

# HRT for Women and Men



Bobbie Barbrey, RPh, CCN—passionate in the design and execution of comprehensive health plans.

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of the healing process, and how the body sometimes needs to be coaxed back to good health when it falters. Mr. Barbrey puts that acquired knowledge to good use: he spends an increasing amount of his time helping people develop detailed, comprehensive, good-health plans.

“When I think of gender health issues,” he muses about this issue’s feature topic, “hormone replacement therapy is the first thing that comes to mind. There is still a lot of confusion about this for many people. Most of the women who come to me with a goal of regaining or improving their health, believe that balancing their hormones will solve all of their physical and emotional problems. While it is seldom that simple, it is true that as we work together to balance the hormonal landscape, there is almost always a noticeable improvement in quality of life issues.

“Still,” he says, “I urge my women clients to understand that robust good health is always a complicated puzzle, and balancing hormones is just one important part of the issues we need to consider. We need to look at the benefits of quality sleep, quality diet, stress reduction, quiet time to heal, and movement, for example.

“We do compounding here at Medicap and a large part of our compounding practice is for bioidentical hormones. I believe the body can use these more effectively than synthetic hormones. As we go down the path of hormonal supplementation, based on careful testing and working in partnership with the client’s physician, I’m looking for a relief of symptoms: perhaps a cessation of hot flashes, more stable moods, and other quality of life improvements.

“And,” he emphasizes, “it’s critical that we monitor hormone levels. We do saliva testing to determine that hormone levels are staying within desired ranges. We test periodically, at six weeks after we initially add hormones, and then every six months thereafter, to be certain that we’re maintaining desired levels. We do not, for example, want to have estrogen running at unnecessarily high levels in the body even though it may be holding down hot flashes. We want to eliminate any additional estrogen burden if possible.

“It’s natural for people’s hormone levels to reduce over time, so together we engage in the process of trying to achieve a new balance. It is possible to establish and maintain new hormonal levels giving increased quality of life. And, as I mentioned before, getting the hormones in balance is not the entire picture of good health. It is important to also work on other good health issues.

“I find,” Mr. Barbrey says, “that women are generally quite open to the idea of building a strong foundation for a comprehensive health plan while they’re also enjoying more immediate results from their hormonal therapy. That’s very rewarding, for my women clients and for me.”

## WORKING WITH MEN

Working with most men to develop comprehensive health plans is a very different experience from working with women, Mr. Barbrey notes. “Typically a man walks in and says he has low testosterone. I might ask how he knows that. ‘I just know; I see it on TV all the time.’ I’m open to the possibility, but my experience,

based on years of testing, is that most men do not have low testosterone levels. So the resolution, of course, is appropriate testing.

“Are the levels really low? Are we dealing with a primary signaling problem where the pituitary is not signaling the testes to make testosterone? Or are the testes simply unable to make testosterone? It is inappropriate to add testosterone without comprehensive testing.

“I also advise men that when we increase the testosterone in their bodies, any excess amount is converted to estrogen. And it’s also converted to DHT—Dihydrotestosterone—which is the hormone that contributes to benign prostate hypertrophy making it difficult to urinate.

“Men, not just women, need to be careful about their estrogen load,” Mr. Barbrey notes. “No man wants to increase the size of his breasts, or increase his likelihood of prostate issues. And remember, men get breast cancer too, so that is another important reason to avoid excess estrogen in men.”

Further, he finds, “men generally tend to be a bit less open to working on other foundational issues for good health. Men will initially say: ‘Give me some testosterone and I’ll be fine.’ But often when we discuss other options and their potential benefit, they are more interested in a customized health plan. Our goal is balanced good health in all areas.

“Some men do, in fact, benefit from supplemental testosterone. We compound and make quite a bit of testosterone at Medicap. Some of the biggest complaints about commercially available testosterone are the odor, the amount needed and the cost. The testosterone we compound is much less expensive, free of odor, and requires a smaller amount.

“People are often surprised to learn that their skin care products can affect toxin levels and even hormone levels in the body. Typically women use more of these products than men, but we ask both to please read the labels. If they bring in the products they are using we will look at the labels with them to point out ingredients that may contribute to a higher toxic burden in the body. We carry RX Skin Therapy at Medicap, an excellent line of professional skin care products. These have very pure ingredients so there are always good options.

“We’re all interested in anti-aging strategies, and hormones play an important part. But they are not the only consideration. We encourage people to take their anti-aging fish oils and anti-aging probiotic along with good multi-vitamins. We carry a fabulous, good tasting liquid multi-vitamin called IntraMax. It is terrific for anyone, but is especially good for anyone with difficulty swallowing pills. It is potent and well absorbed because it is a liquid.

“I spent 20 days at conferences last year,” he said, “and there is no shortage of new products coming to market. We research and check each of them carefully before we agree to add them to our stock. When someone asks us what we would recommend for a specific purpose, I want people to know that they can trust our experience and investment: We are, in fact, invested in their good health and feel responsible and accountable for helping them attain good results—from products, medications, and health planning and counseling.” **h&h**

**For more information, contact:**  
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If you get a little dizzy attempting to sort out complicated and sometimes conflicting health advice (for example, eggs used to be bad, now they’re good, and should I eat grains or not?), you would be doing yourself a favor to schedule a health assessment with Bobbie Barbrey, at Medicap Pharmacy in North Raleigh.

Mr. Barbrey wears many hats, all with exceptional expertise. A registered pharmacist, he is the owner of Medicap and is also a Certified Clinical Nutritionist. Over the past three decades, he has acquired a deep understanding