

Healthy Hormone Balance and Natural Treatment Options for Women and Men

An estimated 50% of women in the United States will be menopausal by the year 2015. Symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, heart palpitations, depression, anxiety, loss of memory, and loss of libido already have 50 million American women who are currently menopausal searching for relief. With the halting of the Women's Health Initiative study in 2002 due to alarming findings regarding the risks associated with conventional hormone replacement therapy (HRT) combined with the media's onslaught of conflicting information, it is no wonder that women are left feeling scared, confused, and wanting safe and effective alternative therapies for menopause symptoms.

Menopause can be a time of tremendous physical, emotional and social change for women. For some women, it is a smooth transition, but for many others it can be a rocky time. During menopause, the ovaries stop producing estrogen and progesterone, and the adrenal glands and fat cells take over. The body is designed to accommodate this natural process, but can only do so if the body is in a healthy state.

Men can also experience age-related changes in their hormone levels. Referred to as andropause, this hormonal decline often coincides with symptoms of aging in males. Andropause, named after the male hormones known as *androgens*, is the counterpart to menopause in women when production of estrogens and progesterone by the ovaries begins to decline. For men, the drop is more gradual than the hormonal "roller coaster" often experienced by women during menopause.

Declining levels of testosterone and DHEA are commonly seen in men beginning in their 40s. These anabolic hormones are particularly important in men, as they are the major players in maintaining both physical and mental health. For example, they increase energy and decrease fatigue; they help in maintaining erectile function and normal sex drive; and they increase the strength of all structural tissues in the skin, bones, and muscles, including the heart. Proper levels of androgens also help to prevent depression and mental fatigue.

For both women and men, a major cause of hormonal imbalance is estrogen dominance. This occurs when there is too much estrogen or not enough progesterone to balance its effects. Estrogen dominance is caused by exposure to potent, environmental estrogens (xenoestrogens), found in plastics, pesticides, cleaners, detergents, body care products, meat and dairy products, stress, anovulation, poor diet, obesity, microbial imbalances, as well as synthetic hormones from birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy.

Foreign estrogens are much more potent than estrogen made by the ovaries. Artificial estrogens activate receptors to stimulate a hormonal effect or occupy the receptor and block natural estrogen from doing its job, thereby disrupting normal endocrine function. Xenoestrogens can accumulate over time, are absorbed through the skin, are difficult to detoxify, and are stored in fat. While endogenous estrogens are biologically active only during the years of sexual maturity, have a life expectancy measured in days, and fluctuate month to month, xenoestrogen exposure starts with fetal development and can be around for decades.

Village Green Apothecary is committed to bridging the gap between conventional therapies and their alternatives. Among our highly trained staff are naturopathic doctors, clinical herbalists, nutritionists, nutrition advisors, and an excellent team of pharmacists and compounding specialists. Together, we assure a high level of safety and competency, as well as offer a vast selection of professional grade products and services to patients and consumers. When exploring both conventional and alternative options, Village Green Apothecary offers doctors and patients unparalleled knowledge and expertise to implement complementary and alternative therapies in a safe and effective manner

Testing

We highly recommend specialized testing to measure your sex hormones, adrenal hormones, thyroid levels, micronutrient status, and neurotransmitters. We work with labs such as ZRT, Neuroscience, Genova/Metametrix, and Spectracell, to provide you with a variety of comprehensive cutting-edge testing options.

Recommended Supplements for Natural Support

(Specific product examples are given below, but there are other excellent supplements, as well.)

Supplement	Benefits
CALCIUM D-GLUCARATE (XYMOGEN Calcium D-Glucarate)	A substance found in many fruits and vegetables, such as grapefruit, apples, oranges, broccoli, and brussels sprouts. Calcium D-glucarate increases the glucuronidation and elimination of estrogen. Research shows that it has a preventive and therapeutic effect on a number of cancers including breast, liver, prostate, and colon.
DIM (DIINDOLYMETHANE) /SGS™ (GLUCORAPHANIN) (XYMOGEN Hormone Protect)	Promotes metabolism of estrogen into the favorable and protective 2-hydroxyestrone (2-OHE) metabolite versus production of 16-alpha-hydroxyestrone (16-alpha-OHE) metabolite. Assessment of 2:16-alpha-OHE ratio appears to be useful in evaluating estrogen dominance.
ADRENAL SUPPORT (PATHWAY Adrenal Support)	As the ovaries produce less estrogen during peri/menopause, the adrenals are designed to produce estrogen, although not as powerful as the estrogen produced from the ovaries. If the adrenal glands are “fatigued,” then they will have a difficult time producing hormones. The adrenals can be nourished by vitamin C, vitamin B5, magnesium, as well as adaptogenic herbs such ashwagandha, rhodiola, ginseng, licorice, and maca root.
PROGESTERONE CREAM (PATHWAY Crème de Femme)	Helps to increase progesterone levels. Look for a cream that uses USP progesterone derived from a substance called diosgenin, which is extracted from wild yam or from soybeans. In the laboratory diosgenin is chemically synthesized into human progesterone. Because progesterone is very fat-soluble, it is easily absorbed through the skin.
LIVER SUPPORT (PATHWAY Liver Support & Detox)	Ingredients such as lipotropic factors (choline and inositol), turmeric, milk thistle, dandelion root, artichoke leaf, and bitters help to promote the removal of fat from the liver, detoxify the body’s wastes, detoxify harmful chemicals, and metabolize and excrete estrogens.

