

~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Black Cohosh

ASK GRANNY EARTH

HRT- Hormone Replacement Therapy (Premarin, Prempro, Premphase and Prempac) **can cause an increase in the risk for heart disease, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, blood clots and strokes. It also is not good for animals that are used to obtain it - pregnant mares and their foals.**

What are the natural alternatives?

There are several herbs that can help alleviate the undesirable effects of menopause, pre-menopause and PMS. These conditions are the result of an imbalance in hormones. Did you know that we have more hormones than just estrogen and progesterone circulating in our bodies? When considering HRT, ask your self this simple question: How do I (or my doctor) know which hormone is imbalanced? Wouldn't it be nice to find a product that would work with your body to balance the hormones that are out of balance and not affect the ones that are not out of balance? Our endocrine system is a delicate mechanism and Mother Nature provides us with several plants that can balance these sensitive hormones.

BLACK COHOSH (*Cimicifuga racemosa*): A Native American remedy also known as black snakeroot and squawroot. It has been used for hundreds of years for woman's complaints, especially painful periods and problems associated with menopause and kidney complaints. It also benefits rheumatic problems including arthritis, and nerve conditions such as tinnitus. A 1995 German trials revealed that Black Cohosh in combination with St. John's Wort was 78% effective in treating hot flashes and other menopausal problems. Black Cohosh has estrogenic action and reduces levels of pituitary luteinizing hormone, thereby decreasing the ovaries over-production of progesterone.

VITEX BERRY (*Agnus castus* - Chaste Tree): Well known since ancient times- used for menstrual problems and fertility. It is one of the most important herbs for regulating female hormones. By increasing progesterone activity, Vitex helps to balance progesterone and estrogen production by the ovaries throughout the menstrual cycle. It helps to regulate periods, while it eases PMS and bloating. Also valuable for treating period associated problems such as migraine and acne. Vitex is also considered to be anti-androgenic- inhibiting the action of male androgens (sex hormones).

MOTHERWORT (*Leonurus cardiaca*): Now naturalized in USA, Motherwort has long been considered to be a remedy for the heart in cases of palpitations and spasms. It strengthens a weak heart and is a gentle sedative. However, it does stimulate the muscles of the uterus and is good for delayed menstruation, pain and PMS. It is reported to drive away melancholy. Do not take Motherwort during pregnancy.

LICORICE ROOT (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*): One of the most valuable of all herbal medicines, Licorice is a powerful anti-inflammatory herb that has been used successfully for thousands of years. It stimulates the production of the body's own hormones by the adrenal glands and reduces the breakdown of steroids by the liver and kidneys. The isoflavones in Licorice are known to be estrogenic. Licorice is a gentle laxative and is highly demulcent, making it good for healing many inflammatory conditions.

RED CLOVER (*Trifolium pratense*): Growing naturally in America, clover is an excellent blood purifier. It has slight estrogenic effects, useful in treating menopausal complaints as well as ridding the body of toxins. Recently it has been used topically to treat breast cancer by encouraging the tumor to grow outward and eventually clear the body.

SAGE (*Salvia officinalis*): *Salvia* comes from the Latin, 'salvare' which means 'to cure'. It is an excellent remedy for sore throats, poor digestion and irregular menstruation. It is the phytochemical, Thujone that is responsible for sage's hormonal effect on the body. It reduces sweating, and hot flashes, as it helps the body adapt to the hormonal changes accompanied with menopause. Sage is a nerve tonic, helping to both calm and stimulate the nervous system, depending on what action is needed.

By doing research and learning to grow the above plants, you can now begin to treat yourself naturally - Nature always works.