



Younger women are experiencing the symptoms of hormone imbalance

Most women in their teens to late thirties think that hormone imbalance only affects their mothers and grandmothers. But today's hectic lifestyles, increased stress, changing environment and diets are dispelling that myth. Younger and younger women are experiencing the symptoms of hormone imbalance. And it's happening years before the onset of perimenopause.

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#### ABOUT WOMEN IN BALANCE

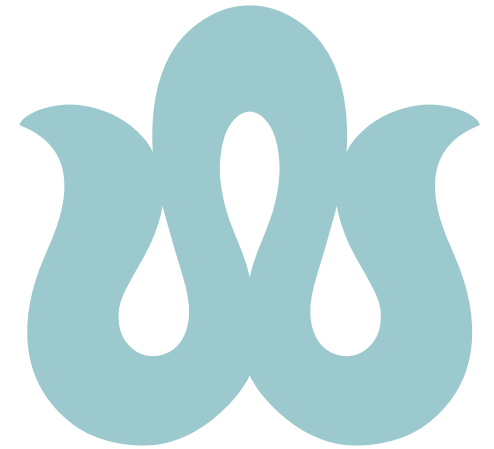
Women in Balance is a national, non-profit association of women, as well as doctors, other health care professionals and organizations dedicated to helping women achieve hormone balance. Our mission is to educate women and the health care community about hormone imbalance and its impact on a woman's health and well-being as she ages. We are the only non-profit association, without bias or affiliation, focused on addressing these issues for women.

To learn more about balance and bioidentical hormones, read studies, search for a health care provider, and explore natural solutions visit [www.womeninbalance.org](http://www.womeninbalance.org).



women in balance

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What every young woman should know about hormones



women in balance

non-profit advocacy for women's hormone health

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# Why hormone balance is important

Hormone balance plays a leading role in improving overall health and preventing premature disease. Women whose hormones, such as progesterone, aren't in balance may experience some of these common symptoms:

**Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)**

**Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)**

**Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome**

**Uterine fibroids**

**Fibrocystic breasts**

**Belly fat**

**Heavy bleeding**

**Infertility**

**Migraines**

**Mood swings**

If you feel you're out of balance, diet and lifestyle changes can help you get back on track. You should also talk to your doctor about evaluating your hormone levels, including your levels of progesterone.

## WHAT IS PROGESTERONE?

Like estrogen, which gets much more public attention, progesterone is a female sex hormone. Women produce it in their ovaries and adrenal glands and in the placenta during pregnancy.

Throughout a woman's reproductive years, progesterone prepares the uterine lining (or womb) for pregnancy. Each month, progesterone levels rise following ovulation. Unless you become pregnant, the progesterone levels drop and trigger a monthly menstrual period. Because of birth control pills, changing diets and the environment, many young women are severely progesterone deficient and don't even know it.

Too much estrogen and not enough progesterone throws your body out of balance, often leading to premenstrual complaints such as water retention, breast tenderness, migraines, mood swings and possible infertility.

To control their premenstrual symptoms, an alarming number of young women are being prescribed anti-depressants (SSRIs) and birth control pills. Yet many women these days are looking for natural alternatives to synthetic pharmaceutical solutions.

## BIOIDENTICALS: THE NATURAL ALTERNATIVE

Over the past decade, forward-looking health care providers have used bioidentical hormones with great success—a finding confirmed by several U.S. and European research studies, and further supported by the exceptional improvements observed in patients.

Bioidentical hormones start as plant substances and then are manufactured to have the same molecular structure as the hormones naturally occurring in your body, so they can produce the same beneficial effects.

## IS PROGESTERONE SAFE?

Progesterone has been used in a number of clinical applications since 1940. Its early use was to assist women with infertility. Progesterone has NOT been linked to increased cancer risk. In fact, a large study conducted in France to look at the risk of breast cancer with hormone replacement therapy found that using bioidentical progesterone did not cause any increase in breast cancer, whereas use of synthetic progestins did result in a statistically significant increase in breast cancer risk. It is important to note that progesterone is often confused with progestins, which have been linked to increased cancer risk as evidenced in the Women's Health Initiative and also in this large French study.

## IS PROGESTERONE RIGHT FOR YOU?

Natural or bioidentical progesterone can be found in a variety of forms: creams, gels, suppositories, pills or patches – and it can come in a range of doses. We suggest that you work with your health care provider to find out if you need to supplement your hormones with progesterone. If therapy is recommended, talk to your provider about how to ensure you get the right physiological, individual dose for you.

## TYPES OF NATURAL PROGESTERONE AND WHERE TO GET THEM

You can get bioidentical hormones from a doctor or licensed health care provider. Some bioidentical hormones are regular prescription drugs. Others are made specifically for your individual needs by a compounding pharmacy, based on your provider's written prescription.

You can also purchase over-the-counter progesterone cream at natural products retailers or online. Progesterone cream is easily absorbed into the blood stream through the skin, helps to support progesterone levels, and can alleviate some premenstrual discomforts. However, it's important to note that not all progesterone creams are created equal. If you are purchasing them at a local store, look for a product that contains USP progesterone and is supported by clinical studies.

## FINDING A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Bioidentical hormones have been available for over 30 years in this country, but they are a relatively new choice for many providers. Many health care providers are unaware of the information and options available, along with new methods of testing hormone levels. Women In Balance is striving to expand our list of providers who are experienced in working with these hormones. Please go to [www.womeninbalance.org](http://www.womeninbalance.org) and click on *find a health care provider* as a place to start your journey.

