



## Safe Hormone Therapy for Women

### Bio-identical Hormones, Yes! *Designer Hormones, NO!*

by Lane Sebring, M.D.

**H**ormone replacement has become a very complicated issue, but it is governed by a few simple principles. By understanding and following these principles, you will be able to determine if hormone replacement is appropriate for you. If it seems a contradiction that the same hormones that help build strong bodies when we are young, and help us maintain our health during our middle years, suddenly turn on us to promote cancer, heart attack, and stroke when we attempt to maintain their levels by supplementation in our later years, then you will be able to appreciate the information presented here.

The first principle is simply that bio-identical hormones (the exact same molecules that your body has been making since before your birth: estradiol, testosterone, and progesterone) do not cause the deadly side effects associated with hormone replacement. In fact, when bio-identical hormones are used, especially through the skin as a cream or gel, there is a reduction in the risks associated with hormone replacement when compared to women who do not use hormones.

The second principle is that the human hormones used in bio-identical hormone replacement therapy can no longer be patented, and therefore offer little profit incentive to the pharmaceutical industry. As a result, the published studies that show some bad risks associated with hormone replacement therapy are done on synthetic, non-human hormones that do offer a profit to the drug companies.

**Hormone replacement should respect our biology, and only be done with bio-identical hormones. The benefits for most women far outweigh the risks**

Objective medical research has shown that bio-identical hormones given to humans in human amounts to replace deficiencies, especially when administered through the skin, lead to either an improvement or cause no change in virtually every measurable parameter.

The problem with modern hormone replacement, which is more accurately called hormone substitution is that it utilizes molecules that have been altered quite dramatically. This can lead to very different and

unintended actions on the body. For example, when altered by moving just two hydrogen atoms, the testosterone molecule becomes estradiol, a female hormone.

Estrogen and testosterone have very different functions in the body. When the pharmaceutical industry makes major changes in hormones in order to secure patents, and then sells them as hormone “replacement,” nothing but trouble can result.

Another factor to consider is that there are two different pathways in the liver where hormones are broken down to be eliminated by the body. Simply put, one pathway is good and one is bad. In large amounts, the breakdown products produced in the bad pathway are strongly associated with an increased risk of estrogen-related breast, colon, and uterine cancers. High amounts of the breakdown products produced in the good pathway, it has been shown, actually result in a decreased risk of these cancers, even when compared to women who are not taking hormone replacement.

**I**t is vital in hormone replacement therapy to not introduce foreign hormones

into the body. The hormones that are taken should be broken down in the good pathway and not the bad one. There is actually a lab test to determine the ratio of the breakdown products in the good pathway versus the bad. Eating cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and Brussel spouts, or taking indole-3-carbinol (I3C), which is the critical molecule contained in them, increases the enzymes in the good pathway so that it becomes the larger funnel. By having these items in her diet, a woman can ensure that her hormones move away from the bad pathway and that they are broken down in the good one.

If a woman takes hormones orally in pill form, she must be given ten times the amount needed, because 90% will be broken down in the liver before reaching the bloodstream. This overload strategy of the pharmaceutical industry might sell more pills, but it necessarily causes much more of these hormones to be pushed down the bad pathway. Hormone cream applied to the skin is a far more intelligent and healthy method of hormone delivery.

The increased risk of heart attack and stroke caused by blood clots associated with hormone replacement is not the result of using bio-identical hormones, but of using a synthetic altered progesterone

in the form of medroxy-progesterone acetate, the typical progesterone offered by physicians (Provera and Prempro). When this hormone passes through the liver it increased clotting factors, thus resulting in an increased risk for heart attack and stroke.

**P**aradoxically, medroxy-progesterone acetate actually acts as a progesterone blocker in most tissues, thus not increasing bone density, but decreasing it; not decreasing fibrocystic breast disease, but increasing it; not promoting a calming effect on the mind, but promoting agitation and anxiety; not reducing the risk of breast cancer, but actually increasing it.

Considerable medical research indicates that bio-identical hormone replacement results in an improvement in cholesterol and increases insulin sensitivity, which reduces the risk of diabetes and of gaining fat around one's middle. Bio-identical hormones are stronger than other prescription medications for treating osteoporosis. There is evidence they reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease by 86% if taken for more than ten years, which is profound considering that 50% of women aged 85 have some form of the disease.

Despite all the research and available literature on bio-

identical hormone replacement, little of it shows up on the major medical journals. Most physicians are therefore completely unaware of the virtues of this treatment option for their patients.

Bio-identical hormone replacement also makes women feel better and have more energy, and reduces mood swings and makes them seem happier, both to themselves and to their spouses. Libido returns or increases. Vaginal dryness resolves. Mental clarity returns. Healing is more rapid. Bladder leakage can be eliminated without surgery. Natural oils come back to the skin. Elasticity of the skin is maintained. Literally, the sparkle comes back to their eyes.

Hormone replacement should respect our biology, and only be done with bio-identical hormones. The benefits for most women far outweigh the risks.

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**Dr. Sebring is a Board Examiner for the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.**

**His practice combines traditional medicines and treatments with nutritional and hormonal supplements, diet, exercise, and relaxation training. The results often drastically improve chronic conditions.**

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