



Transcript: #457 Reclaiming your Menstrual Cycle, Sync your Menstrual Cycle with Your Life with Jema Lee

Dr. Wendy Myers: Hello, I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. Welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. In today's show, I have Jema Lee on the show, and she is a Menstruation Coach. She helps women from around the world help get in touch with their cycles. So a really good show today. And we also talk about the cycles for menopause as well, not just if you're menstruating, and we talk about many of the foods that you can eat to help you through each phase of the cycle, which ones are grounding, which ones are more supportive of energy, et cetera, et cetera. We talk about some of the toxins that are in menstruation products, pads, and tampons. And we also talk about some things that can interfere with your hormones, stress, toxins, and other things that can interfere with your hormones and cause you to have more stressful periods, more PMS symptoms like headaches and cramps, and things of that nature.

So a really good show today. I got to tune into this one. If you are maybe confused about what's going on with your period, you're worried about your PMS symptoms, or worried about fertility, we talk about things that interfere with your fertility as well. I know you guys listening to the show are concerned about toxins. You're concerned about what toxins may be affecting your health. And one toxin you may not have thought of is emotional trauma. I'm talking more and more about this because it's that really another missing piece of the puzzle when people have done everything physically for their health, they're trying to figure out what's going on with them, and they still are not able to find solutions to their health issues, or they've done everything for their health, but they still emotionally just feel blah. They just don't feel like they're living the life or feeling as well as they should be, given everything they do for their health.

And so, I created a free masterclass called the Emotional Detox Masterclass. You can check it out at emo-detox.com, emo-detox.com. And in this masterclass, I talk about the five pillars of emotional trauma and go into detail about all the statistics about... You'll be really, really surprised about all the different health issues that are caused by emotional trauma. Things happen to us at the hands of our caregivers, be it abuse,

neglect, be it maybe a parent was addicted to drugs or a parent was just absent. And it's not necessarily outward abuse as much as people also have neglect where you were taken care of physically, you were driven to the soccer games and things like that. Your parents are nice people, but they just weren't able to tune into you emotionally and acknowledge you as a person, and just maybe largely absent. And so, that neglect can be just as harmful to people as abuse.

And so, I talk about people's adverse childhood experiences, ACEs versus PTSD. A lot of really, really interesting distinctions that you're going to learn about trauma and how it's still affecting you today, your health, your relationships, your job choice, and how it's preventing you from really stepping into your life purpose and how to release it for good. Really important information I'm sharing with you in this masterclass. So check it out, emo-detox.com, emo-detox.com. So our guest today, Jema Lee, she's a Menstruation Cycle Expert and a Natural Contraceptive Teacher, and she's also a qualified Ayurveda Coach and the creator of Wellsome.

And so, for 13 years, she's helped guide women in over 22 countries to embrace their monthly cycles and deepen body awareness through personalized coaching, online courses, retreats, and workshops. And she's also known as the down-to-earth, raw, and authentic teacher who makes periods fun. So her teachings are analogy fields, helping to make the complicated stuff practical, easy, and memorable. She's located in Australia. She's also a full-time human who spends her days coaching, dancing, and creating. And you can learn more about Jema and her work at wellsome.com. Jema, thank you so much for coming to the show.

Jema Lee: Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Dr. Wendy Myers: So how did you become a menstrual cycle educator and coach?

Jema Lee: Oh, this is such a good question, Wendy. I grew up as the girl at school that hated being a girl. I never wore skirts. I used to love the movie called Now and Then, and I used to duct tape my boobs because I didn't want boobs, and my brothers used to always tease me about having boobs. And so, I was this young girl who rejected a lot of being a girl. And I went on the contraceptive pill very early in my life, for my menstrual life, I should say. And I was around 16 and stayed on the pill for 12 years. And when I came off the contraceptive pill, I was already working in the nutrition industry, I'd already started health coaching, and I didn't get a period. I just thought, "Oh, if I come off the pill, my period will come back."

And nine months later, I still hadn't had a bleed and had a little spotting. I went to the doctor, and I was diagnosed with PCOS, and that's when I discovered the menstrual cycle. And I was like, how do people not know more about this? And after all the things I'd studied anyway in the health area and in nutrition, not one person had mentioned the cycle. And so, I was really confused around that, and that led me down this track of getting into the menstrual world, and now it's something that I talk about all the time.

