

Perimenopause And Menopause: Should We Be Without Hormones?

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Just as vitamins and minerals decline with age, the organs in women and men alike produce declining hormones with age. These include estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, thyroid hormones, growth hormone, melatonin, DHEA, brain hormones and the list goes on.

In women, **synthetic** hormone replacement (Hormonal Restorative Medicine) dominated the scene for the last several decades until three years ago when media attention was called to the risks of synthetic hormone replacement (Hormonal Restorative Medicine). That week, many of my patients who were on hormone replacement (Hormonal Restorative Medicine) stopped taking them and started feeling miserable.

It is known that if we do not replace hormones, our brain, bones, heart, vessels, joints, skin, mood and most importantly, quality of Life, decline more rapidly. But what are the options? Should bio-identical hormones be considered instead of synthetic ones?

What Are Bio-Identical Hormones?

Bio-identical hormones are rapidly becoming popular among women who do not want to suffer anymore. The body does not know the difference between the hormone it makes and bio-identical hormones, because they are exactly identical in molecular structure to the hormones which are made in the body. They are compounded from yam and soy by removing and adding extra molecules so they are recognized by your cells and tissues as your own. Just Like Humulin insulin instead of pork insulin.

Synthetic hormones have extra molecules which are not recognized by the body. They are not broken down by our body's enzymes and they may stay in the body for long periods of time as toxins and carcinogens. Although, soy and yam hormones, which are available over the counter, have many health benefits; they are barely recognized by human estrogen and progesterone receptors. Therefore, they do not effectively reverse or treat the hormone deficiency.

How Are They Used?

Bio-identical hormones are compounded by prescription only. Healthcare providers evaluate hormone requirements through clinical symptoms, and possibly, blood or saliva tests. The prescription is tailored to the exact amount of each hormone needed for the individual's balance. Hormones, which are initially evaluated for replacement, include the three estrogens (estrone, estradiol, estriol), progesterone and testosterone. These can be taken orally, by patch or as a cream. Additional hormones which should be considered include melatonin, DHEA, thyroid hormone and growth hormone.

What Are the Benefits?

Bio-identical hormone replacement (Hormonal Restorative Medicine) will significantly reduce symptoms associated with hormonal decline before, during and after menopause including hot flashes, vaginal dryness, skin thinning, memory loss, concentration loss, anxiety, depression, weight gain, irritability, fatigue, insomnia, decreased sex drive, urine loss, muscle weakness and joint pain. In addition to symptom relief, Bio-identical hormones protect your brain, heart, vessels, bones, skin, hair follicles and muscles from decline. Most patients who start on bio-identical hormones feel emotionally and physically better within two weeks.

What Is The Data?

So far, there is more data on synthetic hormones than bio-identical hormones because synthetic hormones are patented and drug companies pay for the studies. Bio-identical hormones are generic to the human body like vitamins. They can not be patented and therefore drug companies have not been interested in footing the bill thus far. We do know that bio-identical hormones have been used in Europe for over 60 years and studies show that they are both safe and effective.

They have been shown to protect against heart disease, high cholesterol, osteoporosis, and mental decline. They do not increase the risk of breast cancer, and, in fact, there is data showing that they may protect against breast cancer. At precise doses that exactly replace your body's deficiency, there are no known side effects. They have the exact same action on the body as our own hormones.

Should You Take Them?

Some ask, am I safe taking hormones. I ask how safe are you without your hormones? The cells in your brain, heart, vessels, bones, skin, hair follicles and muscles all have receptors for hormones. As the hormone levels dwindle, all these cells and tissues lose stimulation, leading to a rapid decline and advance of degenerative diseases. If you would correct a vitamin or mineral deficiency with bio-identical vitamin or mineral replacement, you should consider replacing a declining hormone.

Bio-identical hormones are an excellent safe option for both men and women.