

STEP 3:  
TAKE THE RIGHT SUPPLEMENTS  
TO SUPPORT, NOT SABOTAGE,  
YOUR HORMONE BALANCE

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Over the last several years, I have researched and tested hordes of nutritional supplements to ascertain their true mechanism for beneficially influencing estrogen metabolism. There is a select group of supplements that will enhance healthy hormone balance and thus promote weight loss and weight management. These are described below.

**Calcium D-Glucarate**

Calcium D-glucarate is a natural substance that promotes the body's detoxification process and supports hormonal balance. Calcium D-glucarate facilitates the detoxification process by inhibiting the reabsorption of estrogen-like toxins into the bloodstream, allowing them to leave the body and be excreted in the feces.

Calcium D-glucarate has been found to lower unhealthy

estrogen levels in animals and thereby inhibit the development or progression of cancer.

✓ TAKE 1,000 MG OF CALCIUM D-GLUCARATE TWICE DAILY.

## **Diindolylmethane (DIM)**

Diindolylmethane (DIM) is a phytonutrient akin to the indole-3-carbinol (I3C) found in cruciferous vegetables. DIM has unique hormonal benefits. It supports the activity of enzymes that improve estrogen metabolism by increasing the levels of 2-hydroxyestrone—that is, the good estrogen. When taken as part of a healthy diet, DIM helps to relieve PMS symptoms and to promote fat loss and healthy estrogen metabolism.

In men, DIM also promotes its own metabolism. This means that it allows for greater testosterone activity. Men who take DIM supplements will benefit biochemically because DIM promotes an optimal testosterone-to-estrogen ratio.

✓ WOMEN SHOULD TAKE 200 MG OF DIM PER DAY; MEN SHOULD TAKE 400 MG PER DAY.

## **The B Vitamins**

The B vitamins—B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>5</sub>, B<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>12</sub>, and folate—do a lot within your body to support estrogen detoxification. Conversely, if your body is deficient in B vitamins, you will

have higher levels of circulating estrogen. By now, you definitely know that increased estrogen levels lead to estrogen dominance, and estrogen dominance will most certainly lead to weight gain and the inability to get rid of that weight.

B vitamins also impact estrogen activity for the hormone receptors at the cellular level. Clinical studies have shown that high levels of intracellular (e.g., within the cell) B<sub>6</sub> can decrease the binding response at the estrogen hormone receptor site. What happens at the cellular level is sort of like an internal game of musical chairs: if the music stops and B<sub>6</sub> sits down in the “estrogen chair,” then the estrogen molecule is out of the game.

**√ BECAUSE THE B VITAMINS WORK TOGETHER TO PERFORM SUCH VITAL TASKS AT THE CELLULAR LEVEL, YOU SHOULD TAKE A B-COMPLEX VITAMIN, NOT JUST ONE OR TWO OF THE B VITAMINS.** TAKE A B-COMPLEX THAT HAS 50–100 MG EACH OF THIAMINE (B<sub>1</sub>), RIBOFLAVIN (B<sub>2</sub>), NIACIN (B<sub>3</sub>), PANTOTHENIC ACID (B<sub>5</sub>), AND B<sub>6</sub> (A WATER-SOLUBLE VITAMIN THAT EXISTS IN THREE MAJOR CHEMICAL FORMS: PYRIDOXINE, PYRIDOXAL, AND PYRIDOXAMINE), ALONG WITH PABA, CHOLINE, INOSITOL, 50 MICROGRAMS (MCG) OF B<sub>12</sub>, AND 400 MCG OF FOLIC ACID.

## **Vitamin E**

Years ago, researchers studied the effects of vitamin E in reducing the difficulties of menopause, and most of these studies found vitamin E to be helpful. Vitamin E has also been shown to reduce PMS-related breast tenderness, nervousness, depression, headache, fatigue, and insomnia. Newer research suggests that low vitamin E levels are linked

to estrogen dominance. Furthermore, Vitamin E deficiency has been found to inhibit estrogen detoxification.

√ TAKE 400 IU OF VITAMIN E PER DAY.

