

The
ALCHEMY
of
YOU

Health secrets of phenomenal women.



Patricia Copley O'Connell



NOVEL INSTINCTS

NOVEL INSTINCTS PUBLISHING

6008 Ross Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75206
www.novelinstincts.com

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www.HormoneGuru.com

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ISBN: 978-0-9726007-6-7

Cataloging information: 1. Women's Health 2. Menopause 3. Aging 4. Longevity
Library of Congress Control Number: 2011925818

Printed in the United States of America.
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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To all the women who thought they had lost themselves.

Welcome back!

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the development and improvement of this book. Particular thanks go to the various focus group members who described candidly what you wanted and needed in a resource like this. You are: Jeannie Brady, Cheryl Carter, Danee' Diaz, Carly Dunson, Kathy Harris, Mikka James, Angela Jiura, Ashley Linnabery-Sotello, Molly McCreary, Caren Mitchell, Tisha Muntz, Nancy Nevil, Cheryl Rivera, Laurie Roberts, Laura Simmons, Donna Starford, Laurie Stoekert, Vickey Wade, Beth Wood, Shannon Worthy and Blanche Stephens. I owe much gratitude to my brilliant designer, Paul Black, and the team at Novel Instincts publishing for your unerring class and professionalism. To my able editors—Bridget Foley, Jeanne Kern, Brian Moreland, Bob Ryan and Kelly Young—each an author and force of nature, bless you for your eagle eyes and cheers. Smooches to my agents, Cricket Freeman and Jeffery McGraw of The August Agency, for your ongoing advice, perspective and delightful friendship though the years. Many thanks to Dr. Kelly Martin and Dr. Jill Wade for spurring me to write this long-overdue follow-up to my first book and for your tireless efforts to deliver smarter health solutions to your patients. My incredible writer's group also deserves a special mention for your brainstorming and business advice and for raising the bar for us all. And there is no way to adequately show my appreciation to my vast circle of family and friends for your support and encouragement, so I just offer my continued love and give thanks for the gifts you bring me. Here's to my grown-up baby girl, Megan, her daughter Jordan, my many sisters, nieces, and all the women who I hope will have better choices in part because of what this book has done.

INTRODUCTION



1 | What You Need to Know to Get the Results You Want

Alchemy is the fabled ancient art of using mystical substances to perform seemingly impossible tasks—like turning lead into gold or extending longevity.

Today we know this ancient practice by a more familiar name: *science*. Yes, modern science can now transform one element into another, and it can also tell us how to live longer, healthier lives.

But for most of us, this knowledge has remained hidden behind layers of myth and misdirection promoted by certain drug companies that want us to believe we have no power over our present and future wellbeing.

Well I'm here to tell you they are wrong. Like Dorothy in Oz, you've had the power all along and now's the time to take back control.

The Alchemy of YOU shows you how your internal chemistry affects nearly every aspect of your mind and body. And it tells you how to naturally manipulate that chemistry and the systems that drive it to maintain your health, vibrancy and youthfulness for a delightfully long time.

Yes, the secrets to staying young and feeling good are right here at your fingertips, all in one place, ready and waiting for you.

Audience

The Alchemy of YOU was created specifically for women of any age, especially those over 35, who are experiencing unwelcome changes in their overall health, including one or more common issues such as:

- Brain fog, memory loss
- Weight gain, difficulty losing weight, carb/sugar cravings
- Menstruation problems (irregular, long, heavy), severe PMS
- Insomnia, poor quality sleep
- Hot flashes, night sweats, racing heart, itchy skin
- Loss of (or dramatic surge in) sex drive and other passions
- Signs of aging in skin, hair, nails
- Indigestion, heartburn, acid reflux
- Fatigue, weakness

Objectives

The three most important things you should know right from the beginning are:

- You are not alone.
- You may not have to accept those changes.
- There are healthy and natural ways available to help prevent or reverse many dysfunctions we used to think were inevitable signs of aging.

The objective of this book is to empower and enable you to take a stronger role in your own wellness and to help shape the nature of your care.

Using the tools presented here, you will be able to:

- Identify and understand the tests that can help focus your quest for answers.