Dr. Wendy Myers: And so, did you take the pill back-to-back so that you didn't get a menstrual cycle? Is that why you were surprised it didn't come back?

Jema Lee: Well, I just assumed, the ignorance that I had, that taking the contraceptive pill just stopped me from falling pregnant. So, my cycle would just continue when I stopped taking the contraceptive pill. So for 12 years, I still had a pill bleed, a synthetic bleed. And I think maybe three times in the whole 12 years, I skipped that, but I never felt really good not having some kind of bleed. It always felt a little bit unnatural for me to not have some form of menstruation. Even though I wasn't menstruating, I didn't know that at the time.

And so, when I came off the pill altogether and had nothing, I felt like I had an alien in my body, and I was going crazy. And that's when I was, something doesn't feel right here. My hormones were all out of whack, and of course, having gone on the pill so young and so soon after my menarche, my first menstruation, my ovaries had not really formed a good connection with the glands in my brain. And so, it was like, "Where are you? I can't find you." So it took a bit of time for that to re-establish.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. Yeah, I had the same thing. I went on the pill when I was 13, because my mother was terrified of me becoming pregnant. She just wanted to prevent it just in case. I didn't say anything about becoming sexually active. And so, I was on it until I was 35.

Jema Lee: Wow.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah, I was on it for a long, long time, and a lot of times, I would skip my period. I would take it back-to-back because I didn't like getting my period, and then so I'd skip it many, many times. So why is discovering it and reconnecting with your cycle so important, maybe getting off the pill or even if you're not on the pill?

Jema Lee: Reconnecting with your cycle is honoring who you are and who you're born to be. And even, I like to say, Wendy, that not all those humans straight are women. Some who identify with different gender might also be menstruating. So menstruate out there. Living with a cyclical nature is one of the best ways to honor your overall cycle. And I think many people don't realize that different genders work on different cycles. So those born without a menstrual cycle don't have a 28-day cycle. They have a 24-hour cycle. So I always think, if we look at the classic genders of feminine men, that my dad has loved to eat the same thing for lunch every freaking day for the last 50 years. And that's such a great example of the men's hormonal cycle, working on a 24-hour period.

Whereas for born menstruators, us women out there who are menstruating, we have a 28-day, 29-day. Some it's 26, and some it's 33, but our hormones change every single day differently. And because of that, we live in a very cyclical nature, and we are much more connected with the earth in that cyclical nature when we honor our cycle. And so that's when you think about it, everything runs on a cycle, from the tides to the moon cycle, to the seasonal cycle around the year, the seasonal food growing, everything is cyclical. And when we start to leave cyclical, we can actually become more in balance with our bodies.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. I used to like it when I was having my menstruation cycle, that after you have your cycle and then you have a buildup of estrogen, and then you're glowing more, your skin's glowing more, you become more attractive to other men, and things like that. So I always used to really enjoy that part of my cycle; the other one's not so much.

Jema Lee: I describe that as the sexy, sassy, Beyonce phase of your cycle where you feel unstoppable, literally.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. Can you tell us the four phases of the cycle?

Jema Lee: Yeah, of course. In allopathic medicine, we look at the four phases of menstruation: the follicular phase, ovulation, and the luteal phase. When I'm working with kids or even women going through menopause, I like to describe them as the seasons of the year. And many people worldwide have done this for many years, but menstruation is very much like winter. So if you think about winter in the outer world, I live in a part of the world where we don't get a very, very cold, snowy winter. But if you think of winter as that snowy winter where you're bunkering down, I call this the bare season. So you're really hibernating. You want to be inward, you want to have warm foods, and you don't want to have social life over the top in your calendar. That's your menstrual time. So when you're menstruating, or your period, as some people also call it, you move into this beautiful spring phase after you've menstruated.

