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## **Hormones Part II: Four Minor Hormones have Major Consequences in the Body**

by Barbara Minton, Natural Health Editor

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(NaturalNews) When hormones are in optimal amounts and balanced, the body is ready to play the music of life. Like an orchestra when some of the players have taken the day off, the body can't make beautiful music without all of its hormones being present and working together. Achieving hormonal balance takes some time, dedication and work. It is best done with the help of a physician who specializes in anti-aging medicine or hormonal balance. It is often achieved only after a period of trial and error, but it is work that has a big payoff. Full hormonal orchestration not only makes you feel great, act great and look great, it provides the best protection there is against the horrors of aging and degenerative disease. In addition to the sex hormones, optimal levels and balance of four other minor hormones can keep you dancing to the music of the cosmos.

### **Melatonin puts us to sleep and keeps our immune systems strong**

Melatonin is the timekeeper of the body, allowing for sound and deep sleep. It is secreted by the light sensitive pineal gland that regulates the biological clock and synchronizes the hormone-immune network. It is also produced by the retina and in the gastrointestinal system. Melatonin keeps the body in tune with the circadian rhythm, rising with darkness and falling with light. It is melatonin that makes you yawn and feel compelled to sleep when it gets dark, even if you do not want to. Melatonin keeps the rhythm for the body to maintain its balance with the rest of nature and adapt to changing environmental conditions.

Declining level of melatonin is central in the aging process of the body. Typically, somewhere in the mid thirties the pineal gland begins to become calcified and melatonin production starts to diminish, setting in motion a shift in the way the cells of the body operate. The body moves from a mode of repair and rejuvenation to one of aging and degeneration. This is why maintaining an optimal level of melatonin is so important. Degeneration and aging-related diseases such as arteriosclerosis, autoimmunity, depressed immune system, cancer, and metabolic conditions are promoted by the de-synchronization of the hormonal system, and its loss of cyclicity and rhythm.

The connection between melatonin and aging was dramatically demonstrated in a study where melatonin was added to the drinking water of laboratory animals resulting in an increase in their life spans of 30 percent. Older animals drinking water containing melatonin became more vigorous and healthy. In another experiment, pineal glands from younger mice were transplanted into older mice that then lived much longer than expected. Their pineal glands were transplanted into younger mice who then died much sooner than expected.

The invention of the electric light bulb has played havoc with the rhythms orchestrated by melatonin. Production of melatonin is cued by the coming darkness of night. When we stay up late with the lights on, night never comes and the whole melatonin-prolactin cycle is thrown off. It is at night that the body recuperates and regenerates tissues and organs, and restores glycogen reserves. When melatonin levels stay low, this body maintenance can not take place. This is why it is so important to go to bed close to the time darkness settles in, and to sleep in a room that is completely dark. We have learned to fight

the signal from melatonin that it is bedtime, especially in the fall when darkness descends so early. We yawn and stretch and turn on even more lights to keep ourselves awake, ignoring the signals of our bodies. The result of such actions is a body in a state of melatonin deprivation long before we reach the age of thirty-five.

When the body is able to produce the needed amount of melatonin it can directly kill many different types of cancer cells. Melatonin is a naturally produced cytotoxin that easily induces death in tumor cells. It can also retard tumor metabolism and development by lowering the body temperature, as it is a natural inducer of hypothermia. It has also been shown to inhibit the spread of the AIDS virus. And it is protective of all the organs in the body, particularly the pancreas.

Supplemental melatonin is available at health food stores and online. It is very inexpensive. According to hormone balancing specialist, Dr. Uzzi Reiss, a healthy pineal gland produces 2.5 milligrams of melatonin every twenty-four hours. For him the ideal supplemental level for anti-aging is 1 to 5 milligrams. He prescribes supplementation up to 20 milligrams a day for cancer protection.

### **Human growth hormone is the quintessential anti-aging hormone**

Human growth hormone (HGH) has a bad reputation because of its frequent abuse by athletes. Now people think that if they supplement with it they will turn into Andre the Giant. This is too bad since it is HGH that keeps us looking and feeling young, trim and fit well into what people consider to be the years of old age.

Children are loaded with HGH. It is the hormone that promotes growth during childhood. By the time the age of thirty is reached, the levels of HGH have declined to about 20 percent of their childhood peak. At this stage the body is no longer able to repair all the damage that is occurring and the aging process continues to accelerate.

HGH is released by the pituitary gland and is beneficial for the brain, cardiovascular system, immune system, aerobic capacity of blood and tissue, and body and bone composition. It enters the blood stream in bursts during sleep, especially the deep sleep that occurs after midnight. It's also produced during exercise provided the exercise is done on an empty stomach. It is transported to the liver where it is converted to insulin growth factor 1 (IGF-1), a messenger molecule that travels to all parts of the body to stimulate cell production and growth. HGH is responsible for cellular rejuvenation, and low levels lead to aging.

Symptoms of HGH deficiency are wrinkled or sagging skin, thinning bones, loss of muscle strength, accumulation of body fat, decreased heart function, lowered immunity, thinning hair, decreased stamina and vigor, depression, anxiety, and fatigue. It is great for weight control and re-contouring the body with loss of belly fat, the area associated with increased risk of heart attack and diabetes. A study of overweight women on HGH found a loss of more than 4.6 pounds of fat, mostly in the abdomen while lean body mass increased. More than twenty-eight thousand studies on the hormone have shown that supplementation with HGH is the closest we have to a fountain of youth.

