

A GUIDE FOR WOMEN WHOSE LABS ARE NORMAL BUT FEEL ANYTHING BUT

The Symptom Decoder

What your body is actually trying to tell you.

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Your body isn't broken. It's communicating.

If your labs are normal but you feel terrible, this guide is for you.

You're not crazy. You're not lazy. You're not just stressed.

You're a woman who knows her body. And right now your body is telling you something is wrong, even if every doctor you've seen has shrugged and handed you another prescription or told you to lose ten pounds.

Maybe it's the bloating that shows up no matter what you eat.

Maybe it's the periods that take you out for a full week every month.

Maybe it's the exhaustion that no amount of sleep fixes.

Maybe it's all of it at once, and you've stopped knowing where to even start.

I get it. I've been there.

MY STORY

A quick word about how I got here.

Six years ago I was a high school math teacher with a body that was falling apart.

Symptoms I couldn't explain. Doctors who couldn't help. A growing pile of "your labs are normal" notes while I felt anything but normal.

I felt powerless. Dismissed. Like I was supposed to just accept that this was my new baseline.

It wasn't. And it isn't yours either.

I started learning everything I could about functional health. I found out that my symptoms weren't random. They were connected. They were my body trying to tell me something my doctors weren't trained to hear.

That's when everything changed. Not just for me, but for the hundreds of women I've worked with since.

I left teaching. I got certified as a Functional Health Coach, an NBC-HWC, and an Endometriosis Specialist. And I built a practice around one belief:

Your body isn't broken. It's communicating. And when you learn to listen, you can heal from almost anything.

That's why I made this guide.

BEFORE YOU READ

Take the Symptom Inventory.

Most women try to fix one symptom at a time. Bloating here. Bad period there. Energy crash in the afternoon.

But your body isn't a collection of separate problems. It's one system. When one part is struggling, it usually shows up in three or four places before you connect the dots.

So before you dive in, take five minutes and check off everything that sounds like you. Be honest. Nobody's watching.

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

- ☐ Bloating after meals (even "healthy" ones)
- ☐ Constipation (fewer than one bowel movement per day)
- ☐ Loose stools or diarrhea
- ☐ Burping or gas regularly
- ☐ Heartburn or reflux
- ☐ Feeling overly full after small meals
- ☐ Foods you used to tolerate now bother you

HORMONES & CYCLE

- ☐ Painful periods (you plan your life around them)
- ☐ Heavy bleeding or large clots
- ☐ PMS that wrecks your week
- ☐ Spotting between periods
- ☐ Hormonal acne (jawline, chin, back)
- ☐ Mood swings tied to your cycle
- ☐ Low libido

ENERGY & BRAIN

- ☐ Tired even after 8 hours of sleep
- ☐ 2pm or 3pm crash
- ☐ Can't fall asleep, or can't stay asleep
- ☐ Brain fog (forgetting words, losing your train of thought)
- ☐ Wired but tired feeling
- ☐ Coffee doesn't work like it used to

SKIN, HAIR & BODY

- ☐ Adult acne
- ☐ Hair thinning or shedding
- ☐ Dry skin or eczema
- ☐ Cold hands and feet
- ☐ Stubborn weight that won't budge
- ☐ Inflammation (puffiness, joint stiffness)

MOOD & NERVOUS SYSTEM

- ☐ Anxiety that comes out of nowhere
- ☐ Feeling on edge or wired
- ☐ Low mood or flat affect
- ☐ Easily overwhelmed by normal stress
- ☐ Crying spells or short fuse

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

3+ checks in any single category: That system is sending you a signal. Start with that section of the guide first.

3+ checks across three or more categories: Your body is having a full conversation with you. There's usually a root cause connecting them.

6+ checks total: Stop trying to fix this one symptom at a time. It's not working because the symptoms aren't separate. They're connected.

This isn't a diagnosis. It's a starting point. A way to look at what your body has been trying to tell you and start asking better questions.

Bloating.

That "I look six months pregnant by 3pm" feeling.

You eat a salad. You bloat. You eat a burger. You bloat. You drink water. You bloat. At a certain point you start wondering if it's just you. It's not just you. And it's not in your head.

WHAT'S LIKELY GOING ON

- Bacterial overgrowth (often SIBO). The wrong bacteria in the wrong part of your gut, producing gas every time you eat.
- Low stomach acid. Yes, low. Most women have less than they need, not more.
- Sluggish digestion. Bile flow, enzymes, the works.
- Food sensitivities, often to things you'd never suspect.

LABS WORTH RUNNING

- SIBO breath test
- GI-MAP (stool test that shows what's actually living in your gut)
- H. pylori testing

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

- Slow down when you eat. Chew until it's liquid. This sounds basic. It changes everything.
- Stop drinking water with meals. It dilutes the acid you already don't have enough of.
- Get tested before cutting more foods. Random elimination diets just shrink your world.

