

The essence hormone of being a woman

A message from Jenny

I would like to share my observations over several years of work with women involving what I call the 'spiritual essence' of progesterone. It is purely my own viewpoint.

I would be doing the women and this book a disservice if I didn't disclose the inner soul and inner spirituality of what I believe is the progesterone journey from a holistic point of view, covering not only the physical benefits and usage of progesterone, but the spiritual side of progesterone and the emotional side of progesterone. I believe that they are all interactive and there is no clear defined line between what is hormonal, what is emotional and what is spiritual. They all interplay, and they all have a place of importance and need to be acknowledged and recognised.

I believe that to give a woman back her progesterone - her mother hormone, her essence hormone - you give her back an opportunity to reconnect with herself. Many women have become so hormonally imbalanced that they have no clue as to what their true essence feels like. Often stress, a very busy lifestyle, or family can and do distract her.

However, the one thing in common with every woman who has come through my lounge room for counselling, or picked up the phone to call me directly is that once a woman gets her hands on this vital hormone, she begins an incredible journey. Often she doesn't even understand what's going on herself but it's so powerfully obvious to the person witnessing the transformation.

I know that as soon as a woman puts progesterone into her body there's an incredible physiological reaction to that hormone. It's as if it resonates immediately, and she can 'tell' progesterone is central to her renewed health, not necessarily because of what she's read but how it intrinsically feels in her body. It's as if she's coming home to herself.

Even for those women who may experience incredible discomfort for the first 10 days to 2 weeks, when estrogen actually wakes up and estrogen dominance symptoms are exacerbated, she is determined to keep applying progesterone cream because she wants the end result. There is an intuitive 'knowing' that something good has been introduced into her body and she wants it to stay.

Unfortunately, some women abandon progesterone at the point of discomfort, not knowing how to get through the debilitating stages of estrogen dominance, which can occur at any stage. It is my hope this book helps you work through the setbacks so that you can stay with progesterone long enough to enjoy the true essence and benefits from both a physical and metaphysical viewpoint.

It is likewise understood that women who started HRT and felt dreadful in the initial period gave it up because they knew intuitively it was 'bad' for them. Often women don't even get to the point of opening that packet of HRT, or it sits in their handbag, often the script doesn't even get filled. Clearly, there is something that just doesn't feel right for these women. I say to women, "Honour your intuition. Honour this innate intelligence. Use your discernment."

During initial group meetings spanning 18 months, I had observed transformations that I now draw on during individual counselling sessions. I had seen women enter my lounge room (for group meetings) behaving like doormats – shrivelled, dripping with sweat, like a little dog shivering in the corner, insignificant, helpless, lost and frightened. Women in their 40s and 50s with families, careers, a wealth of experience and knowledge, and tremendous gifts to offer the world appear to lose all semblance of their true self because of incorrect or untreated hormonal imbalance.

Within months of progesterone use and balancing various aspects of their life, which I talk about in this book, and encouraging a woman to acknowledge herself and honour her body, I had seen these very same women start to plump up spiritually, become vocal, find their voice, express an opinion, exude confidence, and take back their self respect and a degree of assertion.

I have also witnessed husbands dragging their spouse in to my lounge room (office), distraught and desperate, looking for solutions to their wife's behaviour; her inability to cope, remember, focus, communicate, socialise. Interestingly, these same men have been the controllers in their relationship, having taken over their wife's capacity to think for herself and she has, in turn, become co-dependent.

These fuzzy-headed, tentative women, once they get 12-18 months into progesterone supplementation, often ended up being in a position of defining new boundaries and standing up to their husbands. They become assertive and very independent, and finally learn how to say "no". In fact, one such husband rang me and asked what the side effects of progesterone were, to which I enquired, "Why is that?" He stated that his wife hardly ever stays home now and that she never irons his clothes any more. Mind you, both of them were retired.

The wife suddenly found that she had interests outside of the home and returned confidence and had made a life independent of her husband. The husband, on the other hand, was quite angry that in getting back his wife's hormonal balance and capacity to function again, he had lost the control of his wife. I stated to this man that there are side effects but they certainly weren't ironing, or the lack thereof.

