

Hormones, ADHD & *student life*

Why focus, energy, mood and sleep can feel different across your cycle — and how to support yourself without blaming yourself.



If some weeks feel manageable and others feel much harder, the change may not be “all in your head.” Hormonal shifts can be one part of the picture.

What may be *happening*?

Estrogen and progesterone interact with brain systems involved in attention, motivation, emotion and sleep. Some women with ADHD notice their symptoms change as hormones fluctuate across the menstrual cycle.

The research is still developing, and everyone's pattern is different. Tracking your own experience is more useful than assuming there is one “normal” cycle.

Focus & memory

Starting work, holding information in mind or finding words may take more effort.

Mood & sensitivity

Frustration, anxiety, low mood or rejection sensitivity may feel louder.

Energy & sleep

Fatigue or disrupted sleep can reduce the capacity you have for study and daily tasks.

Small supports for *harder days*

01 • NOTICE

Track, don't judge

For a few cycles, note focus, mood, sleep, energy and period dates. Look for patterns over time rather than reading too much into one difficult day.

02 • EXTERNALISE

Move memory outside your head

Use one capture list, visible reminders, recorded lectures where available, and a clear first step for every assignment.

03 • PLAN GENTLY

Protect lower-capacity days

When possible, start work earlier, break it into short sessions and leave margin before deadlines. Plan lighter tasks for days that are predictably harder.

04 • ASK

Use university support

Disability, accessibility, wellbeing or student-support services may help with reasonable adjustments, planning, quiet spaces or assistive tools.

BRING THIS TO STUDENT SUPPORT

- "My attention and capacity fluctuate. Can we plan support for the harder days?"
- "What adjustments or study supports are available to me?"
- "Can we agree one clear way to ask for help before I reach crisis point?"

WHEN TO SEEK HEALTHCARE ADVICE

Speak with a qualified healthcare professional if symptoms are new, severe, affecting daily life, or linked with significant mood changes. Do not change medication based on cycle patterns without your prescriber.



SEE YOUR PATTERNS WITH RITHIM

Rithim helps women with ADHD notice links between cycle, focus, mood, energy and sleep — with practical support for the day you are actually having.

Scan the QR code or download for iPhone or Android:

www.rithimapp.com/download

Created by Dr Deirdre Ryan, Clinical Psychologist and woman with ADHD.

Educational information only. This handout does not diagnose ADHD, a hormonal condition or any other health condition, and it does not replace individual medical, psychological or psychiatric care. If you need urgent help, contact local emergency or crisis services.