✨ TRY THIS TODAY

Before your next meal, take three slow breaths. Then squeeze half a lemon into a small glass of water and sip it five minutes before you eat. This wakes up your stomach acid the way nature intended. Notice if you bloat less after that meal. Most women feel a difference within two or three days.

Painful Periods.

The kind that take you out for three days.

Painful periods are common. They are not normal. Common is not the same as normal. You shouldn't be canceling plans, calling out of work, or living on ibuprofen for a week every month.

WHAT'S LIKELY GOING ON

- Estrogen dominance. Too much estrogen, not enough progesterone, or both.
- Inflammation. Your body is on fire and your period is the smoke signal.
- Sluggish detox. Your liver and gut clear used hormones out of the body. When they're backed up, hormones recirculate.
- Prostaglandin imbalance. The chemicals that cause cramping are out of whack.

LABS WORTH RUNNING

- DUTCH test (the gold standard for understanding your hormones across a full cycle)
- Estradiol and progesterone (timed properly to your cycle)

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

- Stabilize your blood sugar. Yes, even for period pain. Blood sugar drives hormones more than most people realize.
- Eat enough fiber. Your gut clears estrogen. Constipation means estrogen comes back.
- Sweat regularly. Sauna, exercise, hot baths. Sweat is a detox pathway most women under-use.

✨ TRY THIS TODAY

Add 2 tablespoons of ground flaxseed to whatever you're eating tomorrow. Yogurt, oatmeal, smoothie, salad. Flax does two things at once for hormones: it provides fiber to clear excess estrogen, and it contains compounds that gently support hormone balance. Do this daily for a full cycle and see what shifts.

Constipation.

If you're not pooping every day, you're backed up.

A lot of women have been told that pooping every other day or every third day is "normal for them." It's not. Your bowels are one of your main exit routes for hormones, toxins, and metabolic waste. When they're slow, everything builds up. Skin breaks out. Hormones get worse. Energy drops.

WHAT'S LIKELY GOING ON

- Sluggish thyroid (often missed because TSH alone won't catch it)
- Low magnesium
- Dehydration (yes, even if you drink water all day)
- Stuck nervous system. When you're in chronic fight-or-flight, digestion shuts down.
- Gut imbalances

LABS WORTH RUNNING

- Full thyroid panel (TSH, Free T3, Free T4, Reverse T3, antibodies)
- Magnesium RBC (not regular serum magnesium, it's misleading)
- GI-MAP

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

- Magnesium glycinate or citrate before bed
- Walk after meals, even five minutes
- Manage your stress like it's a prescription. Because it is.

✨ TRY THIS TODAY

Tonight, take 300-400mg of magnesium citrate about an hour before bed. Drink a full glass of water with it. Most women see a softer, easier bowel movement by morning. If you're already on magnesium and it's not working, the form matters. Citrate moves the bowels. Glycinate calms the nervous system. You might need both.

Diarrhea.

When food just runs through you.

Loose stools, urgency, or showing up unexpectedly. None of this is something to ignore or laugh off.

WHAT'S LIKELY GOING ON

- Gut infections or pathogens (parasites, bacteria, yeast overgrowth)
- Bile dysregulation
- Food sensitivities
- Stress that's wrecking your gut. Your gut and your nervous system are best friends.
- Inflammation in the gut lining

LABS WORTH RUNNING

- GI-MAP
- MRT or similar food sensitivity testing (chosen carefully)
- Inflammation markers

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

- Stop cutting foods randomly. Test, don't guess.
- Support your nervous system. Diarrhea is often a stress response in disguise.
- Add gentle binders if appropriate (under guidance).

✨ TRY THIS TODAY

Before your next meal, put one hand on your chest and one on your belly. Take ten slow breaths. Just ten. This shifts your body out of fight-or-flight and into the state where digestion actually works. If your gut is reactive, eating in a stressed state is like pouring food into a closed pipe. Open the pipe first.

Hormonal Acne.

Adult breakouts that show up on your jawline and chin.

If you're getting acne in your 30s or 40s along the lower half of your face, this isn't a face-washing problem. It's a hormone and gut problem showing up on your skin.

WHAT'S LIKELY GOING ON

- Elevated androgens (testosterone, DHEA-S)
- Insulin resistance
- Poor estrogen detox
- Gut dysfunction. Your gut is one of the biggest drivers of skin health.

LABS WORTH RUNNING

- DUTCH test
- Fasting insulin (not just glucose)
- Free and total testosterone, DHEA-S

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

- Stabilize blood sugar. Insulin drives androgens. Androgens drive acne.
- Heal your gut. Skin reflects gut. Always.
- Support your liver. Caffeine in the morning, alcohol at night, and a sluggish liver can't keep up.