I see women come to me in a very vulnerable state. They are obviously out of tune with their bodies and their needs. They come distraught, exposed, fragile. They come exhausted physically, emotionally and spiritually. Women often sit for the first hour in my presence and cry. This alone is a relief and validation for them because they have finally found an outlet. They don't know why they are crying but they are crying and I always state that they have every right to express themselves. Something they may not have given themselves license to do for years. Tears don't come from nowhere. Tears have a purpose. Tears serve as a barometer, as guidance, as an expression of what's really happening in our body. Tears are also the cleansing of our soul!

Hormonal imbalances seem to weaken the emotional profile of a woman, meaning that what once was dealt with or excluded or in control, or put away, handled or not handled, is suddenly exposed and rears its ugly head. It's almost as if when a woman is going through a hormonal imbalance, whether she is in her early teens, or whether she is in her early twenties, or whether she is in peri-menopausal years of thirties to forties,

or whether she is in post menopausal years of fifties onwards, she still has issues there that need addressing and hormones seem to have a way of bringing to surface grief, sadness, depression, lot of tears, emotional roller-coasters, sessions of hate, anger, frustration, belittlement, resentment, guilt and shame, and the list goes on and on.

We all too often tend to fob off or claim that it's hormonal, and that it's our hormones that are creating these things and that we're not normally like that. I would debate that and often I ask women to challenge that within themselves. I say the way to do that is first address your hormonal imbalances, get your progesterone back in, your mother hormone, your essence hormone, ground yourself. Get your nutrition and exhaustion in order so that you're feeling stronger in yourself and physically more able to cope with stress, infections and all the traumas and the impact that your body is exposed to on a daily basis. Then, deal with the emotional issues that arise, or are there and need re-addressing. Often women find that they now have to revisit events that they thought were in the past and resolved. Often they find that these conflicts are there and get worse and are uglier and more out of control and more irrational because the hormones are out of control.

Hormone imbalance creates emotional instability, but I also say emotional issues often create hormonal imbalances. There's always a connection with the adrenals when stress is involved (adrenal exhaustion can cause hormonal imbalance, hormonal imbalance can create adrenal exhaustion). I witness women who have had a shock, a death in the family, a loss of a child, a sudden divorce, a husband running off with a younger woman, suddenly going into menopause or her menses stops, and yet having no previous symptoms or signs. This goes to show how powerful the messages and chemicals of our brain and body are and how they impact so deeply and so cruelly on our delicate organs, and can throw the whole endocrine system upside down. And how stress can cause our body to lose balance, rhythm and connectivity.

One woman sat in my office sobbing bitterly because her mother wasn't going to be around for her menopause. And I thought to myself sadly, this poor woman needs her mother now just as she needed her when she was going through puberty. It brought home to me how important support is for women at this, and various stages of their life. How important it is to have our mothers and our loved ones around us. And also how important it is that we go through life addressing and dealing with each phase. If we fail to progress through our natural phases like puberty and menopause in a healthy way, they can become for us a dis-ease (ill at ease with our body).

This applies to so many of us. Hormone imbalance appears to be a catalyst for visiting painful and hurtful conflicts and memories, thus isolating and alienating us into further despair and depth of depression, or for others triggering anxiety and panic attacks. There is this overwhelming helplessness and distortion of reality that is compounded by hormone imbalance, but seems to be easily addressed once progesterone is introduced. Mind you, progesterone doesn't mysteriously make the problems disappear. It just seems to give most women the ability to tackle her problems with a different perception and a more methodical approach.

For myself, mine was sexual abuse recall. Why it came up at menopause I don't know.

Again, it related to the filing cabinets being thrown open, my defence mechanisms being down, the fact that I went through so much stress with the Hysterectomy and surgically induced menopause that my body just broke down and so did my emotional filing cabinet. I personally sat in my lounge room for 12 months feeling I wanted out. I was looking for suicide every day. And I was frightened that I was thinking that way, and none of it made sense to me, I was in a void (abyss) and feeling totally helpless.

I was only able to start getting a handle on my life and my spirituality once I started to get the progesterone back into my system. For the first 6 months I was on Wild Yam cream. But once I soaked in the progesterone, I started to feel a bit calmer and more connected, and I felt I was coming home to myself. It didn't get rid of my grief, my emotional issues, traumas, and turmoil. In fact, upon reflection, it gave me the strength and clarity of thought to deal with them. It also gave me opportunity to deal with my internal grief that was so deeply buried in my subconscious and stored in my body. I cried through my emotional pain which lasted a year, it was my essence healing.

