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Why Some Men Should Take Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

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Benefits of androgen therapy

It is no surprise that our bodies change as we age. The hormones that stimulate the development and maintenance of “maleness” are called androgens. Androgen levels peak when men are in their late teens and twenties. After that, levels gradually decline. For most men, hormonal decline happens slowly, often spreading out over decades. In any given age group, men who have the highest levels of testosterone and other androgens, frequently look, feel and perform at the top of their class. There are other men with androgen levels at the bottom of the pack. They may be fatigued, perform sex poorly and may even be depressed. Often, it is not recognized that low androgens can be at the heart of many common male medical problems.

Which hormones are we talking about?

The most important androgen is testosterone. Androstenedione and DHEA are two other weaker, less potent androgens. DHEA, although a weaker androgen, circulates throughout the blood in larger quantities than testosterone and contributes to health and well being.

What problems/symptoms usually occur?

A variety of symptoms can develop from muscle loss and weakness along with reduced sexual desire and erectile dysfunction. Weight gain, especially around the middle, is a common problem that can lead to high blood pressure, insulin resistance and increases the risk of heart attack and stroke. Prostate enlargement can cause difficult or frequent urination, especially during the night. Prostate cancer rates tend to be higher along with elevated levels of depression. A man may experience judgment problems or difficulty learning new things.

Do you have to be old to require androgen supplements?

No! Although androgen levels tend to gradually decline with age, there is a great deal of individual variation. Some men have nearly youthful levels in their seventies while other men in their thirties and forties may have lower levels.

How will Georgia Hormones assess my hormone status?

During your first visit, we will ask questions regarding your health, signs, symptoms or problems and review your medical history. Additionally, blood tests will be run for testosterone, estrogen, cholesterol, prostate specific antigen (PSA), DHEA and other tests as needed. It is also important to measure your height, weight, body mass index (BMI), along with waist-to-hip ratio.

Are there different kinds of hormone supplements?

The Georgia Hormones staff exclusively uses natural bioidentical hormones. These medications mimic natural hormones made by the body. Most testosterone shots are actually synthetically made chemicals that never existed in the human body and are not chemically identical to natural human testosterone. In the 1950s, pharmaceutical chemists invented powerful, synthetic non-bioidentical androgens. These chemicals, known as anabolic steroids, do not exist in nature. They build muscle much more effectively than real testosterone, but unfortunately, many of them are toxic to the liver and kidneys. Anabolic steroids gave male hormone therapy a bad name as these synthetic hormones can have powerful effects.

Before the advent of artificial anabolic steroids, the 1950 Mr. Universe contestant, Sean Connery, exemplified the image of a “perfect male body.” Twenty-five years later, after taking anabolic steroids, the new *ideal body* belonged to the pumped-up Arnold Schwarzenegger. Bioidentical hormones cannot turn you into a 1975 Schwarzenegger version, but neither will they increase your risk of liver cancer or disease.

How are bioidentical hormones dispensed?

Testosterone is usually applied as a daily gel or cream directly to the skin. DHEA usually comes in a tablet or capsule. Other forms are available to meet individual needs.

What is the purpose for taking bioidentical supplements?

It is our goal is to restore vitality and health and that includes helping men to increase low androgen levels to age appropriate levels. Overdosing a man to excessively high levels of real hormones have no medical benefits, and there may be dangers. As therapy continues, levels are monitored for hormones, PSA, blood counts and other health factors. We want our patients to have sufficient hormone levels that are age appropriate, but not excessive.

What are the benefits?

- Improves mood, well-being, thinking and learning
- Enhances libido and sexual performance

- Maintains prostate gland health and healthy urinary function
- Increases muscle mass and tone while reducing abdominal body fat
- Reduces cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugar to help protect the heart
- Protects bone strength and density

Can I just take androgen supplements to solve all my problems?

Absolutely not! Georgia Hormones is a holistic medical practice. Hormone supplements are only one part of a program for a healthier life. Proper diet is essential (including reducing the consumption of carbohydrates and empty calories). Exercise is vital and should include strength-training, aerobics, stretching and deep breathing. Some vitamins or other dietary supplements may be required, along with adequate sleep and moderate alcohol consumption.

Are there any dangers?

There are some potential risks. Men with pre-existing prostate cancer, male breast cancer, Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH), sleep apnea, high red blood cell counts and significant heart disease could be strong reasons to avoid androgen supplementation therapy.