

# Progesterone VS. Progestin (Bio-identical or Synthetic)

## Hormonal Imbalance

As we age, women will start to experience symptoms of hormonal imbalance, which can be related to perimenopause, menopause, postmenopause, giving birth or from a hysterectomy.

Females tend to experience an imbalance of estrogen, testosterone and progesterone, which can lead to hot flashes, night sweats, anxiety, depression, brain fog, weight gain, loss of muscle, irritability and bone deficiency. Bone loss in women can exacerbate stress fractures caused by osteopenia or osteoporosis.

Optimizing hormone levels through bio-identical hormone replacement therapy can alleviate or in many cases eliminate these symptoms. There are even studies now that suggest bio-identical hormones can help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.

## What Are Bio-Identical Hormones?

In the U.S., bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT) has been used since the 1930s. Results from hundreds of current medical studies looking at the use of BHRT show astounding improvements in patients' overall quality of life and their hormonal symptoms.

Bio-identical hormones are equivalent to our body's natural hormones on a molecular level. The difference between synthetic and bio-identical hormones is that synthetic hormones do not match human hormones on a biological level. For example, a very common synthetic estrogen cream that many physicians prescribe is made from a pregnant horse's urine. Most people can see why this substance would not be fully accepted by the body.

Bio-identical hormones are made from natural plant sources and are readily received by the body since they are identical to those hormones that the body produces for itself. Dosing or the amount of hormones being taken by a patient is just as important. When we are replacing the body's hormones, it would make sense to use physiologic doses or doses that are similar to the amounts of hormones naturally made in the body prior to menopause and not imbalanced or overly potent synthetic versions.



## Progesterone vs Progestin

Oftentimes, the terms progesterone and progestin are used interchangeably; however, there is a huge difference between the two. Progesterone, and not progestin, is the natural bio-identical form of the hormone as opposed to progestin, which is the synthetic version found in manufactured products like Prempro.

Progesterone can be best thought of as a hormone balancer, especially for estrogens. It enhances the positive effects of estrogen while preventing any negative effects of estrogen dominance. Progesterone is the precursor, or hormone from which most of the other hormones are derived, including the estrogens and testosterone. Progesterone has a number of very important jobs in the body, including normalizing blood sugar levels and maintaining pregnancies. It also has a natural calming effect and diuretic properties.

On the contrary, synthetic progestin does not have as many benefits. In fact, it has more negative effects, such as miscarriages, weight gain, decreased sex drive, increased risk of breast cancer, high risk of fractures and osteoporosis, increased blood clotting risks, anxiety, depression, migraine headaches and other health related disorders.

## Progesterone After a Hysterectomy

Opposite of what some uninformed physicians believe, women that have had a hysterectomy see just as many benefits with progesterone therapy. It has been widely studied and proven that bio-identical hormone replacement therapy with progesterone is just as important and beneficial for their health even after a hysterectomy. For women, progesterone is essential for all of life's stages, and it provides beneficial results outside of the uterus since progesterone receptors are imbedded in almost every cell in the body. Ultimately, women without a uterus still need progesterone therapy.

## Progesterone After a Hysterectomy

Obviously, hormone replacement with bio-identical progesterone versus synthetic progestin is the best option considering it looks and acts just like the progesterone we make in our bodies. When hormone balance is achieved with bio-identical hormones, fewer side effects if any are observed. Just think, natural hormones have undergone safety and efficacy trials for as long as humans have walked the earth!

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