- Identify root causes for many of your symptoms.
- Rule out suspected causes based on test results and other symptoms.
- Identify a range of solutions—including human-friendly, natural solutions—that may reverse or minimize your most troublesome problems.
- Evaluate solutions to determine which are most compatible with your attitudes and life goals.
- Discuss with your doctor or healthcare advisor the directions you'd like to take in further exploring causes and solutions.
- Make grounded, knowledgeable decisions regarding your body.

How to Use This Book

This book is for informational purposes only. I encourage you to conduct your own research to learn more about the subjects presented here. And please be sure to consult a physician or other healthcare advisor for guidance in selecting and implementing any health-related solution.

Designed as a quick reference, *The Alchemy of YOU* is structured to make it as easy as possible for you to quickly find out what you can do about the issues you're currently dealing with and how to keep your body and mind in prime condition for the long run.

READ, LEARN, PLAN FOR ACTION

Read it once all the way through so you know how your systems and organs work together to keep your body purring like a well-tuned Ferrari. Then refer back to specific sections as you need them.

Or skip directly to the parts you need and read the rest later.

MAKE NOTES

I encourage you to mangle this book. Make notes in the blank areas, highlight or underline key points in the text, circle important sections, dog-ear pages, use paperclips or sticky notes to mark chapters and specific pages you want to refer back to, even photocopy certain pages to take to your doctors.

This is your book. Do whatever it takes to make it work for you.

TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE

If you are happy following whatever healthcare advice you have been getting so far, then you don't really need this book.

On the other hand, if you would like to become a more active partner in charting your own healthcare course, then use the tools offered here to help you effectively — and respectfully — collaborate with your doctors and other healthcare advisors.

Organization and Content

I don't expect you to run out and implement every solution in the book. In fact, that would be both reckless and costly.

I trust that you will approach your issues thoughtfully, seeking to implement only the solutions that seem to offer the widest range of benefits that matter to you — the “biggest bang for the buck” — and that make the most sense to your healthcare advisors.

The structure of *The Alchemy of YOU* helps you do just that.

Following this *Introduction* chapter, the book is divided into four main parts (A-D), each with its own supporting chapters.

- **PART A (Problems).** Search the handy tables in the first part of the book to find specific problems that are bothering you — whether they are symptoms you've experienced or diagnoses you've been given based on previous tests or

examinations. Identify any tests that may help point you toward specific causes. And search the list of possible solutions that might work for you.

- **PART B (Tests).** Learn more about the types of tests available to help you focus in on the cause(s) of your concern.
- **PART C (Health Processes).** Discover the four key processes/systems that interact to keep you healthy and youthful. And learn about the organs and glands that support or drive those processes. This knowledge will help you understand the causes of dysfunction and aging and how to prevent or reverse them.
- **PART D (Solutions).** Here you will find detailed information about each of the most beneficial solutions. This will help you identify the top few solutions that can address the greatest number of your most troublesome issues.

Common Myths and Misconceptions

Knowledge about wellness and longevity is advancing at a staggering rate today. It's no wonder so many of us are confused.

The following will test your knowledge on some of the most common myths and misconceptions. These statements are typical of the advice or warnings you may get from the media, your friends, and other sources.

Mark the desired column to indicate whether you think each statement of advice or warning is valid (YES) or not valid (NO).
(*Answers follow.*)

Common Myths and Misconceptions

YES	NO	TYPICAL ADVICE / WARNING
		You shouldn't take estrogen because it causes cancer.
		Estrogen increases your risk of blood clots.
		If you take hormones, you should take the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time.
		If you don't have hot flashes you don't need to take hormones.
		Sunlight causes skin cancer.
		Cholesterol is bad for you.
		You need drugs like Fosamax or Boniva to prevent or treat osteoporosis.
		You can't be menopausal if you're still getting periods.
		Estrogen is the only hormone women need at menopause.
		People who supplement testosterone to youthful levels are like drug addicts getting high on hormones.
		Menopausal hormone therapy is dangerous.
		It's normal to feel sick, tired, weak, stupid, fat and sexless at your age.

ANSWERS

You shouldn't take estrogen because it causes cancer.

✘ False (with caveats)

Although your doctor may have other valid reasons not to prescribe estrogen for you, you should know that natural human estrogen *that is properly balanced by progesterone* typically *does not* cause cancer. (I'll discuss *horse* estrogens and *fake* progesterone later.)