Typically, HGH replacement should begin around age 30. In older people, HGH replacement can reverse signs of aging by 5 to 15 percent per year or more. There is no other single therapy that can have the impact on the aging body that HGH does. In addition to reducing excess body fat, particularly abdominal fat, and increasing muscle mass, HGH can reduce wrinkling, restore internal organs that have atrophied with age, increase bone density, reverse cognitive deterioration, strengthen the immune system, stimulate bone marrow cell production resulting in more red blood cells, and reduce the chances of a nursing home as your end destination.

Supplemental HGH is available in injectable form. It is sold by prescription, and prescriptions are difficult to get since the FDA does not seem to want fit and healthy old people around. It is usually only physicians who specialize in anti-aging medicine or hormone replacement that will prescribe HGH. Anyone able to obtain a prescription for HGH will find it readily available at most pharmacies but at a high price. Most people supplementing with HGH spend about \$300 a month on the hormone and inject it themselves twice a day. They find it to be a very worthwhile investment in their health.

There have been no reports of anyone, anywhere, at any age getting cancer after using HGH for a year or more. Although there are theoretical reasons why HGH might promote cell division, HGH also stimulates the immune system to a level where cancer does not occur.

IGF-1 is produced in response to growth hormone, and as a result it is a marker for HGH. Since natural HGH is released in surges and has a very short life span in the body, it is not practical to measure HGH levels directly. Because much of HGH is used by the body to produce IGF-1, which has a fairly long lifetime in the body, tests for HGH levels rely on the amount of IGF-1 present.

Supplements of IGF-1 are readily available from online nutritional outlets. Significant amounts of IGF-1 are found in colostrum, the liquid from the first two milkings of a cow after calving. Colostrum is a tremendous immune system booster and conveys a wealth of health benefits. Another way to provide the body with growth factor is by taking chlorella which contains a substance called Chlorella Growth Factor (CGF). Chlorella is also rich in chlorophyll and nucleic acid.

### **Pregnenolone fights fatigue, boosts memory and more**

Pregnenolone is made in the adrenal glands as well as in the liver, ovaries and testicles. It can also be made in the brain and is involved in a variety of brain functions such as memory, concentration and mood.

The body can change pregnenolone into the hormones DHEA or progesterone depending on its needs at a given time. Either of these hormones can be then produce androstenedione, the direct precursor to the other sex hormones including testosterone and the other androgens, and estradiol and the other estrogens. Progesterone can also make cortisol, the stress hormone, and aldosterone, the regulator of blood pressure. This process by which other hormones are made from pregnenolone which is made directly from cholesterol is often referred to as the hormonal cascade.

Clearly, pregnenolone is an essential hormone. In the young, pregnenolone production averages about 14 mg per day. As the body ages, production declines until at age 75 the body produces about 40% of the amount produced at age 35. As this supply declines, the amount available to make other hormones also decreases.

Although several studies have found that oral pregnenolone reduces fatigue and increases endurance, its claim to fame is its memory enhancement. It accomplishes this by preventing the brain's neurotransmission system from deteriorating and promoting the release of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Pregnenolone promotes greater growth of brain cells. The greater the number of brain cells, the greater the ability to retain memories.

Pregnenolone is available without a prescription in creams, capsules and sublingual drops. The usual dosage is 50 to 100 mg. Absorption is best if it is taken with fat.

### **DHEA is the mother hormone**

DHEA is made in the brain and in the adrenal cortex, and is one of the most plentiful hormones in the body. Levels of DHEA decline with age, and a 70 year old has only about 10% of the DHEA produced by a 20 year old.

Diminishing levels of DHEA are linked to a wide range of degenerative diseases including heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and many types of cancer. Current research shows that low DHEA levels are a cause of many age related disorders and that oral supplementation with DHEA can slow the ravages of aging.

Adequate levels of DHEA can increase testosterone levels, restore muscle mass, improve the body fat ratio, improve memory, and boost the immune system. It is useful in combating auto-immune disorders, obesity, senile dementia, osteoporosis, chronic fatigue syndrome, and depression. DHEA promotes flexibility in the body and raises endurance levels.

DHEA is the hormone that helps you reach and keep you ideal weight. It is the basis of the hormone that tells the brain when you have had enough to eat, and inhibits the conversion of glucose to fat. When the body is low on DHEA fat piles on quickly whenever carbohydrates are eaten since there is nothing to inhibit the conversion of glucose to fat.

DHEA protects against arteriosclerosis by lowering cholesterol and insulin levels. This mechanism keeps you safe from diabetes if you eat a healthy diet. It is another hormone that keeps the immune system strong, preventing cancer. It protects the brain from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's by protecting neurons.

DHEA is available without a prescription almost anywhere supplements are sold. The average dose for women is 10 to 12 mg. a day. For men it is 25 mg. a day. DHEA peaks in the body in the morning, so supplements should also be taken in the morning to maintain the circadian rhythm. If you suspect you have a DHEA deficiency, it is best to confirm it with a blood test before beginning supplementation. As with all the hormones, the goal is to attain a physiological level, meaning that you want to restore the level your body made naturally when it was at its peak.

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## About the author

Barbara is a school psychologist, a published author in the area of personal finance, a breast cancer survivor using "alternative" treatments, a born existentialist, and a student of nature and all things natural.

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