

THE FOUNDATION HEALTH FORUM

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What They're Still Not Telling You About Menopause, and How to Treat it Naturally

Each day millions of U.S. women between the ages of 30 and 55 experience the effects of menopause. Some of the symptoms include fatigue, hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and even depression. Because new, safer therapies are available today to minimize discomfort and the symptoms of menopause, this issue of **The Foundation Health Forum** newsletter will explore the symptoms and causes of menopause, and provide pertinent, timely information on new approaches women can undertake to restore their body's natural balance.



female body and ease the symptoms of menopause for most women.

Whether you are years away or just about to enter menopause, there are simple actions you can take now to make the change of life easier when it does arrive. These positive, simple steps can help boost energy and the enjoyment of life, yet also protect loved ones against many leading illnesses, including cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Not Your Mother's Menopause



U.S. women now enter menopause with pre-existing hormone imbalances unlike never before. Why? A generation of women has been using estrogen-mimicking birth control pills daily. As a result, they are now experiencing the long-term side effects of estrogen mimickers to their systems.

Coupled with this, food manufacturers now commonly apply estrogen mimickers to the produce and meats that you and I consume daily. How? Many of the herbicides and pesticides in use today have chemical steroid ring structures that closely resemble the structure of estrogens. When these artificial estrogens enter our blood, they bind to and stimulate our cells' estrogen receptors. This results in greater estrogen activity and the suppression of another important female hormone, progesterone.

When hormones are already out of balance, women feel the effects of menopause stronger, and these effects have the potential to create serious health consequences. Fortunately, there are natural ways to restore hormonal balance to the

Don't Fall into the "Hormone" Drug Trap

Unfortunately, the solutions offered by most doctors do not reverse the symptoms of menopause, and in many cases, may actually increase health risks. If a woman chooses to seek medical treatment for her menopausal symptoms, most doctors will likely offer to prescribe something called "hormone replacement therapy" (HRT) to make the transition into menopause easier.

While HRT may sound appealing in theory, it's important to note that HRT is not comprised of "real" human hormones. Real hormones occur naturally in humans and therefore drug companies can't patent them. Instead, conventional HRT commonly uses **synthetic** drugs developed to mimic human hormones.

Moreover, these drugs are not designed for the "replacement" of human hormones. Prescription drugs that mimic hormones are experimenting with delicate systems within the female body. And like many drugs, they have troubling side effects that must be taken into consideration before using them.

Currently, three of the most commonly prescribed drugs for HRT include Provera, Premarin, and Prempro. The following chart outlines their risks and the chemicals used.

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Common Prescription HRTs and the Chemicals Used

Brand Name	Chemical	Side Effects
Provera	Medroxyprogesterone Acetate	Increased risk of blood clots and breast cancer
Premarin (from Pregnant mare urine)	Conjugated Estrogen Derivatives	Increased risks of endometrial cancer, heart attack, and stroke
Prempro	Conjugated Estrogen plus Medroxyprogesterone Acetate	Increased risk of breast cancer, heart attack, stroke, and dementia

Serious health risks for these prescription drugs include:

- A 24% increase in heart disease risk.
- A 31% increase in risk of stroke.
- A 100% increase in risk of blood clots.
- A 24% increase in breast cancer risk.
- A 76% increase in risk of dementia.¹

Symptoms of side effects include but are not limited to:

- Bloating
- Nausea
- Aches and soreness
- Mood swings
- Headaches
- Yeast infections

Restoring Estrogen Calms Symptoms

Fewer women today have normal estrogen levels going into menopause because estrogen mimics are all around us. Plastics, detergents, cosmetics, herbicides, and pesticides all contain chemicals that mimic estrogen within the body. The hormones given to poultry and livestock to fatten them up are another source of these estrogen mimics. Studies implicate environmental estrogens increase the risk of breast and other reproductive cancers for women.²

Are environmental estrogens wreaking havoc on the development of our children? A generation ago, young women entered puberty between 12 and 14 years of age. Today, girls enter puberty between eight and 11 years of age and look more physically mature than their grandmothers did a generation ago.

Additionally, women who take synthetic hormones, specifically birth control pills, may contribute to creating estrogen and progesterone imbalances in the body. If the delicate balance between estrogen and progesterone is not maintained, women can experience mood swings, fatigue, hair loss, depression and weight gain.

As women enter menopause, the three forms of natural estrogen created by the body — **Estriol, Estrone and Estradiol** — continue to shift their balance. If this imbalance is not properly treated, it can contribute to the potential risks noted above. Now, let's take a look at the natural estrogens created by the body.

Three Forms of Estrogen

Type	Natural Proportion	Role in the Body
Estriol	80% of total	Helps protect against cancers, promotes healthy skin, prevents hot flashes
Estrone	10% of total	Metabolite of estradiol: Functions similarly to estradiol, but not as potent
Estradiol	10% of total	Most potent and the most responsible for sexual development in puberty and is associated with cancer risks

Of the three types of estrogen produced by the body, 80 percent is estriol. Estriol helps keep women's skin healthy, it protects against cancer, and it preserves memory and healthy brain function.³ Prescription HRT drugs do not increase estriol at all.

Estrone and estradiol are more powerful estrogens. An excess of either of these estrogens is associated with an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancers, as well as cancer of the endometrial lining of the uterus. HRT drugs can actually increase the levels of estrone or estradiol in the body, making the body more susceptible to disease. Fortunately, there are steps women can implement to restore the delicate balance of the natural estrogen levels in their body.



Restore Your Body's Natural Balance

Cruciferous vegetables contain nutrients and natural compounds that help your body to metabolize estrogen. They help to reduce estrogen dominance and to restore a

healthy balance between the three types of estrogen.

