



Women's Health at The Apothecary Shops

Since our formation in 1996, The Apothecary Shops has been the leader in preparing customized medications to meet the specific needs of patients and practitioners. Our compounding centers are staffed by pharmacists and certified pharmacy technicians who are specially trained in the art and science of compounding, which is the method of preparing medications from scratch to meet each physician's and patient's unique needs.

The Apothecary Shops is the only compounding pharmacy in the Southwest, and only second in the nation, to earn the Pharmacy Compounding Accreditation Board's (PCAB) Seal of Accreditation – a new system of standards created by some of the leading organizations in pharmacy.

Menopause grabs headlines for its ill effects on a woman's well being, from hot flashes and moodiness to more serious risks such as heart disease and osteoporosis. Hormone therapy has gained popularity because of its successful reduction of those conditions.

What is a Women's Health Consultation?

A Woman's Health Consultation is an educational service on perimenopause and menopause. It is designed to help patients make the best decisions regarding choices for their change of life. The information provided in the Medical History Questionnaire is reviewed to identify each patient's individual risks and the degree of their symptoms. Current medical study results and different approaches to treatment are explained. The advantages, disadvantages, dosing and effectiveness of various therapies are identified and assessed. Patient lifestyle and personal preferences are considered to develop the best program for each patient's needs. Recommendations are made to physicians on the patient's behalf, allowing the pharmacist, physician, and patient to work together to provide optimal patient satisfaction and care.

Who does the Women's Health Consultations?

Linda Cappellini, R.Ph., FACA, FIACP, is the Woman's Health Specialist. Linda has certifications both as a Menopause Educator and a Menopause Practitioner. She is the only pharmacist in Arizona to hold both certifications. She practices from her office at The Apothecary Shop of Scottsdale. Telephone consultations are scheduled between 8:30am and 2:30pm, Monday through Friday. Appointments starting as early as 7:30am may be arranged by special request. To schedule an appointment call (480) 451-1266.

How do I prepare for my consultation?

Call (480) 451-1266 to schedule an appointment. A Medical History Questionnaire will be provided by The Apothecary Shops prior to your consultation. The Medical History Questionnaire should be filled out and returned to The Apothecary Shops prior to the consultation. Request a copy of any blood or saliva test results from your physician and fax them prior to the consultation, as well. Any records of menstrual cycles or symptoms can also provide useful information during the consultation.

How much does a consultation cost?

A basic consultation, which is approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length, is \$45.00. Follow-up consultations to check up on symptoms, adjust medication, or answer additional questions are offered at the levels below.

Level 1: Basic consultation plus one 15 minute follow-up call - \$55.00.

Level 2: Basic consultation plus two 15 minute follow-up calls - \$65.00.

Level 3: Basic consultation plus three 15 minute follow-up calls - \$75.00

Additional follow-up consultation services are available at \$15.00 per 15 minutes for patients who have completed a basic consultation.

How are follow-up calls done?

The patient can either arrange a follow-up call immediately upon completion of the basic consultation, or the patient can call Linda's office directly to arrange a mutually convenient time to do a telephone or in-office follow-up consultation.

Do I need blood or saliva tests prior to my consultation?

No testing is required for a consultation. Blood testing may be requested from your physician's office as needed. During Perimenopause, hormone levels can vary greatly from day to day and symptoms and menstruation patterns are a better indicator of hormone levels than testing. The Apothecary Shops sells saliva test kits if patients prefer to use this alternative method of hormone testing or if it is requested by your doctor.

What is the process for filling the prescription medication recommended at my consultation?

The prescription recommendation will be faxed to your physician's office. If you do not have a physician, The Apothecary Shops can provide you with a list of physicians and other health care providers who work with us. Your physician will review the request and decide if they want to fill the prescription as written. If the physician agrees with the recommendation, they will sign the prescription recommendation and fax it to the pharmacy that you requested. The pharmacy will make the product and fill the prescription. This process takes at least 48-72 business hours in most cases, 24-48 hours for the physician's office to review the request and 24 hours for the pharmacy to make up your prescription. Call the pharmacy to find out when your medication will be ready for pick up.