## **Calcium-Magnesium Combo**

Most women and men find it difficult to get the recommended 1,200–1,500 mg of calcium per day from their diet. Calcium intake should therefore be supplemented with a calcium-magnesium combination supplement. The right kind of fat is necessary for calcium availability in the soft tissues and to promote calcium elevation in the bloodstream so that muscles contract properly and maintain their tone, nerves function smoothly, blood clots when needed, and bones and teeth remain strong and healthy. Women who believe they are getting enough calcium through diet and supplements may be sabotaging themselves if they do not include enough of the right oils, e.g. extra-virgin olive, canola or flaxseed oils, in their diets. Also, because this diet includes minimum animal products and sodium and little or no sugar or caffeine, your body should better retain its nutritional and supplemental calcium.

Magnesium is another element that helps the body to eliminate excess estrogen. For women, magnesium levels tend to fall at certain times during the menstrual cycle. These shifts in magnesium levels can upset an optimal calcium-magnesium ratio. When the two minerals are in proper balance, the body better absorbs and assimilates the calcium it needs and also allows calcium to migrate from tissue and organs where it doesn't belong.

Without magnesium, calcium might not be fully utilized. Underabsorption of calcium can lead to menstrual cramps. As with a Vitamin E deficiency, when the body does not have enough magnesium to support calcium absorption, many women report PMS symptoms such as mood swings, fatigue, headaches, and sleeplessness.

Premenstrual chocolate craving is a phenomenon that has puzzled many physicians. They have been unable to explain why some women have this overwhelming urge to eat lots of chocolate right before their periods, yet at other times of the month the women's chocolate cravings are not as strong. The PMS-chocolate connection makes a lot of sense because chocolate is very high in magnesium. I have developed a magnesium cream that helps to decrease sugar and chocolate cravings, should you wish to avoid eating chocolate (see Appendix C).

Keeping a balance of calcium and magnesium is critical for optimal physical functioning and for hormone balance.

**√ YOU SHOULD TAKE A CALCIUM-MAGNESIUM SUPPLEMENT THAT CONTAINS A RATIO OF TWO PARTS CALCIUM (1,500 MG) TO ONE PART MAGNESIUM (750 MG).**

## **7-Keto Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)**

Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) is one of the hormones produced by the adrenal glands. After being secreted by the adrenal glands, DHEA circulates in the bloodstream as DHEA-sulfate (DHEAS) and is converted, as needed, into other hormones. Since it is a precursor to testosterone, DHEA may help

to build muscle. It is very unusual for anyone under the age of thirty-five or forty to have low DHEA levels. As we age, however, the body's production of DHEA declines, so people older than forty can most definitely become DHEA-deficient.

Although many anti-aging enthusiasts are familiar with DHEA, far fewer are as likely to be aware of its metabolite, 7-keto DHEA, which functions within the body to safely boost immune function and help reduce body fat. The term *7-keto DHEA* is in fact a brand name for the chemical compound 3-acetyl-7-dehydroepiandrosterone. Human blood levels of both DHEA and 7-keto DHEA tend to rise and fall in a similar pattern with age: increasing until the twenties, beginning to decline in the thirties, and continuing to decline until the levels are reduced by about 50 percent by age fifty. Clinical studies have shown that as 7-keto DHEA levels go down in middle age, body weight tends to go up.

Weight loss is stimulated by 7-keto DHEA through a process called *thermogenesis*, the creation of heat at a cellular level. The more thermogenesis, the higher the metabolic rate and the more that fat is literally burned up as energy. Studies have also demonstrated that 7-keto DHEA does not accumulate in the body over time and that it is free of unhealthy side effects.

Supplementation with 7-keto DHEA is significantly beneficial for increasing the rate at which the body converts stored fat into energy. Because 7-keto DHEA is a natural hormone metabolite, it benefits the body in two ways: it helps to restore hormone balance while also working internally to melt away those unwanted pounds.

**√ TAKE 100 MG OF 7-KETO DHEA PER DAY, ONE CAPSULE EVERY MORNING.**

## **Chitosan**

Chitosan, which is processed from the shells of crustaceans such as shrimp, lobster, and crab, acts as a super fiber. Its swelling action creates a sensation of feeling full, thereby serving to suppress the appetite. In addition, the super-fiber characteristics of chitosan foster a natural cleansing process that is extremely vital to weight loss.

Chitosan is also able to absorb six to ten times its weight in fat and oils. It then converts the fat molecules into a form that the human body does not absorb. Because chitosan causes less fat to enter the body, the body has to turn to previously stored body fat to burn for energy. The net result is weight loss.

