

John R. Woodward, M.D., P.A.

Gynecologic Endocrinology, Urology and Surgery
7777 Forest Lane, Suite A-338
Dallas, Texas 75230

SPECIAL BULLETIN

April, 2004

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

The current status of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) in this country is a state of flux. The Women's Health Initiative Study showed that Premarin, Provera, and their combination (Prempro) were a bad and overly simplistic idea. This was evident years ago, but they were used for the study anyway. Given the study results, the FDA should have followed through and removed all three from the market. Why they did not is a mystery. Liability lawyers, always eager to cash in on a possible new area of lawsuits, may inadvertently accomplish what the FDA didn't. The pharmaceutical companies who manufacture these drugs will have to discontinue making them because of the legal fees that will be required to defend themselves in the thousands of lawsuits being filed against them.

Meanwhile almost half of the women who panicked and stopped taking hormones because the media made all HRT sound dangerous, have resumed using hormone replacement in alternative more effective and safer ways, and periodically monitoring blood hormone levels.

Another study being done in Great Britain called the Million Women Study is producing some of the answers we all hoped the Women's Health Initiative would produce. Because of the huge number of women being studied, results concerning cardiovascular effects, bone fractures due to osteoporosis and colon cancer protection and breast cancer incidence will be very meaningful. If they turn out to verify the results obtained in a preliminary study done on my patients several years ago by an independent investigator, Dr. Gerald Friede, and described elsewhere on my website, doctors and patients will finally be reassured that HRT, when it is done correctly, is what it had been hoped to be.

The good options for hormone therapy are growing, all being non-oral.

Skin patches and vaginal rings containing estradiol are commercially available now, estradiol creams and gels can be made by compounding pharmacists to any specification, and subcutaneous estradiol pellets and testosterone pellets by certain compounding pharmacies, as well as progesterone creams. Birth control patches will almost certainly replace birth control pills. The doubling or tripling of a blood test result called C Reactive protein and associated with an increased rate of cardiovascular disease (the correlation is stronger even than with LDL cholesterol and heart disease) will push all types of oral hormones off the market.