

Haywire

Hormones

Making “The Change” Easier

by Judi Burton

Abandoned diet pill bottles are filling up your medicine cabinet. You stopped eating pre-made foods. You take yoga classes three times a week and have a healthy addiction to organic fresh produce. You allow yourself a little piece of dark chocolate every other night and you gave up soda and beer six months ago. On top of all that, you don't eat meat every day and your favorite snacks are dried fruits and nuts. Yet, you still have that spare tire across your midsection and your underarms flap around like bat wings when you wave goodbye. Your doctor keeps looking at you like you're lying when you tell him you've been good, and the hot flashes, insomnia and irritability sure don't help. Sometimes, you just feel like giving up and eating a gallon of ice cream in your Snuggie and never leaving the house again. Sound familiar? Stop stressing; you're making yourself fat!

Menopause and andropause (the male menopause) make it extremely hard to lose weight and feel healthy. Symptoms for menopause include insomnia, irritability,

hot flashes, weight gain in the hips and thighs, and vaginal dryness. For men, testosterone levels decline at a slower rate, but can lead to loss of mental sharpness, muscle tone, sex drive and energy, only to be replaced by a beer gut and an overwhelming urge to buy a fire engine red Corvette in order to counteract the chemical imbalance. All of these symptoms for both menopause and andropause are caused by hormone imbalances. But there is good news: Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT)—and, if needed, B12 lipotropic injections—has become a godsend to many in their midlife.

Dr. Kenneth P. Orbeck, of Body Logic MD, in Myrtle Beach and Greenville, uses BHRT with his patients as his specialty. He explained that bioidentical hormones “have the identical chemical structure that your body would normally make. There is a master key that fits the lock. Synthetic hormones might go in the lock, but may not open the proper channels to do what the body needs to do.” Orbeck, who has been a physician for 20 years, decided to go into

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functional medicine in the last five because he was not seeing his patients' health improve. "Functional medicine in and of itself cannot be done in a mass form. When I see my patients, my encounter with them is quite lengthy."

Hormone decline is becoming a problem for those who are not middle aged. Orbeck's youngest patient is 17 and is battling severe weight issues due to toxicity problems and is pre-diabetic. "Now, I'm seeing hormones decline faster due to certain environmental variables such as pesticides, BPA plasticizers shedding from plastic containers, and steroids in our foods. They all interfere with our natural hormone production. In addition to that, in today's environment, we are really inundated with stress." Orbeck explained that when your body is exposed to stress, it produces cortisol in the adrenal glands. As our body makes cortisol, it reduces sex hormones and affects insulin and blood sugar balance.

Orbeck works with his patients to discover which hormones are deficient by testing their blood, saliva and metabolites in the urine. Then, he teaches them eating habits that will be conducive to the treatment, such as organic fresh foods and non-pre-made products. He takes a look at the gut to make sure it's clean and healthy, and then helps the patient detox if there are harmful agents that are reducing the body's hormone production. If applicable, the patient will receive a vitamin and amino acid cocktail as well as a B12 lipotropic injection, which will help to reset the hypothalamus. This gland is located in the brain and is responsible for many functions, one being the appetite. It tells you when you are hungry and when you are full. If you reset your hypothalamus, you can trick your brain into thinking you are a thin person and not in need of so much food. The injection also helps process your excess fat through your liver and produces new, healthy blood cells, which increase energy.

Once Orbeck has found the hormonal deficiency, he will work with a compounding pharmacy to custom make your bioidentical hormones. The



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Dr. Kenneth P. Orbeck

compounding pharmacy is different from a regular pharmacy, because it is able to make your prescription in-store instead of having it sent out to a lab.

Orbeck monitors his patients carefully for about eight weeks, and usually sees about 30 pounds of initial weight loss. This is often enough to jumpstart the body into losing more weight, but sometimes a patient might need further assistance.

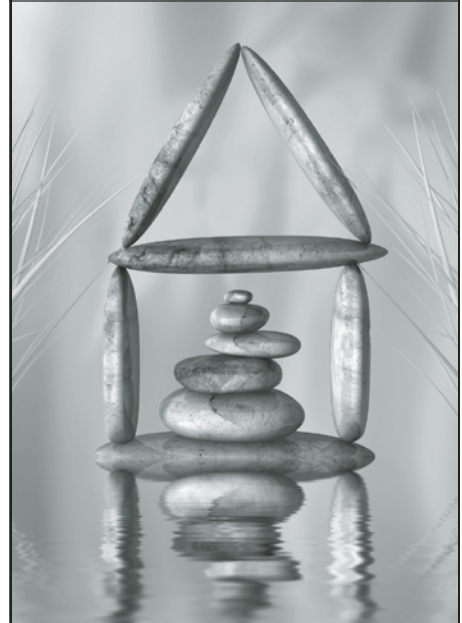
There is a lot of debate about whether bioidentical hormones are

better than synthetic ones. The quarrel is often associated with the fact that the compounding pharmacy has made the hormone in-house as opposed to a regulated "Big Box" pharmacy that is under the FDA's watchful eye. Also, some are more trusting of the neighborhood pharmacy and shy away from a word like "synthetic," when it comes to their health. The FDA states that the risks and rewards are the same in both synthetic and bioidentical, so until the FDA changes their opinion, it is up to the patient to decide what he or she is more comfortable with.

There are many variables as to why you can't lose weight and be happy, and most often, it's not your fault. Going through "the change" is very scary for millions on the planet. It is that one step closer to finishing your time here on earth. Some struggle and claw their way through it with intermittent awkward moments and life-changing arguments with loved ones, while others pass through it gracefully with a glowing beauty and a knowing smile. Which one will you be? "It's all about the quality of life that we have when we're here," said Orbeck.

For more info, contact Body Logic MD, 1240 21st Ave N, Myrtle Beach, at 843-839-0270, or visit BodyLogicMD.com. See ad, page 30.

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