

FREQUENT QUESTIONS ABOUT NATURAL (BIO-IDENTICAL) HORMONES

WHAT IS A NATURAL (BIO-IDENTICAL) HORMONE?

A natural (bio-identical) hormone is defined as a hormone that is IDENTICAL in chemical structure to the hormone produced by the human body, regardless of the source.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF NATURAL (BIO-IDENTICAL) HORMONES?

Natural (bio-identical) hormones are obtained from sterol analogues found in many varieties of plants, primarily soybean and wild yam. These estrogens (phytoestrogens) and progesterone-like compounds are then transformed in the lab to the human identical natural hormones.

WHAT ARE THE COMPOUNDED NATURAL HORMONES?

- Estriol
- Estradiol
- Estrone
- Progesterone
- Testosterone
- DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone)
- Hydrocortisone
- Pregnenolone

WHAT ARE BI-ESTROGEN AND TRI-ESTROGEN FORMULATIONS?

- Bi-estrogen = 20% Estradiol + 80% Estriol
- Tri-estrogen = 10% Estrone + 10% Estradiol + 80% Estriol

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ESTROGENS

Estrogen is not one hormone but a group of similar hormones of varying degrees of activity, all being made by the ovaries. The three most important hormones of this estrogen group are Estradiol (E2) which is more potent than Estrone (E1) which in turn is more potent than Estriol (E3).

WHAT DOES ESTROGEN DO?

Estrogens are the female hormones produced by the ovaries that are responsible for the development and maintenance of the female reproductive system, secondary sex characteristics, favorable effects on blood cholesterol and lipid profiles and slowing the progression of osteoporosis. The ovaries throughout a woman's reproductive years secrete estrogens. Special estrogen receptors are located in the breasts, the lining of the uterus, the cervix and the vagina.

WHAT IS MENOPAUSE?

Strictly speaking, menopause means the end of your menstrual cycle. But more commonly it refers to the 5-10 years when the ovaries gradually stop producing eggs and there is a progressive decline in hormone production, most notably estrogen.

WHAT DOES ESTROGEN HORMONE REPLACEMENT DO?

With the onset of menopause (peri-menopause) the ovaries produce less and less estrogen. During this time, many women experience vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes, night sweats), irregular menses, mood swings and vaginal dryness, burning and itching, urinary tract infections and emotional changes such as depression and irritability. **Estrogen replacement therapy can help relieve these symptoms as well as lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and Alzheimer's disease, improve blood lipid profiles and maintain bladder and urinary tract function.**

WHAT ARE TRIPLE ESTROGEN AND BI-ESTROGEN COMBINATIONS?

Triple estrogen is a combination hormone product containing 80% estriol, 10% estrone and 10% estradiol. Bi-estrogen is a combination of 80% estriol and 20% estradiol. Many doctors prefer to use these forms of estrogen replacement because they use more estriol and less estrone and estradiol. Estriol is a weaker estrogen and is thought to be less stimulatory to breast and uterine tissue.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF ESTROGENS?

Side effects of estrogen therapy include nausea, stomach upset, bloating, headache, dizziness and light-headedness. These effects may be temporary and self-limiting. Other adverse reactions may include breakthrough bleeding, breast-swelling, breast pain, fluid retention and weight gain. Do not use natural estrogens during pregnancy.

DO THESE NATURAL (BIO-IDENTICAL) HORMONES REQUIRE A PRESCRIPTION?

Yes, they do. You will need to consult with your physician regarding hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Follow your Pharmacist's instructions. Oral preparations may be taken with food. If you miss a dose, take a dose as soon as you remember. Do not take another dose if it is almost time for your next scheduled dose. Instead, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double-up on your dose!