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Natural Hormone Therapy

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FEMALE TESTOSTERONE

Testosterone is a male sex hormone although women have it at approx one tenth of male levels, men making 20-30mg daily with women making 2-3mg daily.

It is primarily made in the testes for males and the ovaries for females and in the adrenal cortex of both sexes. To a lesser extent it can also be made in the skin, brain and liver. As with all hormones it starts from cholesterol through pregnenolone then diverts through the androgen pathway to DHEA then testosterone. Testosterone can further cascade into estradiol one of the oestrogens through a process called aromatase.

Testosterone helps to slow the ageing process through maintaining muscle mass and bone mineralisation although the exact mechanism for bone support is not clear yet. It has a positive effect on heart muscle and has been shown to reduce the risk associated with atherosclerosis, (plaque build up in the arteries) It also works with emotional well being helping to maintain motivation and enthusiasm for living. Its most widely acknowledged effect is on supporting libido and sexual function. While this is more readily accepted with men the same can be true for women as testosterone has been effective in treating vaginal dryness, thinning of vaginal tissue and increasing sensitivity in the genitals and breast tissue.

By the age of 40 women generally are producing ½ the amount of Testosterone they were making in their 20's. The decline is gradual and often women are unaware of the subtle changes this causes until combined with the other symptoms of hormonal decline and imbalance experienced with peri-menopause and menopause. The most common first symptom that is recognised is a decline in libido and reduced sensitivity of genitalia. Given that low testosterone symptoms can be subtle or reflect symptoms of both oestrogen and progesterone deficiency, low testosterone in women is often overlooked even when libido remains low when other hormone imbalances have been corrected.

Unfortunately historical beliefs that prescribing Testosterone for women is unnatural, (although it occurs naturally in all women and the decline with age is well documented) is often the reason that women will continue to suffer the effects of Testosterone deficiency unnecessarily.

INDICATORS OF LOW TESTOSTERONE	
• Reduced libido	• Fatigue
• ↓sensitivity in genitals and breast tissue	• Loss of motivation
• Weight gain/loss	• Irritability
• Abdominal fat	• Depression
• ↑ glucose and insulin	• Aches and pains in joints
• ↓Bone minerals	• Contributes to Osteoporosis
• Decreased muscle mass	• Thin dry skin
• Hair loss	• Vaginal dryness and thinning of tissue

At menopause the ovaries no longer produce testosterone so overall production is reduced by 50%. With increasing incidence of adrenal fatigue due to hormone imbalances, stressful lifestyle, poor diet, alcohol intake and increasing pollutant further decreasing testosterone development this results in levels that may be as low as 20% of optimal functioning and the development of the above symptoms.

Women who have had their ovaries surgically removed experience sudden testosterone deficiency and will often not return to full wellness until their testosterone levels have been replaced. Rarely is either Progesterone or Testosterone offered to this group as a primary treatment option.

Women are often concerned with the potential side effects commonly perceived to be associated with Testosterone supplementation, these being facial hair, enlarging of the clitoris and deepening of the voice. These side effects occur when Testosterone is administered in excessive dosing and do not occur when it is given in biological dosing of 1 to 2.5mg daily as this level is clearly within the normal levels the body makes when functioning effectively.

Supplementing Testosterone can be of substantial help in restoring a woman to her familiar level of energy, libido and well being. When supplemented in biological doses it is safe, cost effective and it works!

Ref Susan Rako M.D.: The Hormone of Desire

Sandra Cabot: Hormones: Don't Let Them Ruin Your Life.