

Natural Balance Plus™

For Hormone Equilibrium

THE NUMBERS

- ❑ An estimated 30 to 40 % of menstruating women commonly experience some symptoms of PMS that are distressing enough to interfere with everyday life.
- ❑ According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation, osteoporosis is a major public health threat for an estimated 44 million Americans, or 55 % of the people 50 years of age and older.
- ❑ Some 80 % of Americans with osteoporosis are women.
- ❑ In 2001, the estimated national direct expenditures (hospitals and nursing homes) for osteoporosis and associated fractures were \$17 billion -- \$47 million daily.
- ❑ 50 years ago the average age for onset of puberty in American girls was 14 to 15. It is presently at 9 to 10 years of age.

YOU'RE BEING HORMONAL!

How many times have you heard a woman say her life is ruled by her hormones? How many times have you said or felt like saying that yourself? It is indeed true -- for both men and women -- that hormones in some ways rule our lives. Hormones are the substances in the body that trigger many body processes. Enzymes help speed things along, but it is hormones that start things off. Hormones regulate fluid retention, sexual and reproductive function, and even growth and development. In many ways, they are the sparks that

ignite the life processes.

When it comes to the so-called "sex hormones" for women, the effects may seem more pronounced due to the cyclic, and therefore changing, predominance of one hormone over another at different times during the menstrual cycle. Estrogen has the upper hand for the first two weeks of the cycle, stimulating the build-up of tissue and blood in the uterus. Then progesterone takes over for the last two weeks of the cycle, making the uterine wall suitable for support of a fertilized egg.

It is supposed to be a natural balancing act between the two hormones, which basically have opposing effects. But the modern world has many ways of disrupting the balance nature intended. Stress, overuse of hormones in meat production, an unhealthy diet full of highly processed foods, exposure to various chemicals, and even the use of plastics in cooking all conspire to throw that balance off. And when it goes, havoc can reign throughout the body.

OFF-BALANCE AND OUT OF WHACK

Dr. John R. Lee, well known for his books on women's health, has described this condition as "estrogen dominance" -- a situation that exists when a woman has too little progesterone in her body to balance the estrogen, no matter how much or how little she has. Even if a woman has low estrogen levels, she can still

be subject to the effects of estrogen dominance if her progesterone levels are extremely low.

A major part of the reason estrogen dominance is such a big risk for women today, particularly those living in industrialized countries, is overexposure to xenoestrogens (mostly petroleum-based synthetic chemicals with estrogen-like activity) that are present in massive quantities in the food chain, water supply, and the environment.

THE RISKS OF IMBALANCE

The health impacts of this excess estrogen can range from irritating to life-threatening. Endometrial cancer, breast cancer, loss of bone mass, fibrocystic breasts, uterine fibroid tumors, depression and irritability, PMS, increased body fat, thyroid dysfunction, migraine headaches, and decreased sex drive are just some of the problems that can result from the continuous, unrestrained cell stimulation caused by out-of-balance, excess estrogen in the body.

Declining bone density is a particularly troublesome result of estrogen dominance. Bone cells (like all our other cells) are constantly being broken down and rebuilt. Osteoclasts are cells that work on dissolving the old bone tissue so it can be replaced by new growth, spurred on by another type of bone cell called osteoblasts. Estrogen naturally slows the rate of bone tissue breakdown by

the osteoclasts -- that's why the danger of osteoporosis increases after menopause when estrogen production drops off. Natural progesterone helps maintain bone mass by stimulating the osteoblasts to build new bone tissue. However, when there is not enough progesterone present, bone tissue is not replaced at a rate sufficient to keep up with the loss, and a decrease in bone density results.

Increased cancer risk is another danger of estrogen dominance. Recent studies have verified the role of natural progesterone in helping to inhibit the development of several types of cancer. Two genes in particular have been found to be related to hormones and cancer. The BCL2 gene, which appears to be "turned on" by the estradiol form of estrogen, stimulates the rapid growth of breast, endometrial, and ovarian cells; at the same time, it delays apoptosis, or natural cell death. Progesterone, on the other hand, stimulates expression of the P53 gene, which promotes normal apoptosis and therefore inhibits cancer development. It's easy to see how the balance between estrogen and progesterone in the body can be essential for maintaining good health.

THE ROLE OF NATURAL PROGESTERONE

Progesterone -- although often referred to as a sex hormone -- doesn't convey specific sex characteristics. It does, however, have wide-ranging impact on the entire body, from the reproductive organs to brain cells, the thyroid gland, the immune system, and bones (as we have seen). Natural progesterone is primarily made by the ovaries before menopause, and by the adrenal glands and fat cells after menopause. Estrogen is derived from progesterone through a conversion process in the body. In fact, progesterone is what is known as a "master hor-

monone" because the body uses it to create other hormones like estrogen and cortisol.

The benefits of maintaining a healthy estrogen/progesterone balance in the body are huge. The risk of developing several types of cancer is reduced, bones tend to retain a strong consistency, PMS symptoms can be reduced or eradicated, "menstrual migraines" are often controlled, and energy and libido levels generally improve. Even issues with female infertility can be helped, since one of progesterone's primary functions is to make the uterine wall hospitable for implantation of a fertilized egg.