Supplement	Benefits
<p>MENOPAUSE FORMULA (THORNE Meta-Balance)</p>	<p>Contains herbs such as chaste tree, black cohosh, dandelion root, licorice, and dong quai to support healthy hormone balance.</p>
<p>PROSTATE FORMULA (LIFE EXTENSION Ultra Natural Prostate)</p>	<p>Specialized formula designed for men to support urinary flow, hormone metabolism, and overall prostate health. Saw palmetto, nettle root, in addition to pumpkin seed oil, vitamin B6, lycopene, and zinc are just some of the ingredients that provide powerful support for men's health.</p>
<p>PROBIOTICS (PATHWAY Suprema Dophilus)</p>	<p>Have a positive effect on estrogen excretion. Healthy bacteria are associated with a lower incidence of estrogen sensitive cancers due to the reduced re-absorption of estrogen.</p>
<p>DHEA (PATHWAY DHEA)</p>	<p>DHEA is a natural steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands and a precursor of the human sex hormones, testosterone and estrogen. With age, production of this hormone declines. Current research indicates supplementation with DHEA (when found to be low) can improve both physical and psychological wellbeing.</p>

Natural Therapies

Routine	Benefits
EXERCISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in regular exercise to help promote healthy weight management and bone strength
DIET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy a well-rounded diet rich in whole foods and balanced nutrition Avoid foods high in sugar and refined carbohydrates, caffeine, alcohol, junk foods, artificial ingredients, and unhealthy hydrogenated fats Eat high fiber foods, whole grains, nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, dark leafy greens High in flaxseeds, legumes (phytoestrogen rich foods) Drink filtered water (use glass/stainless steel) Eat organic foods, especially produce, meats, eggs, dairy Eat cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, kale, collard greens, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, etc.) Eat healthy fats such as avocados, walnuts, olive oil, coconut oil, etc. Eat fermented foods such as sauerkraut, miso, yogurt, etc.
LIFESTYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain good digestion and bowel habits Support liver health Stress support Sleep support Manage inflammation Use natural body care products Use natural cleaning products Avoid harmful exposure to environmental chemicals/toxins Do seasonal cleanses

Additional Natural Options

Bio-Identical Hormones

Bio-identical hormone replacement therapy is an all-natural alternative to traditional hormone replacement. Advantages of using bio-identical hormones include the well-known benefits of traditional hormone replacement therapy without most of the unwanted side effects and risks. Ask your doctor about creating a natural hormone plan that is specific to your needs. Our team of compounding pharmacists specializes in providing individualized manually compounded prescriptions to fit each woman's exact needs. Customized prescriptions may come in the form of oral capsules, sublingual tablets, topical gels and creams, and patches.

Conclusion

For over 45 years, Village Green Apothecary's highly experienced and knowledgeable pharmacists and nutrition consultants have collaborated with patients and their health care practitioners to provide the most comprehensive individualized care. We are committed to assisting you in making the best choices for your health, whether they are all-natural or conventional options.

Village Green's commitment to valuable nutrition includes our *Pathway* nutritional product line, which has been developed by our team of experts and is endorsed by leading physicians and nutritionists. Each product is carefully formulated for optimal purity and maximum potency and is 100% natural and hypoallergenic. We use no unnecessary binders, fillers, or excipients in any of our products. We ensure the safety and efficacy of *Pathway* by following strict quality guidelines and having ingredients verified. In addition, we ensure that each product contains the most absorbable mineral forms and herbs in guaranteed or standardized potencies. Furthermore, by incorporating the latest research into our formulation, we are committed to continually enhancing our product line to best support the health of our customers.

Our team of skilled practitioners also makes it possible for Village Green to carry practitioner-brand supplements, which must be sold under the guidance of a licensed practitioner. This means you'll find a host of top brands at Village Green that you won't find at your corner drugstore or natural foods store. Practitioner brand supplements, including Thorne, Metagenics, Xymogen, Life Extension, Innate, and Pure Encapsulations, are some of the purest, most potent forms of vitamins and nutrients available. They're formulated based on the clinical experience of medical practitioners, and often use patented raw materials, ones that are most bioavailable in the body and are therefore most potent. And, they are free of common allergens, such as wheat, corn or soy.

Village Green's Nutrition and Wellness Services

Our trained professionals include naturopathic doctors, licensed nutritionists, clinical herbalists, and holistic health counselors. We offer a wide variety of private wellness consultations. You can schedule an appointment online at www.myvillagegreen.com, where our online appointment manager allows you to look up available times and schedules, view a current appointment, or cancel an existing appointment with the option to reschedule. For further information, please call 301-530-0800.

* * *

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Consult your physician if you have any question regarding a medical condition.