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Female Hormone Replacement

We age because our hormones decline; our hormones don't decline because we age

Symptoms of Menopause/Perimenopause

Menopause (the cessation of menstrual periods for 12 months) and Perimenopause, the stage of gradually falling hormone levels prior to menopause affect about 70% of women, some more severely than others. Symptoms begin to occur when a woman's ovaries decrease and eventually stop producing the hormones necessary to maintain the normal monthly cycle. The fluctuating and eventual marked decrease of estrogen and progesterone lead to symptoms which include hot flashes, mood swings, night sweats, irregular periods, loss of libido and vaginal dryness just to name the most common ones. Other symptoms include fatigue, hair loss, sleep disorders, memory lapses, weight gain, bloating, depression, anxiety, irritability, headaches, osteoporosis, joint pain and itchy skin. Besides alleviating some or all of these symptoms, hormone replacement can have long lasting benefits for a woman's health.

The main "players"

Estrogen

Progesterone

Testosterone

DHEA

Estrogen functions

- increase metabolic rate
- improve insulin sensitivity (less prone to diabetes)
- helps maintain muscle mass
- increases deep sleep
- maintains arterial elasticity
- maintains skin collagen (increases skin thickness)
- maintains memory
- decreases blood pressure
- reduces risk of heart disease
- enhances energy
- improves mood
- increases concentration
- increases sexual interest
- decreases depression, irritability and anxiety

Estrogen imbalance

Low Estrogen

- bone loss
- no period
- decreased sexual interest
- dry skin
- vaginal dryness
- increased risk of heart disease

High Estrogen

- increased risk of endometrial (uterine) cancer
- heavy periods
- uterine fibroids
- increased breast density
- increased risk of breast cancer

Progesterone Functions

- hormone of pregnancy
- balances estrogen and counters its proliferative effects
- decreases breast cancer risk
- neuro protective (promotes healthy nerves and brain)
- anti inflammatory

-precursor to many hormones

Progesterone Imbalance

Low (associated with stress)

-PMS

-Infertility

-Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: obesity, irregular or no periods, acne, excessive effects of male hormones

Benefits of Bio Identical Hormone Replacement

DHEA

A steroid hormone secreted primarily by the adrenal glands. It is a precursor to the sex hormones and is partially converted to testosterone in females. There are no unique symptoms of deficiency. It acts opposite cortisol and helps memory, depression, and improves cardiovascular health.

Testosterone

Testosterone in women is important for a sense of well being, bone density, muscle strength, body composition and libido. Low testosterone is associated with anxiety, lack of self confidence, decreased bone and muscle mass, fatigue, memory loss and increased abdominal fat.

Is Hormone Replacement Safe?

We not only want to alleviate the suffering of menopause and give a woman her energy and femininity back, but we want to do it in a safe manner. It is of no use if the side effects of the treatment are worse than the disease.

Many people (including physicians) erroneously associate hormone replacement therapy with the medications used in the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study from 2002 that led to the wholesale cessation of hormone replacement by many doctors due to the findings that the drugs that were being used were leading to blood clots, strokes and breast cancer increases in the test subjects. The medications that were used were estrogen and progestin (not progesterone). The synthetic progestin led to the problems associated with the hormone replacement. When estrogen alone was evaluated there was a decrease in breast cancer, heart disease, stroke and dementia. There was no change in mortality compared to controls.

A French study of 54, 548 women for 3 years put on different forms of hormone replacement found little to or no increase in risk in breast cancer when estrogens were used alone or with extended release progesterone.

The answer to the problem of safety is to use an estrogen and progesterone that is exactly like the ones found in your body. Bio identical.

Bio identical hormones have been studied extensively and found to be safe.

What are Bio Identical Hormones?

Bio identical hormones have exactly the same chemical makeup as the naturally occurring hormones found in your body. They are usually extracted from a plant source that naturally contains them. They are not synthetic in that they have not been made in the lab to mimic the effects of the naturally occurring hormones that you have. Because they are exactly like your natural hormones they cannot be patented and therefore are less attractive to big pharmaceutical companies that make money from drugs that they develop. They are also just as safe as the hormones that you naturally have.

How are hormones taken?

Typically women begin by taking a mixture of two estrogens (Estriol and Estradiol) in a transdermal gel that is rubbed on the skin in the morning after showering. It literally takes two minutes.

Progesterone is taken at night in the form of a pill that slowly dissolves, the products of which are breast and uterus protective as well as aid in sleep induction and maintenance.

DHEA (a hormone precursor) is taken orally as well. Some of the DHEA becomes testosterone. If the testosterone level is low after a few months then low dose testosterone may be added as well.

The effects of hormone replacement are felt within a week and the benefits continue as you take them. Adjustments are made once or twice per year as your body becomes accustomed to the normalization of your hormones.

Side Effects

You may notice temporary anxiety, weight gain due to water retention and temporary breast tenderness for a short period. Adjustments in dosage are made if they persist.

Lab Tests Before Treatment

CBC

FreeT3, T4, TSH (thyroid function tests)

Chem 20

Fasting glucose

HgbA1c

Estradiol

Progesterone

LH/FSH (Pituitary hormones)

Lab Tests During Treatment

Estradiol

Progesterone

Testosterone

Cortisol

Delivery Methods

Estrogen: Transdermal gel applied in the morning (may also be injected or taken in the form of a pellet inserted beneath the skin 3-4 times per year)

Progesterone: Pill taken at night

DHEA: Pill taken in morning

Testosterone: Transdermal gel (may also be injected or taken in the form of a pellet inserted beneath the skin 3-4 times per year)

Costs

Evaluation

Initial consultation/evaluation: \$350

Follow up evaluations: \$150

A statement will be provided allowing you to submit to your insurance company for reimbursement

Lab work

Tests can be billed to your insurance. Forms will be provided to take to the lab

Medication

A nationally recognized compounding pharmacy is used to custom blend your medicine.

They will help you determine what your insurance will cover. You will be happily surprised at how little the cost will be over time and how much better you will feel.