imagine your life being different?

I feel like I wouldn't have to schedule activities around it – it would be nice. It would be nice to just feel the same all the time.

3. Food & Hormones

5. Do you notice changes in your appetite, cravings, or digestion during your cycle?

Yes, very much. I am definitely hungrier closer to my period. I am craving sugar around my period a lot and meat – red meat in particular. Digestion, I just feel really bloated all the time. First couple of days of my period, I will get diarrhea.

6. Have you ever tried adjusting what you eat based on hormones? What worked or didn't work?

Honestly, no. It's honestly probably something I should do. I just don't have much access to that info. I do feel like everyone is probably different, so it's been hard to find a resource that feels like something I should do. Sometimes the suggestions aren't things that I am craving.

7. What gets in the way of eating in a way that feels supportive to your body?

Lack of knowledge, resources, and just like giving into those cravings as opposed to knowing where they come from and a realistic way to manage them.

4. Current Tools & Approaches

8. Do you use any tools, apps, or routines to manage hormones, symptoms, or diet?

Not to manage them but to anticipate them. I just use the health app on apple.

9. What's helpful about them, and where do they fall short?

The health app is useful because I can log my period so it can track that, and when you're ovulating. You can also track symptoms you're feeling so it will give you a warning in advance once it's gotten your data. I guess it falls short about kind of giving me suggestions of what to do with my symptoms.

5. Future Support & Opportunities

10. If an app could suggest recipes based on your hormones or cycle, what would you want it to include?

If i could input the type of food that I eat typically or things that i like/dislike. Or i could let the app know my usual cravings, that would be really useful. I feel like when I was younger, I was following traditional diet fads – I started following Ayurvedic way of eating and it helped me kind of see the best way for me to eat based on my body type, where I am from, etc.

11. Beyond recipes, what other support would feel valuable—like reminders, mood tracking, or self-care tips?

Yeah, I think just the general tracker is still useful. I like to be able to anticipate my symptoms, and I think even some calming meditations along with the recipes or just tips.

12. How would you want an app like this to fit into your daily routine?

Yeah, for me specifically, because it is just surrounded those two weeks (the week before and the week of my period). I would probably mainly use it during those two weeks. Reminders during other weeks could help. I would use it daily if it had good info to use daily.

6. Wrap-Up & Reflection

13. If you could change one thing about your experience with hormones, what would it be?

To be honest, I had a really positive experience with birth control and hormone altering pills. I know that's not the common answer. I did enjoy hormone regulation through medication. I think having a more natural way to navigate/control it.

14. Is there anything important about your experience with hormones or food that we haven't talked about?

Not really. I think we covered everything.

15. Thank you so much for your time today, would it be okay for me to reach out in the future to gain feedback on early wireframes/prototypes?

Yeah, of course.

3. Hormone App Interview Guide – Meera A.

Lara Matalka

Research Goals

- Understand how people experience hormonal shifts in their daily lives.
- Explore the connection between hormones and food choices.
- Identify challenges, frustrations, and coping strategies related to hormones and diet.
- Learn what users want from a supportive hormone-focused tool, without assuming a solution.
- Uncover opportunities beyond food that may also support people in managing their hormones.

1. Welcome & Comfort

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I'm interested in learning about your experiences with hormones, food, and daily life. There are no right or wrong answers—please share only what feels comfortable.
- Before we start, what name and pronouns do you like me to use?

2. Daily Life & Hormones

1. How do hormones or your cycle usually affect your daily life?
Honestly, for me, it affects me a lot. I feel like mainly the week before and the week of my period. I suffer with PMDD and minor PCOS and the week before has felt very debilitating for me at times, especially emotionally.
2. What physical or emotional changes stand out most for you?
The week before my period, I experience extreme irritability, self-criticism, depression, I question my life decisions. Everything feels very overwhelming, I experience extreme bloat which also feeds into negative self-talk.
3. What feels most challenging about managing these changes?
The overwhelming switch – it feels very jarring. I can feel unrecognizable to myself at times, and it has put a strain on my relationships the week before.
4. Have you found anything that helps you feel more balanced?

Supplements, lots of protein, being in the sun, grounding exercises – but it just feels overwhelming to do sometimes. I wish there was a way to work smarter not harder. I just feel like I am doing everything I can and sometimes, it feels like too much.

5. If you could manage your hormones, how would you imagine your life being different?

I feel like my relationships would be more at ease, I would feel like I had a better control over my emotions, I would fear my cycle less. It would be less daunting to have a cycle. I want to learn to work with my body not against it.

