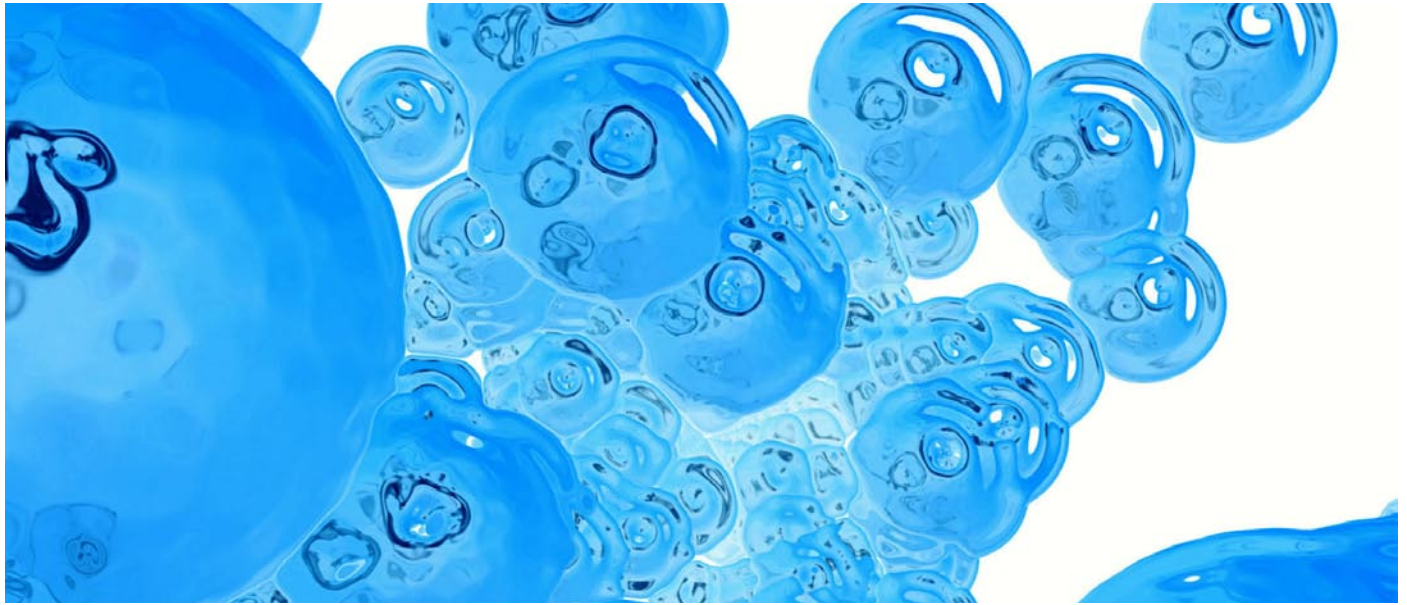


For Women Only

Make sense of menopause and hormone therapy.

BY LORI ALLEN



We have likely all been exposed to hot flashes and night sweats, either personally or through someone close to us. This is one of the more noticeable and common symptoms associated with menopause. The list of symptoms also includes:

- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Breast tenderness
- Vaginal dryness
- Loss of interest in sex
- Fibroids in the breast
- Bladder symptoms
- Dry skin and/or hair
- Loss of hair
- Depression
- Headaches
- Mood swings
- Cramps
- Fluid retention
- Breakthrough bleeding
- Fatigue
- Loss of memory
- Difficulty reaching climax
- Arthritis
- Heavy and/or irregular menses

These symptoms are usually a sign of a hormone imbalance and can be significantly improved and even eliminated by balancing the hormones.

Hormones are a natural part of you. The same hormones are found in men and women, just in different amounts. Men make approximately 10 times more testosterone than women while women make more estrogen and progesterone. The body has natural cycles where the hormones increase and decrease. The cycles are most evident in women who menstruate. The menstrual cycle starts with estrogen. As estrogen lessens, progesterone and testosterone increase. If a woman doesn't get pregnant when the progesterone and testosterone are louder, all the hormones decrease so the song can start all over again.

This hormone song changes throughout our lives. There is a section called peri-menopause. During peri-menopause the music is in disarray because the progesterone and testosterone levels are low, so their contribution to the music is difficult to hear and the estrogen switches irregularly from high to low. During this

time, symptoms of sleep disturbances, anxiety, irregular menses, mood swings, loss of memory and changes in libido are very common.

After the peri-menopause, our song switches to menopause. Menopause can come naturally, but sometimes it is created with a hysterectomy. The cause of menopause doesn't matter, but the uncomfortable symptoms of menopause do.

