

"Common BHRT Questions"

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1. What is compounding?

Compounding is actually kind of like getting back to that "old time pharmacy" practice where a prescription is made up (or compounded) upon the order of a practitioner specifically for a particular patient. Whether this prescription is for a human or an animal, this area really relies on the expertise of the pharmacist and the practitioner both working together for the good of the patient. That is what they mean by the "triad of care"-- The patient, the practitioner, and the pharmacist.

2. What are bio-identical hormones and where do they come from?

Bio-identical hormones are always natural but natural is not always bio-identical. Bio-identical means exactly the same as the hormone made by the human body. Natural can mean herbal and/or not made by the human body yet made by something found in nature. The bio-identical hormones used for compounding or the formulation of various forms (tablets, capsules, suppositories, creams, troches, etc) come from plant sources such as soy or yam. They are processed so that the end result is absolutely no different than the human hormone. They do not need anything from the body such as certain enzymes to convert them to the actual hormone.

3. Do bio-identical hormones keep me safe from cancer?

The answer is NO!!! Any hormones when out of balance can potentiate cancer growth. Even the body's own hormone balance before hormones are taken can be a cause for cancer growth. Estrogens are classified as "carcinogenic" meaning they can cause cancer. Yes, this means any estrogens whether bio-identical (natural) or synthetic. Our bio-identical hormone consultant always recommends using the lowest doses possible and regular testing of hormone levels. She teaches in our classes that labs may show what is normal but not always optimal in many cases.

4. What is the difference between regular serum blood testing my practitioner orders and blood spot testing or saliva testing?

All of the above can be utilized along with patient symptoms to assess a plan of care and sometimes a mixture of all of the above is warranted. Some hormones or formulations cannot be tested via saliva and certain hormone formulations cannot be tested accurately in regular serum blood testing. Our consultant talks about some of this in her BHRT class and also does individual "Plan of Action" appointments to discuss the best options for each individual patient. This does get very confusing. For example, for patients on topical hormone therapy, regular serum blood testing does not give an accurate picture of absorption or active hormone levels. Patients on troches or sublingual drops (under the tongue) therapies cannot be measured accurately via saliva. Certain hormones such as thyroid cannot be measured via saliva.

Blood spot testing is done with a take home kit where the patient pricks the finger with a lancet device and the dried blood sample is sent into a lab. Blood spot and/or saliva testing are the best options available for topical hormone formulations and for troches or sublingual drops.

If you have any more questions regarding this you may check out the ZRT Lab website at www.salivatest.com. If you are still confused, remember that you may call to set up a "Plan of Action" appointment with our consultant to help you sort out the best options for your particular case. (For fees, please check the "Consultant Fee Schedule" on the website or read about it in the "Consultation Packet".)

5. Does my insurance cover the consultations and/or the compounded prescriptions written by my practitioner?

This question, of course, needs to be answered by your insurance company. You can ask them if they cover compounded prescriptions. You may also get an idea by actually showing your insurance card to the pharmacy. They are familiar with most plans which they are able to submit for you. Some can be processed through the pharmacy or some only by the patient submitting their own claim to their individual insurance company. Most plans will only cover a one month supply per copay. Many patients actually find that once they are stabilized on a particular dose, they are able to pay less money per month by getting more than a one month supply and paying out of pocket.

At this time, individual consultations by our bio-identical hormone consultant are usually not a covered item unless the patient has a health care spending account or flex-account. She is actively pursuing possible ways to get her services reimbursed through insurance companies. So far this is a new field that insurance companies do not recognize in many cases, although it is getting better. If the patient wishes to try and submit, the insurance company will require a referral to see her from a practitioner. She does work well with the practitioners and will fax any recommendations after the appointment along with notes on any testing provided to her during the appointment.

6. What practitioners in the area are receptive to using bio-identical hormones? Do practitioners go through bio-identical hormone therapy (BHRT) training?

This area is a growing field pushed by the needs of the health conscious patient. There are more and more practitioners seeking training in this field. The training has to be kept current as there are ongoing studies in any medical field that drive changes in the course of action for the patients. Our bio-identical hormone consultant really stresses the importance of staying with your practitioner rather than switching. If your practitioner has not been through any training but is receptive to you seeking out bio-identical hormones, our consultant highly suggests getting a referral from the practitioner to see her or another trained health care professional. She is available for a consultation whether referred or not. Our consultant regularly attends formal training and has been doing consulting with bio-identical hormone compounding since 2001 and has been a pharmacist since 1987. She is asked regularly to share her expertise with the practitioners and is invited many times to give office presentations. She has revised the current dosage chart which is used in many practices.

7. How long does this process take before I actually get my prescription compound formulation?

The answer to that question depends on a lot of issues such as how

receptive your practitioner is, how long ago it was since you were last seen, if any testing needs to be ordered, etc. On average it usually takes about 2-4 weeks from start to finish until you actually get your compound and another 1-3 months to start to notice the difference. Our bio-identical hormone consultant really stresses the importance of being proactive about your health in order to increase your chances of success with any hormone treatment. None of this is a quick fix and ongoing monitoring should be a part of the patient care.

8. How much will the compounds cost me per month?

On average, the monthly compound expenditure can be between \$30-\$75 out of pocket cost. As stated before, monthly insurance copays are sometimes more expensive than getting a 3 month supply and paying out of pocket instead of submitting through insurance. The patient can check the cost with their pharmacy before they fill their prescription and decide which way will be cheaper by comparing it to the monthly copay through their insurance.

9. What labs do you find helpful that I may ask my doctor about?

Please refer to the updated "Recommended Labs" section on our website at www.gooddaypharmacy.com.

10. How do I find out about classes offered? How do I make an appointment?

You may attend any one of our educational classes offered by our bio-identical hormone consultant. Times and locations are posted on our website at www.gooddaypharmacy.com. If you would like to make an appointment with her you may print off the "Consultation Packet" also posted on the website or pick up a packet at any one of our Good Day Pharmacy locations. If you have testing that needs to be done, you may want to make an initial "Plan of Action" appointment with our consultant as the first step. It may save you time and money. Appointments are made after the "Consultation Packet" is received.

****Please return filled out packet to:
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