And that's that transition where you feel like you're not happy or comfortable in your body, and then all of a sudden, you're like, "I'm back, I have energy, and I can go outside, and I can catch up with people." That's your springtime, also known as your follicular phase. And that's where you're talking about, Wendy, where your estrogen is increasing, and you're like, "Oh, I'm glowing, and I feel really confident in my body. And this is the dolphin phase. So when I work with kids, I call this the dolphin time of your cycle, where you feel really playful and creative. Then from our spring, we move into summer, and summer is the ovulatory phase of our cycle. And ovulation is very much like summer's heat and yang. So if you think of summer, summer's when you want to be outdoors, you want to be with your friends and your family, and you want to be social, you want to have late nights, so you sleep a little bit less.

And the ovulatory time of our cycle is very much like that. And that's that sexy, sassy Beyonce time. After we've ovulated, we move into the luteal phase, and that's the half of the cycle that most people really dread and aren't friends with; I'll just say that in a nice way. They really reject that part of their cycle. And that's what I call inner autumn. And inner autumn, in the outer world of the seasons, is also the time of the year. And I know as I'm recording this, it's fall in North America, and fall is the time where people are like, "Oh my God, I don't want to let go of summer, and it's getting cold, and do I have to pull my boots and my jackets out?" And that's the time when we get a bit of FOMO, where we feel like we're missing out on summer. And inner autumn is actually a really beautiful time in our cycle as we move through pre-menstruation and mean towards menstruation again.

It's all about feeling strong, getting things done, and being articulate. And for some women and menstruators, this is where you're like, "Oh my God, I just feel like I'm hungry, and I want to eat all the food out of the house, and I have mood swings." And that's because we're going through natural changes inside our bodies. But as we adapt and live more in that cyclical nature we were talking about, we start to live more in harmony with each of the four phases. And as we do that, it really brings more harmony into how we feel on a daily basis.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. And are there some key foods that you can eat for each phase of the cycle to help your hormones a little bit or help the transition?

Jema Lee: Definitely, I love eating cyclically. So I call this cyclical eating, and it goes back to the story I mentioned about my dad. He's always eating the same things every day, but as menstrual women and people, I'm sure you're like, I'm eating the same thing for three weeks in a row, and then you get to this phase, you're like, I just want to eat something different, or you're craving something different. And it's very natural for us to want to eat each week of our cycle differently, or each phase of our cycle. So menstruation, that wintertime, is all about warm food. So think about the food you would love to eat in your normal winter in the outer seasons, things like soups and stews, they're very supportive, they're warm, they support healthy blood flow and have lots of root-style vegetables like beetroots, parsnips, carrots, pumpkins, onions, garlic, even beetroots like I said, but having red foods is also really good. So tomatoes or a tomato-based like minestrone and soup are really great foods for our inner wintertime.

In spring, is that like, "Oh, spring's here, let's start having some more fresh food as opposed to slow-cooked food." And so I like to think about eating green foods at this time of your cycle. So welcoming more fruits and vegetables, having fresh fruit, especially in the springtime, in the outer seasons, it's like, oh, this is mango season, mangoes are coming, and so we all want to eat mangoes, or we want to really start having more salads. And so, spring is really great for that. Summer is the time when I'm always, people are so excited about their life in summer that they don't eat as much food or they eat more socially. So the way your hormones are positioned in the summer when you're ovulating, you're actually more supportive for digestion.

So if you have a temperament in your digestive system where maybe you don't eat a lot of dairy, and dairy doesn't sit super well with you, if you wanted to eat it, that would be the time of your seasons to eat, that. So in the summer, you feel more confident, and your digestive system's more confident because of the hormonal balance. So eating out is a great thing to do in summer. It pleases you socially, and it also makes you feel good. You get to dress up, and it's a great time to eat out at that time of your cycle. But this is also a time when you might want to eat more raw foods. So having things like sushi is a really good thing to do. Maybe you have a smoothie. I don't always condone having lots of smoothies, but at that time of your cycle, having colder food is definitely welcomed. And then when we move into autumn, this is the dun, dun, dun, dun, stage of your cycle, and this is where we have.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Chocolate.

