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**What is Estrogen?**

Estrogens are a group of steroid compounds responsible for the estrous cycle. They function as the primary female sex hormone. Like most hormones, estrogens have the ability to diffuse across the cell membrane. Once inside the cell, they bind with and activate estrogen receptors, which in turn regulate the expression of several genes.

Estrogen is produced primarily by developing follicles in the ovaries, the corpus luteum, and the placenta. Smaller amounts are produced in other tissues such as the liver, adrenal glands, and breasts. Estrogen compounds can also be found in certain foods: chick peas, dairy foods, soy, flaxseeds, oats and many more.

**Environmental Estrogens**

Several synthetic chemicals have the ability to mimic estrogen. They are commercially manufactured for a specific purpose or produced as a by-product, often as pharmaceuticals or contraceptives. These are called environmental estrogens; they are likely to have estrogen-like effects on animals, including humans. Exposure to these substances occurs through air, water, soil, plants, and various products that we come in contact with.

There are two types of environmental estrogens: xenoestrogen and phytoestrogen.

**Xenoestrogens**

These are chemical compounds that have estrogen-like effects. These are mostly found in industrial compounds such as:

* Pesticides
* Plastic products
* Pharmaceuticals, especially birth control pills
* Ordinary household products
* Industrial chemicals
* Heavy metals, such as lead and mercury

**Phytoestrogens**

These are naturally-occurring estrogenic compounds whose chemical structure resembles that of human estrogen. These are found in a variety of plant foods such as beans, seeds, and grains.

**Causes and Results of Estrogen Toxicity**

Environmental estrogens are called endocrine disruptors because they are known to harm the human endocrine system. This system is a network of glands that release hormones directly into the bloodstream. The major organs of the endocrine system are the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland, the thyroid gland, the pancreas, the adrenal glands, the testes, and the ovaries. These organs release hormones based on the body’s need; hormonal balance plays a vital role in maintaining health. However, environmental estrogens can cause hormonal imbalances and may have an adverse affect one’s overall health.

Environmental estrogens act by imitating sex hormones and binding to the natural hormone’s receptors. When both native and imitation estrogens compete for receptors, overstimulation occurs, predisposing the system to disease. It is no surprise that we are facing such high incidences of breast and prostate cancer (1 in 7 for each). Look around and you will see the results of hormone problems all around you: girls are menstruating at younger and younger ages, 1 in 3 women needs a hysterectomy; infertility, endometriosis and endometrial cancer are on the rise. Men are not insulated from this problem either: prostate and testicular cancer are on the rise, and decreased sperm count is increasingly widespread. All of us, to one degree or another, are estrogen toxic.

**Symptoms of Estrogen Toxicity**

There are several symptoms associated with estrogen toxicity, and they affect both men and women.

These include:

* Accelerated aging process
* Androgen hormone imbalances
* Autoimmune disorders such as lupus
* Breast tenderness
* Cervical dysplasia
* Difficultly losing weight
* Early onset of menstruation
* Endocrine imbalances
* Low male sex hormones
* Fibrocystic breasts
* Fibromyalgia
* Gynecomastia (or “man boobs”)
* Infertility in men and women
* Irregular menstrual periods
* Low sperm count
* Low sex drive/libido
* Endometriosis

**Ways to Prevent Estrogen Toxicity**

* Avoid contact with pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides.
* Wash your food well to rid it of pesticide residue.
* Use water filters.
* Buy hormone-free meats and dairy products if possible.
* Avoid plastic goods.
* Do not microwave food in plastic containers or plastic wrap.
* Do not leave plastic containers for drinking water out in the sun.
* Use organic soaps and toothpastes if possible.
* Avoid creams and cosmetics that have estrogenic ingredients.
* Avoid surfactants found in many condoms and diaphragm gels.

**Ways to Lower Estrogen Levels**

* Eat an organic diet as much as possible.
* Improve gastrointestinal health to decrease leaky gut.
* Consider doing a cleanse.
* Eat a low-carb diet.
* Exercise regularly (toxins tend to accumulate in body fat).
* Take supplements such as B Vitamins and Zinc.

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As a doctor, it can be heartbreaking to see this overall reverse in peoples’ health. With modern technology, we have access to so much information and quality of life. But people are crying out for help and ways to make the right decisions for their health. I’m passionate about seeing a change in your nutrition and helping you find ways to become passionate about your health. I believe we can start a new health movement.