I always say to women, if there are issues there – grief, unresolved conflicts, burdens, sadness, relationship issues - then allow them to surface and use your menopause, use your hormonal imbalance as an excuse to have a damn good cry. Tears are for healing. Tears are the way of cleansing the soul. And then get on and deal with it.

This is a time of shedding. It is a time of re-building your body, and a time when women can actually re-build their persona. These are women perhaps suffering from the empty nest syndrome, or where the husbands are busy on their careers or have retired, abandoned or passed away. And suddenly they ask themselves, "Who am I? What am I?" and they feel this emptiness. An ambivalence as to who they are over and above their labels/identity as a mother, a lover, a wife, cook, friend, work colleague, confidante, and all those other magnificent skills which they too often take for granted. But they cannot comprehend who they really are, so they have great difficulty serving themselves after a lifetime serving others. It's almost like they are silently screaming out, "Give me attention. Serve me!" But too often no one's listening or they're not understanding. Often she cannot even ask precisely for what she needs. Instead, her needs are manifested as symptoms. These get the focus, not her. Surely this is an obvious cry for help. She knows she's floundering, and she's desperate to get to the other side.

Truly, it is sad to witness the many women who ask, "How do I love myself? How do I nurture myself? I've known how to be a wife, a daughter, a sister and a mother, I've known how to procreate, how to be a healer, a lover, a cook, a taxi driver, career woman, a super woman, a survivor, an organiser and all those wonderful multi-skilled roles that we women fill so readily, but when it comes to how do I look after me or how do I help me meet my needs, the score card comes up blank". Little wonder that women are crying in silence and suffering such bleak emptiness. That they feel such pronounced loneliness, confusion, grief, anger, sadness, and perhaps frustration because they've never taken enough time to listen to their own inner child. And we, as women, have not been taught that it's ok to be self-nurturing without feeling 'guilty'.

I explain that when a woman becomes pregnant, her progesterone is the most predominant hormone. When she is pregnant, she just automatically knows how to

protect herself, to nurture herself and to keep herself stress-free. All these things ensure the baby's survival. Is it the hormone itself that gives her that sense of calmness so the world could be falling around her and she would be in a state of "Oh well"? Pregnant women absolutely flourish and they have that inner glow, their beauty radiates and their happiness is subliminal.

I liken this type of metaphoric process that occurs during pregnancy to what often I feel could be happening to a woman when she starts re-introducing progesterone back into her own body. It's almost like the body is so starved of that hormone that it needs to be reacquainted and, once this happens, then the body settles down. But, in the meanwhile, just introducing progesterone alone can do absolute wonders for a woman's spirituality and her sense of completeness.

When women start this journey they enter an 'awakening' period (some are more aware than others). She can use the same principles when she starts her journey with progesterone (that promotes life) to nurture and develop her own inner child perhaps neglected until now.

I say give a woman back her hormones - her progesterone - and you give her back her spirit. She will then inevitably start dipping into the 'too hard basket' and sort all these things out as they appear because she's rediscovered herself, her oneness, her self esteem and her ability to feel that she belongs in this world. That she has a purpose again. She also learns to become assertive and say "no". Invariably, she reassesses her values, her beliefs, and her position in life. She also learns to redefine her boundaries again, and to abandon things that no longer serve her. This may even be marriage or relationships; I have observed women actually come to a point of realising that their marriage is no longer appropriate, or may require reconstruction. They arrive at this decision with confidence.

I have seen women become more "selfing" (not selfish), to respect their needs rather than put themselves last, to realise that they need to recover and get well, that they need to spiritually nurture their souls, to heal their tired, stressed-out bodies. They need to take some responsibility for their own health. They acknowledge the need to devise plans that are going to target health, eating and nutrition, and lifestyle adjustment that will serve them and carry them through to old age. These are the same women that learn to take up new hobbies and interests. Basically, a whole new way of thinking and approaching their remaining years.

Often I see women, after they start the hormonal balancing journey, going back to school, undertaking new careers, taking on huge challenges, or returning to society to give of themselves in some serving form, and adopting new strategies in expanding their inner growth. I see these women starting to look for the greater meaning of life. I call these their 'croning years' and, in tribal times, these women crones were most respected and looked upon for their wisdom, knowledge and guidance. Within these tribal times, women anticipated this milestone as both an honour and measure of their worth within their community. Sadly, Western society does not venerate this epoch.

