

# What Do Hormones Do?

## What does oestrogen do?

Oestrogen runs the menstrual cycle and is crucial to fertility. However, oestrogen also helps regulate many important bodily functions, including:

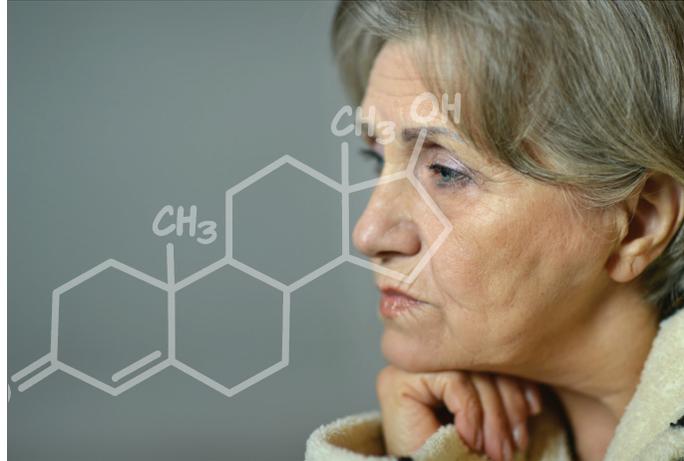
- Sugar and fat metabolism;
- Preventing atheromatous plaques formation in our blood vessels;
- Controlling calcium absorption and bone remodeling;
- Regulating immune protein and clotting factor production;
- Maintaining normal skin thickness and elasticity;
- Maintaining normal vaginal elasticity and moisture;
- Maintaining bladder and urethral health.

Failure of ovarian oestrogen production speeds up aging changes at multiple body sites.



## What does progesterone do?

Progesterone is mainly a hormone of pregnancy, but it has one important function in non-pregnant women – namely, to prevent endometrial overgrowth and possible uterine cancer.



## What does testosterone do in women?

Testosterone is often wrongly classified as just a male hormone. In reality, testosterone does essentially the same things in both the male and female bodies. Important roles include:

- Testosterone drives sexual desire in both sexes;
- Testosterone deficiency in either sex creates a dysphoric mood (meaning a combination of anxiety, irritability and depression), a lack of well-being and chronic physical fatigue;
- Testosterone is the body's most important anabolic hormone, and is involved in tissue repair, wound healing and the preservation of youthful muscle to fat ratios.

Testosterone declines with age. Deficiency speeds up aging changes at multiple body sites in both sexes.

# MENOPAUSE

## Sydney

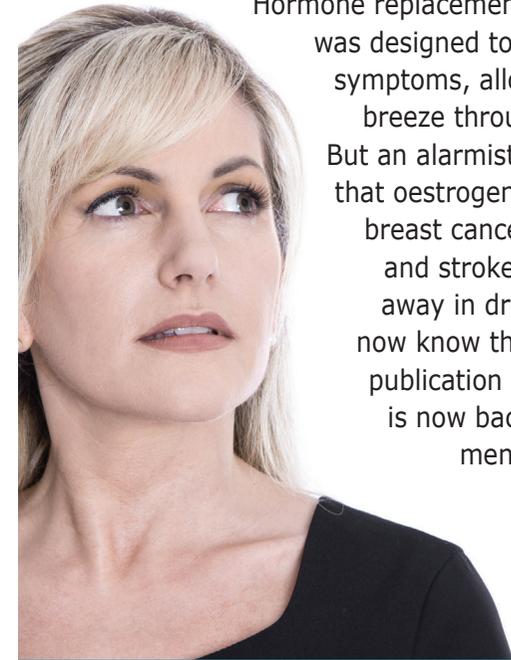


## Are you confused?

Men combat the indignities of aging with Viagra and testosterone gel. But things are not so easy when women become hot and fuzzy.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) was designed to eliminate these symptoms, allowing women to breeze through menopause!

But an alarmist report in 2002, that oestrogen therapy causes breast cancer, heart disease and stroke, scared women away in droves. Scientists now know that this first WHI publication was wrong. HRT is now back in favour with menopause experts.



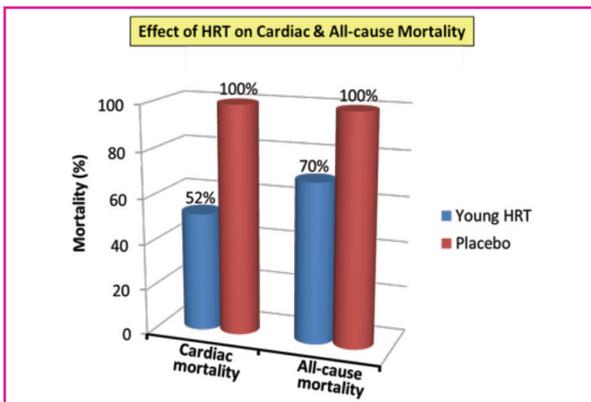
## Do you have a Menopause Problem?

