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Thank you for choosing Integrative Hormone Consulting (IHC). We continually strive to provide our patients with the best patient care possible. Our pharmacist and nurse carry out ongoing study, research and networking with nationally known researchers and physicians in order to give you the most current information and recommendations. Knowledge, clinical experience and evidence based research are the foundation of our practice.

You may have heard a few years ago that a study known as the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) was done by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that concluded that long-term use of hormone replacement therapy can increase the risk for breast cancer, strokes and heart attacks. What many people do not know is that this study used synthetic hormones that have different structures than the hormones found in the human body. More recently, an excellent review was done by the Holtorf Medical Group in 2009 that looked at the differences between bioidentical hormones (such as progesterone, estriol and estradiol which have the same structure as the hormones made by the body) and commonly used nonbioidentical alternatives, comparing how well they work, changes they make in breast tissue, and risks for breast cancer and heart disease.

The nonbioidentical "progestin" medroxyprogesterone acetate (MPA) is structurally different from progesterone. Progesterone is a hormone naturally produced by the ovaries during the second half of the menstrual cycle and by the uterus during pregnancy. Progesterone has many beneficial effects for both women and men. The progestins used in the NIH/WHI study do NOT have these same beneficial effects. The Holtorf review found that MPA had many more side effects than progesterone.

Another issue is that the NIH/WHI study used Premarin® which is generically known as conjugated equine estrogens (CEE). Again, this formulation is not the same as the hormones produced in the body. Ovaries produce estrogens in three forms: estriol, estradiol and estrone. We have found, through many years of practice and experience, that it is most beneficial to replace these three naturally occurring estrogens in the ratios that the body naturally produces them. The Holtorf review discusses the fact that estriol binds certain receptors that help to protect against breast cancer, whereas CEE binds different receptors that promote the growth of breast cells which can increase the risk for breast cancer. Progestins, especially when combined with CEE, also can cause breast cancer.

The use of bioidentical estrogens, progesterone and sometimes androgens (DHEA-S and testosterone) or thyroid hormones (T4 and T3) make up the complex therapy known as Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT).

Compounding pharmacies can create a balance of these hormones that is specific to each patient's needs. Here at IHC, we work closely with you, your physician and the compounding pharmacy to make sure you are getting the best care. We also believe that eating healthy and staying active is crucial. Our pharmacist and nurse are available for personal counseling sessions by appointment. These sessions focus on all aspects of your health, including current medications and supplements, diet, lifestyle, and personal health history in order to determine the best therapy for each individual.