

## **Introduction**

For many years, people have been seeking solutions to the various and complex symptoms that accompany the process of aging. Conflicting medical literature (influenced by the money and muscle behind the pharmaceutical industry) has thus far left health care professionals—as well as the people who rely on their advice—baffled, wondering which therapies are sound and which should be avoided. More often than not, physicians prescribe a cocktail of potentially harmful medications that only conceal the symptoms: Prozac for depression, Xanax for anxiety, Ambien for insomnia, Fosamax for osteoporosis, Metformin for high blood sugar, Alli for excess weight, Premarin for hot flashes, and the list goes on. These drugs offer limited relief of pain or discomfort, but they certainly don't address the underlying issues, and they can cause side effects. The fact is that a large number of the health problems associated with getting older are the result of unbalanced or diminished hormone levels. This is particularly true for women, who must inevitably deal with the hormonal fluctuations of menopause.

Prozac helps mask symptoms of irritability and depression, but doesn't address unbalanced hormone levels or the inability to produce enough serotonin, which are the roots of these conditions. Xanax may decrease anxiety, but the real problem may be a lack of progesterone. Similarly, Ambien can help you get some sleep, but recurring night sweats due to low estrogen levels may

wake you up. Fosamax increases bone density at first, but may actually increase your risk of fracture over time. Alli may help you lose a couple of pounds, but the underlying cause of your excess weight may be thyroid or adrenal dysfunction. Premarin, an estrogen derived from horses, can alleviate general symptoms of menopause, but this estrogen is a foreign substance to the body, and much more potent than estrogen made naturally by humans. To truly remedy these conditions, it seems obvious that hormonal balance must be restored. But there is so much confusion surrounding hormone replacement therapy that most people don't know what they should do.

In recent years, a form of hormone therapy known as bioidentical hormone replacement therapy has been brought to light as a safe treatment option. Stories on talk shows and in magazines have discussed this treatment only in a superficial way, leaving intelligent people with even more questions that their traditional physicians cannot seem to answer. People still want to know: What exactly are bioidentical hormones? Are they all hype, or can they actually help? Are they the same as natural hormones? Are they safe? Who's a candidate for treatment? What is the standard duration of therapy? What are the common side effects of these products? Will they help with weight control, mood, and energy level? The purpose of this book is to answer these and a myriad of other related questions.

If you are a woman entering menopause, this book will allow

you to navigate this phase of life more comfortably and healthfully.

It provides a detailed explanation of the menstrual cycle, all the hormones it affects, and how this process changes over the years. You'll also become acquainted with the hormones behind stress, metabolism, energy, and mood. Before long, you will have a rich understanding of your body's delicate hormonal balance and its intricate hormonal fluctuations. At this point, you will learn how to achieve optimal hormone levels through bioidentical hormone replacement therapy. But whether or not you choose hormone replacement therapy, this book also outlines many other treatment options, including vitamins and other supplements, and dietary and lifestyle changes that can benefit your well-being enormously.

If you've been desperately searching for a way to alleviate symptoms of hormonal imbalance without a handful of drugs or a regimen of hormone replacements that aren't quite the same as what your body used to make naturally, *What You Must Know About Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy* is the guide book for you. Reading this book and talking about bioidentical hormone replacement therapy with a progressive health practitioner can help you learn the advantages and risks involved with this type of treatment, allowing you to decide if it is the right choice for your body.