Are compounded medications covered by my insurance?

The Apothecary Shops' pharmacy is located in the Mountainview Office Suites and takes most major insurance plans. The pharmacy will try to process your prescriptions under your insurance plan on line. Coverage for compounded prescription items varies with each insurance plan and some plans require a completed universal claim form to get reimbursement. Pharmacy personnel can assist you with filling out these forms if needed. Patient consultation services are generally not covered by insurance programs.

What is hormone therapy?

Bio-identical hormones includes estriol, estrone, estradiol, progesterone, testosterone, pregnenolone, and DHEA. They have the identical chemical structures to the respective hormones that naturally occur in your body. The hormones are derived from the soy and yam plants and then processed by laboratories to meet the purity and quality standards of pharmaceutical grade products.

What are various dosage forms for hormone therapy?

There is much debate over which delivery system or dosage form is better. The answer depends on the patient and the physician. Compounding pharmacists can tailor the dose and dosage form to meet an individual patient's needs. Hormones can be compounded into several different dosage forms. For example:

- Sublingual** – troches (lozenges) or liquids
- Topical** – creams, ointments or gels
- Vaginal** – suppositories or creams
- Oral** – sustained release or oil filled capsules

What are synthetic and non bio-identical hormones?

These are hormones that have a different chemical structure than your naturally occurring hormones. Examples of these hormones include

PremPro, Cenestin, Estratest, Menest, Provera and Cycin. A hormone, such as Premarin, comes from a natural source, horse urine, but is not bio-identical. These hormones can have different effects and side effects in your body than the natural hormones. For example, synthetic progesterone such as Provera can cause birth defects in pregnant women but natural progesterone can be safely given during pregnancy to prevent first trimester miscarriage.

What benefits can I receive from hormone therapy?

Hormone therapy will help alleviate some of the bothersome symptoms of peri-menopause and menopause. Hormone therapy is effective in relieving hot flashes, night sweats, and moodiness due to low estrogen levels. Sleep and concentration are usually improved. Vaginal dryness is alleviated and sex drive can increase. Estrogen has been shown to help prevent bone loss, decreasing your risk of osteoporosis. Recent studies have shown estrogen that is taken orally decreases your risk of colon cancer. Estrogen supports the collagen in your skin and decreases the amount of fat deposited around your waist.

What is the difference between peri-menopause and menopause?

Perimenopause is the period of hormonal changes that occur prior to menopause. It is a time of rapidly fluctuating hormone levels usually occurring in your 40s or early 50s. The most common signs of perimenopause are a change in the frequency of the menstrual cycle or the amount of bleeding. Other symptoms include hot flashes, breast tenderness, mood disturbances, poor concentration and memory, sleep disturbances, adult onset acne, headaches, and decreased sex drive. Since hormone levels can vary daily, symptoms may be intermittent. Hormone testing is of limited value during perimenopause and treatment is based more on your symptoms and menstrual patterns.

Menopause is considered 12 months without a menstrual cycle. It signals the end of the production of estrogen and progesterone by the ovaries. Surgical menopause occurs immediately when the ovaries are removed. Menopause can be confirmed by low estradiol levels and elevated follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) levels. The low hormones of menopause can cause hot flashes, mood disturbances, vaginal dryness, decreased sex drive, sleep disturbances, low energy, impaired memory, weight gain, palpitations, joint pain, and skin changes. Hormone testing can confirm menopausal status.

Should everyone take hormones?

Every patient is an individual and their specific risk profile and preferences need to be carefully assessed. There are also herbal and prescription medications that can help ease symptoms of menopause for those patients who prefer not to take hormones or who are not good candidates for hormone therapy. The Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study on synthetic hormones has shown more risk than benefit with taking Premarin and PremPro, both synthetic hormone products. Non-synthetic hormones have not been studied by any large trial, but have been proven effective through years and years of patient satisfaction. Your Women's Health Consultation is designed to help you make an educated decision that is best for you.



The Apothecary Shops

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