3. Food & Hormones

5. Do you notice changes in your appetite, cravings, or digestion during your cycle?
The week before, I struggle to eat. The week of, I definitely am hungrier and crave meat especially. I am extremely bloated both weeks.

6. Have you ever tried adjusting what you eat based on hormones? What worked or didn't work?

So I have in the sense of increasing my protein but that's it. That alone has made a huge difference. I have tried to eat very clean and what not, I do find that this helps but sometimes I am just tired and don't want to cook.

7. What gets in the way of eating in a way that feels supportive to your body?
Honestly, being so anxious that I feel exhausted.

4. Current Tools & Approaches

8. Do you use any tools, apps, or routines to manage hormones, symptoms, or diet?
So I have the stardust app, it tracks my period and symptoms.

9. What's helpful about them, and where do they fall short?

It's honestly helpful for tracking and it tells me which phase I am in which is very helpful so I can anticipate mood and physical changes. I do wish there was more detail, they have the symptoms listed but I wish I could click into the symptoms and learn more. I want to know the why behind things. I also just wish they would give suggestions on what to do.

5. Future Support & Opportunities

10. If an app could suggest recipes based on your hormones or cycle, what would you want it to include?

Some sort of onboarding process to get to know me, I want to feel like it is tailored to me. I think maybe some “lazy meals” too because we probably need the most nourishment on the weeks that we feel weakest. What if we were busy? And we can't make a fancy salmon meal with broccoli and all the healthy things.

11. Beyond recipes, what other support would feel valuable—like reminders, mood tracking, or self-care tips?

Self-care tips would be helpful. Reminders to take care of myself, maybe quotes on the week before my period that help boost my self-confidence because that is when I feel sooooo low.

12. How would you want an app like this to fit into your daily routine?

Honestly, I check my stardust app regularly. This is an app I could use everyday. I want to get to know my body more and understand it.

6. Wrap-Up & Reflection

13. If you could change one thing about your experience with hormones, what would it be?

I don't want it to feel daunting, I don't want to feel like I don't belong in my body or that my body has a vendetta against me two weeks out of the month.

14. Is there anything important about your experience with hormones or food that we haven't talked about?

Hm.. I don't think so.

15. Thank you so much for your time today, would it be okay for me to reach out in the future to gain feedback on early wireframes/prototypes?

Yes!

4. Hormone App Interview Guide – Nikki M

Lara Matalka

Research Goals

- Understand how people experience hormonal shifts in their daily lives.
- Explore the connection between hormones and food choices.
- Identify challenges, frustrations, and coping strategies related to hormones and diet.
- Learn what users want from a supportive hormone-focused tool, without assuming a solution.
- Uncover opportunities beyond food that may also support people in managing their hormones.

1. Welcome & Comfort

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I'm interested in learning about your experiences with hormones, food, and daily life. There are no right or wrong answers—please share only what feels comfortable.
- Before we start, what name and pronouns do you like me to use?
Nikki, she/her

2. Daily Life & Hormones

1. How do hormones or your cycle usually affect your daily life?
Well, they affect my cycle because I think they affect my emotions mostly especially the week before leading up to my period. I just feel literally insane that week.
2. What physical or emotional changes stand out most for you?
My skin for sure, my acne, my appetite changes, I am exhausted. I will sleep 12 hours and still feel exhausted.
3. What feels most challenging about managing these changes?
I always think about how I don't think that people who experience periods aren't educated on how to manage it. I think we go through these long cycles and don't understand how to manage these changes. I think fending for us because it's not something that we learned.
4. Have you found anything that helps you feel more balanced?

I think the biggest thing would be diet and exercise – eating the right foods throughout the cycle. I feel like our hormones are always changing and we need different things. Knowing what to eat is important.

5. If you could manage your hormones, how would you imagine your life being different?

I think probably a lot more balanced, I think I would feel more confident in my health and mental health. I think I am crazy/depressed/insane every month but then I just end up getting my period.

3. Food & Hormones

5. Do you notice changes in your appetite, cravings, or digestion during your cycle?

I think before my period, I think that is when I must eat the cleanest. My gut is very sensitive and I can get constipated easily.

6. Have you ever tried adjusting what you eat based on hormones? What worked or didn't work?

I think staying away from super processed things, things that aren't as inflammatory. So things like dairy for me, honestly eating things high in iron is huge for me the week before my period. I think also drinking certain teas has helped.

7. What gets in the way of eating in a way that feels supportive to your body?

I think fighting the cravings because leading up to my period, I get very emotional and I lean into certain foods to comfort that emotional part of me that is really sad. I just want ice-cream and pizza, so I think there is a mental block there.