In the normal process of growth and repair, your body occasionally makes mistakes, like typos in an email, and it randomly produces cells with mutated DNA. Your immune system routinely attacks any random mutants and makes those cells commit suicide (apoptosis).

If you're exposed to certain carcinogenic agents (like radiation or toxic substances), they may damage the DNA of a large number of exposed cells and thus increase the odds that any given cell division will produce a mutant cell.

Imagine your immune system is like a server at a restaurant. It can keep up with the normal number of customers when the normal number of staff are on duty. But if several servers are out sick, even with a normal crowd, it will be hard for the few servers on duty to keep up. And if the customer volume doubles or triples unexpectedly, even when all the usual staff are on duty, you can be sure that some of those customers will end up neglected and angry.

Like that unusually large crowd of diners, sometimes so many mutant cells are generated at once (by radiation, toxins, drugs, etc.) that your healthy immune system can't keep up.

And if your immune system is compromised by stress, too little sleep, poor nutrition, or illness, it may not be able to keep ahead of even the normal number of mutants.

For the immune system, either scenario can lead to cancer, and the odds are even greater when both scenarios occur at the same time.

Highly simplified, cancer is a collection of mutated cells that have bonded together to support the cluster/tumor's spread, and to form defenses against your immune system.

Because estrogen is designed to stimulate cell division and growth (of eggs in the ovaries, of the uterine lining, of milk glands in the breasts) it increases the number of randomly occurring mutants, simply because it promotes more rapid cell division. But it *does not necessarily cause the mutations*.

The progesterone your body makes when you ovulate each month calms estrogen's tendency to stimulate cell growth. When estrogen is "opposed" by high enough quantities of progesterone each month, the progesterone protects you from developing estrogen-sensitive cancers by simply limiting the rate of cell division to keep it within a range your immune system was designed to handle.

Think of it this way: If estrogen caused cancer, then women who have been pregnant should be at the highest risk for hormone-related cancers. Right?

But just the opposite is true: pregnancy actually *reduces* the lifetime risk of hormone-related cancers. Perhaps that's because although the most important strong estrogen (E2/estradiol) increases dramatically during pregnancy, it is balanced by a *two times greater* increase in progesterone.

Estrogen increases the risk of blood clots.

✓ True

Estrogen *alone* does promote clotting, and higher estrogen levels do indeed increase the risk of blood clots. In fact, pregnant women may be at an increased risk of getting blood clots if their estrogen levels are not properly balanced by progesterone.

Progesterone normalizes the clotting process. (During pregnancy, progesterone rises by 300 times normal, versus estrogen's 100-times increase.) So it's very important to have just the right balance of estrogen and progesterone.

If you take hormones, you should take the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time.

✗✓ Not necessarily

In the wake of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI)—which studied the effects of *horse estrogen* (Premarin) and *horse estrogen plus fake progesterone* (Prempro) in menopausal women—the FDA issued a requirement to include warnings on *all* pharmaceutical hormone products (including bio-identical hormones, which are chemically identical to those our bodies naturally make).

And they cautioned doctors to prescribe those products to women in the “lowest effective dose for the shortest amount of time.” But what's “effective” can differ dramatically from one woman to the next.

Furthermore, this action did not take into consideration studies that show the benefits and safety of using bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

Neither did it acknowledge the fact that it may actually be the (largely *reversible*) hormone *imbalances and deficiencies*—which

occur naturally as we get older—that predispose us to a variety of what are falsely assumed to be “age-related” conditions.

We now know that restoring hormones to optimal levels can help *prevent* many of the conditions and diseases typically blamed on aging and can keep you looking and feeling youthful.

If you don't have hot flashes there's no reason to take hormones.

✘ False

Many women brush off discussions of hormone supplementation as irrelevant to them because they don't have hot flashes.

All women should understand that as we age our hormones drop off at different rates, causing imbalances whose damaging effects may not become apparent for decades or may not be properly attributed to hormone dysfunction.

For example, a breast cancer tumor (triggered by estrogen that is not balanced by enough progesterone) can take 7-10 years to grow large enough to detect.

Although the tumor may not be discovered until after a woman enters menopause, it may have been “born” when she was in her 40s and was having irregular cycles. Those crazy periods were a signal that she was not ovulating every month, and that her body was not making enough progesterone to balance her estrogen.