✨ TRY THIS TODAY

Eat protein at breakfast. 25-30 grams within an hour of waking up. Not a coffee on the way to work. Not a smoothie that's mostly fruit. Actual protein. Eggs, sausage, leftover chicken, whatever you've got. This single change stabilizes your blood sugar for the rest of the day, which means lower insulin, less androgen activity, less acne. Takes about three weeks to see it in your skin. Worth it.

Food Sensitivities.

When everything seems to make you feel bad.

You used to eat everything. Now your list of "safe foods" is shrinking. Dairy gives you a stomach ache. Gluten makes you bloat. Eggs make you break out. You're afraid to eat out. You're afraid to eat in. This isn't because you have "weak digestion" or are "too sensitive." It's because your gut barrier is compromised, and your immune system is reacting to foods it used to ignore.

WHAT'S LIKELY GOING ON

- Leaky gut (intestinal permeability)
- Underlying gut imbalances that haven't been addressed
- Chronic stress keeping your gut in repair mode
- Histamine issues

LABS WORTH RUNNING

- GI-MAP
- Zonulin (a marker of intestinal permeability)
- Targeted food sensitivity testing if appropriate

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

- Heal the gut. Don't keep cutting foods.
- Address the underlying infection or imbalance.
- Calm the nervous system. The gut can't heal in fight-or-flight.

✨ TRY THIS TODAY

Tomorrow, eat one meal sitting down. No phone, no TV, no scrolling. Just the food and your breath. Most women eat in a stressed, dysregulated state and wonder why their gut is reactive. This isn't a forever rule. Just an experiment. Notice if that meal sits differently than the ones you ate while answering emails.

Low Energy.

Tired in a way that sleep doesn't fix.

You sleep eight hours and wake up tired. You hit a wall at 2pm. Coffee used to fix it. Now it doesn't, or it makes you anxious. You're surviving the day, not living it.

WHAT'S LIKELY GOING ON

- Blood sugar swings
- Thyroid dysfunction (especially the undiagnosed kind your TSH won't catch)
- Adrenal and cortisol dysregulation
- Low ferritin (your iron stores, often missed in standard panels)
- Nutrient depletion (B12, magnesium, others)

LABS WORTH RUNNING

- Full thyroid panel (not just TSH)
- Ferritin and full iron panel
- Cortisol pattern across the day (DUTCH or salivary)

WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

- Stop skipping breakfast. Especially stop the coffee-only morning.
- Eat protein and fat first. Carbs alone will crash you.
- Match your caffeine to your physiology. Some women need to cut it. Others need to time it differently.

✨ TRY THIS TODAY

Tomorrow, delay your coffee by 60-90 minutes after waking up. Eat first. Even something small. Your morning cortisol is naturally high right when you wake up, and stacking caffeine on top of it can wreck your energy for the rest of the day. Try it for three days and notice your 2pm.

How to talk to your doctor so you stop walking out frustrated.

Most women leave appointments feeling unheard. You bring up symptoms. The doctor runs a few standard labs. Everything comes back "normal." You're told to manage your stress, lose weight, or try an antidepressant.

You leave with no answers and a quiet feeling that maybe it's just you.

It's not you. It's the system.

Conventional medicine is built for emergencies and acute disease. It's not built for the slow drift into "something's off." Most doctors get less than 30 hours of nutrition training in medical school. They aren't taught to look at the panels that would actually catch what's happening to you.

That's not their fault. But it is your problem.

THE SHIFT

From passive patient to informed advocate. You don't need to become a doctor. You need to ask better questions and request specific tests by name. The minute you do, the dynamic changes. Doctors respond differently to patients who come in prepared.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK AT EVERY APPOINTMENT

- "Can I get a copy of all my lab results, not just the ones flagged as abnormal?"
- "What are the optimal ranges for these labs, not just the lab reference range?"
- "If these labs come back normal, what else would you look at?"
- "Can you explain what these results mean for me specifically?"
- "Is there a functional or integrative provider you'd recommend if this doesn't improve?"

Questions to ask for your specific symptoms.

Bring this page with you. Highlight what applies to you. Ask for what you need.

IF YOU'RE DEALING WITH FATIGUE OR LOW ENERGY

Ask for a full thyroid panel:

- TSH, Free T3, Free T4, Reverse T3, Thyroid antibodies (TPO and TgAb)

Also ask for: Ferritin, Vitamin D, B12, Fasting insulin and glucose

Script: "Would you be willing to also check my Free T3 and antibodies? I've read that TSH alone can miss early thyroid dysfunction."

IF YOU'RE DEALING WITH PAINFUL, HEAVY PERIODS, OR HORMONAL ISSUES

- Estradiol and progesterone (timed to day 19-22 of your cycle)
- Total and free testosterone, DHEA-S, SHBG

Script: "Is there a way to test hormones across my full cycle, like a DUTCH test?"

