

## Bioidenticals safer and more effective than synthetic HRT, studies show

The appearance of Suzanne Somers on a recent Oprah Winfrey show sparked controversy in the mainstream media about the benefits of using bioidentical hormones for hormone replacement therapy instead of synthetics. Dr. Al Sears, who notes that Somers is the author of several best-selling books on the subject, says that she has educated herself about the options for HRT " and he writes that he agrees with her that bioidenticals are a better option. Why?

As Dr. Sears notes in his column, bioidenticals are safer, with several studies and analysis supporting his contention. He refers to a recent analysis of more than 200 studies that found bioidentical HRT to be both more effective and offer greater health benefits for menopausal women than synthetic hormones. "The study showed that women taking them were less likely to have sleep problems, anxiety, depression and cognitive problems " common side effects of synthetic hormones. And these women had a reduced risk of breast cancer and superior heart protection," he writes. He points to a German study that found the effects of the bioidentical estriol to be successful in 92 percent of all cases, with the drug eliminating hot flashes and sweating in 71 percent of the women. Another study of Japanese post-menopausal women who took estriol found no side effects in the uterus or breasts of the women.

Conversely, Dr. Sears notes that synthetic HRT drugs have a whole array of reported risks, from chest pain and shortness of breath, to vision problems, breast lumps, dizziness and depression. "Alleviating the symptoms of menopause can often result in something much, much worse if you take the synthetic form of the drugs," he points out. Moreover, a study of the Women's Health Initiative evaluated women who had taken an estrogen-progestin combination drug called Prempro. The National Institutes of Health had to cut the study short when their findings showed that the drug resulted in a 26 percent increase in breast cancer, 41 percent increase in strokes, 29 percent increase in heart attacks, 100 percent increase of blood clots in the legs and lungs, and an increased risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer.

As Dr. Sears explains, bioidenticals are made from plants that have an identical molecular structure to the hormones produced by the human body. "Your body doesn't see them as foreign matter, whereas synthetic HRT drugs are chemically altered forms of hormones that come from animal waste," he notes, highlighting that Prempro and Premarin, one of the most widely prescribed HRT drugs, both contain horse urine from pregnant mares.

So, how should patients get started with bioidenticals? Dr. Sears stresses the importance of first having a physician check levels of estrogen, progesterone and

testosterone in order to determine which hormones need replenishing. And he emphasizes that not all bioidenticals are equal. "When it comes to hormones, one size does not fit all. Everyone's needs are different. With bioidenticals, a doctor can prescribe a custom blend of naturally occurring hormones that are specific to the patient's needs," he notes. Some doctors are unwilling to prescribe bioidenticals, but many are, particularly those who specialize in alternative and natural health. A directory of physicians is available at his website at: [www.alsearsmd.com/health-directory/](http://www.alsearsmd.com/health-directory/)

News Release: What you need to know about hormone replacement therapy  
<http://www.totalhealthbreakthroughs.com/2009/07/are-oprah-and-suzanne-somers-right/> July 10, 2009

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