Jema Lee: Yes. I'm just eating all the sweet things. And it's so true, Wendy, though. And good sources of chocolate, so think of dark chocolate, have a really good variety of minerals. And so those minerals, that magnesium, can be very supportive of menstruation. I don't believe in restrictions, so don't eat something, but if you have a desire for chocolate, what if we just chose better quality chocolate instead of a fast food option of chocolate? And yes, it might cost a little bit more, but maybe you'll eat it a little bit more harmoniously instead of just scuffing the whole thing down. So chocolate's definitely one of those foods, but inner autumn is a great time to have things that are slow-cooked and roasted in the oven. So this is a time I like to have pot-fedge, for example, and we want to feel really grounded.

So eating grounding foods like those foods that grow in or on the ground, like zucchinis, pumpkins, like I mentioned from menstruation, carrot, parsnips, onions, garlic, they're very whole, grounding foods, and slowly cooking them. Not to mention if you're getting those good sources of carbohydrates, they actually help you feel fuller a bit longer. And it's really, really important at this time of your cycle if you have mood swings or those hungry cravings to make sure you're getting good sources of protein, especially in that first portion of the day. So that might be eggs, or maybe you like to have beans or legumes added onto stir-fried greens for breakfast, but it's really important to get your proteins in the morning.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. Well, I don't have my period anymore; I'm in menopause. But when I did, it was all about that chocolate. I knew when I started having these voracious cravings for chocolate, it's like, let me have some magnesium and some copper to help things along, as your body's innately intelligent. It knows what to make you crave. And so, could you talk a little bit about PMS and what if things in your cycle aren't going as planned? And are signs of PMS more common when not living in tune with each part of your cycle.

Jema Lee: Yes, definitely.

Dr. Wendy Myers: If you're not doing things to take care of yourself? So what exacerbates PMS symptoms?

Jema Lee: This is a really great question. The biggest thing that brings on PMS, and I like to call them cycle signs, rather than premenstrual symptoms or signs, is stress. Stress and poor quality sleep are the two biggest factors that contribute to things like PMS and cycle signs. People think about stress and sleep. Are you serious? But what happens is a lot of women don't live in that cyclical nature of their cycle. So they're not really honoring their rest time when they're menstruating. They're not really honoring rest, outwardness, and being social when ovulating. And what happens is there's so much pressure put on them in their lifestyle that when it comes to that premenstrual phase, everything just hits the bloody roof, and things just start to crumble apart. So when we're looking at stress, stress is the biggest contributor because it communicates either safety or urgency in the body.

So when we think about stress, it does not just work stress. It could be relationship stress, financial stress, or other health stress issues that could be going on. And when we

feel stressed, that communicates fight, flight, or freeze to the body. And as menstruators, we are born to reproduce, and our body's only going to reproduce in a safe space. So if we don't feel safe and supported in our external world, and stress might be present, making us feel unsafe, the body slowly starts to reduce the thing that's the least important, which is reproduction, because it's more important to breathe and to detox and to digest. And so, it slowly starts to shut that reproductive system down. And Wendy, that's what can lead to long cycles, irregular cycles, missed periods like amenorrhea, and other things that can occur. That's where we talk about those real PMS tensions like pain, cramps, headaches, migraines, acne, menstrual pain, discomfort, heavy menstruation, clotting, and stagnancy.

So maybe we're not actually bleeding properly. You're having lots of stagnant flow and spotting for a few days. Stress is the biggest lead to that. And then, there are many other things, stress then impedes your sleep, and then when you're not having a good, sound sleep, it throws your hormones off balance. And people always think, Wendy, why is my sleep affecting my menstruation? My ovaries are down there, and my sleep is not down there. And that's because our whole body is so intricately connected through the endocrine system. And when we really understand that how we live our life directly impacts how our body responds. We can go, okay, I can start to understand why our body has those cycle signs or PMS.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. And also, I mean, women can skip releasing an egg, where even if they're trying to get pregnant, if they're really, really stressed, they might not release an egg and just have trouble getting pregnant as well.

Jema Lee: Totally. And that happens a lot when you look at the fertility side. For a lot of women who have a stress cycle, it actually shortens their luteal phase. And even if they are ovulating, they might have a non-fertile cycle because their luteal phase is so short. And because that's so short, they don't have enough supportive lining to actually house and support the embryo. Then the body just moves forward to the next menstruation. So yeah, you're very spot on there, and it's a big challenge that's happening in the world of fertility at the moment.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. I mean, there are a lot of challenges in fertility, and toxins are among them. Can you talk at all about how toxins and heavy metals are affecting menstruation and fertility?

