

NATURAL HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (HRT)

WHAT IS NATURAL HRT?

Natural HRT or "Bio-identical" hormones are derived from Wild Yam or Soy. They are called bio-identical because they are a perfect match with the chemicals normally produced by your body, which most commercially produced hormones are not. They are also in the same proportions as usually found in your body (e.g. Trieste, the Oestrogen we use, is made up of 10% estradiol, 10% estrone, 80% estriol as found in the body).

USES/BENEFITS

The uses are - For relief of post menopausal symptoms
Improvement in osteoporosis
Treatment of PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome)
As a face cream or acne or reducing effects of age

HOW TO USE

Most medications taken orally are absorbed in the stomach and then go to the liver where they are broken down, so that the actual amount of drug available for use by the body is reduced and potential side effect causing by-products are produced. Hence the Natural HRT comes in 2 forms that bypass the liver, i.e. "Troches" which are waxy pellets that are placed in the mouth (in the cheek) and usually dissolve in about 10 minutes. They can also be used intra-vaginally if their absorption in the mouth is too slow or mouth irritation occurs (rare). Secondly a Cream that is absorbed through the skin, A small spoon is supplied and the appropriate dose is rubbed into soft skin of the body such as the breasts, chest, lower abdomen, inner thighs, inner arms or neck. The area used should be rotated, so every few days use a new area.

SIDE EFFECTS

Generally there are very few side effects and most will disappear in 1-2 weeks or can be eliminated by dose manipulation. One of the great benefits of these formulations is the ability to custom make the prescription to suit each individual. Some possibilities are – headache, spotting, breast tenderness or nausea.

FOLLOW UP

As the hormones take 1-3 months to stabilise in your body, I recommend follow-up visit after 3-4 months so we can monitor progress and make changes if necessary. After that, 12 monthly visits are required. I can be contacted at any time with questions on 4950 9600. Regular breast self-examinations, routine Mammograms and PAP smears must not be neglected. If you have not had a hysterectomy, 2 yearly ultrasounds are required to ensure adequate protection against endometrial cancer.

RISKS

There are well documented risks* associated with conventional HRT. We expect these risks are smaller with Natural HRT but as large studies have not been done, we must accept the risks as applying to Natural HRT also.

They are – Breast cancer (risk is 1 in 263 per year compared to 1 in 333 without HRT, but only after at least 7-10 years use!)
Stroke (1 in 347 compared with 1 in 487)
Deep Vein Thrombosis (2 in 10,000 compared with 1 in 10,000)
Ovarian Cancer (1 more per 2,500 in 5 years)

Note: There has not been found any increased overall risk of death with HRT, in fact there is a reduction in total mortality[^].

Smoking with HRT increases all these risks further.

The NHRMC has stated that short-term use of HRT is an appropriate option for management of symptoms of menopause.

FURTHER INFO

www.menopause.org.au

*The Women's Health Initiative

www.health.gov.au/nhmrc/publications/synopses/2h34synl.htm

[^]JAMA 4 April 97 "Post-menopausal hormone therapy and risk of cardiovascular disease"

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