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Estrogen and Progesterone

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are natural estrogen and progesterone produced?

'Natural' means biochemically identical. In other words, the hormone you replace is identical to the hormone made naturally in your body. Many natural estrogens are now produced in the laboratory similar to how synthetic estrogens are made. In addition, natural estrogen and progesterone can be produced naturally in yams. These natural ingredients can then be extracted and processed by special compounding pharmacies into a capsule or tablet. These hormones are identical in molecular structure to our own natural hormones even though the natural base is from yams. Natural hormones should be prescribed by a physician and made by a reputable pharmacy. Over the counter products cannot be counted on for reliability.

How do these differ from the synthetic estrogens and progestins?

Hormones act as a key that must fit perfectly at the cell site lock opening doors and allowing beneficial things to happen inside the cell. Synthetic estrogen and progesterone are produced in a laboratory in an attempt to elicit the same response as your naturally produced hormones. They are chemically altered so they can be patented by pharmaceutical companies. Since these synthetics are not identical in chemical structure to our own natural hormones, the shape of the key has been changed, and therefore may adversely stimulate receptor sites that lead to side effects. The fit of a natural hormone is perfect- it acts as an identical hormone replacement. In other words, the key is made to fit the lock perfectly.

What are the problems with synthetic estrogen replacement?

When first developed, synthetic estrogens were well received because they offered the benefits of estrogen replacement- fighting osteoporosis and heart disease. They also helped to reduce the symptoms associated with menopause. However, the long-term results have shown that these synthetic hormones were also eliciting a metabolic response that was not obvious at the start. In some patients, synthetic estrogens contributed to the development of breast and uterine cancer.

Why doesn't my gynecologist prescribe natural hormones?

Any substance made naturally either in nature or your body (such as vitamins and hormones) is protected by federal regulation. These substances may not be patented and therefore their production is not focused on by major pharmaceutical manufacturers. Much of what physicians learn in medical school is from studies produced by pharmaceutical companies, who have conducted an expensive study to prove the effectiveness of a certain medication. More than

likely, your physician was taught only about the synthetic products in medical school. Natural hormones do not come under specific brand names and require more self-education and experience in prescribing and monitoring.

What are the signs of low Progesterone?

Progesterone is responsible for balancing estrogen and the female reproductive cycle. Deficiency results in symptoms of PMS, water retention, bloating, tender breasts, headaches, cramping, irritability and mood swings.

What are the health benefits of Progesterone?

Research shows natural progesterone stimulates bone building osteoblasts, thus providing protection against osteoporosis. Progesterone reduces the mitotic change in breast and uterine tissue, thereby protecting against cancer. Progesterone is responsible for the physiologic equilibrium with estrogen. It should be used for treating menopausal symptoms, PMS, and osteoporosis. At menopause, women lose both estrogen and progesterone. It only makes sense to replace them both together, building back what was once naturally perfectly balanced in the body.

How does one know whether they are receiving adequate amounts of replacement hormones?

Blood tests determine deficiencies. Blood tests also determine whether adequate replacement has been prescribed. All people will absorb, assimilate, and respond to hormones differently from others. If the proper level is not achieved, then the full benefit of hormone replacement is not realized.

What if I've been taking synthetic hormones?

There are now new types or methods of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) offered because of new data from years of research. Synthetic estrogens have been associated with adverse effects which are unacceptable to many women. Natural or plant derived hormones avoid these problems. If your physician does not know how to prescribe this for you, read and become educated through a physician who prescribes natural hormones to see if these are right for you.

Should I take estrogen and progesterone or not?

The risks of not taking hormone replacement therapy include elevated cholesterol, heart disease, strokes, osteoporosis, depression, menopausal symptoms, and Alzheimer's Disease. The adverse effects of swelling, weight gain, and breast cancer can be eliminated in almost all women by using the natural estrogen and progesterone. Overall health and well-being are improved, long term survival is greatly improved and the quality of life greatly enhanced. The medical community has long recognized the long-term benefits of Hormone Replacement Therapy particularly in preventing heart attacks, strokes, and osteoporosis fractures, all of which result in over 95% of the major cause of death in post-menopausal women.

What about Raloxifene?

Raloxifene (Evista) is of a new class of drugs called estrogen blockers. These anti-estrogens were designed to block estrogen and at the same time stimulate receptors in bones and vessels. This has researchers trying to make estrogen blockers into estrogen replacements without the side effects. Studies show that these compounds are effective in increasing bone mass and preventing heart disease. However, there is little data and no long-term studies. In fact, these estrogen blockers are related to Tamoxifen, which has been shown to stimulate uterine cancer. Patients taking Evista must be especially careful because their chance of forming blood clots increases. Also, estrogen blockers do not relieve any of the side effects of menopause- only estrogen and progesterone relieve these side effects.

