

SOUTH FLORIDA WOMAN'S HEALTH ASSOCIATES

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Natural Bio-Identical Hormone Replacement Therapy

Natural hormone therapy is better described as bio-identical hormone replacement. Our program has been successful and has gained popularity primarily because it works and makes sense. It is a progesterone based program adding triest, testosterone and DHEA based on the individual needs. Your dose is based on your symptom profile, your medical history, your age, your body habitus and your lab work.

The first step to beginning your Natural HRT program is having a consultation with the Doctor and having your blood drawn for an extensive hormone profile to determine what your hormone levels are. Once you've been seen you will schedule a follow up appointment so that the Doctor may discuss your levels and then start you on a personalized formula designed specifically to fit your hormone needs.

Please read the following carefully. If you have any additional questions, please have them ready for your follow up appointment with the Doctor.

The prescription you will be taking is a Natural Hormone Compound prepared for maximal absorption. This is a prescription derived from plants, and there are no synthetic products in this prescription. This is BIO-Identical to what your own body has created since puberty. This compounded prescription may be compounded to include up to 4 different ingredients depending on what your needs are.

The predominant delivery system we use is the Troches. It is pronounced "Trookies". It will come in a gelatin or wax form which is HEAT SENSITIVE, so please DO NOT leave them in the sun or in the car. They must be stored in a cool, dry place near room temperature, not in the refrigerator. The troches may also be prescribed in a capsule or suppository form per the Doctor's recommendation. They come in many different flavors, unflavored, sweetened or unsweetened. The sweetener used is called 'Stevia'. The prescription is absorbed sublingually; you will dissolve ½ of a lozenge in your cheek or under your tongue twice daily or as directed on your prescription. Do not chew, swallow or suck on the troches, because then it will tend to get swallowed and will not be as well absorbed. The gelatin troche takes approximately 15 minutes to dissolve. This prescription will not interfere with any other vitamins or medications. No other Hormone replacement therapy should be taken in conjunction with your Bio-Identical hormones unless otherwise prescribed by your physician.

Your prescription is then ordered from the Compounding Pharmacy that we use or a pharmacy through your insurance. Our pharmacy is Hazle Compounding which is located in Pennsylvania. www.hazledrugs.com. Please be sure that you contact our office for all future orders at least **2-weeks before you run out**. These prescriptions are delivered via USPS and are not deliverable on the weekends. We recommend that you have your Prescription delivered to our Deerfield Beach office for a minimal fee and pick up at your convenience. If you prefer to have it delivered to your home or office, you will incur higher shipping costs and the package must be signed for at time of delivery. We are NOT responsible for any prescriptions that arrive melted due to delivery issues. We usually start all of our patients on a 90-day (3 month) order because it generally takes about 7-8 weeks to get the hormone levels to stabilize. You will most likely see some results within the first week of taking them. 95% of our patients feel much better by the end of the second week and the other 5% sometimes feel worse before they start feeling better. This is due to rapidly changing hormone levels and is best to start taking the troches in quarter dosages throughout the day.

Some of the symptoms that you may experience while your body is adjusting to the hormones are as follows; breast tenderness, swelling, bloating or possibly a period or some spotting (unless you have had a hysterectomy). The bleeding is often caused by the progesterone / estrogen which stimulates the endometrial lining; this does not mean that you will continue to get a period. If you bleed for more than 7-days and it is heavy please contact our office. After consultation with the Doctor, we will probably require some diagnostic testing, either an endometrial biopsy or a gynecological ultrasound. Please be assured that these symptoms are usually temporary and not every patient gets these symptoms. We recommend drinking a lot of water (six to eight 8-ounce glasses a day), taking supplements such as multi-minerals or potassium, magnesium for breast tenderness, swelling and bloating. A multi-Vitamin and Calcium-Magnesium with Vitamin D are also suggested.

Below are descriptions of the 4 different ingredients and how each of them may be beneficial to you well-being and health.

Progesterone

Progesterone is derived from Wild Yams, and it helps to prevent Osteoporosis. It is helpful to obtain baseline Bone DEXA scan. We have found that in many cases, progesterone can restore bone mass. Progesterone also helps treat symptoms such as; anxiety, moodiness and depression which many women experience due to a hormone imbalance. Other uses for progesterone besides HRT is to reduce the size of Uterine Fibroids, often avoiding surgery, and for the treatment of endometriosis.

Triestrogen

Triestrogen (Triest) is the 3 different estrogens combined consisting of, Estradiol, Estrone and Estriol. These are derived from Soy. Triestrogen treats symptoms such as; Hot flashes, Insomnia, Lack of Energy and urogenital atrophy that includes sexual dysfunction and vaginal dryness.

Testosterone

Testosterone helps with increasing your libido and your energy level. It often takes a little bit longer to notice the increase in libido. This hormone is also derived from progesterone and helps to increase the efficiency of the estrogens in the compound.

DHEA

DHEA is a precursor to the other hormones. It is produced primarily in the adrenal gland and is helpful in a person who is hormonally stressed out. We give very small dosages that will not suppress your own production.

