

# Hormone Replacement Therapy with Pellets Now Available in Tampa

At BioDesign Wellness, pellet therapy is now offered on our existing menu of bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (HRT) options. Choices for HRT now include:

- Pellets (mainly for women), surgically inserted just below the skin every three to five months. (Note: *While we often recommend a different approach for men, bioidentical hormone replacement therapy through the delivery of pellets placed just below the skin is available.*)
- Capsules, taken orally by prescription
- Topical creams
- Injections

Your choice depends primarily on personal preference. Many women who can benefit from HRT opt for pellets to avoid taking medication daily, but capsules, creams, patches, and injections have their own advantages, as you'll see later in this post.

## ***Do I Need Hormone Replacement Therapy?***

We take a conservative approach to HRT for both women and men. First, we seek to understand and then address any underlying health issues that may be hindering you from feeling your absolute best. Then – and only then – do we consider hormone replacement therapy, and only if a patient is experiencing symptoms indicating that such therapy may be useful, such as the following:

<b>Symptoms for Women</b>	<b>Symptoms for Men</b>
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Anxiety	Lost strength or endurance
Brain fog (reduced mental clarity/focus)	Brain fog (reduced mental clarity or lack of focus)
Sadness/depression	Sadness/depression
Dry skin	Less frequent or weaker erections
Fatigue	Fatigue
Hair loss	Deterioration of athletic performance or inability to play sports
Hot flashes	Feeling tired or falling asleep after meals
Loss of libido (sex drive)	Loss of libido (sex drive)
Mood swings	Decreased enjoyment of life
Restless sleep	Restless sleep
Spotting between cycles, heavy bleeding, irregular cycles, painful cycles	Weight gain (inability to lose weight)
Tender breasts	
Vaginal dryness	
Weight gain	

The primary benefits of hormone replacement therapy when done properly using bioidentical hormones, include the following:

- Improved sleep
- Reduced inflammation
- Increased energy
- Improved sexual function
- Enhanced mood
- Increased muscle strength

- Improved body composition
- Improvements in skin tone and hair texture
- Fewer to no hot flashes
- Easier weight management

Testosterone specifically reduces secretion of beta-amyloid cells associated with Alzheimer's disease and improves cognitive function. Progesterone increases bone mass.

For more about testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) for men and hormone replacement therapy for women, please read our previous posts on these topics:

- [Setting the Record Straight on Testosterone Replacement Therapy](#)
- [Part I: Hormone Replacement Therapy is Safe – When Done Right](#)
- [Part II: What You Can Expect with Hormone Replacement Therapy](#)

### ***Why Bioidentical Hormones?***

Bioidentical hormones have the same molecular structure as endogenous hormones (those found naturally in the human body). As a result, they have the same physiological effects as endogenous hormones.

Many of the studies that highlight the dangers of hormone replacement therapy look at the use of synthetic hormones, such as medroxyprogesterone (Provera) and Premarin (conjugated equine estrogens), which are *not* bioidentical to human hormones. These pharmaceuticals mimic human hormones and may actually interfere with the body's natural hormones and hormone receptors, which may increase the risks of serious health conditions.

Bioidentical hormones, used properly, are safe and effective.

## ***Exploring Your Options***

If it's decided that hormone replacement therapy is right for you, we discuss the methods for delivering bioidentical hormones to your body. The table below helps you compare the four methods we offer.

<b>HRT Delivery method</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Capsules	Precise dosing Easy dosing adjustments Support for higher dosing than creams	Inconvenience of daily medication
Topical applications (creams)	Convenience No need to swallow pills No pain from injections	Lower absorption Inconsistent dosing (absorption depends on humidity, skin condition, and application site) Poor support for higher dosing Care needs to be taken to avoid skin-to-skin contact with others following application

Injection	Fast-acting Convenient (self-administered) 100% absorption Easy dosing adjustments	Pain/discomfort
Pellets (for women only)	Convenience Long-term, time-released hormones	Doesn't allow for quick dosing adjustments Pain/discomfort

Pellets contain hormones (estradiol or testosterone) compressed into tiny cylinders slightly larger than a grain of rice. A small incision is made in the lower abdomen or upper buttocks, the pellet is inserted under the skin, and the incision is closed with sutures or tape strips. Over a period of three to five months, the pellets dissolve, so they don't need to be removed. You can expect to feel relief from two days to two weeks after the pellets are implanted.