**√ TAKE 750 MG TO 1 GRAM (G) OF CHITOSAN THREE TIMES A DAY WITH MEALS.**



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## KEEPING THAT *flat* BELLY FOR LIFE

*Are you concerned about putting the three steps—diet, progesterone, and supplements—into an easy framework that you can use every day? This section shows you how to integrate these steps into your daily life and how to make hormone-healthy choices that support your weight-loss goals.*

*A fear of rebound weight gain is common in people who follow the three-step plan and finally take off those extra pounds around their middle. The good news is that these fears almost always prove to be unfounded, for the years go by and people delightedly maintain their desired weight and waistlines.*

*Why does this plan work for life when other diets seem to have short bursts of weight loss followed by permanent rebound weight gain? The key is to know how to avoid letting stress or poor lifestyle choices sabotage your hormone balance and thus your long-term weight loss. This section provides a simple framework you can put into action every day to keep the weight off for the long term. It tells you how to make hormone-healthy choices in four key areas that affect your hormones and your weight: handling stress, getting enough sleep, staying active, and boosting your adrenal glands. Finally, we end with a series of delicious recipes that you can enjoy even while achieving your weight-loss goals.*



# KEEPING WEIGHT OFF IN THE REAL WORLD

## 6

**F**ad diets come and go. Unfortunately, so do those unwanted pounds. Fortunately for you, this plan offers a safe and effective alternative to yo-yo dieting. As you follow the three-step plan and move from *belly fat* to *belly flat*, you will discover a lifetime approach to keeping your hormones balanced and your waistline trim. To keep you on track, here are some helpful hints and reminders:

- Keep your bio-identical progesterone cream and your supplements by your toothbrush so that incorporating them into your daily regiment quickly becomes automatic.
- Make a grocery list before you shop, and always shop on a full stomach. If you shop when you're hungry, you're more likely to be tempted by high-fat or high-calorie foods.
- Eat three meals a day and *never* skip breakfast. If you

don't eat breakfast, your metabolism is more likely to slow down to compensate for not receiving any new calories. In addition, you'll be more likely to experience low energy and food cravings later in the day.

- Eat slowly. It takes twenty minutes for your stomach to signal your brain that it is full. Try putting your fork down between bites, and take a drink of water to help you slow down.
- Do not eat in front of the television; when your attention is elsewhere, you're more likely to overeat.
- Avoid fast food, but when you have no other choice, order a grilled chicken "sandwich" without the bun or mayonnaise. Most fast-food chains now also offer some type of side salad or fruit cup. Don't eat the dressing.
- When eating out, avoid croutons and order low-fat salad dressing on the side; drizzle it sparingly.
- Also when eating out, ask for a double order of broccoli or asparagus and dress with lemon juice to substitute for a buttery potato or rice dish.
- Keep a large bowl of broccoli and cauliflower florets ready for cooking or snacking.
- Although the sample daily menus include only one afternoon snack, if you get hungry between breakfast and lunch, eat another recommended snack.
- Try to eat dinner before 7 PM and then do not eat again until breakfast. Drink water with lemon until bedtime.
- Keep small sandwich bags of chopped carrots and celery and nuts in the refrigerator. Grab them for a quick snack when you are on the run.

- Keep a weekly weight-loss journal (see Appendix A). Record your weight, symptoms of hormone imbalance, stress level, and exercise patterns. Measure your waist-line circumference once a month.

Remember that the choices you make every minute of every day either work for you or against you. Unfortunately, some people unknowingly engage in habits or behaviors that sabotage their weight-loss efforts. When you are dealing with maintaining weight loss, there are four hidden saboteurs that can impact your weight: stress, lack of sleep, physical inactivity, and insufficient supplementation.

## **stress and your hormones**

Although too much estrogen is the primary culprit that causes you to pack on those pounds, stress impacts the production of five other hormones that can influence your metabolism, your appetite, and your food cravings. Three of the five hormones are produced by the walnut-size adrenal glands located on top of each kidney. They are adrenaline, cortisol, and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA). The other two hormones are ghrelin and leptin, which are produced by a small area in the middle of the brain called the hypothalamus. If stress has disrupted the balance of one or more of these five hormones, you will tend to always be hungry and will never feel full no matter how much you eat. The result is more fat stored around your middle.