The lack of symptoms creates a false sense of security. We need to be aware of our hormone imbalances early and correct them to prevent the diseases that may crop up later.

Symptoms that many women assume are inevitable and unrelated—such as insomnia, fatigue, weight gain, loss of muscle/skin tone, depression, even heart disease, cancer, arthritis and osteoporosis—may in fact be preventable or reversible by restoring their hormones to optimal levels.

Sunshine causes skin cancer.

✓ ✕ Not necessarily

You would think that people who live in sunny tropical climates should have the highest incidence of skin cancer, but you would be wrong.

In fact, deadly melanoma (along with other cancers) is far more prevalent among those who live closer to the poles and have *less* exposure to sunlight.

Your body was designed to produce vitamin D in your skin when exposed to UV rays and sweat. Depending on the color of your skin (dark skin blocks more UV rays than light skin), you can produce between 10,000 and 20,000 IUs of vitamin D3 on a sunny summer day...assuming you expose enough skin and don't cover it with sunscreen.

Study after study shows that vitamin D3 is critical to the fight against a whole host of cancers as well as heart disease, autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis and others.

But what have you heard for years regarding sunshine? "*Stay out of the sun.*" And if you have to be out there, "*cover up and wear sunscreen.*" The current recommended amount of vitamin D3 is 800 IUs, which is woefully inadequate, considering that you were designed to run on 10,000 to 20,000 a day. If you are avoiding all sunlight on your skin, then you will have to get the vitamin D you need from somewhere else.

Some of us think that if we drink milk and consume other products fortified with vitamin D we are getting enough. But not all sources provide the right kind of vitamin D, and those that do don't provide enough. The vitamin we need to be our healthiest is D3, and we need a lot of it.

Fortunately, even mainstream experts are now beginning to acknowledge the benefits of vitamin D3 and are recommending we get at least 1000-2000 IUs per day. Some doctors even

supplement vitamin D3 in single doses upwards of 60,000 IUs to quickly restore patients who are severely deficient.

Even TV's Dr. Oz has recommended getting about 10 minutes a day of direct sunlight on unprotected skin. That's a breakthrough in thinking. Following his recommendation could dramatically reduce the occurrence of a variety of deadly diseases over the next few decades, especially for today's young people.

But keep in mind that as you age, your skin becomes much less effective at producing vitamin D even under optimal conditions. By the age of 70 you may be producing only 25% of the amount you made when you were younger. So vitamin D supplementation becomes even more important with each year.

Cholesterol is bad for you.

✘ False

We all know the cholesterol story is complex and there are good and bad types of cholesterol.

What you may not know is that *cholesterol is essential to the normal function of your body*. It is the raw material from which many of your hormones are made. If it is too low, you cannot make the hormones that keep you alive. It is so important, in fact, that most of your cholesterol is made in your liver. Only a portion of the cholesterol in your blood comes from your diet.

Cholesterol alone is not bad for you, but *oxidized* cholesterol is—which is why it is important for you to get plenty of *antioxidants* like vitamin C, resveratrol, curcumin, and others.

Even the American Heart Association admits that total cholesterol is a poor indicator of cardiovascular health. What is most important (and you'll notice this is a theme running throughout this book) is that you *maintain the proper balance* of cholesterol levels, ideally through exercise and diet.

As it turns out, inflammation is far more damaging to your heart. And indicators of inflammation like homocysteine and

C-reactive protein (CRP) may tell you more about the condition of your cardiovascular system than cholesterol levels.

Keep in mind that the statin drugs typically prescribed for high cholesterol are well known to damage the liver and deplete the body of an essential nutrient, CoQ10.

And—according to a recent meta-analysis of 11 studies, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* (June 28, 2010)—although statins may be effective in lowering cholesterol levels and reducing the number of myocardial infarctions, *they have not been shown to reduce the overall risk of dying!*

Drugs provide the best treatment for osteoporosis.

✘ False

Healthy bone constantly undergoes a process of breaking down and rebuilding. Your hormone levels and their ratios to one another are critical to keeping this remodeling process in perfect balance.

Estrogen is responsible for slowing the rate of bone loss, while progesterone, testosterone and growth hormone are responsible for building new bone.

