



## Hormone Replacement Therapy

Whether you're looking for relief from symptoms caused by hormone imbalance for the first time or trying to decide if you should continue to take the hormones you've been taking, you should be aware of all the options.

Your compounding pharmacist can provide more information about the option of bioidentical HRT. Working with you and your physician, he or she can determine what bioidentical HRT is right for you.

### Recent Studies and Misconceptions

Many women and their physicians have been shocked to learn that conventional hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can actually increase the chance of getting a major disease. The most recent controversial Women's Health Initiative trial was abruptly halted in July 2002 because it showed that conventional HRT, using synthetic hormones such as Premarin, Prempro, Premphase, Provera, Cytrin, Amen, or any medication containing conjugated equine estrogens (made from horse urine) and a synthetic (manmade) progestin, medroxyprogesterone acetate, increased the chance of some major diseases, as follows:

- A 41% increase in strokes,
- A 29% increase in heart attacks,
- A 26% increase in breast cancer,
- A 22% increase in total cardiovascular disease,
- A doubling of the rate of blood clots, and
- A possible contribution to Alzheimer's disease.

### Options

Many women taking conventional HRT feel they are faced with only two options: continue to take the synthetic hormones and hope for the best, or stop taking hormones and possibly experience unpleasant symptoms such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, bloating, forgetfulness, mood swings, night sweats, irritability, breast soreness and weight gain, to name a few.

A third choice you may not be aware of is bioidentical HRT. This therapy differs from conventional HRT in several ways.

#### Bioidentical HRT

1. Uses hormones with the same structure as the hormones produced by the human body (synthetic hormones have the structure appropriate for horses, with only approximately 30% identical to human hormones);
2. Is prepared by a compounding pharmacist and not available from a drug manufacturer;
3. Uses progesterone, not progestin, and different estrogens (estriol, estradiol and estrone) either as a single-ingredient or multiple-ingredient prescription;
4. Is individualized or customized to each woman's needs, symptoms, hormone levels, etc., and can be easily adjusted; and
5. Is prepared in a dosage form, ie, troche, capsule, cream, or suppository, based on what your doctor recommends and what you prefer.

COMPOUNDING CHEMISTS  
MAKE BIO-IDENTICAL  
HORMONES - NOT THE  
MANUFACTURED  
HORMONES LISTED ABOVE.



If you are interested in learning more about bioidentical HRT, please contact a compounding pharmacist for further information. It is possible you can work with him or her and your physician to identify a therapy that is just right for you.