

Bio-Identical Hormones: One Size Dose Not Fit All

The severity of problems caused by the use of synthetic hormones led to a landmark decision in 2002 with the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) – a long-term health study of post-menopausal women. After discovering that the instances of breast cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis increased with the use of synthetics, research was halted. Bio-identical hormones were brought into the spotlight after women sought a safe alternative for synthetic hormone replacement therapy.

The difference between bio-identical and synthetic hormones starts at the molecular level. Side effects and risk factors are minimized when your body recognizes its own molecular structure. Bio-identical hormones can be tailored to match each individual's needs. Synthetic hormones, on the other hand, have an altered molecular structure that the body does not recognize completely, thus their effects are not physiological and they are not detoxified easily from the body. Side effects are common with these types of hormones because they are foreign to the body. Synthetic hormones are prescribed as a "one size fits all", and cannot be specifically made for an individual.

The individualized approach of bio-identical hormone treatment will only measure active (free/unbound) hormone levels, unlike serum tests which reflect inactive (total/bound) levels. Measuring inactive hormone levels is not as useful in assessing function or balance. With everyone's body chemistry being different, the correct, balanced, and individualized supplementation therapy can be invaluable in reaching your health care goals.