After the pellets are implanted, you must avoid any vigorous physical activity, bathing and swimming for about five days. You can take a shower but avoid scrubbing the area for about a week until the area is fully healed.

Possible adverse side effects for pellet therapy include minor bleeding, bruising, swelling, discoloration, itching, or infection. The possibility also exists of the pellet backing out of the insertion site.

### ***See Your Doctor***

If you're not feeling your best, we encourage you to make an appointment to see a doctor who fully understands the critical role hormones play in overall health, and one who takes an integrative approach to treating patients. Declining hormone

levels may or may not be the root cause of why you're not feeling your best. Any and all causes should be carefully explored and addressed before proceeding with HRT. At BioDesign Wellness Center, we think of hormone replacement therapy as "the cherry on top."

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**Disclaimer:** *The information in this blog post on pellets and hormone replacement therapy is provided for general informational purposes only and may not reflect current medical thinking or practices. No information contained in this post should be construed as medical advice from the medical staff at BioDesign Wellness Center, Inc., nor is this post intended to be a substitute for medical counsel on any subject matter. No reader of this post should act or refrain from acting on the basis of any information included in, or accessible through, this post without seeking the appropriate medical advice on the particular facts and circumstances at issue from a licensed medical professional in the recipient's state, country or other appropriate licensing jurisdiction.*

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## **Addressing Hormone Issues with Proper Nutrition and Diet**

If you read our two-part series on [hormone replacement therapy \(HRT\)](#) or our post about [testosterone replacement therapy \(TRT\)](#), you're aware that here at BioDesign Wellness – [Tampa's functional medicine practice](#) – we recommend and provide safe and effective hormone replacement for our patients who can benefit

from such treatments. However, hormones are only part of the story. They certainly play a key role in the body's chemical messenger system (the endocrine system) as the actual messages that are sent and received. However, the endocrine system also contains glands that produce and secrete hormones, and various cells throughout the body receive and act on those hormones (messages).

Simply stated... anything that goes wrong at any point in the production, secretion, reception, or processing of these chemical messages negatively impacts one's health and fitness.



Safe and effective hormone therapy requires more than merely hormone supplementation. Treatment should also address any issues related to the healthy function of glands that produce and secrete hormones and anything that may prevent individual cells from receiving and processing the chemical messages. For example, when we see a patient with low thyroid hormone, instead of merely prescribing thyroid hormone, we look for reasons why

the thyroid is not releasing sufficient amounts of hormone and address those issues first. (*For more on this approach, please see our two-part series on [restoring thyroid health](#).*)

The fact is that many hormone issues can be traced back to the basics – nutrition, physical activity, and stress reduction. In this post, we provide tips on how to adjust your diet and limit your exposure to environmental toxins in order to improve the efficiency of your body's chemical messaging system.

### ***Eat Healthy Fats***

Over the years, fat and cholesterol have gotten a bad reputation, undeservedly so. The truth is, both fat and cholesterol are essential to good health. In relation to hormone health, fat and cholesterol play two important roles:

- **The body needs cholesterol to make hormones.** Although dietary fat has little impact on hormone production, medications that lower cholesterol can be a big problem for those trying to increase their hormone levels.
- **Fat improves each cell's ability to receive messages from hormones.** Every cell's membrane (coating) is made of fat. Coming out of the membrane and running through it are hormone receptors, similar to the receptors you have for taste or touch. The quality of the fats you eat dictates the ability of the fatty cell membrane to allow the signal from the receptor to pass into and out of the cell. Think of it this way: If the cell is hard, like an artery that is hardened by plaque (oxidized fat), signals will have a hard time passing into the cell.

Sources of healthy fats include:

- Olive oil
- Flax seeds

- Avocado
- Coconut oil
- Raw sunflower seeds
- Ghee
- Grass fed butter
- Wild-caught, cold-water fish – especially salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, and halibut (SMASH)
- Grass fed beef or bison
- Yogurt (made from grass fed dairy products)

Most foods purchased in a package have a variety of unhealthy (oxidized) fats. Eating healthy fats over a twelve-month period will start to restore your cell membranes to a healthy state, allowing for better hormone reception.

Merely increasing hormone levels while ignoring overall cell health provides little benefit, because unhealthy cells will not respond to the hormones. Healthy receptors and cell membranes process hormones efficiently through the appropriate pathways leading to healthier hormonal balance.