If so, call us today on  
**02 9327 2542**

# Is HRT really dangerous?

**The data in the initial WHI publication** was re-analyzed in 2004. This second analysis showed that the extra heart attacks described in the 2002 report had occurred in >70 year old women who were taking unsafe hormone doses. HRT started within 10 years of menopause actually reduced heart attack risk by 24%. Unfortunately, the damage from the 2002 WHI report has lingered. HRT remains stigmatized in the eyes of both women and general practitioners. Recent research estimated that about 85% of Australian women are still receiving inadequate treatment for their menopausal symptoms.

Disregard the persistent negativity to HRT in the lay media! Expert medical opinion is once again firmly in favour of hormone therapy. A recent meta-analysis of 40,410 subjects from 19 randomized clinical trials showed that women who started HRT before the age of 60 years had a 48% reduction in their heart attack death rate and a 30% reduction in their all-cause death rate (Figure). The North American, British and Australasian Menopause Societies have all issued statements urging symptomatic women to use HRT for menopause relief.



This analysis of 40,410 HRT users in 19 clinical trials showed that commencing HRT before 60 years of age reduced cardiac death rate by 48% and all-cause mortality by 30%. Stroke and breast cancer risks were unchanged.

# What is Menopause?

**Menopause begins** when ovarian hormone production slows down, and ends when there are no more eggs left. Natural menopause is a gradual process that typically stretches over 5-15 years. Menopause is divided into three stages:

- **Perimenopause** is the period where hormones fluctuate between deficiency and excess, creating menstrual irregularities, hot flushes, night sweats, weight gain and mood swings.
- **Menopause** is the complete cessation of menstruation. Average age is 51 years, with range of 47-55 years. Timing is genetically determined, but can be brought forwards by surgery or factors toxic to the ovary.
- **Postmenopause** refers to the remaining years of a woman's life. Symptoms usually settle, but prolonged oestrogen deficiency brings forth the visible changes of aging.

# Dealing with Menopause

**Menopausal symptoms** vary from nuisance level to a nightmare. Suffering can always be relieved, but there is no all-encompassing "right answer" about how this should be done. Ideally, each woman should meet with a menopause expert to decide how to best deal with her own menopause.

- Women often begin with lifestyle adjustment, perhaps aided by natural remedies (like black cohosh or soy dietary supplements).
- Short term hormone therapy is always effective and can be taken safely until symptoms settle.
- Longer term HRT is an equally safe option, as a means of preserving youthful vitality and optimizing quality of life. Extended HRT can be done with either synthetic or bioidentical hormones (BHRT).
- Getting the most out of longer term HRT usually requires the addition of a testosterone supplement (in doses appropriate to women).

## Symptoms & Signs

<b>MENSTRUAL IRREGULARITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpredictable cycle length</li> <li>• Prolonged bleeding</li> <li>• Heavy bleeding</li> <li>• Missed periods</li> <li>• Severe period pain</li> </ul>	<b>VASOMOTOR SYMPTOMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot flushes</li> <li>• Night sweats</li> <li>• Insomnia</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Heart palpitations</li> </ul>
<b>MENTAL SYMPTOMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mood swings</li> <li>• Thought &amp; concentration difficulties</li> <li>• Memory lapses</li> <li>• Anxiety and panic attacks</li> <li>• Apathy and unexplained sadness</li> <li>• Loss of sexual desire</li> </ul>	<b>URO-GENITAL ATROPHY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry uncomfortable vagina</li> <li>• Painful intercourse</li> <li>• Urgency and urinary incontinence</li> <li>• Pelvic organ prolapse</li> <li>• Frequent bladder infections</li> </ul>
<b>ACHES AND PAINS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sore muscles</li> <li>• Aching joints</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Tender breasts</li> <li>• Osteoporosis back pain</li> </ul>	<b>COSMETIC BODY CHANGES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of muscle mass &amp; strength</li> <li>• Thin, dry, wrinkled skin</li> <li>• Female pattern hair loss</li> <li>• Acne and facial hair growth</li> <li>• Weight gain (mainly abdominal)</li> </ul>

*Drs Oscar Horky and R. I. Reid solve these problems everyday.*