

BIOIDENTICAL HRT

What are biologically identical hormones?

Biologically identical hormones or bioidentical hormones are derived from plants, such as the wild yam or soybean plant. The wild yam is rich in precursor molecules that can be converted into oestrogens and other hormones whose molecular structure is the same as those produced naturally in the human body.

Oestrogen is not one hormone, but a group of three hormones: oestrone (E1), oestradiol (E2), and oestriol (E3) are natural human hormones. A high ratio of oestriol to the other oestrogens has been associated with a lower risk of breast cancer. Premarin®, a drug commonly used in oestrogen replacement therapy, is derived from pregnant mare urine. Because horse oestrogen is foreign to the human body, people may lack the enzymes and cofactors to metabolise it safely.

Progesterone may be needed to balance the effects of oestrogen on the uterus as well as the rest of the body and also may help build bone. Natural progesterone might be safer than synthetic progestins (like Provera®), which may have a negative effect on the cardiovascular system. Likewise, natural testosterone (typically thought of as a male hormone but also produced in the ovaries) may be safer than synthetic methyl-testosterone for treating problems with libido.