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## Bioidentical Hormone Therapy: Clarifying the Misconceptions

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One of my partners, [Dr. Lynn Pattimakiel](#), wrote an important article with me this month for health care providers on "[Bioidentical hormone therapy: Clarifying the misconceptions](#)." (Cleve Clin J Med 2011;78: 829-836)

Female hormones remain a hot topic in the news. Whether the topic is about the risks of newer hormonal contraceptives, which most women's health physicians think the risks, in general, are NOT different than the risks of older (and many times less expensive, but more side effect ridden) hormonal contraceptives. The media message always seems to blare that the risks of any hormone are not acceptable. This is just not true. Every medication, prescription, as well as "over the counter" medicine has risks. Not treating certain medical conditions also has risks. Sometimes major risks!

The bottom line is that with any hormone, there is a rare risk of a blood clot. This is true for the birth control pill, standard menopausal hormone therapy or compounded, so called "bioidentical hormone therapy." Fortunately, for most women, this is not an issue. However, for a small fraction of women, their blood coagulation system becomes "thicker" with female hormones.

Another important risk with [menopausal hormone therapy](#) (especially unregulated, compounded hormone therapy), is the risk of uterine cancer if estrogen is used alone without adequate PROgesterone to PROtect the uterus. Smearing on "wild yam cream" or "natural progesterone" to the skin just won't cut it, ladies. Certainly, women who want bioidentical female hormones, who need hormone therapy, can get regulated prescriptions with the right amount of progesterone to protect the uterus. However, while one can get a physiologic and pharmacologic effect from rubbing estrogen cream on the skin, one can not with progesterone cream to the skin. Hormones are potent, hormones are effective, hormones can be misunderstood and misused. Not all women respond the same way to hormones, just like we all don't look the same with various haircuts and colors! You owe it to yourself to get the facts, from a true hormone expert, not from media sound-bites.

*Be Strong, Be Healthy, and Be in Charge!*

-Dr Holly L. Thacker