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DHEA Boosts Estrogen Levels

DHEA replacement therapy is another natural way of replacing estrogen levels diminished by the aging process. DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone) is a precursor to the sex hormones. It is transformed into estrogen and testosterone within the body, all of which are needed at youthful levels to avoid the deterioration of aging. One problem with taking DHEA to replace depleted sex hormones is that the ratio of these hormones converted from DHEA is uncertain. A better way of controlling the amounts of each hormone within your body is to supplement them specifically.

If you do take DHEA, it's important to understand that extra DHEA is likely to increase the levels of all your sex hormones, which may diminish your need for additional supplementation. When going on any type of hormone replacement regimen, it is vitally important for you to be tested regularly under the care of a physician in order to make whatever adjustments are necessary for optimal care.

DHEA AND CANCER RISK

The evidence that DHEA may prevent breast cancer is difficult to evaluate. Animal studies have shown that DHEA is very effective in preventing breast cancer, while the human studies have been inconclusive. There are studies showing that DHEA protects against human breast cancer cell proliferation by blocking estrogen receptors on breast cells, yet other studies contradict this finding.

Recent studies in elderly people have found that DHEA supplementation results in overall improvement in their feeling of well being. As a result, the news media have been touting DHEA as "the first fountain of youth drug". It is interesting that DHEA produces the same anti-aging effects attributed to estrogen. It could be that some of the beneficial effects of DHEA are the result of some of the DHEA being converted into youth hormones such as estrogen and testosterone.

We want to reiterate that there are contradictions in the scientific literature regarding hormone replacement therapy and cancer. Of the various hormone replacement therapies women may choose, only melatonin appears to protect against both estrogen dependent and non-estrogen dependent breast cancer. Before discussing melatonin, we'd like to point out that there are foods and nutrients you can take to augment your hormone replacement program and to help protect you against breast (and other types) of cancer.

VITAMIN E PROTECTS AGAINST BREAST CANCER BY RAISING ESTRADIOL AND PROGESTERONE LEVELS

Women with fibrocystic breast disease (mammary dysplasia) have a significantly increased risk of breast cancer. In order to test the idea that vitamin E therapy is beneficial for patients with fibrocystic breast disease, scientists at the Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore conducted a double-blind trial in 17 patients and 6 controls.

The patients in the study were given placebo tablets for one menstrual cycle, followed by 600 IUs a day of vitamin E (alphatocopherol acetate) for two menstrual cycles. All patients were tested for blood levels of estradiol, estriol, and progesterone.

RESULTS OF STUDY

They found that 15 of 17 patients (88%) showed significant clinical improvement, confirming previous studies showing that vitamin E is an effective treatment for fibrocystic breast disease.

They also found that vitamin E raised blood levels of both estriol and progesterone in fibrocystic patients, and that the ratio of both estriol and progesterone to estradiol increased as well. This may explain (in part) the therapeutic effect of vitamin E in these patients.

Serum a-Tocopherol levels in controls and MD patients

a-Tocopherol (mg/dl)	Before Therapy	After Therapy	Clinical response
Controls (n = 6)	1.49 ± 0.25 ^a	2.56 ± 0.39 ^b	No Change
Patients (n = 17)	120 ± 0.06	2.39 ± 0.15 ^b	Fair-Good ^c

^aMean ± S.E.

^bp<0.001

^c Nine, 6 and 2 were good, fair and poor responders, respectively, as graded by published criteria.

Serum progesterone/estradiol ratios of controls and MD patients			
Progesterone / estradiol	Before Therapy	After Therapy	Clinical response
Controls (n = 6)	45 ± 19 ^a	57 ± 20 ^b	No Change
Patients (n = 17)	30 ± 7	53 ± 11 ^b	Fair-Good ^c

^aMean ± S.E.

^bp<0.001

^c Nine, 6 and 2 were good, fair and poor responders, respectively, as graded by published criteria.

Phytochemicals Fight Breast Cancer

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