### ***Eat Less Sugar and Processed Carbohydrates***

Eating fat doesn't make you fat. Eating lots of sugar and "simple" processed carbohydrates does. Here are a few tips for consuming less sugar and processed carbohydrates:

- Eliminate or strictly limit your consumption of sweet (even diet) beverages, including fruit juices. Water is best. Coffee and tea are fine for most people.
- Opt for whole food carbs, such as fresh vegetables, fruits, berries, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.
- Limit consumption of heavy, starchy carbs, including rice; potatoes; legumes, bread, and pasta.
- Strictly limit consumption of processed carbs, such as chips, crackers, pastries, and fried potatoes and breaded

foods.

In short, consume nature-made, not manufactured foods. If you have to read the label to find out what's in it, you should be cautious about eating it.

### ***Eat Enough Quality Protein***

You should eat a few ounces of quality protein at each meal. Good sources of quality protein include the following:

- Nuts and seeds
- Legumes
- Wild-caught, cold-water fish – especially salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, and halibut (SMASH)
- Free-range chicken
- Grass fed and finished beef

### ***Pay Attention to What You Eat Eats***

Although it is certainly true that you are what you eat, you are also what you eat eats. For example, the nutrition value of fresh vegetables varies based on the nutrients in the soil. Here are a few suggestions for choosing the most nutritionally-rich and toxin-free foods:

- Opt for certified “USDA ORGANIC” foods, which are more likely to be free of toxic and synthetic pesticides or fertilizers, genetically-modified organisms (GMOs), antibiotics or synthetic growth hormones, and artificial flavors, colors, or preservatives. USDA ORGANIC-labeled foods also come with the added benefit of not coming into contact with sewage sludge or irradiation.
- If you're going to eat fish, choose smaller wild-caught fish, such as Atlantic mackerel, herring, sardines, and anchovies. Smaller fish are less prone to having high levels of mercury, which tends to build up in larger fish

such as tuna. Wild-caught fish tend to have lower concentrations of harmful pollutants than do farm-raised fish.

- Avoid meat and dairy from conventionally raised livestock, which is likely to contain high levels of antibiotics and growth hormone. Make sure any meat you consume is both grass fed **and** grass finished. (Note: *Grass fed and grain finished* means that the livestock forages for grass on open pasture for the first part of its life and then spends its last days getting fattened up in a concentrated animal feeding operation – CAFO, for short.)

### ***Watch Your Carb:Protein:Fat Ratio***

You can find plenty of recommendations for an ideal ratio of carbs-to-protein-to-fat, but that ratio varies according to the individual and the person's health and fitness objectives. Here's what we recommend as a good starting point for most people:

1. Eat more vegetables than anything else.
2. Eat 2–3 servings daily of fruits.
3. Eat a few ounces of protein at each meal.
4. Use fat liberally to flavor your food or as part of your ordinary food choices; for example, avocados or the fat content in a piece of steak, salmon, or olives.

### ***Be Careful with Personal Care Products and Medications, Too***

When it comes to balancing hormones, what you consume also involves what you put on your skin and hair and the medications you take. Consider these to be part of your diet, as well. Many medications and personal care and beauty products may play a role in disrupting endocrine function. They do so via the aromatase enzyme activity that takes place in estrogen-producing cells in the ovaries, placenta, testicles, brain, fat tissue,

and adrenal glands.

Aromatase is an enzyme that converts androgens (testosterone) into estrogens (estradiol). Too much or too little aromatase activity adversely impacts hormonal balance. Sugar consumption, medications, birth control pills, cosmetics, and chemical food additives can all impact aromatase activity. Simply put, there are many aspects of our current lifestyle and environment that can impact aromatase levels, which can result in different health issues in different genders and age groups, including:

- Breast cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)
- Endometriosis
- Osteoporosis
- Ovarian cancer
- Gastric cancer
- Pituitary cancer
- Alzheimer's disease
- Schizophrenia
- Male hypogonadism

If you have been spending many years eating unhealthy carbs, are overweight or using medications or personal care products and are struggling to balance hormones, the underlying issue may be related to a disruption in aromatase activity.

### ***Let Us Help***

Addressing hormone imbalance can be easy when you know what to do. Working with our team at [BioDesign Wellness](#), we can run lab testing, view your current dietary habits, and perform a complete history. We then use the information we collect to develop a personalized protocol, which includes diet, lifestyle, nutritional supplementation (to support cell health and hormone

signaling), and hormone replacement (if necessary), to restore hormone balance and healthy function of your endocrine system.

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