4. Current Tools & Approaches

8. Do you use any tools, apps, or routines to manage hormones, symptoms, or diet?

I recently got the stardust app, and I really love that one because it kind of dives into hormones a bit. It tells you about your different phases of the cycle. Once in a while, I will track my meals on FitnessPal.

9. What's helpful about them, and where do they fall short?

I think they're helpful in the information they do provide. I think where apps fall short is showing you what you could have if you pay for it. Especially because they are expensive, I don't want to pay \$200 to track my period. I think just not giving enough free information.

5. Future Support & Opportunities

10. If an app could suggest recipes based on your hormones or cycle, what would you want it to include?

I would love if it was organized in a way that was according to your phases. So being very specific on what part of your cycle – I have been recently googling stuff like that to know what to eat during certain weeks. I think also knowing the why behind the food, why it is good for you. Honestly, i might pay for an app like that.

11. Beyond recipes, what other support would feel valuable—like reminders, mood tracking, or self-care tips?

I like mood tracking, I would love updates every month just recapping how you felt the month before. To maybe see if there is any changes. Also maybe support wise, syncing up with your friends on the app.

12. How would you want an app like this to fit into your daily routine?

I think the reminders would help, just checking in everyday so it's consistent info that is being provided.

6. Wrap-Up & Reflection

13. If you could change one thing about your experience with hormones, what would it be?

Honestly, i would circle back to just learning more about them. I wish it was more common knowledge in schools.

14. Is there anything important about your experience with hormones or food that we haven't talked about?

Not that I can think of right now.

15. Thank you so much for your time today, would it be okay for me to reach out in the future to gain feedback on early wireframes/prototypes?

Yes, absolutely.

5. Hormone App Interview Guide – Deanna Knight

Lara Matalka

Research Goals

- Understand how people experience hormonal shifts in their daily lives.
- Explore the connection between hormones and food choices.
- Identify challenges, frustrations, and coping strategies related to hormones and diet.
- Learn what users want from a supportive hormone-focused tool, without assuming a solution.
- Uncover opportunities beyond food that may also support people in managing their hormones.

1. Welcome & Comfort

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I'm interested in learning about your experiences with hormones, food, and daily life. There are no right or wrong answers—please share only what feels comfortable.
- Before we start, what name and pronouns do you like me to use?
Deanna Knight, She/they

2. Daily Life & Hormones

1. How do hormones or your cycle usually affect your daily life?
Shift my mood in a wide range, uncomfortable in body
2. What physical or emotional changes stand out most for you?
Tailbone pain, bloating, gastrointestinal problems, irritability, depression, forgetfulness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating
3. What feels most challenging about managing these changes?
Trial and error process that is very unpredictable. Different symptoms depending on the month.
4. Have you found anything that helps you feel more balanced?
Going on long walks, less greasy foods, increase water intake, thc
5. If you could manage your hormones, how would you imagine your life being different?
Less intense pain, more consistency and predictability

3. Food & Hormones

5. Do you notice changes in your appetite, cravings, or digestion during your cycle?
I crave red meat and greasy foods. My stomach is more sensitive, increased bowel movements.
6. Have you ever tried adjusting what you eat based on hormones? What worked or didn't work?
I have tried to eat vegan when on my period but increase protein. It didn't last long because the cravings for red meat increased but I did not have as much disruptive gastrointestinal issues.
7. What gets in the way of eating in a way that feels supportive to your body?
Planning and not knowing what cravings to listen to or are reinforcing the problems and worsening symptoms.

4. Current Tools & Approaches

8. Do you use any tools, apps, or routines to manage hormones, symptoms, or diet?
No
9. What's helpful about them, and where do they fall short?
n/a

5. Future Support & Opportunities

10. If an app could suggest recipes based on your hormones or cycle, what would you want it to include?
A breakdown of what's on my plate like Vitamin B, Iron, etc. and what is increased
11. Beyond recipes, what other support would feel valuable—like reminders, mood tracking, or self-care tips?
Mood tracking and simple suggestions of physical activities that can pair with nutrition
12. How would you want an app like this to fit into your daily routine?
I would like it to be a place to log meals daily maybe a meal reminder notification

6. Wrap-Up & Reflection

13. If you could change one thing about your experience with hormones, what would it be?

Less unpredictable

14. Is there anything important about your experience with hormones or food that we haven't talked about?

no

15. Thank you so much for your time today, would it be okay for me to reach out in the future to gain feedback on early wireframes/prototypes?

yes