Jema Lee: Oh, this is a great question. I knew this was going to be a question from you, being the toxins expert. With heavy metals, I like to think, you can look at them in a few different ways. First, you can look at the heavy metals and toxins in menstrual products. So we'll talk about tampons first. Tampons, a lot of people think, "Oh, but surely it's white. It's made of cotton. Can't we use this?" But many tampons are heavily soaked, bleached, dyed, and covered in not-great chemicals. And when we're putting that in our body, our body absorbs and leaches into all of that. So it's really important to look at what we're using as products, but then we can look at our entire lifestyle. I know Wendy, you would look at skincare products and home care products. How are we storing our food?

Where is our water quality coming from, and how is that contributing to our cycle? And the more we clean the toxins out of our life, the easier our body comes back into a harmonious cyclical rhythm, and we can have easier production of hormones, but also, it stops the overproduction of hormones or dampening of the detoxification system, which then challenges the detoxification of excess estrogen, which then can also lead to cycle imbalances. So heavy metals and toxins are found in so many places, and many of them can actually be estrogen inhibitors, so they actually help produce extra estrogen in the body, and that can throw out the cycle. I'm sure you've seen that a lot in your own practice.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, the heavy metals and toxins wreak havoc on your hormones. I mean, it's just without question in so many different ways as well. And so, let's talk about how people can get to know their own cycle. Are there any apps or things that you recommend for people to track their cycle and help figure out this mystery a little bit?

Jema Lee: Definitely, I think education is power when it comes to our cycle. We've definitely moved out of the era of uneducated cycles as young teens and tweens. So as an adult listening to this, there's no better time to start learning about your cycle than right now. Apps are fantastic. They're a great introduction to learning about your cycle. So you've got apps like Clue, Flow, and MyFlow. Even Apple now has a menstrual cycle tracker on their watches in their health program. So apps are a great way to understand what day of your cycle you're on and how long the cycle is. So that's a foundation for getting to know your cycle. The best way to really dive deep into your cycle is tracking your cycle with a written app. Now, if you've never done this before, it only takes 30 seconds, 60 seconds a day to just check in, put pen to paper, and write down, how do I feel today? What was coming up for me? What were my cycle signs?

And Wendy, I always say to clients and people in the Well Women Academy that the apps are great, but it's a bit tap, tap, swipe, forget. And we've lost so much in the appy world out there that putting pen to paper is beautiful, and the most important thing to write down on your cycle tracker is anything you would bitch to your best friend about. So anything that you're complaining about or you are constantly whining over, and it's irritating you that much, definitely write that on your tracker. And then, after three cycle trackers, you can go back and go, "Wow, every day on day 24, I always have this big crash of energy, and then I have this huge surge of cravings." And you can start to see your own natural rhythms and your own natural patterns.

So a written tracker is the best way to go, and I have a free one of those on my website if anyone wants to access that. It comes with videos on how to use it. And there are also trackers for women who are no longer menstruating, for example, through menopause or pre-menopause, perimenopause, or even menarche, pregnancy, or someone who's going off hormonal contraception or missing their period for whatever reason and are looking to get it back. It's a great way to bring in that cyclical nature to feel supported as you start menstruating again or moving beyond menstruation.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. I mean, it's so key to track these things. I know when I was menstruating, that the day before my period started, I would get really angry at things, or I'd be triggered really,

really easily, and eventually, then the next day my period started, I'd be like, "Oh, that's what that was about." And so, it was very important for me to know when my period was starting and not get caught up in those feelings of thinking, ruminating, and getting angry about things, and I realized it was just hormonal. It didn't really have much to do with what was happening around me, so it was very helpful to know when my period was starting. Can you talk about a few ways that women can connect to their menstrual cycle and really help with the transitional phases of each part of the cycle?