Eating at least three servings of vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and asparagus each week gives your body diindolylmethane (DIM). DIM is a compound that helps your liver to metabolize excess estrogen. In one study, people taking a DIM supplement had more estrogen metabolites in their urine — this demonstrated that more estrogen was being broken down in the body.⁴

DIM creates another compound called indole-3-carbinol (I3C). I3C protects your cells against cancers. It interferes with your body's receptors for estradiol, the most aggressive form of estrogen.⁵ It "tones down" existing estrogen receptors, which can help minimize menopausal symptoms.

At *The Wellness Research Foundation* we've seen good results when women take **herbal supplements** like **Dong Quai** during menopause. Dong Quai is a traditional Chinese herbal remedy used for centuries to relieve menopausal symptoms. It reduces hot flashes and can improve the libido. Dong Quai works by blocking estrogen receptors. This helps to harmonize estrogen with other hormones in the body.

The herbal remedy **Black Cohosh** is the best we've found for treating hot flashes and mood swings that result from falling estrogen levels. Like Dong Quai, it also contains phytoestrogens that bind with the body's estrogen receptors. However, one side effect associated with this herb is hypertension, so women should speak to a medical practitioner prior to using it. In clinical studies Black Cohosh improves menopause symptoms by 60–70% without raising the risk of breast cancer.⁶

In addition to supplements and food choices, you can help prevent hormone imbalances through the following **new habits and activities**:

- Choose a good water filter that can remove estrogens from shower and drinking water.
- Whenever possible, choose organic, hormone-free meats from animals that have been fed a natural diet. Trim the fat from your cuts of meats before cooking. The fat is where excess hormones are stored.
- Store your food in glass or ceramic containers rather than plastic. Never reheat food in plastic. Xenoestrogens leech out of plastic more easily when the plastic is heated.
- Eat fiber rich foods such as whole grains, fruit, legumes and vegetables, which help bind and excrete estrogen metabolites from the body.
- Tune up your liver to aid its ability to metabolize estrogen by using Vitamin B6 and Vitamin C.

The Other Female Hormone: Progesterone

Progesterone is the overlooked sister hormone to estrogen. During menopause your progesterone production falls to almost zero. The gap between estrogen and progesterone causes many of the symptoms of menopause.

Some HRT drugs include progestins and synthetic hormones that act like progesterone. Taking estrogen alone can cause endometrial cancer, but progestin protects against that. Unfortunately, a recent study reveals other health risks from progestins:⁷

- Heart attack and heart disease risks climbed 24%.
- Blood clots in the lungs and legs rose 47%.
- Breast cancer risk rose 24% with progestin.

On the other hand, natural progesterone, as found in women's bodies, provides numerous health benefits without the risks of the drugs:⁸

- Helps metabolize fat better.
- Assists thyroid hormone action.
- Boosts your mood.
- Helps regulate blood sugar.
- Boosts the libido.
- Keeps blood clotting agents at normal levels.
- Protects against some cancers.
- Builds bones.
- Does not increase breast cancer risks.

Moreover, natural progesterone does not increase breast cancer risks. Replacing natural progesterone provides a number of benefits. It keeps women's bones strong, balances the

emotions, and regulates the blood sugar and the sleep cycle. And, it's easy to replace.

Progesterone creams with real progesterone are available over-the-counter. To use, rub a small amount on the abdomen each day for fourteen days mid-cycle if you have not been through menopause. If a woman has been through menopause, she can use progesterone cream everyday. To learn more, speak with your doctor about the benefits of progesterone cream.

The herb **Chaste Berry (Vitex)** gently stimulates and balances progesterone production, which helps harmonize overall hormone levels. Studies show chaste berry brings relief to symptoms like hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and night sweats.⁹



Bio-Identical Hormones Naturally Balance Women's Bodies

Women can also work with their doctors to naturally balance their hormones with bio-identical hormones. Bio-identical hormones are “real” and “natural” to women's bodies. Bio-identical hormones are derived from a type of yam that is rich in substances that are

easily altered into the natural estrogens (estriol, estrone, and estradiol) and progesterone, which are produced in women's bodies.

To learn more about them:

1. Tell your doctor you would like to try bio-identical hormones. Ask for assistance. Request a blood sample and a hormone panel. Don't forget to inquire about the fees and estimates for insurance coverage.
2. Review the hormone panel results together. Discuss what hormones you have an excess of and where you are deficient. Ask your doctor to write a bio-identical hormone prescription for you to take to a compounding pharmacist. A compounding pharmacist is licensed to blend natural hormones based on your doctor's prescription. These hormones are identical to what your body produces. You will receive a prescription of all-natural hormones tailored exactly to your body's needs.
3. To find a compounding pharmacist, go to The International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists at www.iacprx.org.

If your doctor doesn't want to support you in your quest to use natural hormone therapies, you can find a doctor knowledgeable in natural hormones in your area by going to www.worldhealth.net, www.acam.org, www.naturopathic.org, or www.naturopaths.com.

**To Your Good Health,
The Staff of the Wellness Research Foundation**

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Don't Let Drug Companies Take Away Your Choice

The pharmaceutical giant Wyeth has filed a petition with the FDA to ban bio-identical hormones. They argue that these hormones violate the patent for their HRT drugs Premarin and Prempro.

Bio-identical hormones are much safer than synthetic HRT. With the surging popularity of bio-identical hormones, Wyeth is simply looking to suppress its competition.

You can let lawmakers know your opinion on this petition by going to:

http://www.iacprx.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Action_Alert

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