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# *Preface*

**A**s a woman, very likely you are missing fully one-third of the information you need about being female. Two of these three essential subjects – sex education and the role expected of you in your family and your culture, you probably learned one way or another. What has been missing, incredibly, is how to take care of the very thing that makes you female – your female hormonal system. That is the subject of this book, and one which matters far more than you might imagine. That is because female hormones are at the very core of how everything – your body, mind and spirit works and integrates together.

In these pages you will find all the factors involved in the care and feeding of your female self. Applying this knowledge means you can achieve truly natural hormone balance from the inside out at every age and stage of your female life journey. And, you will become empowered to activate your own body's innate capacity to create health.

Each topic within these pages has been chosen as significant because it has been demonstrated to be so by women who learned how to take care of their female hormonal selves by trusting and working with their own inherent bodily wisdoms. This way of gathering information is part of the tradition of evidence-based medicine, - assembling knowledge gained by finding what works in the clinical setting, with actual women. It is based on the fact that each element, each particular of what works for each woman, is part of a whole and ultimately represents the unity of the nature of all women. This female unity is often referred to by the term “synergy”. It means how your female body works in its unrestricted wholeness. In Jungian psychology it is called “the feminine”.

The current, prevailing scientific paradigm has not employed this way of thinking so natural to women. Instead, it uses a method of logical analysis that breaks things down into their component parts (which is why it's referred to as “reductionist”). This is useful if one wants to find out the parts of something. For example, “What are the parts of a watch?” is a question this method can answer by systematically taking the watch apart. However, it does not and cannot answer the question “How does a watch work?”, for at best, at the end of its inquiry, it has discovered all the pieces of a watch and but is still unable to find out what time it is. This analytical, linear, laboratory-experiment based scientific method specifically excludes the natural, practical synthesizing approach which women naturally understand and which is easily applied in clinical practice.

## *The Female Hormone Journey*

Using the example of the watch, the synthesizing approach aims to discover how all the parts work together to create the function of a timepiece. Applying this to what it takes for each woman's hormonal system to be healthy and balanced at each phase of her journey yields a very different view of how female hormonal systems work and what they need to regulate their functions. It reveals that the bottom line in achieving and maintaining hormonal health and balance is taking into account the wholeness of each woman's unique and natural process.

When such knowledge derived from each individual woman is put together with that from other individual women, what is revealed is a map that represents the holistic way your female body regulates its hormones and what it needs to continue to do so. That map reveals that, to balance your hormones, you have to consider: your *whole* hormonal system, your *particular* body in which that system lives and works, and the *particular environment* surrounding your body. This is also why your primary health sustaining patterns and those for balancing your hormones are virtually the same. Looking at hormonal balance from this perspective means discovering that your entrance into menarche, your reproductive years, your pre-menopause, menopause and post-menopause don't have to be painful, dysfunctional, involve a roller coaster ride or turning into a prune. It also reveals how essential it is to take into account the special hormonal challenges modern women encounter and learn what to do about them. You'll discover that using hormone replacement, whether synthetic drugs, bioidentical products or synthetic isolated nutrients like pregnenolone, DHEA or HGH, is like arriving at an unstable truce that must be constantly monitored and managed, while holistic hormone balance, arrived at from the inside out, provides a lasting, stable, and healthy state of balance.

Approaching your female endocrine balance from the inside out is not only a naturally female approach, it also takes into account the simple truth that your body is its own pharmacy, manufacturing thousands and thousands of its own chemicals, and when it is respected, supported and kept in tune, it will make all the hormones you need. Your self-regulation is improved, you feel more balanced, and your entire health and wellness- physical and emotional - is enhanced.

This information has become especially timely in the last thirty years since the development of birth control pill in the 1960's. Uses of "the pill" soon expanded beyond birth control to include regulating our periods, dealing with PMS (premenstrual syndrome) or breakthrough bleeding. Later these were extended even further to take in managing menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, mood swings, memory impairments, heart attack or stroke risk, bone loss or just feeling

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better. Advertisements in women's magazines inferred that "the pill" was a fountain of youth. The message was that if we didn't take HRT we'd shrivel up like a prune.

Apparently few of us wanted that. So thoroughly did we sign on to this agenda that the estrogen replacement therapy market in the United States alone swelled to \$840 million per year, with Premarin, made of 49 horse estrogens, controlling 90% of the market at \$672 million a year. When this therapy was found to cause increases in breast and uterine cancer, the next products combined synthetic estrogens with synthetic Progestins (Prempro and PremPhase are two such examples). These include chemical variations of natural human progesterone. The idea was to counterbalance the negative effects of synthetic estrogens with synthetic progestins. Forty percent of U.S. postmenopausal women signed on, with six million using combination therapy and eight million taking synthetic estrogen; in Canada, it was fifteen percent; and in Australia, 500,000-600,000.

Then along came the announcement from the National Institutes of Health that it was stopping the combination HRT trial, part of the Women's Health Initiative Study, because preliminary results demonstrated that women taking these products actually had increased rates of breast cancer, heart disease, stroke, blood clots and endometrial cancer! In addition, breast cancer in women taking these products was shown to be harder to detect and more aggressive. These synthetic hormones were also linked with a doubling of the risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia in older women.<sup>1</sup> Not only that, but the longer the use, the greater the risks!

Women began dumping HRT en masse. Australia's biggest supplier of HRT, Wyeth Australia, reported a 30% drop in sales immediately following the announcement, and their stock prices plummeted. The results of a survey conducted by ImpactRx in the first few days after the news broke showed that about 50% of doctors had told their patients to stop HRT or switch to an alternative. But what is the alternative?

Actually women's bodies have been self-balancing our hormonal systems since time began. So effective has this process been that our bodies, the only source of new human beings, have managed to reproduce the human race and not merely populate, but overpopulate the planet.

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<sup>1</sup> Ulysses Torassa, "New reports of hormone therapy dangers, drugs in studies seem to hide breast cancers." In The San Francisco Chronicle, June 25, 2003.

## *The Female Hormone Journey*

Clearly, many of our foremothers and female contemporaries have successfully managed their various female life transitions without modern synthetic pharmaceuticals. That means choices exist other than being victimized by the symptoms of a hormone system out of balance or the scary side effects of synthetic hormones. In fact, we carry the means of producing our own hormonal health in our own bodies.

True, as women living in the modern age, we have some problems our foremothers did not face. Changes in the last forty years seem to have our bodies under attack. Female-related illnesses have risen dramatically, a situation never before seen in history: “Today, we see the age of puberty (menarche) dropping precipitously to as low as 8 years of age, infertility rates rising, endometriosis afflicting 10% of all perimenopausal women; premenstrual syndrome (PMS), rising and afflicting close to 30% of perimenopausal women, uterine fibroids affecting close to 25 % of women from age 35 to 50, and breast cancer afflicting close to 10% of all women.

So what is the knowledge possessed by our hormonally balanced foremothers and contemporary sisters? That holistic wisdom is what you now hold in your hands. It is an invitation for you, too, to join the circle of women restored once again to a happy hormonal state, and to greet every phase of your female hormone journey in the positive mood that arises from a healthy, natural hormonal equilibrium.

Pamela Levin  
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