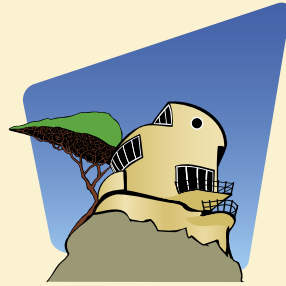
— The benefit of tailoring your medication means you will get exactly what you need.

The relief of these symptoms can be achieved through balancing your hormones. Hormone imbalance can occur at any time during your body's hormone symphony. The tools to determine where your imbalance lies are hormone labs, either serum testing or saliva testing, and the symptoms you exhibit. Once your imbalance has been found, you need to decide how you would like to fix your imbalance. Some people choose to use natural herbs like black

Home, Sweet Vacation Home

Compare all-inclusive and house rental options for your vacation getaway.

BY MONA MOORE



cohosh, wild yam and evening primrose. These treatments can prove to be effective for some, especially those with mild imbalances. The other option is using hormones to correct the imbalance.

Understanding Hormone Treatment

This is where much of the confusion about the best treatment option enters. It is difficult to sort out the fact from the fiction because of the conflicting information in what we read and hear. Let's start out with some terminology. The most common terms describing hormone therapy are Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and Bio-identical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT). Hormone Replacement Therapy uses synthetic hormones not found in your body the way Mother Nature intended. Bio-identical hormones are hormones that are biologically identical or the exact match of your hormones made by your body. There are also confusing terms like "natural" which means "found in nature." The hormones in horse urine are natural, but that does not mean they are biologically identical for women.

There are many practitioners—doctors (MD and DO), nurse practitioners (NP), naturopathic physicians (NMD), physician assistants (PA) and pharmacists—who specialize in working with women and men to help balance your hormones. Balance is the key for finding the best results. The option of compounding tailors the hormones to your specific needs. The benefit of tailoring your medication means you will get exactly what you need—not too much or too little and the correct amount of all of the necessary hormones.

If your hormones are out of balance and you choose to balance with bio-identical hormones, you can contact the helpful staff at Mixtures Pharmacy and Compounding Center to schedule a consultation or find a referral for practitioners who work with bio-identical hormones.

Mixtures Pharmacy
16515 S. 40th St., Suite 123 |
Phoenix
480.706.0620
www.mixturesrx.com

How does a three bedroom house on the beach with a swimming pool sound? What if the house comes with a housekeeper and a cook? Sounds pricey right? Not necessarily. If your family has ever been to an all-inclusive resort, then a beach home vacation rental can be a very reasonable alternative.

All-inclusives (AI) offer a one-stop vacation. Room, food, drinks and activities are included in the one price. Generally food includes three meals a day and limited items in between. Activities can include arts and crafts, nightly entertainment and game rooms, but you can expect to pay extra for motorized activities. Often AIs offer some kind of child care or kid's camp where children can be dropped off and Mom and Dad can have some time to themselves.

However, AIs can come at a hefty price. Your accommodations will probably be just a basic hotel room arrangement, although you may be able to upgrade at a cost. This can be cramped quarters for a family and presents a dilemma at naptime and bedtime. One parent might end up sitting in the dark at 8 o'clock, so the children can go to sleep and be supervised. Also at an AI, you generally don't leave the property and therefore get a limited experience of your location of choice.

By choosing a vacation rental you can have a home away from home experience. Most rentals offer all the amenities that you have in your own home and some may even include food and non-alcoholic drinks in the price. Additionally, a cook/housekeeper may be included or available at an additional cost. If not, you will have to do the cooking and cleaning just like at home. Babysitting services may also be provided at a charge. Your family can enjoy spacious accommodations on the beach that may include a pool. No need to interrupt the fun for naptime. You can put the little one down and still play in the sand a few steps away. There are also more opportunities to experience the local cultures by staying in a rental home. Just going on a grocery run can be a learning experience for you and the kids.

Choosing a Getaway

Consider some of the following before making your choice. First, confirm that children are allowed. Rates vary by season, so be sure to find out if your travel plans fall during high or low season. The difference could be significant. Determine if transportation to and from the airport is included in the rate and, if not, if a rental car is recommended. If you require baby paraphernalia such as a crib, high chair or stroller, ask if they are provided. Also consider specialty diets or food allergies and if they can be catered to. If your vacation is on an island, keep in mind that most everything will be more costly because you are ultimately paying to transport those items. Packing your week's supply of diapers might be worth your while.

So for your next family trip, try a vacation home. You can have a unique value vacation with the perks and lots of room too. For more information and resources go to www.MomsZone.org.

Mona Moore owns Mom's Zone, a local online resource for local Moms. Mom's Zone helps Moms connect, find the products and services they need, and find fun things to do with their families. Check out the Mom's Zone Website at www.MomsZone.org or call 480.917.0306.