

Bio-identical Hormone Replacement Therapy: Fact and Fiction

Part 4: BHRT, not just for women anymore

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Over the past few decades, western medicine has come to a greater understanding of the physiology and symptomology of menopause. Now, similar work is underway to understand the male counterpart of menopause; ANDROPAUSE. Like women, men experience gradual hormonal changes as they age. While this is a normal, natural process, the shifts may lead to surprising side effects that can be disruptive to relationships and daily routine.

As men age, their zinc levels decline, allowing the conversion of testosterone to estrogen to increase, leading to symptoms of classic estrogen dominance. Muscle mass is replaced with fatty tissue, especially around the midsection. Emotionally, men may be more irritable, agitated and intolerant. Lower levels of testosterone are linked to a disinterest in engaging the outside world. Men may become less inclined to travel, even a short distance from their home. They may lose confidence, sex drive and energy to work on projects or career tasks and may be less able to deal with unexpected circumstances. Physical fatigue and muscle weakness are linked to andropause.

Much like menopause, the symptoms men experience vary greatly, and many men may pass through andropause with little or no symptoms. In general, the hormonal shift occurs much more slowly in men than women, so some changes are hardly noticeable until years have passed.

Dietary and lifestyle modifications can manage and support these hormonal shifts. Many men have found that supplemental hormones, in the form of testosterone, can be helpful. As is true of all hormone replacement therapy, patients should seek out bio-identical hormones and avoid mis-matched or synthetic products that are more likely to cause unwanted side effects.

When pursuing hormonal replacement options, men should be aware of the many forms it may take. Intramuscular injections were once the most commonly prescribed form of testosterone. However, these have proven to be inconsistently effective, and do not release a constant level of testosterone into the bloodstream. Our pharmacy prefers either transdermal or sublingual administration techniques. Transdermal creams are applied topically to rotating sites and are made with bases that actively transport the medication through the skin. Sublingual troches (a lozenge similar in texture to a hard candy) are placed under the tongue where it is readily absorbed while it disintegrates.

To learn more about bio-identical hormone replacement therapy, please visit our website <BlueMountainRx.com> or contact us for an information packet.