An interesting role that progesterone plays in the body for both men and women is maintenance of myelin, the insulating material of nerve sheaths. With injury and other causes of inflammation, there is often disruption of myelin in the affected area, which tends to result in acute or chronic pain. Having natural progesterone available to restore the myelin to its normal state can help alleviate such pain.

RESTORING THE BALANCE

Nature always seeks balance in its systems, but there are many factors in today's world that tend to throw our bodies out of balance. We need to take an active role in restoring balance in our bodies by eating more healthful foods, reducing stress, and exercising more. Natural supplementation is another important weapon in our health arsenals. Many supplements take the form of capsules, tinctures, or teas. However, since progesterone is a fatty molecule, it is readily and easily absorbed through the skin, a route that provides higher and more consistent levels in the body than taking it by mouth. That's why Healing America's natural prog-

esterone supplement comes in the form of a high-quality, all-vegetarian skin crème -- Natural Balance Plus.

Natural Balance Plus supplies progesterone to counter estrogen dominance or maintain nerve myelin in areas of inflammation, through the application of an all-natural crème containing ingredients of the highest standard. Let's take a look at just what's in Natural Balance Plus:

Natural Progesterone (Progesterone USP)

USP stands for United States Pharmacopeia, the international standard of purity for substances used in the production of drugs and cosmetics. In this case, USP indicates the progesterone is natural -- it is identical to the molecule produced by the human body -- as opposed to the synthetic "progestins" promoted by drug companies.

Since naturally occurring substances can't be patented, drug companies must slightly alter the chemical composition of hormones they want to patent and sell as supplements or replacements. The slight alterations that make these substances patentable have a profound impact on their activity, particularly with regard to side effects. The side effects listed for synthetic progestins in the Physicians Desk Reference include depression, acne, increased facial and body hair, birth defects, risk of embolism, decreased glucose tolerance, and allergic reactions. Natural Balance Plus contains natural progesterone, which is exactly like that found in our bodies and is free of these side effects.

Wild Yam Extract

Wild yams contain estrogen-like compounds called phytoestrogens. Studies have shown these phytoestro-

gens to be helpful in alleviating some of the problems of menopause such as osteoporosis, elevated cholesterol levels, and hot flashes. Since they tend to fill estrogen receptor sites in the body, they can also block some of the imbalances caused by estrogen dominance.

Arnica Oil

Commonly known as leopard's bane, arnica has been used as a homeopathic remedy for hundreds of years. The active components in arnica - sesquiterpene lactones - help reduce inflammation and decrease pain. Arnica also has anti-bacterial activity and stimulates blood circulation. Its anti-inflammatory influence helps reduce pain and swelling when applied topically. It thus bolsters the effect of natural progesterone in combating inflammation and pain.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Our world today is quite simply out of balance. In their original, natural state, many fruits, grains and vegetables provide low-action phytoestrogens for use by the body. These plant-based estrogens tend to fill the estrogen receptor sites in the body, staking their claim early against the effects of more powerful natural and synthetic estrogens. It's nature's way of protecting us from estrogen dominance.

But modern American diets are often filled -- despite our best intentions -- with highly processed, nutrient-stripped foods. And the fruits and vegetables we do eat are largely lacking in their original nutritional potency due to poor soil, polluted water, overuse of pesticides, etc. As a result, we simply don't consume enough phytoestrogens to protect us - we're out of balance.

That's why we need to take steps to restore the balance. Supplementation with high-quality natural products, adherence to a healthy diet low in processed foods, and a regular program of moderate exercise can all help. Natural Balance Plus crème is a product that can help restore what nature intended all along. Its proper application is detailed in the insert included with each jar.

Note - for a complete discussion of natural progesterone and its role in hormone balance, *What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Menopause* and *What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Premenopause*, by John R. Lee, MD, are must reads.

CAUTIONS

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease, but rather is a dietary supplement intended solely for nutritional support.

SOURCES

Balasz J. Sex steroids and bone: current perspectives. *Hum Reprod update*. 2003 May-Jun;9(3):207-22.

Watt PJ, Hughes RB, Rettew LB, Adams R. A holistic programmatic approach to natural hormone replacement. *Fam Community Health*. 2003 Jan-Mar;26(1):53-63. Review.

Warren MP, Shantha S. Uses of progesterone in clinical practice. *Int J Fertil Womens Med*. 1999 Mar-Apr; 44(2):96-103.

FDA approves natural progesterone. *Harv Womens Health Watch*. 1998 Jul; 5(11):7.

Liu J. Natural progesterone. *Health News*. 1998 Mar 31;4(4):3.

Ziel HK. Estrogen's role in endometrial cancer. *Obstet Gynecol*. 1982 Oct;60(4):509-15.

Komesaroff PA, Black CV, Cable V, Sudhir K. Effects of wild yam extract on menopausal symptoms, lipids and sex hormones in healthy menopausal women. *Climacteric*. 2001;4(2):144-150.

Russell L., Hicks GS, Low AK, Shepherd JM, Brown CA. Phytoestrogens: a viable option? *Am J Med Sci*. 2002 Oct;324(4):185-8. Review.

Ernst E. The benefits of Arnica: 16 case reports. *Homeopathy*. 2003 Oct;92(4):217-9.

Stevinson C, Devaraj VS, Fountain-Barber A, Hawkins S, Ernst E. Homeopathic arnica for prevention of pain and bruising: randomized placebo-controlled trial in hand surgery. *J R Soc Med*. 2003 Feb;96(2):60-5.