



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Survey Finds Women Unsure About Their Options

(NAPSA)—If you had to describe bio-identical hormone therapy, which words would you choose? Individually designed hormone therapy? A non-natural means of menopause relief? Or substances that are structurally identical to the naturally occurring substances in the human body?

If you're not sure which is correct, you have plenty of company. According to a recent survey, conducted by MenopauseRx.com, nearly 40 percent of women misidentified bio-identical hormone therapy as a non-natural means of menopause relief.

Bio-identical therapy is actually a more natural option for relief. Most estrogens and progesterone come from soy (estrogen) or yams (progesterone). Once the hormones are extracted from a plant source, they are processed to be used by a woman's body.

While there is not one "best" hormone therapy option for all women, the reality is that women are much more responsive to the types of hormones normally found in the body.

These include bio-identical hormones such as estradiol (the primary estrogen produced by the ovary) and micronized progesterone. Women respond to these bio-identical prescription products because they are so similar to what the body makes naturally after the midlife change.

Bio-identical hormone therapy is available through FDA-approved prescription products such as gels, lotions, patches and pills, as well as non-FDA-approved compounded products. Some pharmacies offer to custom-compound bio-identical hormone therapies for a woman's individual menopause symptoms



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but the safety and effectiveness of these formulations cannot be assured. Commercially available estradiol and progesterone products have undergone rigorous FDA monitoring. When prescribed by a health care professional, these medications are usually covered by insurance companies.

While the use of hormone therapy is currently the subject of debate, it remains the gold standard for relief of troublesome menopause symptoms. The North American Menopause Society recommends using the lowest dose of hormone for the shortest time to relieve symptoms. Research indicates that FDA-approved and prescribed bio-identical hormones can be an effective way to alleviate the symptoms of menopause.

In choosing a hormone therapy, experts recommend a yearly review with a health care professional. Most women find that over time the symptoms diminish or the reasons to use hormone therapy change. As that happens it may be beneficial to discontinue the use of hormones. To learn more, visit www.MenopauseRx.com.