IF YOU'RE DEALING WITH GUT ISSUES, BLOATING, OR FOOD SENSITIVITIES

- Comprehensive stool testing, not just standard
- H. pylori testing
- Full Celiac panel (including total IgA)
- Inflammation markers (CRP, ESR)

IF YOU'RE DEALING WITH ACNE, WEIGHT THAT WON'T BUDGE, OR PCOS-TYPE SYMPTOMS

- Fasting insulin (not just glucose)
- Hemoglobin A1C
- Free and total testosterone, DHEA-S, LH and FSH

Note: Fasting insulin can be elevated for years before your blood sugar shows it.

Three phrases that change every appointment.

1. "I'D LIKE THAT DOCUMENTED IN MY CHART."

If you ask for a test and your doctor refuses, ask them to document the refusal. They almost always order it.

2. "CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY THAT TEST ISN'T APPROPRIATE FOR ME?"

You're not arguing. You're asking for reasoning. Most doctors will reconsider when challenged respectfully.

3. "WHAT WOULD NEED TO BE TRUE FOR YOU TO TAKE THIS MORE SERIOUSLY?"

This one is gold. It pushes the conversation off "you're fine" and onto specifics.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU STILL FEEL DISMISSED

Sometimes the answer is a new doctor. That doesn't mean your current one is bad. It means you might need a different kind of provider for this season.

Look for:

- A functional medicine MD or DO
- A naturopathic doctor (ND)
- A certified functional health coach who works alongside your medical team

You know your body better than anyone. Not your doctor. Not your mom. Not the internet. When something is off, trust that. Your symptoms are real. Your experience is valid.

Meet Meghan.

Endometriosis. Years of being dismissed. Then everything changed.

I want to tell you about a woman I worked with named Meghan.

Before we started working together, Meghan was where a lot of women reading this guide are right now. She had endometriosis. She was exhausted. She was bloated. She was in pain. And she had spent years getting turned away from healthcare providers who didn't take the time to actually listen to her.

If you've been there, you know what that does to you. It's not just the physical symptoms. It's the slow erosion of trust in your own body.

When Meghan and I started working together, we didn't try to fix everything at once. We started by listening to what her body was actually saying. We ran the right labs, not the same ones she'd been getting for years. We found the patterns nobody had bothered to connect.

Within a few days, she felt progress. Not perfection. Progress.

Barely bloated. So much more energy. Better place mentally and physically. Crossing symptoms off my list, and feeling like I can actually feel healthy and pain free. I saw progress immediately working a few days with Coach Jen, meanwhile I spent years getting turned away from healthcare providers because they didn't take the time.

— Meghan R.

Meghan's results aren't a fluke. They're what happens when you stop chasing symptoms and start listening to what your body is actually telling you.

If you've been wondering whether this is possible for you too, the answer is yes.

NEXT STEP

Ready to stop decoding alone?

You've made it this far for a reason.

Maybe you saw yourself on more than one of those symptom checklists. Maybe a few of the root causes hit a little too close to home. Maybe Meghan's story sounded like a version of your own.

Whatever brought you here, here's what I know.

You can keep doing what you've been doing. The Google searches at 11pm. The Instagram saves that pile up. The waiting for one more lab, one more doctor, one more six-month window where you tell yourself you'll figure it out.

Or you can stop guessing.

A TRUTH I TELL EVERY WOMAN I WORK WITH

The cost of the program doesn't outweigh the cost of inaction.

If you do what you've always done, you're going to get what you've always gotten. Another year of bloating. Another year of periods that take you out. Another year of dragging yourself through afternoons that should be yours.

That's not a guilt trip. It's just math. The version of you a year from now is going to either be deeper into the same hole or finally out of it. The decision you make this week is what determines which one.

Take action now to get your life back.

BOOK YOUR CALL

Book your free discovery call.

WHAT HAPPENS ON A DISCOVERY CALL

It's 30 minutes. Just you and me, on a video call.

We'll get to know each other. You'll tell me what's actually going on, what you've tried, what's worked and what hasn't. I'll ask questions your doctor never has. We'll talk about your goals.

Then I'll tell you honestly whether I think I can help and how. If I'm not the right fit for you, I'll tell you that too, and I'll point you toward someone who is.

MY PROMISE

No matter what, you walk away with an action plan. Something you can start doing this week, even if you never work with me. That's the floor of what I do on a discovery call.

 [Book Your 30-Minute Discovery Call](#)

If you're not ready to book a call yet, that's okay. Read this guide a second time. Try a few of the "Try This Today" actions. See how your body responds.

But don't put this off forever. The longer you wait, the more your body adapts to a baseline that isn't actually yours.

You weren't made to spend your life managing symptoms.

You were made to feel like yourself.

Warmly,

Jen Navon

Certified Functional Health Practitioner | NBC-HWC | Endometriosis Specialist