ROAR

Hormones & Menopausal Hormone Therapy

Understanding Your Hormones

Hormones work together in a coordinated way, but they are not interchangeable. Shifts in hormone levels during midlife and menopause can affect many body systems, influencing how you feel and function overall.

"Estrogen and progesterone aren't interchangeable — they have different jobs."

Estrogen

Estrogen is important for:

- **Hot flashes** — helps keep body temperature regulated (lower levels can trigger hot flashes).
- **Vaginal and urinary tissues** — keeps these tissues healthy and comfortable.
- **Bones** — helps maintain bone strength.
- **Brain and other body systems** — influences mood, thinking, heart, skin, and overall well-being.

Progesterone

Progesterone is important for:

- **Menstrual cycles** — works with estrogen to keep cycles regular.
- **The uterine lining** — helps prepare and maintain a healthy lining.
- **Reproduction** — plays a key role in fertility and supporting a pregnancy.
- **Other whole-body effects** — influences systems throughout the body, including mood, sleep, and overall balance.

Testosterone

Women make testosterone too.

Testosterone is important for:

- **Sexual desire** — supports interest in and desire for sexual activity.
- **Sexual function** — helps with aspects of sexual response and satisfaction.
- **Muscle** — helps maintain muscle mass and strength.
- **Physical function** — supports energy, endurance, and overall physical performance and function.

Why This Matters in Menopause

- **Changing hormone levels can affect:** sleep, sexual health, urinary symptoms, bones, muscles, and quality of life.

What This Handout Will Cover

- **Progesterone** — what it does, forms, and use.
- **Testosterone** — what it does, forms, and use.
- **Menopausal hormone therapy** — an overview of what it is and key considerations.

HORMONES & MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

Progesterone – The Other Half of the Conversation

WHAT IS PROGESTERONE?

Progesterone is a key hormone that works alongside estrogen to keep many systems in balance, especially the reproductive system.

PROGESTERONE IS IMPORTANT FOR:

- **Menstrual cycles** (regulates and stabilizes)
- The **uterine lining** (prepares and maintains it)
- **Reproductive function** (supports conception and early pregnancy)
- **Other effects throughout the body** (e.g., mood, sleep, brain, bone and overall **well-being**)

FORMS OF PROGESTERONE

Progesterone can be prescribed in different forms, depending on your needs, symptoms and health history.

Oral capsules/tablets	Swallowed by mouth.
Vaginal capsules/tablets	Inserted vaginally, often used at bedtime.
Vaginal gels	Applied inside the vagina.
Injections	Usually intramuscular (into a muscle), depending on the medication.
Creams	Some progesterone creams are available, although absorption can be variable and they aren't interchangeable with prescription products.
Hormonal IUDs	Release a progestogen (a synthetic, progesterone-like hormone) locally in the uterus rather than progesterone itself.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- ✓ Progesterone has a unique and important role in the body.
- ✓ It works in partnership with **estrogen**.
- ✓ There are several effective forms, and the right one depends on your individual needs.

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

Progesterone and **progestogens** are not the same. Progestogens are synthetic, progesterone-like hormones (e.g., in some IUDs and hormonal therapies) that act in a similar way, but they are different from **natural progesterone**.

HORMONES & MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

Testosterone – Yes, Women Have Testosterone Too

YES, WOMEN HAVE TESTOSTERONE TOO

Testosterone is a key hormone for women's overall well-being, not just a male hormone. Women make it naturally in smaller amounts, and it plays an important role in many body functions.

TESTOSTERONE IS IMPORTANT FOR:

- **Sexual desire** – supports and maintains a healthy libido.
- **Sexual function** – contributes to arousal, response and satisfaction.
- **Muscle** – helps with muscle strength, tone and maintenance.
- **Physical function** – supports energy, stamina, bone health and overall vitality.

FORMS OF TESTOSTERONE

Testosterone can be prescribed in different forms, depending on your needs, symptoms and health history.

Injections	Usually intramuscular or subcutaneous; different preparations can last from days to several weeks.
Gels	Applied to the skin daily (e.g., to the arm, thigh or abdomen). Not in a form strictly for women.
Creams	Topical preparations applied to the skin.
Patches	Deliver testosterone through the skin for steady absorption.
Implants/Pellets	Placed under the skin and release testosterone gradually over several months.
Nasal Gel	Applied inside the nose, typically multiple times daily.
Oral/Buccal Formulations	Some testosterone products are designed to be absorbed through the mouth (e.g., under the tongue or against the cheek), although availability varies by country.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- ✓ Testosterone has important benefits for women.
- ✓ There are several effective forms.
- ✓ The right option depends on your individual needs, symptoms and health history.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Testosterone isn't a male hormone. It's a human hormone — and women make it too.

Your healthcare provider can help you determine if testosterone is appropriate for you, and which form and dose are the best fit.

HORMONES & MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) — Understanding Your Options

WHAT IS MHT?

Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) is a treatment that replaces hormones (most often estrogen, with or without progesterone) that the body is no longer producing at previous levels.

KEY BENEFITS (WHEN APPROPRIATE)

- Relieves common menopausal symptoms (e.g., hot flashes, night sweats, sleep disruption).
- Supports vaginal and urinary health (e.g., dryness, comfort and recurrent irritations).
- Helps maintain bone health and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Can improve overall quality of life, comfort and well-being.

TYPES OF HORMONE THERAPY

SYSTEMIC HORMONE THERAPY

Hormone enters the bloodstream and works throughout the body.

May help with:

- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Sleep and mood changes
- Bone health (helps prevent bone loss)
- Overall menopausal symptom relief

LOCAL VAGINAL ESTROGEN

A lower-dose estrogen that primarily treats tissues locally (vagina, urinary tract).

May help with:

- Vaginal dryness and discomfort
- Painful intercourse
- Urinary urgency, frequency or recurrent urinary tract irritations
- Tissue health and comfort

KEY TAKEAWAY

- MHT is not “one-size-fits-all.”
- There are different types, doses and delivery methods.
- The right approach depends on your symptoms, health history, risk factors and personal goals.
- Work with a trusted healthcare provider to create a plan that is right for you.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

“The question isn’t simply whether hormones are good or bad, but whether they are appropriate for this woman, at this time, in this form.”