Jema Lee: Beautiful question. One of the best ways for menstruators is to really get to know their body and menstrual cycle, which is to feel your body when you're menstruating. I don't necessarily mean physically; I mean tuning in. So maybe try changing up the menstrual product that you're using. Period undies are a fantastic way to know how menstruation feels, using a menstrual cup or a tampon. You don't get that full sensation of actually bleeding, and, "Oh actually, I can feel that my menstruation is moving through me right now." So that's one beautiful way to get to know your body. The other thing is when you're tracking your cycle, notice your energy shifts. This is such an easy one. Okay, when do I go from feeling really in within my body and low in energy to feeling really outward in my body and higher in energy?

That's a great representation of that shift from that winter phase to spring as we go towards that yang style of our cycle. And then again, after we're ovulated when we hit that new inner autumn time of our cycle. So energy's a really good one. Tuning into your libido is also a great way to tap into where you are in your cycle. Naturally, our libido is quite low when we're menstruating, and naturally, it's quite high when we're ovulating, for obvious reasons. We're looking for a male partner to reproduce with. So when we look at our libido, libido can be a great sign of whether there's an imbalance of the cycle if we have no libido at all, but it also can be a really great key or maybe when we are moving into a fertile time of our cycle. So that's another one that's a really great way to understand how we can tap into how we feel.

And the next one I would like to say, Wendy is tap into your food. How do you feel about the meals that you're eating? Are you feeling really drawn to like, "Oh, I don't care about my body today. I'm just going to binge on all the foods I'm craving." Or are you really conscious about how food feels in your body and how digestion feels in your body? So that's another one that you can do. And, of course, there are many more. You could look at sleep; you could look at poo. The list is really endless, but they're great places to start because everyone knows how they feel energetically, everyone knows, or everyone eats some food hopefully in their lifetime and can understand when they have cravings when they have shifted in their meals, or I'm actually really honoring how I feel, and I'm really craving deep, warm food today, as opposed to craving a smoothie for example.

And then libido, sex isn't an often talked about topic, but we all exist because of menstruation and a menstrual cycle, and we all exist because of sex. Well, most of us, anyway. So sex and your libido is a great topic to explore for yourself to know how you feel and honor your cycle.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. I mean, I think it's really important to pay attention to your libido because the absence of libido can mean that something is perhaps wrong, that you have too much stress, or there's something going on with your cycle. For me, I know when I was on the pill for so long, I didn't have a libido for a really long time, and I didn't know it at the time, but that should have been a sign to me that I'm not living naturally within my cycle. And that causes problems in your relationship if you just have zero desire to have sex because you have no libido, and you hear about people talking about this libido, and you're like, "Well, where is mine?" And I think a lot of women struggle with preventing unwanted pregnancies versus having that trade up with that, and then not having a libido or a very low one, because of being on the pill.

Jema Lee: And there's a big movement of people coming off hormonal contraception and really starting natural fertility or natural contraceptive tracking. And that's the whole thing when you go on hormonal contraception. It's to diminish your ovulation. And when we ovulate, back to what I was saying before, it brings an increase in estrogen as our FSH rises, getting ready to release the egg. That's getting us ready to be sexual so that we can reproduce. So when hormonal birth control diminishes and actually stops ovulation, it's naturally also going to slow down and stop libido. And so, it's a great sign that if you are feeling not connected with your sexuality through knowing when you have a high libido or a low libido, look into that. That's a really optimal sign of health, a healthy libido.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. And is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you wanted to bring up? I mean, for one thing, cycles and menopause. Do some of these things you talked about in the different cycles still apply to menopause, even though we're not menstruating anymore?

Jema Lee: Thank you for asking this question. This is a beautiful question. I've had many clients in that peri-perimenopausal phase, asking, "Oh my God, this is so challenging for me. How can I make this an easier transition?" And I'm a big believer, Wendy, that the menopausal signs of hot flashes and night sweats are all a sign of not understanding your cycle and connecting with your cycle. So if you are listening to this and you're going through this phase in your life, or it's upcoming for you, the best thing I would recommend is to start tracking your cycle. People are like, "But how do you do that when you're not menstruating?" You can use the moon. And so, as born women, we are born to be cyclical. And so, that cyclical nature is living in tune with a different phase every week or so.