According to Tene T. Lewis, a health psychologist and lead

researcher at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, the pressures of a busy life can stimulate some bodies to conserve more fat. Dr. Lewis's team of researchers found that the more stressors that were reported, the more weight that was gained over four years. This weight gain was not attributable to other variables like diet or exercise.

What are life stressors? The list of stressors typically cited by patients include the following: daily time-management issues, juggling work and family, being laid off or fired, experiencing major money worries, losing a parent, going through a divorce, and dealing with difficult infants, angry teenagers, and/or aging parents. Can you identify? How does stress impact hormone levels? When the brain perceives some form of danger, it signals the adrenal glands to pump out more adrenaline, often referred to as the "fight-or-flight" hormone. The sudden surge in adrenaline levels signals fat cells to quickly release energy. This energy rush stimulates flight. Once the body is out of danger, the brain continues to signal the adrenal glands that there is a temporary need to keep the adrenaline level elevated. Higher than normal adrenaline levels cause an increase in appetite, which encourages the body to eat more calories and replenish fat stores. In acute stress situations, the adrenaline level will soon return to normal once the immediate appetite has been satisfied.

This brain-body hormone-stimulating phenomenon served human beings very well in times when people were trying to avoid immediate dangers like being eaten by wolves or killed by invading armies. Today, however, the modern person in the United States is not frequently subjected to such immediate dangers.

Contemporary stressors, like worrying about paying the mortgage, doing the jobs of three people, dealing with an unhappy marriage, or grappling with ongoing parenting issues, tend to be more long-term. A life stressor can be considered chronic if it persists for three or more months. Instead of pumping out more adrenaline, the adrenal glands respond to chronic stress by secreting more cortisol. Because chronic stress is ongoing, high cortisol levels do not subside until the stress is removed or the adrenal glands are exhausted.

Over time, elevated cortisol levels can wreak havoc on your body. Sustained high cortisol levels destroy healthy muscle and bone, slow down healing and normal cell regeneration, deplete the necessary biochemicals to make other vital hormones, impair digestion, dull your mental processes, interfere with healthy endocrine function, and weaken your immune system. If you are stressed out, high cortisol levels will also compromise your metabolism and cement more pounds around your middle.

In addition, when the adrenals are chronically overworked and are straining to maintain high cortisol levels, they lose the capacity to produce DHEA in sufficient amounts. DHEA is necessary to moderate the balance of hormones in your body. When DHEA is produced at optimal levels, it functions to promote the loss of body fat. Double-blind clinical trials have found 100 mg per day of DHEA to be effective in decreasing body fat in older men. Conversely, when the body's DHEA levels are insufficient, body fat is more difficult to budge.

Recently, a female patient named Shirley complained that she had gained fifteen pounds in the last nine months. She said she wouldn't be unhappy if she could only spread some of those pounds around to her "stick-skinny legs" or to her arms or chest. The problem was that all fifteen pounds had attached themselves to her middle.

Shirley reported that in the last eighteen months she had purchased a new home, moved across town and away from her familiar church and schools, and experienced the unanticipated death of a close childhood friend. There was no doubt that a combination of estrogen dominance, elevated cortisol levels, and insufficient DHEA levels were all contributing to the reason why Shirley was packing those pounds around her middle.

I explained to Shirley that estrogen dominance can cause weight gain and bloating, and that deep abdominal tissue has up to four times the number of cortisol receptors than any other area of the body. When the body is under stress, the cells in the abdomen are the most aggressive in responding to increased cortisol levels. The result is a biochemically driven accumulation of extra abdominal flab.

Six months after her first consultation, Shirley returned and said the following:

*When I first came to you complaining that my gut had become a fat magnet, you recommended that I start a regimen that would include bio-identical progesterone cream, foods and supplements to support hormone balance, and a practice of consciously relaxing three times a day. I bought into your approach to eliminating my condition of estrogen dominance, but I thought the whole idea of de-stressing to support hormone balance was hokey, so I just blew that part off.*

*In two months I lost eight pounds and was excited. Then for the next two months, no more weight loss. I was discouraged, but I remembered what you had said about how stress can sabotage hor-*

*none balance, so I decided to give relaxation a try. I began to practice conscious breathing every time I came to a red light. Also, I set aside ten minutes every morning to just sit quietly and imagine myself at the beach. In four weeks, those last seven pounds I wanted to lose just melted away.*

### **how stressed are you?**

The list shown in Table 6-1 is adapted from the work of mental health experts Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe. It's very useful for obtaining a snapshot of your overall stress level.

