



Sensible News

Issue 21, September 2004

Sensible Philosophy

Sensible News aims to provide important health information that may not be readily available from conventional sources. Articles are factual. Any references not listed are available on request.

In the News:

Hormone Creams Deliver:

A recent study has shown that progesterone in whole blood increases after the application of progesterone cream (1).

Comment: This study is the first of its kind to take into account the fact that hormones are transported on cell membranes, and are therefore more easily detected by tests that measure the fat-soluble portion of hormones such as whole blood or **saliva**. Saliva hormone tests are available in Australia, but serum tests are more common. This is why many Australian doctors believe that natural hormone creams do not work. Anyone who has experienced the benefits of progesterone cream will not be surprised that hormones can be delivered through the skin. Indeed, it should not come as a surprise as conventional HRT and now even the birth control pill can be administered through the skin.

Appointments at Sensible-Alternative Naturopathic Clinic are available weekdays 8am to 6pm. 12 Ridge St., North Sydney. Call: 02 9922 4009

web: www.sensible-alternative.com.au
email: lara@sensible-alternative.com.au

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 In the News: Hormone Creams Work.
- 1 The Problem with Natural Hormones in Australia
- 1 Why Progesterone? What is Estrogen Dominance?
- 2 Estrogen Dominance Quiz
- 2 Treatment of Estrogen Dominance

The Problem with Natural Hormones in Australia

Natural hormones, such as bio-identical progesterone, are a fantastic treatment for PCOS, endometriosis, fibroids, PMS, depression and menopause.

In my opinion, however, there are two main problems with the way that natural hormones are prescribed in Australia.

1. **They are usually given as troches or lozenges rather than creams.** This means that some of the hormone will be swallowed and broken down by the liver into other hormone metabolites. Progesterone metabolites will not work as well, and higher doses must be used.
2. **Doses are too high.** The pioneer of natural progesterone use, Dr. John Lee, recommended using no more than 20mg Progesterone per day (40mg in a troche). That is the amount produced by the ovary in a healthy woman. Higher amounts may be needed for severe estrogen dominance, but never more than 100mg per day.

Why do we need hormone creams? What is Estrogen Dominance?

Estrogen is a blessing and a curse. It is a very strong hormone, and although it is essential for female characteristics and reproduction, it has the side effects of lowering metabolism by suppressing thyroid function and by storing blood sugar as fat. Estrogen also stimulates the growth of breast and uterus tissue. All of these effects are supposed to be balanced by progesterone, but in many women, they are not.

Why is Progesterone Deficient?

Progesterone is supposed to protect breasts and uterus from the cancer-promoting effects of estrogen. It should increase metabolism, burn fat, relieve depression and anxiety, act as a natural diuretic, normalize blood clotting, stimulate new bone formation, and stabilize blood sugar. Progesterone is produced by the ovary after ovulation.

For many women, ovulation is inhibited by estrogen mimics and by the presence of insulin (see Issue 17 of Sensible News). This results in inadequate progesterone production. Progesterone is further depleted by stress, which uses progesterone precursors to make the stress hormone cortisol.

Estrogen Dominance

The result of too much estrogen relative to progesterone is Estrogen Dominance. It is the chief cause of PMS, fibroids, endometriosis, PCOS, infertility and other hormonal imbalances. Under the influence of too much estrogen, women feel bloated, irritable, fatigued, and crave sugar.

Do you have estrogen dominance? Take a minute to do this quick quiz:

Estrogen Dominance Quiz

Anxiety before period	5
Autoimmune disorder	5
Breast Cancer	20
Cervical Dysplasia	15
Contraceptive pill ever taken for more than 6 months	5
Depression before period	5
Dry eyes	5
Endometriosis	10
Fatigue	5
Fibrocystic Breast Disease	5
Fibroids	10
Gallbladder disease after HRT	5
Infertility	10
Irregular menstrual cycles	5
Insomnia before period	5
Miscarriage (1 st trimester)	10
Osteoporosis	10
PMS	10
Polycystic Ovary Syndrome	20
Low Thyroid function	5
Cyclic Water retention	5
Weight gain in hips and thighs	5
Yellowish skin discoloration	5

Total

Score: 10-20 – Mild Estrogen Dominance

Score: 20-40 - Moderate Estrogen Dominance

Score: 40+ - Severe Estrogen Dominance

Treatments for Estrogen Dominance

1. Increase your body's own progesterone:

- Lower the progesterone competitor cortisol by managing your stress.
- Ensure ovulation by avoiding estrogen mimics and avoiding bread and sugar. (see Issue 17 of Sensible News)
- Use vitamin B6, and the herbs Chastetree, Peony or Lady's Mantle

2. Use Progesterone Cream.

3. Minimize exposure to estrogen:

- Avoid pollution, pesticides, solvents, and plastics as much as possible.
- Avoid HRT and the contraceptive pill.
- Improve liver clearance of estrogen by avoiding alcohol and processed food.
- Exercise

4. Protect yourself with mild plant estrogens.

- Plant sterols in soy, linseed, and red clover are not true hormones. They are mildly estrogenic, which acts as a buffer against chemical estrogen mimics.

Mild and Moderate Estrogen Dominance may improve without bio-identical progesterone. More severe cases require the prescription hormone.

References:

- 1) Hermann, Anne. "The Bioequivalence of Over-The-Counter Progesterone Cream" Clinical Pharmacology Research Center at Bassett Healthcare. 2004
- 2) Lee, John R. "What your doctor may not tell you about Breast Cancer" 2002. Penguin Books Australia

Lara will be back:

My first day back from Canada is September 20. Before that, reach me by email.

All articles written by Lara Grinevitch BSc, ND

Obtain back issues, or subscribe to the latest issue of
Sensible News straight to your email.

Visit our website: www.sensible-alternative.com.au