In our Western society, women enter their menopausal years fearful that they will be looked upon as redundant, no longer useful, and without value. And we bought the

package! Again, women lose their own sense of value by buying into this unfounded social myth surrounding hormonal imbalance and menopause.

However, in my observation, I have seen that this may not be the case once a woman finds help, and a hormonal balancing infrastructure put in place. Anything and everything seems possible! And I've seen so much that nothing surprises me anymore when it comes to women's personal growth. Amazing, wonderful and miraculous things are happening to many, many women worldwide as they discover, and use this wonderful multi-factorial hormone called progesterone. As each woman reunites with herself, there's an internal shift of power and renewed energy which vibrates within her soul and is reflected in her energy field.

Often you'll hear me tell women, "don't underestimate the power of progesterone on a different level other than physiological symptoms". There is a wonderful, magnificent side of progesterone that I don't think we really understand. And, as I said earlier, it is purely an observation that never ceases to amaze and bemuse me. For every woman has her own special journey with progesterone. In time, you will probably take it for granted and it won't be so significant. But guaranteed, over the years, as you go through the years of croning and wisdom, you will find that perhaps progesterone has had some impact. That it was, in a way, responsible for both your growth and your journey, or at least it supported you.

You may look back, reflect, and realise that progesterone marked a significant milestone in your life such as pregnancy, your hormones for puberty, and your hormones for menopause. We sometimes fail to respect the importance of our hormonal persona and how it plays out in our life. How important it is for use in our life. And how important it is for us to connect to ourselves.

The fluctuations of our hormones throughout our life have been responsible for our growth and our physiological being. I encourage women to embrace imbalances so that they can understand who they are and what they are all about. And to find some points of balance and correction so that they can actually empower themselves with each milestone; as it occurs within their lives, as it was when they were pregnant, and when they were going through their first menses, etc.

I believe that women need to respect the progesterone hormone. It is a very, very powerful hormone. It is your nurturing hormone. It is your hormone of essence. It is the mother hormone to all the other hormones. But more importantly, it is the hormone that makes the difference between a woman and a man. A man has more testosterone, a female has more progesterone and estrogen.

Progesterone is often referred to as the happy hormone, and that is quite right (it's actually a mood enhancer and modulator). Because it's a happy hormone, I encourage women to find their own happiness and inner contentment, and to recapture the joy and bliss in their own lives as they journey with this hormone and discover its remarkable powers. Embrace these changes and utilise them for your own magnificence.

Often I hear that menopause covers the best years of a woman's life. Of newfound freedom and awareness. I really believe that this can happen, but sadly, with so much

exposure to hormonal disruption like xenoestrogens in our foods and the environment, and the stress that we are subjected to - chemically, internally, and through the demands the world puts on us, or the speed at which the world is going, and the fast foods that are part of our lifestyle now - that we won't get past all these dreadful obstacles and symptoms.

Symptoms that keep us locked in our diseases, rather than realising the greatness that awaits us.

Without dealing with all the issues, a woman's treatment in hormonal balancing and health will not be as effective or as advantageous as one would like that woman to experience. It helps if women become very aware of their bodies through charting and through education, and open to its usage and how to get the most mileage out of progesterone, combined with attitude adjustment, dietary, nutritional, and lifestyle modifications. One thing that is necessary to include here is the importance of her spiritual and emotional journey and awareness.

I forever remind women that hormonal imbalance is not a disease but rather a transitional stage of life. If menopause arrives prematurely, then it's a signal either your lifestyle is not right or your eating habits are inadequate, perhaps your ovaries have been damaged through some unfortunate incident, or what you're doing to your body here and now is impacting your health. Whatever the reason, you still need to journey through the metaphysical and psychological aspects that go hand in hand with the physical changes of hormone imbalance.

From this viewpoint and experiences of woman associated with NPAN, I believe progesterone can perhaps support this transition, over and above what has been written and acknowledged to date on progesterone and its multi-factorial benefits.

On a closing note, I and my organisation NPAN, would like to extend my blessing, limited wisdom and love to all readers on your personal journey towards empowerment and awakening.

God bless you on your spiritual journey, Jenny