Note that each stress-inducing event has been assigned a life-change unit (LCU). To quantify your stress level, first circle all the life events that you have experienced within the last twelve months. Next, add up the corresponding LCUs. Once you have your LCU total, find your stress-level category. Finally, read how your stress level is linked with hormone imbalance.

**Table 6-1. Stress-Inducing Events**

| <b>Life Event</b>                               | <b>LCU</b> | <b>Life Event</b>   | <b>LCU</b> |
|---|------------|---|------------|
| Death of spouse                                 | 100        | Children leaving home   | 29         |
| Divorce   | 73         | Trouble with difficult teenagers                              | 29         |
| Marital separation                              | 65         | Outstanding personal achievement                              | 28         |
| Jail term                                       | 63         | Spouse begins or stops work                                   | 26         |
| Death of a close family member                  | 63         | Starting or ending school                                     | 26         |
| Personal injury or illness                      | 53         | Change in living conditions                                   | 25         |
| Marriage  | 50         | Revision of personal habits<br>(dress, manners, associations) | 24         |
| Being fired from work                           | 47         | Trouble with boss   | 23         |
| Reconciliation with spouse                      | 45         | Change in work hours<br>or conditions                         | 20         |
| Retirement                                      | 45         | Change in residence   | 20         |
| Change in health of a family member             | 44         | Change in school  | 20         |
| Illness or change in care<br>needs of a parent  | 40         | Change in recreational activities                             | 19         |
| Sexual difficulties                             | 39         | Change in religious activities                                | 19         |
| Addition of a family member                     | 39         | Change in social activities                                   | 18         |
| Major business readjustment                     | 39         | Mortgage or loan under \$15,000                               | 17         |
| Major change in financial state                 | 38         | Change in sleeping habits                                     | 16         |
| Death of a close friend                         | 37         | Change in number of family<br>gatherings                      | 15         |
| Changing to a different line of work            | 36         | Change in eating habits                                       | 15         |
| Change in frequency of arguments<br>with spouse | 35         | Vacation  | 13         |
| New loan for major purchase<br>over \$15,000    | 31         | Christmas   | 12         |
| Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan               | 30         | Minor violation of the law                                    | 11         |
| Major change in responsibilities<br>at work     | 29         | LCU Total Score: _____  |            |

Here is what your LCU total score reveals:

- If your total is 0–150: At the moment, your stress level is low. The chance of your stress triggering a hormone imbalance is also low. Good for you.
- If your total is 150–300: You have borderline high stress. Your risk for a stress-related hormone imbalance is moderate.
- If your total is more than 300: Warning! You have a high stress level. Your chance of having a stress-related hormone imbalance is great.

Because the average person's life is full of responsibilities and complications, it is just not reasonable to think that you can completely eliminate stress as a factor. There are, however, tools and strategies that can help you to cope better with day-to-day stress. Proactive stress management has been shown to decrease the body's susceptibility to the fight-or-flight surge of adrenal hormones.

### ***hormone-healthy habit: beat stress***

Although de-stressing is part of the prescription for restoring and maintaining hormone balance, setting aside time for yourself will be one of your greatest challenges. Experiment with different approaches to determine which ones will work best for you.

### ***breathe***

A common response to our hurried and fragmented lives is physical tension in the body and shallow breathing through

the chest. Simply making a conscious effort to breathe more deeply and slowly can elicit a relaxation response to counteract your automatic stress response.

Try to set aside five minutes three times a day to close your door, turn off the phone, and just focus on inhalation and exhalation. Some people accomplish this best when they are naturally sequestered; for instance, in a car or on the toilet. Try the following technique:

- Put your hand under your belly button and focus on moving your breath down through your belly rather than up through your chest.
- Breathe in through your nose for a count of four.
- Hold for a count of three.
- Exhale through your mouth for a count of four.

Take any routine interruption that you find annoying in life and “reprogram” it as a cue to pause and breathe more consciously. Red lights, e-mail message alerts, and being put on hold during a telephone call can all serve this function.

### *meditate*

For most of us, our minds are busy even when our bodies are still. When you use meditation to elicit the relaxation response, you turn your attention inward, concentrating on a repetitive positive thought, prayer, or image to reduce the reactivity of your thoughts.

