We all know that “food is medicine” – but what about our beverage choices? Because endometriosis is associated with high estrogen levels, research continues to explore how our lifestyle can help moderate and balance our hormones.

One of the first questions is “Can I drink alcohol?”

Some research has found that alcohol consumption was higher in groups of women suffering from endometriosis. However, this does not indicate that alcohol had a causal effect, as several studies have found no connections. If you are living with endometriosis, here are some key considerations:

- Alcohol may increase estrogen levels in the body. How? Our liver will refocus its efforts on metabolizing alcohol, which could slow its clearance of estrogen. Alcohol may also increase the conversion of testosterone to additional estrogen in the body. The amount of alcohol that impacts this process is unclear and varies between women. The research to date indicates that heavy drinking (3 or more drinks per day) could be detrimental. However, a recent post by Endometriosis Foundation of America clarifies that “if you choose to forego that Cosmopolitan at your pal’s wedding, or a glass of wine with dinner, it may, after all, have little to do with thwarting an endo episode.” Best advice – don’t stress if you want to mindfully savor a cocktail on special occasions.

“What about soda and lemonade?”

- Minimize the sugary drinks this summer. Our hormone balance is just that – a balance between many hormones. A surge of sugar will cause our bodies to release another hormone, insulin. This is a natural response, however wide swings (especially the roller coaster effect associated with high sugar drinks) can worsen estrogen dominance. Explore fruit-infused water with fresh herbs for a refreshing alternative.

“Why is water beneficial?”

- Up to 60% of our bodies are made up of water. Our digestive system, notably the kidneys, requires adequate hydration to naturally detoxify our bodies. Plus, hydration supports consistent bowel movements – which prevent estrogen from being reabsorbed from the colon. The Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine recommends 91 ounces of total water a day. This includes water from all beverages and foods. Because most of us consume about 20% of our water needs from food, we have ~73 ounces, or 9 cups of fluids, to go.

For more support and a personalized plan, consider meeting with Oakdale ObGyn’s registered dietitian, Kimberly Plessel. For more information or to schedule a consultation, call 763-587-7000.