And that's also living in tune with the different phases of the moon. It sounds a little bit woo-hoo, but it's actually really easy. Every day that the new moon falls on would be day one of your cycle. So you'd, inverted brackets, be ovulating when the full moon is present in the sky. So by doing that, as women, we get to live in a cyclical nature, so we can still understand, "Okay, I'm actually in the outward phase of my cycle right now with the yang of the moon. I'm in the inward phase of my cycle with the yin of the moon." And regardless of whether you're menstruating or not, connecting with that cyclical nature actually helps you be more in tune with your body. And when you have more awareness and knowledge of how you feel daily, you can better support yourself.

So you can avoid things like hot flushes, night sweats, and irritability. And going through menopause is also very similar to going through menarche. So menarche is that first menstruation that transitions into becoming a menstrual being. And that transition takes a bit of time. So when we start menstruating as teens and tweens, we don't instantly start ovulating and ovulating every single cycle straight away. Sometimes there's a bit of a period where we're not ovulating. We might not get our period again for another 60 days. And that occurs for a couple of years, very similar to menopause.

So the same rule that I guide young teens and tweens with is the same for women who are going through menopause start tracking your cycle. Okay, how can I eat to serve where I am right now? How can I move my body to serve where I am right now? And the women who I've found who have tracked their cycle before getting to menopause, their menopausal journeys are actually much softer, and they're easier because they're more aware, and they just continually track and live in this cyclical nature.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. And I think it's also something to be aware of that when you're hitting perimenopause, your cycles can get a lot heavier. I've had friends tell me that they had really heavy bleeding, and it freaked them out and that they want to go to their doctor and figure out what's going on with them. But it can be very natural to have these more erratic periods, not normal, skipping periods and things like that. And then, I think it's really important to start learning how to reduce stress during this time because the more stress you have, the fewer hormones your body's going to be able to create. Your adrenal glands are going to be able to create because they take over when your ovaries shut down and stop producing as many hormones.

Jema Lee: You're spot on. And I think a lot of menstruators really dread menopause. They're quite scared of the menopausal journey. If I think of my mom's menopausal journey, I'm like, "Oh my God, I really hope that doesn't happen to me."

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah, opening the refrigerator, trying to cool off, standing in the freezer.

Jema Lee: Laying face down on the tiles, face down on the tiles in the middle of the night, trying to get cold.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah, because estrogen regulates your body temperature to a certain degree.

Jema Lee: Yeah. And menopause is a complete re-patterning. So your entire endocrine system, and you mentioned the adrenals like the thyroid, hypothalamus, pituitary, and pineal gland, are re-regulating; their jobs are shifting. And so, it's like they're entering retirement, and they're like, "Oh, what do I do with myself now? I don't know. I've been doing this other thing for so many years, and now what do I do?" And so, it's very transitional, and it takes time. And I think if we approach it on a day-by-day basis, like you said, "Okay, where are my stress levels? Am I honoring my body with sleep? Am I nurturing and nourishing my body?" And a lot of women aren't getting enough good sources of protein, which is a big challenge for menstrual women and menstrual health, but what can we do to help support that transition?

And it's always great at that time to go and see a naturopath or nutritionist to just get an overview of, okay, what can I really do right now to best support myself nutritionally. I think working out, using your body and moving, is so important. So what can I do to help produce other hormones like oxytocin and serotonin in the body, which also support the production of melatonin later in the day?. What can I do on a movement basis that serves where I am in my lifestyle and my age but also supports my body for longevity and transition through menopause? And I think that's a really important one too, that a lot of people forget about: movement can be very supportive for stress and sleep too.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Right. Fantastic. Well, Jema, thank you so much for coming to the show. Really appreciate your contribution, helping women get more in touch with their cycles and their menstruation, illuminating some of this mystery surrounding our cycles, and helping women understand their bodies more.

Jema Lee: You're so welcome, Wendy. Thank you for having me.

Dr. Wendy Myers: So, everyone, thank you so much for tuning in to the Myers Detox Podcast. And I'm Dr. Wendy Myers, and every week I bring you experts from around the world to help you uplevel your health. So I hope you got some nice little nuggets out of the show today that can help you with your health. So thanks for tuning in, and I will talk to you guys next week.