Patients have said they meditate by repeating a mantra of love or peace with each exhalation; others say that they recite a memorized prayer or picture themselves on the shores of a beach listening to the ebb and flow of the waves. I encourage

you to develop your own personal meditation to help your body and mind begin to quiet down so that a state of physiological and mental rest can ensue.

Begin by setting aside ten minutes each day to meditate. Do your best to find a quiet space where you won't be disturbed. You can meditate in any position, but the best way is to sit up with a straight back or in a comfortable chair. To help you fully relax and eliminate the need to look at your watch, set a timer or gentle alarm.

### *visualize*

A psychologist I know well has a fun technique to reduce your reaction to stressful people. He suggests that whenever you are around someone who is causing you to tense up or feel anxious, you should visualize that person's face on a tiny mouse's body with really big ears. Then, he suggests, imagine yourself taking a big broom to firmly and efficiently swish that mouse away.

Another visualization technique is to imagine that your stress has a shape and form and has attached itself like gum to the bottom of your shoe. Visualize yourself taking off your shoe, peeling off that nasty stress, and throwing it in the garbage. The goal is to create an image of stress as something you can get rid of.

Finally, simply close your eyes and take yourself on a trip to the most peaceful place you have ever been or read about. Imagine how the air feels against your skin and how restful your mind is while you are there. When you reenter your true surroundings, you will most likely feel refreshed from your brief mental vacation.

## **sleep disturbances and your hormones**

Stress can cause you to toss and turn at night. Stress-induced insomnia can impact two hormones that function to stimulate and control your appetite: ghrelin, the hormone that pumps through your body when you feel hungry, and leptin, the hormone that tells you that you are full and to stop eating.

In the long-term Wisconsin Sleep Cohort Study, men and women who routinely slept eight hours nightly were compared to those who slept five hours or less. The findings indicated that those sleeping five hours or less had a 15 percent higher level of ghrelin, the hormone signaling hunger, and a 16 percent lower level of leptin, the hormone signaling fullness.

According to Peter Kilpton, health journalist and author of *Less Sleep Can Equal More Weight*, when you are deprived of sleep, the production of ghrelin and leptin are affected, and not in a positive way. Researchers have concluded that a sleep deficit leads to elevated levels of ghrelin in your system. If you are not getting enough sleep, your body responds by telling you that you are hungrier. Furthermore, when you do eat, it will take you longer to feel full and satisfied. This is because the amount of leptin in your system has decreased. The combination of elevated ghrelin (making you feel constantly hungry) and decreased leptin (telling you that you still aren't full) will wreak havoc on your waistline.

### ***hormone-healthy habit: snooze and lose***

Substantial medical evidence suggests that there is a strong link between sleep and weight. Researchers say that how

much you sleep, and quite possibly the quality of your sleep, can silently orchestrate a symphony of hormonal activity that is tied to your appetite.

According to Michael Breus, a faculty member of the Atlanta School of Sleep Medicine and director of the Sleep Disorders Centers of Southeastern Lung Care in Atlanta, a lack of sleep drives leptin levels down, which means that you don't feel as satisfied after you eat. It also causes ghrelin levels to rise, which means that your appetite is stimulated, so you want more food.

Because estrogen dominance frequently causes insomnia or fitful sleeping as a result of hot flashes and night sweats, using bio-identical progesterone cream and eating foods to reduce your estrogen load should help to promote a healthy sleeping pattern. However, you still have to make the choice to stop whatever you are doing and get into bed early enough to allow yourself eight hours of sleep.

## **physical inactivity and your hormones**

Numerous studies in the last several decades have confirmed that physical activity has a positive effect on longevity and mortality and that a lack of physical activity is associated with an increased risk of disease and disability. Regular physical activity helps to regulate cortisol production, making it less likely that surging cortisol levels will contribute to both a constant feeling of anxiety and an ever-expanding waistline.

***hormone-healthy habit: find a way to move***

In order to commit yourself to a regular fitness program, you must set goals that you know you can meet. If you do not currently exercise, start by planning to simply move your body thirty to forty minutes each day. Do something you enjoy: walk, dance, ride a bike, swim, do yoga, attend an aerobics class, or jump rope. This might sound harsh, but *if you are too busy to exercise every day, then every day you are busy dying.*

**boosting your adrenal glands**

The adrenal glands are the main site of stress damage in the body. Certain supplements can nourish depleted adrenal glands while encouraging adrenal cortex secretions, which help to maintain optimal hormone balance.

