

# BEAN SCENE

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## LOVE YOUR LEGUMES

Bean's nutritional stock is pretty high in my books - they are super healthy, super versatile and super affordable. I don't really like the term "good carb" but they are the kind of carbohydrate you want to eat since they help you stay fuller longer and provide sustainable energy. Beans are full of fiber, protein, minerals and their antioxidant capacity is off the charts! Antioxidants help prevent or repair damage done by free radicals in your body.

The "B" in beans also stands for B vitamins: B1, B2, B3, B5, B6 and B9 (folate). In fact, a cup of most varieties of beans contains more than half of your daily folate. Vitamin B6 is another very important vitamin because it helps regulate your hormones. Vitamin B6 can help lengthen the luteal phase of your cycle and a deficiency can cause irregular menstrual cycles, a progesterone imbalance and poor egg and sperm quality.

In addition, the B Vitamin complex plays a huge role in hormonal balance because the liver needs this group of nutrients to metabolize and eliminate excess hormones. When estrogen isn't metabolized properly, too much of it stays in the bloodstream, especially in relation to progesterone levels, resulting in what is called estrogen dominance.

Symptoms associated with a high estrogen-to-progesterone ratio include irritability, breast tenderness, water retention, weight gain, cyclical migraines, irregular periods, anovulatory cycles and mid-cycle spotting. Conditions associated with high estrogen levels include fibroids, ovarian cysts, heavy bleeding, endometriosis, menstrual migraines, PCOS and PMS.

### BASIC BEAN BREAKDOWN:

**Black:** In addition to also ranking among the antioxidant bean superstars, black beans are the top bean source of magnesium - a mighty mineral lacking in the diets of about 70% of women. Magnesium helps with menstrual cramps as well as mood swings and migraines associated with PMS.

**White (Navy, Great Northern, Cannellini):** The Navy variety of the white bean is the top bean source of fiber. Just one cup provides over 70% of your fiber needs for the day! The Great Northern is the top bean source of phosphorus, a mineral needed for healthy bones and teeth. It's especially important for young women, 40% of whom do not get adequate phosphorus, setting the stage for osteoporosis and tooth decay.

**Red (Kidney, Adzuki):** Adzuki beans are the top antioxidant bean - packing an even bigger antioxidant punch than blueberries! They are also a good source of zinc, which is necessary for your body to efficiently utilize estrogen and progesterone. A zinc deficiency can cause reduced fertility and increased risk of miscarriage. A cup of Kidney beans provides 25% of the iron women need on a daily basis, which is especially helpful for women who are anemic because of chronic heavy periods.

**Green (Mung, Lima, Lentils):** Mung beans are one of the highest protein providers in the bean world containing about 14g of protein per cup. Lima beans are a very good source of folate; one cup contains 40% of the recommended daily value. Lentils help stabilize blood sugar which is essential in supporting kidney and adrenal function. Healthy kidneys and adrenals are a vital part of your hormonal health.

**Yellow (Garbanzo):** One cup of chickpeas contains 84% of your daily requirement of manganese! Manganese is required for the production of sex hormones and has been proven to reduce PMS-related mood swings and cramps. Chickpeas are also a great plant source of choline, which plays an important role in fetal and infant brain development.

**\*\*Soybeans:** Soybeans are the most difficult beans to digest. People traditionally ate baby soybeans (edamame), made tofu, or took the time to ferment the soybeans to make tempeh, miso and tamari. These are the best ways to consume soy for most people, unless they have problems with fermented foods. However most soy is over-processed and over-consumed in this country and it is one of the most genetically engineered crops, so it is important to get organic and only consume small amounts.