Osteoporosis drugs tend to work like estrogen to preserve existing bone. But they don't provide the other components that help build strong, resilient new bone.

In fact, the best way to maintain strong bones is a 4-pronged approach:

1. Consume the building blocks of bone (calcium, magnesium, vitamin D3, protein, etc.)
2. Maintain optimal hormone levels needed for bone remodeling (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and perhaps growth hormone).
3. Keep body pH slightly to the alkaline side of neutral.
4. Get regular weight-bearing exercise.

If you must take bone-preserving medications, you must also continue to support your bones in other ways.

You can't be menopausal if you're still getting periods.

✓ ✘ Technically true, but misleading

Traditionally, menopause has been defined as the point at which a woman has had no natural periods for 12 consecutive months.

While accurate, this definition fails to acknowledge the condition of *hormonal* menopause, when a woman's FSH (produced in the brain) is continuously above 25 mIU/mL and her estradiol (the most important form of natural estrogen) falls below 50 pg/mL.

A woman who is hormonally menopausal may continue to have periods—though they are likely to be irregular, sometimes very heavy or long lasting—while suffering symptoms like hot flashes, insomnia, brain fog, and others typical of classical menopause.

Estrogen is the only hormone women may need at menopause.

✘ False

Women and men are both built to run on the same hormones, including estrogen, progesterone and testosterone. But women typically have a lot more estrogen than men, and men have a lot (10 times) more testosterone than women. And for both sexes, it is critical to maintain the proper balance of hormones.

For example, because estrogen is also produced in fat cells (as well as the ovaries and adrenal glands), a heavy post-menopausal woman may not need to take estrogen. But she *will* need progesterone to balance the estrogen her body still makes. She may also need testosterone to boost her brain, build muscle and bone, or bring back her passions.

Although every woman is different, the one hormone almost all women need in the years leading up to and following menopause is *progesterone*, because we have no significant

backup sources for progesterone after our ovaries shut down or are surgically removed.

People who supplement testosterone to youthful levels are like drug addicts getting high on hormones.

✘ False

No one would accuse a diabetic of “getting high” on his insulin, or would call someone a “thyroid addict” because she supplements hormones for her underactive thyroid.

And yet, when it comes to supplementing sex hormones, it happens every day.

A recent news story featured a doctor from a world-renowned hospital insisting that people, like our local police chief, who replenish their depleted testosterone supplies are equivalent to narcotic addicts.

The ignored fact is that testosterone is an essential hormone for brain function, bone and muscle integrity, heart health, assertiveness, and sex drive.

Testosterone deficiency has been linked to the development of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases. In other words, supplementing testosterone to bring it back up to optimal levels may actually *prevent* these terrible diseases.

Do people with low testosterone feel a kind of “high” when they finally begin to restore their hormone levels? Sure. If someone has tried to suffocate you, do you feel a kind of “high” when you catch that first breath upon release? Absolutely. Does that make you an *air addict*? No.

It’s true that athletes and others may abuse this hormone. But when used properly, it can be a blessing...for men *and* women.

Menopausal hormone therapy is dangerous.

✓✘ May be true in some circumstances, but not all

Whenever someone tells you that studies have proven hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is dangerous, there is one very important question you need to ask: “What specific hormones are you talking about?”

What few people realize is that *virtually all the large studies of HRT over the past 70 years have focused primarily (or exclusively) on the use of hormones that are foreign to the human body!*

Whether a given study intentionally examined only specific HRT hormone products, or merely tracked the use of HRT among large groups of women, the fact is that, *until the early 2000s, nearly all women on HRT were using Premarin (if they had no uterus) or Prempro (if they still had a uterus and needed a form of progesterone to balance the strong estrogens in Premarin).*

And as I’ve discussed earlier, Premarin is made from horse estrogen, while Prempro is Premarin plus the synthetic progesterone substitute called Provera (or MPA).

So, when someone says, “All the studies show that estrogen [or progesterone]...” does certain things (good or bad), they typically mean that *horse estrogen* or *fake progesterone* has been shown to do those things.

The fact is that NONE of the major HRT studies often cited reflect the impact of either our *human hormones* or the *bio-identical versions* of those hormones that are made from plants and are *chemically identical* to human hormones.