In addition to the supplements described in Chapter 5, I designed an Adrenal Boost formula to increase overall energy and decrease fatigue. It is helpful for people who are under stress because it supports the glands that are responsible for energy flow. Anyone whose adrenal system is depressed by stress should also take 7-keto DHEA.

The ingredients in the Adrenal Boost formula are vitamin C, vitamin B6, pantothenic acid, deglycerized licorice root, Mexican wild yam root, schizandra berry, *Eleutherococcus senticosus* root, stinging nettle leaf, trimethylglycine, special plant cellulose, natural silica, vegetable stearate, and magnesium stearate. I recommend that people take one capsule every morning and every night if they need it.

You should not take Adrenal Boost, however, if you have high blood pressure, because licorice root can elevate blood pressure.

In summary, you do not have to allow stress and/or poor lifestyle choices to upset your hormone balance. A proactive regimen of self-care is the best way to vaporize those weight-loss saboteurs that lurk in the corners of our everyday lives. Even though most of us can't take a week a month just to chill out and can't afford a full-time housekeeper, chauffeur, or chef, we can make simple (and free) adjustments in our everyday lives to manage daily stress, enjoy a good night's sleep, get some exercise, and supplement a fatigued adrenal system, if needed.

Hormone balance is a process, not a fixed state. What works to balance your hormones in your thirties and early forties might not work as you approach your late forties and early fifties. The production of your hormones will continue to shift and decline with age.

About 80 percent of women and men will never need anything more than over-the-counter bio-identical progesterone and our recommended regimen of foods and supplements to maintain optimal hormone balance. However, with age, approximately 20 percent of women and men will suffer a decline in estrogen and/or testosterone production that will require treatment. They will need the help of a knowledgeable physician and a compounding pharmacist. For those who are on a comprehensive bio-identical hormone replacement regimen, it will be critical that they stick to their diet and take their supplements if they want to lose their belly fat and keep it off for good.



# THE 80-20 RULE



**I**n this chapter I want to introduce you to what I call the 80-20 rule of bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) and long-term weight management. Approximately 80 percent of men and women find that over-the-counter bio-identical progesterone cream, combined with foods and supplements to support hormone balance, is all they need to get and keep those unwanted pounds off. However, the other 20 percent discover that the pounds begin to creep back on and realize that they need a bit more help.

How will you know if you are one of the 20 percent who needs extra bio-identical hormone support? The answer is that your body will tell you as you approach your forties and fifties.

Pam had been my patient for twelve years. When she first came in at age thirty-nine, she was twenty-five pounds overweight and experiencing constant headaches, fatigue, and bloating. After following the three-step for just a month, her symptoms went away. She lost all the excess weight in four months and, by continuing on the plan, kept those pounds off. Then, when she was fifty-one years old, Pam was back in the office for her annual exam, and she wasn't happy.

"What has happened to your bio-identical progesterone cream?" she asked. "I am still eating all the foods to reduce my estrogen load and taking my supplements, but I have gained nineteen pounds in nine months. It's got to be a change in your cream!"

Pam complained that she was having night sweats and hot flashes. She also reported that she had not had a period for eleven months. When a woman has not had a period for twelve months, she is officially menopausal. Pam was on that cusp, and the production of her other sex hormones had declined to a point that additional help might be necessary. The progesterone cream had not changed, but the balance among her other hormones had.

## **one size does not fit all**

As stated in the previous chapter, hormone balance is a process, not a fixed state. Although progesterone production is the first to decline in women, with age the production of estrogen and testosterone will also decline. This means that the hormone replacement that works for you today might not work for you five years from now.

How will you know if you are one of the 20 percent who also needs to address a shift in estrogen and testosterone production? Your symptoms will be your first clue. If symptoms of hormone imbalance persist or return when you are using a regimen of bio-identical progesterone cream and foods and supplements to support hormone balance, then the balance of your other hormones has also shifted and will require attention.

Women in their thirties or forties who enter abrupt artificial menopause as a result of a complete hysterectomy should be placed on a full regimen of bio-identical hormone replacement. As they age, some women sail through natural menopause with the help of the three-step plan only. Other women have a flare-up of symptoms that require additional hormone supplementation. As for men, if they experience a progressive decline in libido in their late forties and early fifties, they should work with a physician to determine if they are candidates for bio-identical testosterone replacement.

