

Male Hormonal Imbalances



Men also produce estrogen and estradiol (E2), but in much lower amount than women. Males also produce progesterone, but about half the amount from that of females. It is produced in the testes and in the adrenal glands. While the level of progesterone in the male is significantly lower than in the female, some women's progesterone levels fall below that of men of the same age during menopause.

The male hormone, testosterone, is an antagonist to estradiol (E2). Like progesterone, testosterone can stimulate new bone formation, increase bone density, and a lack of it causes osteoporosis. It is made from progesterone. Men normally continue to produce a relatively normal level of testosterone for their age and well into the seventies. Contrary to common perception, **testosterone does not cause prostate cancer.** Studies have shown that men with the highest level of testosterone have the least prostate enlargement. Conversely, men with the highest level of estrogen have enlarged prostates. **Declining testosterone, together with increasing levels of estrogen, is the most likely reason for prostate enlargement and cancer in men. Since progesterone has an antagonistic effect on estrogen, use of sublingual progesterone could indirectly enhance the effect of testosterone. Balancing hormonal levels within normal physiologic levels seems to be the key in “turning on” the receptors for testosterone.**

In addition to the use of progesterone to offset the negative effect of estrogen leading to increase testosterone level, use of zinc should be considered. **Zinc, saw palmetto, nettle root, and chrysin inhibit the action of aromatase, an enzyme that converts testosterone to estrogen and androstenedione to estriol.** Of all the body's organs, the prostate has the highest level of zinc. Therefore, supplementation with natural zinc one to two times a day enhances testosterone function.

Large doses of progesterone inhibit sexual behavior but physiological doses appear to enhance sexual drive. Clearly testosterone alone is not the only driver of sexual function in male or female.

1. Testosterone deficiency in Men:

Symptoms: weight gain, lower stamina, enlarged breast, loss of muscle, lowered sex drive, fatigue., high cholesterol/triglycerides, high blood pressure, rapid mental decline, osteoporosis, erectile dysfunction, low sperm production/ fertility,

Discussion: Commonly occurring to men over the age of fifty and now common in men with chronic high stress, and estrogen dominance at **ANY** age.

Solution:

- Special nutritional supplements such as zinc, tribulus, orchex, etc.
- Pro-hormone such as pregnenolone to stimulate testosterone production.
Only if testing shows a need!
- Strength training exercises.
- Reduce stress effect, H-P-A axis support if they have been down regulated..
- Reduced weight/obesity has a direct effect on increasing estrogen built up in the body.
- **Reduce alcohol consumption.** Alcohol significantly inhibits the clearance of estrogen from the blood stream and also decreases zinc level. One or two drinks should be the maximum per day.
- **Increase consumption of plant protein that contains phytoestrogen.** Such phytoestrogen has only 1/500 the active effect of estradiol, the most active human estrogen. It acts competitively and blocks estrogen receptor sites in the body as well as stimulating the P450 system in the liver to metabolize estrogen more actively. Once the estradiol is removed from the receptor site, it is readily available to be excreted from the body and can not elicit its powerful effect toward dysregulating the male hormone balance.
- Avoid grapefruit which has a tendency to inhibit the liver's breakdown of estrogen.
- Increase cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower that stimulate the burning-off of extra estrogen. Cruciferous extracts such as DIM can be considered as well.
- **Reduce drugs** that inhibit the P450 system and resulting in increased estrogen level. These include non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen, diclofenac), aspirin, acetaminophen; certain antibiotics such as sulfas, tetracyclines, penicillins; cholesterol lowering drugs (Statins, lovastatin; heart medications such as propranolol, quinidine, methyropa and coumadin.

2. Excess estrogen in Men:

Symptoms: hair loss, prostate enlargement, irritability, headache, breast enlargement, acid reflux, heartburn, gall bladder attacks, mid back pain, upper back/shoulder pain,

slow healing, chronic fatigue, weight gain, irritable bowel, High risk for prostate cancer.

Solution: reduce estrogen in diet and male hormone replacement. Improve liver function and supplement intake to encourage estrogen breakdown and removal. Stress management, and sugar handling modifications are necessary for long term success as well.

- Clean liver pathway and gall bladder to enable breakdown of estrogen.
- Supplement with magnesium, zinc, EFA'S, B6, and fiber to aid in removal.
- Stop excess conversion from testosterone.
- Encourage body to "up-regulate" receptors of testosterone to remove estrogen effect in men.

3. Low DHEA:

Symptoms: chronic stress, fatigue, slow healing injuries, recurring injuries, low strength and or stamina, inability to handle stress, unhealthy mood and brain function, fast-aging, increased degenerative disease onset or progression

Solution: adrenal support, stress management, supplementation to buffer stress response, DHEA supplementation, (only if proven with testing)

4. High Progesterone:

Symptoms: Chronic stress, excessive need to produce cortisol(stress hormone), Very high indicates exposure from progesterone cream(partner's) or use of body care product high in progesterone.

Solution: Modify stress response and buffer the body from impact, remove external exposure and clear from system.

The result of any one or a combination of these hormonal changes, alters the delicate balance of male hormones and shuts down the receptors for all of the hormones crashing a man's system into a loss of androgen dominance. Maintaining a healthy Androgen Dominance involves an overall balance between the adrenal glands, testes, digestion, absorption, and their regulation with the endocrine system control. Fatigue, stress, weight gain, and increased aggression are early warning signs of losing dominance. Of course, proper testing and clinical evaluations go far in diagnosing this condition and preventing serious problems in the future if left uncorrected.

For questions and testing call 412-243-6676

Dr. Shannon D. Smith, D.C., C.C.S.M.S