However, at least one large study (2005 French E3N study of 54,000 women) now helps to balance this picture, showing significant benefits and reduced risks associated with the use of bio-identical hormones.

It's normal to feel bad at your age.

✓ ✕ It may be true but it doesn't have to be

Too often we are judged by what's normal "for our age." Some will say it's normal to be slowing down or to have a few health complaints at a certain age. Our blood tests may come back saying that our hormone levels are "perfectly normal" ...*for someone in the age bracket where hormones are typically low!*

It's a crazy kind of circular logic that fails to address the difference between "normal" (meaning what typically occurs in the average population) and "optimal" (meaning *ideal*).

Maybe it's a holdover from the time when doctors couldn't do anything about the inevitable changes that come with age. But we've advanced since then and have the tools to restore our bodies in many ways to their optimal conditions.

In the past, we thought of aging as synonymous with a decline in health. But in fact they are two separate things.

Yes, certain things occur as a function of age. But a great many of the complaints that bother us as we get older are the result of hormone imbalances and other circumstances that we can prevent or counteract.

The Top 2 Health Secrets for Women

Now that you've had a taste of some of the royal secrets, you can see that there is a lot more to learn. In the pages of this book, you'll find many great solutions, some that apply to most women, and others that apply to only a few.

But there are two supplementation solutions *every woman should know about, especially as she gets older:*

- Bio-identical progesterone
- Vitamin D3

Both progesterone and vitamin D are *hormones* (really!) manufactured in your body when the conditions are right.

- Progesterone is made (from cholesterol) in the ovaries (and in the placenta during pregnancy).
- Vitamin D is made in the skin when exposed to the sun's UV rays and sweat.

Unfortunately, the mechanisms that produce each of these hormones don't always work reliably, especially as we age. And sometimes we disable them by our well-intentioned actions. So here's what you can do to get back on track.

KEY BENEFITS OF THE TOP 2 SECRETS

Both of these substances will be described in greater detail in Part D. Here's just a glimpse into their extraordinary benefits:

PROGESTERONE BENEFITS

- Prevent estrogen-sensitive cancers
- Prevent/reduce PMS
- Calm irregular/heavy periods
- Increase metabolism
- Promote weight loss
- Decrease appetite
- Normalize clotting
- Ease anxiety/depression
- Build strong bones, muscles
- Improve brain & memory
- Support heart/cardio health
- Promote sleep
- Support sex drive
- Reduce allergies

VITAMIN D3 BENEFITS

- Prevent most cancers
- Protect against melanoma
- Manage diabetes
- Improve bowel function
- Minimize chronic pain
- Tame MS, rh arthritis, etc.
- Improve immune system
- Build strong bones, muscle
- Promote heart health, lower BP
- Prevent stroke
- Support brain/memory
- Promote healing, slow aging
- Support eye health
- Reduce gum disease

You can see why these two solutions deserve special emphasis.

PROGESTERONE SNAPSHOT

- If you are not ovulating regularly, or if your ovaries have been removed, *your body cannot produce enough progesterone to balance the estrogen it continues to make in your adrenal glands and fat cells.*
- If you test low in progesterone relative to estrogen (especially in what should be the second half of your menstrual month, or after menopause), you should supplement progesterone to prevent “estrogen-dominance” cancers and many degenerative conditions.
- You can get natural creams over the counter (in health food stores, online, etc.) that contain pharmaceutical-grade, bio-identical (same as what nature gave you) progesterone.

VITAMIN D3 SNAPSHOT

- *Melanoma (skin cancer) rates are **higher** among those who get the **least sun**, whether because of their location (nearer the poles the sun’s UV rays are weaker), or because they wear cover-ups and sunscreen.*
- Our bodies manufacture the vitamin D hormone in our skin when it is exposed to UV rays and sweat. But with age, our skin loses much of that ability, making only about 25% as much vitamin D from sunlight by the time we reach our 70s.
- Depending on our skin color, we can produce as much as *10,000 to 20,000 IUs of vitamin D just by being out in the sun*—with plenty of skin exposed and no sunscreen on a summer day in warmer latitudes. Just 15 minutes a day may give us all the vitamin D we need.
- Because burns and overexposure to the sun can *also* cause certain skin cancers and exaggerate the appearance of aging, more and more doctors are recommending that most people who avoid the sun take at least 1000-2000 IUs of vitamin D3 a day to stay healthy.

