



HORMONE THERAPY Q&A

What symptoms are associated with perimenopause or menopause?

Hot Flashes	Mood Swings (PMS)	Night Sweats	Tender Breasts
Vaginal Dryness	Water Retention	Foggy Thinking	Nervousness, Anxiety
Incontinence	Irritability	Sleep Disturbances	Fibrocystic Breasts
Heart Palpitations	Uterine Fibroids	Depression	Bone Loss-Osteoporosis
Loss of Sex Drive	Headaches	Fatigue	Facial Hair
Wrinkling of Skin	Hair loss		

What is menopause?

Menopause is the transition between a woman's childbearing years and her non-childbearing years. It is the last stage of a biological process during which the ovaries gradually produce lower levels of sex hormones - estrogens, progesterone, and testosterone, resulting in the cessation of menstrual periods. As these hormones begin to fluctuate, women enter into perimenopause and often have a variety of symptoms such as: bleeding irregularity, hot flashes, night sweats, sleep disturbances, mood swings, vaginal dryness, headaches, depression, irritability, rage, breast tenderness, and others. Perimenopause may begin up to 15 years prior to menopause.

What is bioidentical hormone therapy (BHT)?

Bioidentical Hormone therapy (BHT) is supplementation using natural, plant-based hormones, in doses to replace the natural premenopausal levels. If successful, symptoms of hormone imbalance should subside and long-term effects of hormone imbalance, or low levels of hormones, should be reduced or completely eliminated. The first step is having your hormones tested, at any age, in order to obtain an individual snapshot of your personal hormone needs. The second step is to develop a treatment plan to help women achieve perfect hormone balance, with bioidentical hormones, supplements, and lifestyle changes.

How is bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) different from conventional hormone therapy (HRT)?

Conventional HRT uses a variety of synthetic estrogen and progestin products that are similar but often not identical to what the body naturally produces. Conventional estrogen replacement products come from a variety of sources, including from the urine of pregnant mares. Many times, these chemical differences can cause uncomfortable side effects, and may not provide all of the benefits of bioidentical hormones.

Bioidentical hormones are made from hormone precursors found in yams and soy plants. Because the body does not have the ability to turn these precursors into hormones, they go through a chemical process that converts them into molecules that are identical to the hormones that are produced by the body. Bioidentical hormone products are made specifically for each woman by a trained and often certified compounding pharmacist, who customizes each prescription to match unique body chemistry according to the prescribed dose, which is based on each woman's blood tests and personal needs.

When should women have hormone testing?

- If menstruating: have blood drawn at least 16 days from first day of last period, but before the next period is to begin. Do not take your hormones or thyroid medication the day you are tested.
- If you are finished menstruating or have had a complete hysterectomy (no ovaries), you can be tested any day of the month. Do not take hormones or thyroid medication the day you are tested.
- If you have had a hysterectomy and still have ovaries, it is best to have your estrogen and progesterone tested twice (two weeks apart) to evaluate if cycling is still occurring.