## **when you will need a doctor**

A doctor will have to order either a saliva or a blood serum test to analyze all your hormone levels. Once a doctor has determined which hormones are deficient, he or she can write a prescription for a formulation of bio-identical hormones that will address your unique needs.

Patients come to see me from all over the world because it's not always easy to find a physician who has experience diagnosing hormone imbalances and BHRT as the preferred treatment. BHRT is not yet taught in medical schools, and most physicians remain uneducated about it.

However, since the World Health Institute has begun detailing the significant health risks of synthetic hormone replacement, this trend is shifting. In the last several years, hundreds of doctors have attended national continuing medical education forums on the subject of BHRT. In most cases, these doctors have been prodded by the demands of their patients for safe and effective alternatives; as a result, these doctors have taken the initiative to educate themselves.

If you do not know a physician in your area who is proficient in BHRT, ask your local compounding pharmacist (see below). Appendix C also offers resources for locating a physician.

## **why you will need a compounding pharmacy**

Once your doctor determines exactly which hormones are deficient, your prescription will have to be filled in a compounding pharmacy. Although some pharmaceutical companies are now manufacturing standard dosages of bio-identical hormones, it is more typical for a doctor to write a prescription for the exact amount of the hormones that your body needs. A compounding pharmacist will then mix your individualized prescription on site.

If you have never had your prescriptions filled by a compounding pharmacist, here are some facts you should know:

- Every compounding pharmacy is licensed and inspected by the State Pharmacy Board.
- Compounding pharmacists are educated and trained to provide information about the formulation of bio-identical hormones. In many cases, they help to edu-

cate the physician on dosing and delivery options.

- All materials used in compounding formulations are subject to FDA inspection and the agency's Good Manufacturing Procedures code.
- The International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists (IACP) and the Professional Compounding Centers for America (PCCA) are two excellent resources to help you or your physician locate a compounding pharmacy in your area. Their contact information is provided in Appendix C.

If you are one of the 20 percent who requires a more comprehensive plan of BHRT, you will still need help to win your battle of the bulge. You should stay on the three-step plan and simply apply bio-identical progesterone cream as well doing the other BHRT that is prescribed. As you have learned, unopposed estrogen can foster cell growth that can be a precursor of cancer. Consequently, you should never take any form of estrogen therapy, even if it is bio-identical, without also taking bio-identical progesterone.

If you are on any form of bio-identical estrogen replacement, it might seem counterproductive to continue to eat foods and take supplements to reduce your estrogen load. However, it is not. In fact, by continuing to eat foods that reduce your estrogen load and take supplements that support overall hormone balance, you can positively influence how the estrogen is metabolized in your body.

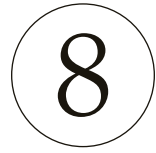
The names for the three most commonly prescribed formulations of bio-identical estrogen are tri-est, bi-est, and estradiol. Tri-est is a combination of the three estrogens you

learned about earlier: estrone (E1), estradiol (E2), and estriol (E3). Bi-est is a combination of E2 and E3, and estradiol is simple E2. Just like the estrogen produced by your ovaries, bio-identical estrogen returns to the liver to be metabolized after it completes its required activity within the body. There it is broken down into different enzymatic pathways. The first, the 2-hydroxy pathway, results in “good” estrogen metabolites. The second, the 16-hydroxy pathway, produces one of the “bad” estrogen metabolites, which results in an increased risk of cancer. The third, the 4-hydroxy pathway, is associated with an even higher rate of cancer.

It seems obvious that you should want more “good” estrogens than “bad” estrogens. Foods and supplements can influence which enzymatic pathway estrogen goes down. For instance, you have learned that cruciferous vegetables act as a catalyst to pull estrogen down a benign pathway to 2-hydroxyestrone, thus decreasing the levels of the carcinogenic 4- and 16-alpha hydroxyestrones, the “bad” estrogens. In addition, the supplement DIM supports the activity of enzymes that improve estrogen metabolism by increasing the levels of 2-hydroxyestrone, the “good” estrogen.

If you are on a more comprehensive BHRT regimen that includes bio-identical estrogen, it is even more essential that you stick to the plan. When you do, you will continue to reduce your unhealthy estrogen load, support overall hormone balance, protect yourself from hormone-dependent cancers, and keep your belly flat for life.

THE “FLAT BELLY FOR LIFE”  
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