Hormones are an important, yet mysterious, part of the body. How do they work?

**THE HORMONE PROCESS**

1. Glands in the endocrine system give a hormone a job to do.
2. That hormone travels through the bloodstream to get to its assignment.
3. The hormone carries out a task—anything from controlling metabolism to regulating salt.

**KEY PLAYERS**

There are dozens of hormones in the body, all with important roles. Here are seven worth knowing:

- **TESTOSTERONE**
  - In men, helps develop male sexual characteristics. For everyone, protects bone health.

- **ESTROGEN**
  - In women, is responsible for sexual characteristics and reproduction. For everyone, protects bone health.

- **SEROTONIN**
  - Stabilizes mood and assists cells in the body in communicating with each other. Affects anxiety, focus and feelings of well-being.

- **INSULIN**
  - Allows cells to absorb sugar in the blood and breaks down fat and protein.

- **PROGESTERONE**
  - Regulates a woman’s menstrual cycle and prepares the uterus to be fertilized. Helps maintain pregnancies and gets the breasts ready to produce milk.

- **MELATONIN**
  - Signals to the body when it is time to sleep and wake up.

- **THYROID**
  - Controls metabolism. Affects nervous system activity, brain development and how the body uses energy.

**KEEP IN MIND:**
Even a small change in a hormone can make a big difference. They are that powerful.