

Female Hormones: Achieving Balance

Why You Want Balanced Hormones

Hormones are critical to the function of virtually every system in the body, specifically:

- Estrogen and progesterone help brain function, reduce brain inflammation and help with cognitive function. There is also evidence that estrogen may prevent Alzheimer's.
- There is an intimate relationship between hormones and neurotransmitters; which means hormones can have a major impact on mood, will power and motivation.
- There is a strong correlation between hormone and bone metabolism.
- Thyroid hormone, your metabolism hormone, works better when progesterone is functioning optimally.
- Estrogen protects cardio. function in women.
- Progesterone helps regulate the immune response.

Most importantly, the beneficial effects of hormones occur when they are in balance. In excess or in deficiency, all hormones can have negative consequences.

What To Do

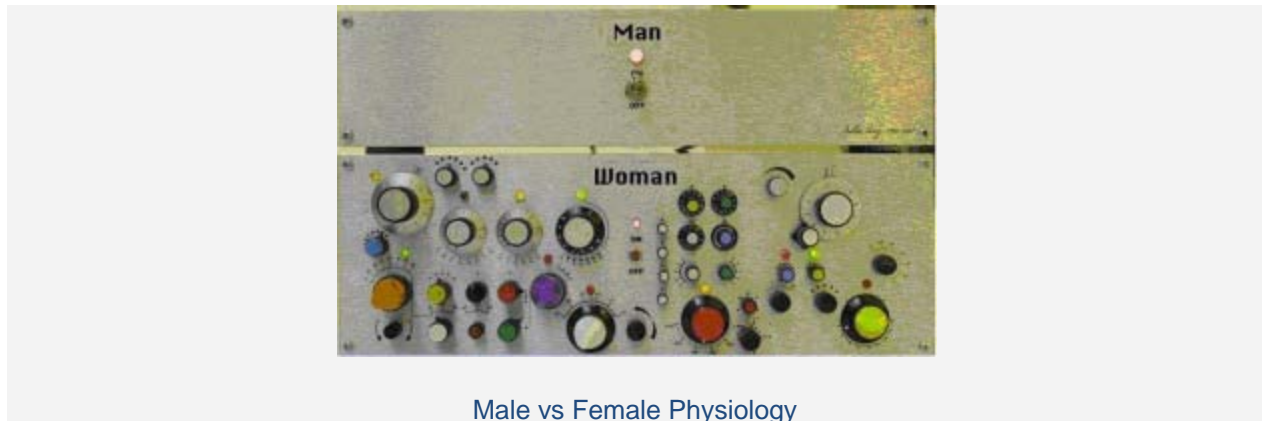
It is easy to say, "Everyone needs chaste tree berry or black cohosh," or "Every woman needs progesterone cream." But that would be wrong, very wrong.

Instead, if you have hormonal symptoms, you need to get tested. When it comes to testing, you have a few different options – blood, saliva and urine.

- Urine hormone testing measures hormone metabolites and not the hormones themselves. It is great for looking at what hormones are being converted into, but not good at evaluating precise hormone levels.
- Blood testing can measure two types of hormones – free and bound. Free hormones are considered to be "active" hormones, in that they can enter into cells and impart their metabolic effects. Bound hormones on the other hand are attached to a protein molecule and are therefore unavailable for use in the body until they detach from their carrier.
- Lastly, salivary hormone testing only measure free hormones.

All tests are valid, but have a different place clinically.

When it comes to female hormone testing, I believe the only option is salivary testing. Reason being, you can inexpensively take multiple samples throughout the month and evaluate the entire month of hormones, rather than simply taking a single blood draw and making assumptions about what hormones are doing the other 27 days of the month. The lab I particularly like is Diagnostechs simply because they also include pituitary hormones in their samples.



What To Do . . . Today

When a woman comes into our office with hormonal issues, we rarely run a hormone test . . . initially. Reason being, there are four things that will completely wreck a woman's hormones, a few of which have already been discussed.

1. Blood Sugar

Blood sugar must be balanced. In women, blood sugar imbalances cause increases in testosterone, which will wreak havoc on the hormonal system.

2. Adrenals

The adrenal glands must be healthy. Adrenal dysfunction can suppress pituitary function and rob the sex hormones of the necessary precursors for hormone production. Dysfunctional adrenal glands are paramount in hormonal balance.

3. GI Function

Gastrointestinal function must be working properly. This is an often missed component of hormone balance. Gastrointestinal dysfunction can raise cortisol, cause hormone detoxification issues, and produce damaging hormone metabolites, to name a few. If your guts aren't working properly, neither will your hormones.

Each of these systems must be working properly if hormone balance is desired. Put another way, you will not have optimal hormone balance if any of these systems are not working properly.

Female hormones are very complex. There is nothing quite like them. But women are easily the most mistreated patients in medicine today. If you have hormonal symptoms, fixing them is not as simple as giving you more hormones. Your body needs to be functioning correctly and when it does, hormones have a magical way of properly regulating themselves.

Ask how Dr. Bloom can help you test your hormones.