

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# How Hormones Support a Healthy Heart



In case you haven't **heard it yet, heart disease remains the leading cause of death for women in the U.S.**—a fact that hasn't changed despite growing awareness. According to the CDC, **one in five female deaths is attributed to heart disease.** That means hundreds of thousands of women die each year from a largely preventable condition.

One of the key factors that increases a woman's risk of heart disease is **hormonal decline, particularly the loss of estrogen during menopause.** Estrogen is a powerful heart protector—helping to maintain healthy cholesterol levels, reduce inflammation, and keep blood vessels flexible. Once estrogen levels drop, a woman's risk of **heart attacks, strokes, and cardiovascular disease rises dramatically—often surpassing that of men.**

With over **50 million women over the age of 50 in the U.S. today,** it's critical that we rethink heart disease prevention. One of the most effective yet underutilized strategies? **Bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT).** Research shows that **timely hormone therapy can reduce the risk of heart disease by more than 60%.**

## Why Hormones Matter

In our 20s and 30s, we have an abundance of key hormones, including:

- **Estradiol (estrogen of youth)** – Supports cardiovascular function, maintains skin elasticity, and regulates metabolism.
- **Progesterone** – Balances estrogen, promotes restful sleep, and stabilizes mood.
- **Testosterone** – Fuels energy, libido, and muscle strength.

These hormones **help us feel vibrant, energized, and resilient**—from smooth skin and easy weight management to a strong immune system and quick recovery from illness.

## What Happens in Our 40s and Beyond?

As hormone production declines, everything changes:

- **Cholesterol levels rise** – LDL ("bad" cholesterol) increases while HDL ("good" cholesterol) decreases.
- **Arterial plaque builds up** – Increasing the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease.
- **Energy drops, sleep suffers, and anxiety increases.**

- **Weight gain, especially around the midsection, becomes more common.**
- **Heart disease symptoms present differently in women** – Unlike men, women may not experience classic chest pain. Instead, symptoms can include **jaw pain, arm discomfort, extreme fatigue, or a persistent cough**—often leading to misdiagnosis.

## The Solution: Bioidentical Hormones & Proactive Heart Health

If more women understood the heart-protective benefits of bioidentical hormone therapy (BHT)—which mimics the body's natural hormones—they could significantly reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease.

### Here's what you can do today:

- **Start bioidentical hormone therapy early** – Don't wait until menopause. If you're experiencing fatigue, sleep disturbances, or mood shifts in your 40s, it may be time to talk to a doctor about BHRT.
- **Prioritize heart-healthy nutrition** – Eat a low-carb, anti-inflammatory diet rich in vegetables, healthy fats, and lean proteins. Cut back on sugar, processed foods, caffeine, and alcohol.
- **Move your body daily** – Engage in at least 30 minutes of cardio and strength training to maintain metabolic and cardiovascular health.
- **Get quality sleep** – Aim for 7–8 hours of restorative sleep every night to support hormone balance and heart function.
- **Eliminate stress and fear** – Chronic anxiety negatively impacts heart health. Practice mindfulness, connect with supportive people, and prioritize joy.
- **Work with a knowledgeable doctor** – Seek out hormone-literate practitioners who understand the link between hormones and cardiovascular health.

## Take Control of Your Health

Women shouldn't have to fear heart disease—or aging. With **the right knowledge and proactive steps,** you can protect your heart, **maintain your vitality, and enjoy a long, healthy life.**

Let's start today.