

Progesterone

General Description

- Progesterone is a steroid hormone produced in the ovaries (corpus luteum) and adrenal glands. One of its main roles is to balance estrogen.
- Progesterone is also produced by the brain and peripheral nerves, and possibly other locations.
- Normally, women have much more progesterone at any given time, than estrogen.

KNOWN FUNCTIONS OF PROGESTERONE

1. Balances the effects of estrogen.
2. Prevents estrogen from overproducing uterine lining and buildup.
3. Maintains the secretory endometrium, that is, it ripens the uterine lining for possible pregnancy.
4. In pregnancy, maintains and protects the developing fetus.
5. Needed for brain and nervous system development in the fetus.
6. Stimulates new bone growth.
7. Helps calm and focus brain function.
8. Helps burn fat for energy.
9. Is a natural diuretic.
10. Is a natural antidepressant (in balance with estrogen).
11. Can increase libido.
12. Is a natural muscle relaxor.
13. Facilitates thyroid hormone function.
14. Helps normalize androgen levels (keeps testosterone from getting too high)
15. Is preventative against breast, uterine, and all forms of cancer.
16. Regulates the sensitivity of estrogen receptors.
17. May help protect against autoimmune diseases.
18. Functions as a precursor for other steroid hormones, including adrenal cortical hormones.
19. Progesterone's functions throughout the nervous system, and in the rest of the body, are mostly unknown.

SYMPTOMS OF PROGESTERONE DEFICIENCY

- PMS
- Heavy bleeding
- Clotting, cramping
- Inability to concentrate
- Short term memory impairment
- Muscle tension, spasm, Fibromyalgia
- Water retention, bloating
- Insomnia
- Breast tenderness, lumpiness, cystic breasts
- Weight gain
- Thyroid dysfunction (resembling hypothyroidism)
- Headaches, migraines
- Anxiety, irritability, nervousness, moodiness
- Hot flashes
- Spotting

- Fibroids

SYMPTOMS OF PROGESTERONE EXCESS

- Endometriosis, adenomyosis (uterine endometriosis)
- Sleepiness
- Bloating or constipation (excess progesterone sedates the digestive tract)
- Candida (excess progesterone can inhibit anti-Candida white blood cells)
- Mild depression (excess progesterone down-regulates estrogen receptors, and estrogen is needed for serotonin production)
- Exacerbated estrogen deficiency symptoms (excess progesterone down-regulates estrogen receptors and desensitizes tissue to estrogen)

NOTE: Progesterone only functions correctly when it is in the right proportion with estrogen, its primary partner and synergist. In a cycling woman, these proportions change throughout the cycle. In menopausal women, the proportion of progesterone to estrogen remains fairly constant.

REMEMBER: Estrogen is necessary to create progesterone receptors, and progesterone regulates estrogen receptors.

- Depression
- Decreased sexual response
- Osteoporosis
- Amenorrhea (no periods at all)
- Oligomenorrhea (infrequent periods)

SUPPLEMENTATION WITH PROGESTERONE

- ✓ Bioidentical progesterone is available through both prescription (compounding and regular pharmacies) and non-prescription (health care provider, health food store)
- ✓ Bioidentical progesterone is made from natural plant sterols which are compounded into hormones that are exact replicas of human progesterone (or estrogen, testosterone, or any steroid hormone.)
- ✓ The most desirable ways to supplement progesterone is sublingual or transdermal.
- ✓ The least desirable way to supplement progesterone is orally. The liver de-activates 50-90% of hormones given orally. Therefore, larger doses must be given and the liver is “overworked” and stressed.
- ✓ When progesterone is given transdermally (crèmes) it will raise the free hormone levels as measured in saliva tests. It will not raise bound hormone levels as measured in blood tests. Most practitioners are unaware of this fact.
- ✓ Progesterone (natural) and progestin (the correct term for synthetic progesterone), are used interchangeably in a lot of the medical literature and research findings. This has caused a lot of confusion. Progestins have numerous dangerous side effects while progesterone has almost no side effects, except when given in overdose.
- ✓ Many of the negative side effects of progestins (such as breast cancer) are the very things progesterone protects women from.