- Vitamin-D-fortified milk and foods may contain D2, which is the wrong kind of vitamin D. (Always look for vitamin D3.)
- Optimal vitamin D3 levels—as measured by the 25(OH)D blood test—should be around 60-80 ng/mL.

...And So the Quest Begins

You've seen how facts can be misinterpreted and have already discovered a few of the key secrets of human chemistry that phenomenal women possess.

Now you are ready to embark on the quest to find your own best solutions to keep you healthy, youthful and vibrant for years to come.



PART A: PROBLEMS

2 | Problems Desperately Seeking Solutions

You have needs. This book has solutions. PART A of *The Alchemy of YOU* gets you from one to the other in a flash, without a lot of fuss.

Quick-Reference Format

Each chapter in this first section addresses a group of related issues that may concern you. These are presented in a three-column table format for easy reference.

- The **left column** lists the symptoms, **problems**, conditions and diagnoses that may concern you.
- The **middle column** indicates common **causes** for those issues.
- And the **right column** lists a variety of actions or **solutions** you might implement.

This book does not cover conventional solutions the doctors on your team are likely to suggest. It assumes those bases are covered. Neither does it delve into exotic or rare causes for various symptoms.

Instead, it focuses on the many *common* causes that may either be overlooked or simply disregarded as untreatable or unworthy of treatment. And it suggests the complementary solutions that may be appropriate for those conditions.

The solutions entries often begin with a list of tests, each designed to help you home in on the true cause of the problems.

Then they suggest a range of preventive or corrective solutions that may apply to your issues.

Later in the book you will learn more about tests and possible solutions as well as the overall systems/processes and organs that keep your body operating at its best.

Symptoms Everyone Should Recognize

Before getting into your specific issues, let's take a moment to talk about four potentially deadly conditions (heart attack, stroke, ovarian cancer and endometrial cancer) whose symptoms may be overlooked.

In some cases these are clusters of otherwise very mundane symptoms that can be attributed to simpler causes. Sometimes it is only as a group that these ordinary symptoms reveal something more sinister.

HEART ATTACK

We all know the classic signs of a heart attack in men: shooting pain in the left arm, a crushing feeling in the chest and shortness of breath.

But we women don't like to do things the way men do. A woman having a heart attack is much more likely to be misdiagnosed than a man because her symptoms often look like other, less serious, conditions.

So here are the symptoms to watch for:

- Pain in left arm/chest, jaw, back or stomach
- Sudden unexplained anxiety/fear
- Shortness of breath
- Sudden heavy sweating/cold sweat
- Lightheadedness, sleep disturbances
- Indigestion, nausea

- Severe fatigue, muscle aches

STROKE

Many people can avoid the damaging effects of a stroke if they carry aspirin with them and take one or two tablets at the first indication of trouble.

When someone is having a stroke it is important to get the right kind of help (including aspirin) administered within the first 45 minutes. After that, they are more likely to suffer permanent damage.

Symptoms of a stroke can include:

- Crooked smile or facial asymmetry, one side drooping
- Slurred speech
- Weakness, numbness or loss of control on one side
- Difficulty walking
- Lost or diminished vision
- Sudden, severe headache
- Sudden confusion

To respond when you think someone is having a stroke, think of the word FAST.

- *Face*: Ask for a smile.
- *Arms*: Ask them to hold both arms out straight.
- *Speech*: Ask them to repeat a familiar phrase
- *Time*: Act fast! Have them take aspirin as soon as possible, then call 911 or get them to an ER ideally within 15 minutes.

OVARIAN CANCER

Like pancreatic cancer, ovarian cancer is so deadly because it reveals no obvious symptoms early on and cannot be found in routine screenings.

So it is important to watch for these ordinary symptoms that, together as a group, may be subtle signals of ovarian cancer:

- Abdominal bloating and/or pain
- Pelvic pain
- Fatigue
- Indigestion
- Urinary frequency
- Constipation

Some people believe the CA-125 test is a good way to find ovarian cancer early. It isn't. As a screening tool, it produces a lot of false alarms and misses about half of actual cancers.

