
Focus on Health

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HRT and Breast Cancer Survival

Use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and survival following breast cancer diagnosis.

This is a very important report which should be somewhat reassuring for women who elect to remain on hormone replacement therapy despite concerns about breast cancer. In this study, breast cancer risk was slightly increased in hormone users, but the cancers had more favorable prognostic factors. There were several reasons why women taking hormones did better, including closer screening and "healthy user effect."

Several other studies agree that mortality from breast cancer is lower in women on HRT when they develop breast cancer, especially if they remain on it, but the *Million Women Study* from England disagrees, though their figures show borderline statistical significance.

That Is Outrageous

In 1965, 30 states had laws prohibiting or restricting the sale and/or use of contraceptives. Connecticut's law was the worst. (I was at Yale at that time.) Married couples could be arrested for using birth control in their own homes. The government is once again attempting to deny women access to contraception. The FDA refused to support its own advisors' advice to grant "over the counter" status to Plan B, the post intercourse emergency contraceptive pill. The FDA Commissioner, Dr. Crawford, resigned following a scathing editorial in the New England Journal of Medicine about his handling of Plan B and after his attempt to appoint a male veterinarian to replace Dr. Susan Wood as Director of the FDA Office of Women's Health who had resigned in protest. Dr. Crawford is the latest example of President Bush's poor record in choosing appointees for many positions of great importance.

There is no
evidence that
hormonal levels in
saliva are
biologically
meaningful.

Monitoring Blood Glucose

Self monitoring of blood glucose by type 2 diabetics not on insulin does not improve control of the disease compared with regular quarterly monitoring of hemoglobin A1C (Hgb A1C) blood levels.

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Better Cholesterol Test

The VAP Cholesterol Test provides a more comprehensive coronary heart disease assessment than the conventional lipoprotein profile. Measuring other risk factors such as lipoprotein (a), small dense and large buoyant cholesterol, LDL particle density pattern and intermediate density lipoprotein, allows one to choose the best treatment options and combinations of drugs.

As part of the professional services I feel should be provided by me to my patients, screening of the voluminous medical literature has become more and more important. Please read this now if you have time before I see you, so that we can further discuss whichever topic especially interests you.

Perhaps you have seen an item that I have not included in this list or have not seen myself. If so, feel free to bring it to my attention.

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