

Bio-identical Hormone Replacement Therapy: Fact and Fiction

Part 3: The Art of Hormone Balancing and Custom Compounded Prescriptions

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Fatigue, mood swings, heavy or irregular periods, weight gain, altered libido... do these sound familiar? If so, you may be suffering from excess estrogen or estrogen dominance. With symptoms like these, it is no wonder estrogen has affectionately been called the “witch” hormone. But let’s not forget the importance of estrogen. Estrogen is the great heart protector and helps maintain healthy cholesterol and blood pressure levels. It plays a role in memory retention, mental clarity and bone health.

As is often true in life, the key is balance. Not only do we need the right amount of estrogen, we also need the right proportions of different types of estrogens, which need to be balanced by adequate progesterone and testosterone levels. There’s no simple equation or even laboratory test that can flawlessly determine what your hormones levels “should” be (but our bodies have ways of communicating when things are out of balance.) Problems can arise when hormone levels are deficient or in excess. While puberty, menopause and andropause are often associated with the effects of imbalanced hormones since they mark life’s transitions when hormone levels are shifting, hormone imbalances can occur during all phases of life.

Symptoms of hormone imbalances show up differently in everyone, and range from mild to intolerable. Supplemental hormones can offer much needed relief and help protect against crippling diseases associated with hormone imbalances (such as heart disease and osteoporosis). But just as our natural hormones exist in a delicate balance, so must hormone therapy. Not surprisingly, no pre-formulated mass marketed hormone product will work for everyone. Contrary to marketing assumptions, one size does *not* fit everyone. That’s why many hormone replacement patients are turning to compounded prescriptions. Working together with the physician and patient, compounding pharmacists are able to combine individualized hormone formulations and adjust to whatever dosing is required. A patient’s unique hormone blend is determined not only by testing blood or saliva hormone levels, but also through assessment of the patient’s symptom picture and health history. As a result, patients receive the maximum benefits of hormone replacement with minimal side effects.

In other words, skillful balancing of bio-identical hormone therapy can provide the important protective benefits of supplemental estrogens while balancing them with progesterone to prevent the sometimes “witchy” signs of estrogen dominance.

For more information about bio-identical hormone replacement therapy and custom compounding hormone prescriptions, please contact Blue Mountain Apothecary for an information packet (443) 535-8691.