Unfortunately, it is primarily useful only in confirming a late-stage diagnosis of cancer and in tracking the effectiveness of cancer treatment, according to experts at Johns Hopkins University and elsewhere.

Currently, the best way to screen for ovarian cancer may be through ultrasound examinations, though this is certainly not a foolproof test.

Some women may even choose to have their ovaries removed once they shut down at menopause in order to prevent this insidious disease.

ENDOMETRIAL CANCER

The number-one symptom of cancer of the uterine lining (endometrial cancer) is *irregular bleeding*.

And *any bleeding after natural menopause is considered a sign of endometrial cancer* until proven otherwise.

However, if you are peri- or post-menopausal with an intact uterus and are taking supplemental hormones, you could continue having periods indefinitely. In that case, the diagnosis of cancer becomes much more difficult.

To watch for this deadly disease after menopause, get regular pelvic exams that include transvaginal ultrasound and possibly biopsy.

It's All About You Now

You've learned about the structure of this chapter and have gathered some handy tips for spotting symptoms of four of the most deadly conditions.

Now, it's time to think about what's bothering you.

Identifying your specific symptoms, issues and conditions is the first step on the path toward finding the answers (and secrets) you've been looking for.

3| Allergies & Immune Dysfunctions

PROBLEM	COMMON CAUSES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
IMMUNE DYSFUNCTION new or worsening allergies, asthma, hives, autoimmune conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food sensitivity /leaky gut syndrome ▪ Parasites or yeast/Candida ▪ Low progesterone ▪ Hormone allergies ▪ Adrenal fatigue/stress ▪ Drug reaction 	<p><i>Conduct tests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food allergies ▪ Elimination diet ▪ Hormone allergy ▪ Progesterone ▪ Adrenal function <p><i>Address the cause(s)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cleansing ▪ Rotation diet ▪ HCL, probiotics, enzymes ▪ Add progesterone ▪ High-dose vitamin C, zinc, curcumin ▪ Hormone desensitization ▪ Allergy shots ▪ Alternative drug ▪ Reduce stress <p><i>Address the symptoms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Antihistamines ▪ Corticosteroids ▪ Malic acid

Allergies and Immune Dysfunctions (cont.)

PROBLEM	COMMON CAUSES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
FREQUENT COLDS, INFECTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weakened or compromised immune system ▪ Stress/adrenal fatigue 	<p><i>Address the cause(s)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vitamin D3, C, zinc, quercetin ▪ Other immune-boosting supplements ▪ Reduce stress ▪ Improve sleep
COLD SORES, fever blisters, shingles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Herpes virus ▪ Weakened or compromised immune system ▪ Stress/adrenal fatigue 	<p><i>Address the cause(s)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vitamin D3 ▪ Vitamin C, quercetin ▪ Immune-boosting supplements ▪ Reduce stress ▪ Improve sleep <p><i>Address the symptoms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lysine, arginine ▪ Lip treatments ▪ Calamine lotion ▪ Antihistamines

4| Appearance: Skin, Hair

PROBLEM	COMMON CAUSES	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
AGING SKIN, dry, thinning, sagging skin, loss of elasticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low/imbalanced sex hormones ▪ Low/imbalanced thyroid hormones ▪ Low growth hormone (GH) ▪ Sun damage 	<p><i>Conduct tests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sex hormones ▪ Thyroid hormones ▪ GH/IGF-1 ▪ Allergy blood test <p><i>Address the cause(s)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add/balance sex/thyroid hormones ▪ Quercetin, B-complex, resveratrol <p><i>Address the symptoms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce sun exposure ▪ Lotions, oils
AGE SPOTS, scaly skin,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low/imbalanced sex hormones ▪ Low/imbalanced thyroid hormones ▪ Poor nutrition ▪ Normal end of cell life ▪ Low growth hormone (GH) 	<p><i>Conduct tests</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hormones: sex, thyroid, GH (IGF-1) ▪ Micronutrients <p><i>Address the cause(s)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add and/or balance sex/thyroid/growth hormones ▪ Multivitamin, esp. vitamin C, D3, E, zinc ▪ Resveratrol, calorie restriction diet <p><i>Address the symptoms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce sun exposure ▪ Lotions ▪ Laser treatment