

# **Estrogen Balance Key to Women's Health**

Dr. Deidre Macdonald

## **Estrogen Dominance Syndrome**

Estrogen replacement therapy has gotten a pretty bad rap in the world of medical science lately. Not only is taking estrogen pills potentially harmful, a woman's body can naturally make too much estrogen and create a wide array of health problems. It is actually quite common for women to experience abnormally high estrogen levels at any time during the premenopausal years. Estrogen dominance syndrome, as it is now called, is a phenomenon in which there is too much estrogen coupled with a deficiency of progesterone. This imbalance can be the cause of many women's health concerns.

## **Symptoms of Estrogen Dominance**

- Weight gain
- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- Breast tenderness
- Migraine headaches
- Menstrual disturbances; irregular or heavy bleeding
- Endometriosis
- Fibroids
- Ovarian cysts
- Water retention
- Sleeplessness
- Anxiety

## **Causes of Estrogen Dominance Syndrome**

Common times to experience estrogen dominance are in the teens and in the 40's. However, other health factors can cause or exacerbate this problem at any time. For instance, we know that estrogen is primarily produced in the ovaries then is eliminated via the liver and colon. The liver is a filter of toxins and chemicals, even naturally occurring ones like excess estrogen. If the liver is impaired by toxins, it can't prepare estrogen for elimination as effectively. If the colon has problems, such as candida yeast overgrowth (from antibiotics and oral hormone use) or constipation, the old estrogen will be reabsorbed and lead to increased estrogen levels. Environmental toxins can mimic estrogen when ingested. Pesticides are some of the worst offenders and have been implicated in reproductive disorders for men, women and animals.

## **Finding Balance**

If you recognize yourself in the description of estrogen dominance syndrome, you may wish to consult a physician experienced in this area. Naturopathic physicians are uniquely suited to help women get to the root cause of their hormonal problems and to educate them on how to create lasting changes that enhance the overall health. A hormone balancing program will likely start with a thorough evaluation of your health (careful health history, physical exam, lab testing). Then an individualized plan for cleansing your liver and colon and optimizing your diet would be suggested. Finally, herbs and other natural medicines would be utilized to work with the body to balance the hormones. I have had countless patients report that within 3 months, their PMS and menstrual difficulties have been alleviated. Not only that, by learning how to better take care of their bodies, women often report having increased energy and mental clarity. That's what I like to hear; side benefits instead of side effects!