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Holistic Female Health

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Holistic medicine

Holistic medicine is the art and science of healing that addresses care of the whole person – body, mind and spirit. We do not just treat body parts, nor do we just treat symptoms. The practice of holistic medicine is focused on attaining optimal health through the prevention and treatment of disease by correcting the causes and to modify contributing factors. Treatment options come from a variety of traditions and are chosen based on meeting the unique needs of each patient. The realm of choices may include lifestyle modification, complementary approaches, conventional drugs and possibly surgery. An ideal practitioner will work with the patient via a partnership, which encourages patient autonomy and values the needs and insights of both parties.

All medical problems come within the context of your life, taking in social, family, work, mental, spiritual and medical environments. As holistic practitioners, we focus on the unique needs and nature of the person who has the illness, rather than on the illness that has the person. We want to know how we can help you, as the complete person that you are. In addition to hormone issues and changes, we will need to consider diet, exercise, sleep patterns, vitamins and other supplements, as well as dental hygiene, alcohol use and even the consumption of water.

Women's health throughout her lifetime

Throughout her lifetime, a woman's hormone status will change. **Young women just starting their menstrual cycle** may encounter normal, typical periods or could experience irregular or painful periods, acne, PMS or abnormal hair growth. Georgia Hormones can measure hormone levels and make adjustments as required. The need for birth control may be a consideration, as may infertility — but the treatments chosen must be suitable to meet patient needs and comfort.

Entering the prime reproductive years, a woman may experience irregular or heavy bleeding, fibroids or endometriosis. Often, these problems are due to hormonal imbalance. Supplementation with natural, bioidentical hormones can make a world of difference. At birth, a woman's ovaries already hold all of the eggs she will ever have. Eggs are continuously being "called up" to maturity — and only a few will fully develop. The rest gradually die off, reducing the number

of eggs available. As the remaining eggs age, many do not function properly and can result in the loss of progesterone. The combination of a declining egg and its functionality can frequently result in hormone imbalance — either estrogen dominance or unopposed estrogen. Women may experience heavy, irregular periods, fibroid growth, weight gain, breast pain and poor sleep. Treatment with bioidentical progesterone can relieve those symptoms.

At menopause, estrogen levels dramatically change. As women approach menopause, some gradually lose estrogen while others may experience an excessive surge. Symptoms can be similar — only by measuring a woman's complete hormone profile can it be determined what her current hormone therapy may require. During the transition, the hormone profile can change (*as well as the therapy*). In later years, when the ovaries make little, if any hormones, the goal is to supplement the declining hormones. There are many ways of administering natural, bioidentical hormones including: capsules, patches, skin creams, vaginal creams, tablets, and oral troches. Each woman has a unique, distinctive rate for absorbing supplemental hormones (as well as eliminating them). Since these hormones are identical to those produced in nature, they can be measured to ensure adequate absorption while avoiding surplus or overdose. The goal is to provide sufficient hormones to meet a woman's needs without the side effects caused by excess.

Diet and metabolism

Reduce consumption of carbohydrate foods, stay away from indulging in high caloric foods and avoid unhealthy fats— these are key to maintaining good health. As we age, metabolism slows down and we don't burn calories as fast as we used to. We tend to exercise less and eat more. Life stresses can increase cravings for high carbohydrate foods, which tend to be deposited around our stomachs into abdominal fat. This causes a vicious cycle — stress, central obesity, unopposed estrogen, eating more carbohydrates — they all contribute to expanding abdominal fat. An aging digestive system can lose some of its ability to make digestive enzymes, bile and stomach acid. Supplemental digestive enzymes and stomach acid enhancers are also available. It also helps to reduce eating heavy animal fats, and substitute easier to digest fish or chicken. Eating more vegetables and fruit will reduce the workload on the gall bladder, promote natural digestive function, and reduce acid reflux.

Vitamins, minerals and other supplements

As we age, our digestive tracts are less able to absorb many vitamins and minerals. We all need to take supplements. Vitamin B-12, calcium, magnesium and iron need evidence of stomach acid so they can be absorbed. Calcium is important for bones and nervous system health along with adequate Vitamin D levels for calcium absorption. Studies have shown that people with higher levels of Vitamin D have lower rates of colon, prostate, breast and other cancers. Georgia Hormones can measure Vitamin B-12 and Vitamin D levels to determine if additional supplements are needed. A good quality multi-vitamin and multi-mineral supplement can supply the nutrients lacking in small increments.

Additional nutrients are needed in fairly large amounts and will not fit into a single daily vitamin tablet. They include Vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, and fish oil fatty acids EPA and DHA. For a complete list, go to the article, Essential Dietary Supplements (located in Resources). Many people take other supplements,

herbs and teas for various purposes and may include CoQ10, glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, licorice, Dong Quai, and others. Many books and online articles are available to cover the use of those products.

Exercise

Perhaps no single life change is as important as regular exercise. Our bodies are designed for motion. Without regular exercise the heart and lungs, muscles, bones and joints degenerate. Using our muscles also burn calories and fat. Borderline diabetics frequently use medications to lower blood sugar but exercise alone can often do a better job. Aerobic exercise helps burn excess fat and includes walking, hiking, jogging, bicycle riding, using a treadmill, elliptical machine and others. Heart and breathing rates rise and with training, these activities can be performed for extended periods of time. Aerobic exercise helps improve heart and lung function and strengthens supporting bones.

Stretching

This is very beneficial. Consider yoga, Tai Chi or Chi Gong. They are all good stretching classes. A yoga master once said, "You don't get old and stiff, you get stiff and then old." These practices also improve posture and balance, reduce the likelihood of falls and getting broken bones. Muscle building and toning improves strength and burns calories. Testosterone will help the muscles and bones respond but they will not grow or stay strong without weight bearing exercises. Weight training helps keep bones strong, further reducing the risk of fracture.

Sleep

Adequate sleep is needed to restore strength, mental health and resistance to disease. Progesterone, estrogen and regular exercise can all enhance restful sleep.

Dental hygiene

Investing in good teeth is vitally important for a long healthy life. The intestines need healthy fiber to function properly, which requires regularly eating rough, raw vegetables (e.g., carrots, celery, cabbage, dark green lettuces, and broccoli). Strong, healthy teeth are essential to enable chewing the vegetables. Additional supplements that may help include calcium, magnesium and Vitamin D. Chronic gum infections can cast bacteria into the blood stream, which can inflame plaque into the coronary arteries. **Sick gums can lead to increased heart attack rates.** It is essential to brush regularly (electric toothbrushes can help kill bacteria), floss and get regular dental check-ups. A dental implant could add more to your life than a new flat screen HDTV.

Alcohol

Although red wine has been suggested to be beneficial for the heart, excess alcohol consumption does more harm than good and increases breast cancer rates. Beer contains high levels of carbohydrates and can increase abdominal weight gain. Ideally, alcohol consumption should be limited to no more than one half drink per day.

Drink water

We all don't get enough water. Many people drink soft drinks, energy sports drinks and juices. Some may contain a lot of sugar, salt, caffeine, artificial sweeteners or other harmful chemicals. We just need to drink plain water — it's important to drink it throughout the day.

Don't expect to change everything at once

With patience and self-care, Georgia Hormones can help with gradually reducing harmful habits and encouraging positive lifestyle changes. You should feel some improvement right away. We will help by supplementing hormones, vitamins and minerals and can discuss diet, exercise, sleep habits and recreation. We can even talk about sex. No one is immortal — we all age. Our goal is to help maintain health and vigor, so that you can enjoy a fulfilling, active and worthwhile old age.