

Bio-identical Hormones

Progesterone, Testosterone and the Estrogens (Estradiol, Estrone and Estriol) play important roles in the well-being of women's health. These hormones are found in an intricate, natural balance. However, sometimes that balance is disturbed. Some of the conditions that unbalance the natural harmony include peri-menopause and other natural cycle changes, oophorectomy and other surgical procedures, exposure to pesticides and xeno-estrogens, and even stress. Hormonal imbalance may manifest as hot flashes, thin or dry skin, loss of hair, loss of libido, weight gain (especially in the waist), and sleep disturbances.

The traditional response from physicians was to treat with a single estrogen (estradiol) or use a mixture of estrogens derived from horse urine. Added to this was a synthetic form of progesterone (called a progestin), but only for certain women. These traditional responses do not address the natural balance of estrogens and progesterone found in all women, and current studies suggest that the foreign agents typically used may, in fact, be harmful.

A woman naturally makes estriol as the primary estrogen (roughly 80% of the estrogen is found as estriol). Estriol has been shown in studies to have positive cardiovascular and antineoplastic (anticancer) effects. But when a manufacturer allows only estradiol (or a mixture of estradiol and foreign metabolites) in their product, a woman is lacking in the principle form of estrogen that may be the most beneficial. Natural Bio-Identical hormone treatment includes this important estrogen, and balances the other two forms (estradiol and estrone) in a way that reflects what naturally occurs.

Natural estrogens along with natural progesterone have tremendous advantages over the nonnatural and synthetic dosage forms. Advantages include: lowering triglycerides, less tendency for blood clot formation (using the topical cream dosage form), and less likely to increase blood pressure. Furthermore, when a cream is used, the compounded estrogen or progesterone is so rapidly absorbed with lower metabolism that a reduced dose can be used. Natural progesterone creams are also beneficial for their ability to reduce fibrocystic breasts (when applied directly to the breast tissue).

For women who want to achieve a natural balance with their hormones, there are physicians who are trained in the use of natural Bio-Identical hormones. There are compounding pharmacies that use pure hormones that originate from a natural product (yam or soy) that are then converted to an identical hormone that a woman's body naturally produces. These are then purified, and sent to the pharmacy as pure ingredients (99.9% or higher) that are USP-grade (United States Pharmacopeia; the same quality needed for a manufacturer).

Because these are pharmacy-grade hormones that are compounded by a pharmacist into the final dosage form, Bio-Identical Hormone Replacement is available only by a prescription. The patient, physician and pharmacist then work together to maximize the patient's therapeutic success in eliminating unwanted symptoms and achieving a natural hormonal balance.

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