Insurance and Pricing

These prescriptions are made to order so must be paid for at the time of your order by cash, credit card or check made out to: SFWHA (South Florida Woman's Health Assoc). When reordering by phone you will need to pay by credit card in order to process your prescription refill. Once you pick up or receive your troche order you will also receive a receipt from the pharmacy. Please keep this receipt and make a copy for your records. Send the original receipt with a prescription claim form from your insurance company or the attached universal claim form. You may also send the attached 'Medical letter of Necessity'. Make sure that you also attach a front and back copy of your insurance card so that they may easily identify you. If you should contact your insurance company by phone and they inform you that they will not reimburse for this, PLEASE submit your information anyways, because many plans are unfamiliar with hormone replacement therapy and need the added information before making a decision. A few years ago none of the insurances were reimbursing but now certain plans/policy are covering a percentage if not the entire cost of the bio-identical hormones. Your prescription will cost you anywhere from \$49.00-\$65 monthly. These prices are subject to change due to product cost increases. When you order more than one-month at a time you will receive a significant price break. The maximum that may be ordered at a time is 6-months, where the savings become even more significant.

We are happy that you have chosen a safe method of Hormone Replacement Therapy. We feel that you will see tremendous results and have minimized risks. The fear of any long-term side effects as with Synthetic Hormones have been proven to be reduced. If at any time you should have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at 954-427-4966 in our Deerfield Beach office.

ANDROGENS AND MENOPAUSE

Androgens are hormones that have masculinizing effects. In women they are made primarily in the ovaries and adrenal glands. Androgen hormones include testosterone, dihydrotestosterone, androstenediol, androstenedione, and two weakly androgenic hormones, androstenedione and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA). The precursor hormone to the androgens is pregnenolone, which then follows a pathway either through progesterone or DHEA. We'll call these the "progesterone" pathway or the "DHEA" pathway.

A simplified diagram of the two pathways follows:

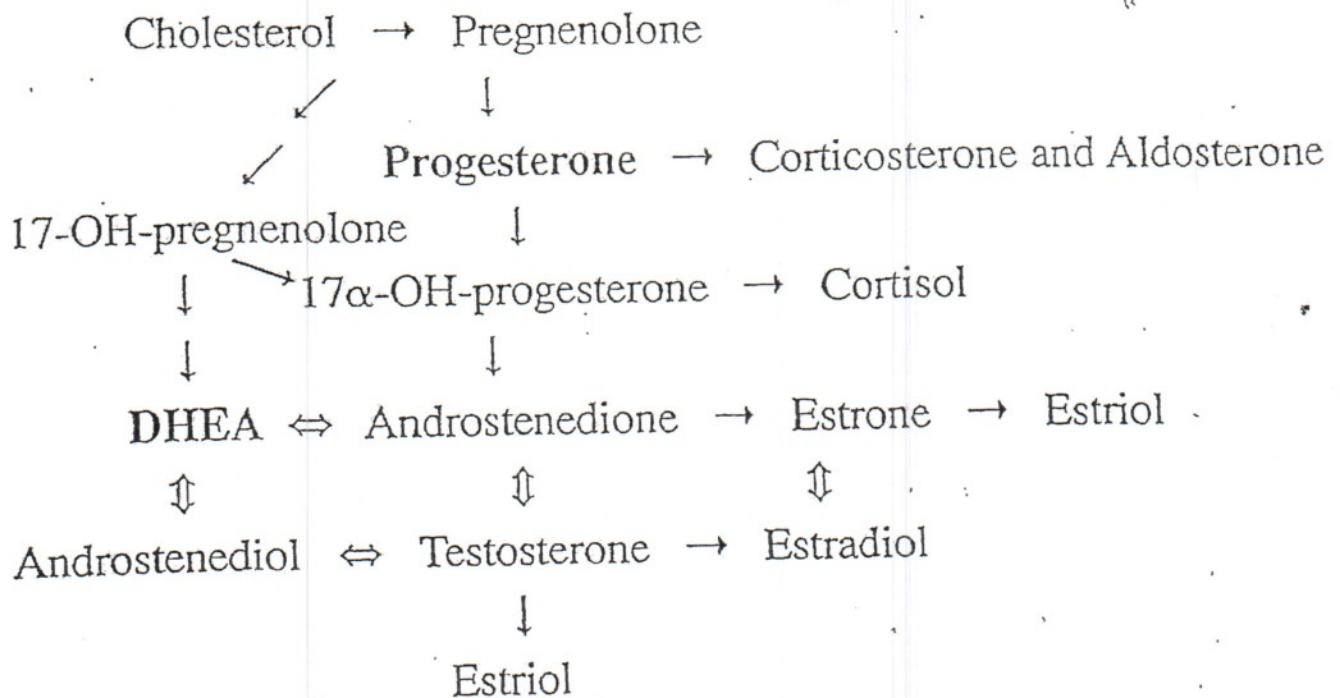


Figure 9: The progesterone and DHEA hormone synthesis pathways.