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Welcome to the This Is Not Normal podcast. I'm Dr. Neb and I am nurse practitioner Nicole. If you don't feel like yourself anymore and you've been told it's just part of aging, you have come to right place.

Let's uncover what's really going on because you deserve to love the way you feel. If you're already on hormone replacement therapy and you are just not feeling as great as you had hoped you would, it is probably because there's more to balanced hormones than just a hormone prescription.

That's so true. So it's not just patch and a pill, right? It shouldn't just be give these prescriptions and see you in six months. I hate it when I have a patient that says to me or even a friend that you know those hormones they just weren't right for me right but i don't think that's it right it's there's so much more to balancing hormones because hormones right they're chemical messengers they start in our brain and they go all throughout our body and there like a family right?

They all are dependent on each other so it is not that your estrogen is independent from your thyroid or your adrenals and your cortisol so there is so many more So first you need the right dose, and we're all very unique and individual.

So what's right for me may not be right you. Which hormones I need versus which ones you needs. What dose? What form? So, first of all, there's getting the hormone right, but then there is more.

One of the things that really impacts how the hormones work in your body is your level of stress. Yes, that's so true. Stress is all around us. You have to think about stress as being internal stress, stress that you might be giving your body the wrong food, right?

Stress that might you be burning the candle at both ends. You're up early in the morning and you're going to bed late at night. Stress from the world around us, our work stress.

Environmental stress and so there's so much stressors. Your adrenal glands are really, really important. They're like the neck that turned the head on all the other hormones in your body.

And they're supposed to kind of be the plan B when women go into menopause, but they've been waving a surrender flag for years. Like, they can only do so much.

So when your cortisol, your main stress hormone, is trying to keep up and keep and up, there's only so which it can do. If we don't have if we're not dealing with our stressors well and we are not managing that stress well, we could bathe you in estrogen and it wouldn't make a difference.

Yeah, the cortisol literally gets in the way so that the estrogen can't do its job. So stress is a huge cause of hormone imbalances for women. It's a big cause for things like hot flashes, some of the symptoms that we blame on hormones in first place, but it's also a reason why hormone therapy may not be doing its best thing.

That's true. One of the hormones that we talk about all the time at Signature Wellness that gets forgotten is testosterone. We think of testosterone as the male hormone.

It's libido and whatnot. But if you're under a lot of stress and your cortisol is all out of whack, All the testosterone in the world is not going to help you, but one of the complaints we get all the time is, I have no libido, my libidos low.

Stress trumps sex every time, right? So if we can't get your stress under control, we cannot get you in a parasympathetic relaxed kind of state so that you can enjoy the relaxation, the intimacy, and the desire inside and outside the bedroom, because testosterone is more than just desire in the veteran.

It's desire, it's motivation, its excitement. Desire to get to the gym, to top your broccoli, or to clean out your closet, get that report done that's due by Thursday.

That's true. Stress is one of the things that can be interfering with the results from your hormones, but it is only one thing. another thing that's really important for hormone health is actually your gut.

And we find really commonly that when people come to see us complaining about symptoms that they feel are probably hormonal, often there's underlying gut problems that set you up to be the person that has hormonal problems in the first place.

Yes, that's so true. Your gut is the outside environment on the inside of the body, right? So the whole concept of we are what we eat is completely true, so if we're putting in wrong foods, we create a hostile environment where the wrong microbes are growing.

It's basically like having too many weeds in your garden And then your fences break down and things are crawling through that shouldn't. And what's on the other side of your gut is your immune system.

If your system is seeing things it doesn't like, it causes inflammation. When your body is under inflammation, you're having more and more symptoms. Symptoms are your bodies way of telling you something is wrong.

So again, if we just give you some hormones, but we don't deal with the inflammation or the imbalances in your gut. We as women, we make different microbes before menopause and after menoppause, and our diversity of our gut changes after Menopaus.

we lose diversity. We get women every day that come in and say, I used to be able to eat all these different foods and now I can't. And it's because of that change in the microbiome.

Yeah. So what goes on in our gut is really important. And if we do have an imbalance in the microbes and our barrier isn't working well and microbes are creeping in in your bloodstream and your immune system starts flaring up and we get this inflammation, it doesn't stay in out gut.

It goes throughout our blood stream and it goes to our brain and now we don't sleep and were tired and have brain fog and can't We remember things and we feel like we have ADD.

So many women, when they go through Ferry menopause, feel, like, oh my gosh, I'm developing ADT. And a lot of times we blame these symptoms on our hormones, and goodness, hormones can cause those symptoms, but inflammation from your gut can also cause symptoms too, or make them worse.

Right. If all we do is stick a patch on your butt, we don't always clear everything up. That's true. Besides just creating symptoms another important thing is your good is really important for for screening out and for clearing the hormones in your body.

Right, that's important. So whatever we take in, food, medicine, vitamins, air, anything we breathe in anything, we have to get rid of. Our body has to break it down.

We have detoxify it and our body is smart. It knows how to do that through sweat, through urine, throughout bowel movements, but we to detoxified those things.

If we're not Getting out and exercising and getting that you know using our sweat glands if we're not hydrating well if were constipated we likely recirculating all of those things so.

Anything that's gonna build up from outside environmental toxins to even hormones right we need to get rid of them and get them out of our body it's another reason people say.

that prescription didn't work for me or hormones didn' work. For me, I had side effects. I have breast tenderness or I was bloated or had headaches. And it's probably because they're recirculating the toxins and they are not breaking it down and metabolizing it out of their body.

So toxins are really important. Let's talk about that. Because there are so many toxins in our environment, plastics and pesticides and I don't know, maybe something in the air that we're breathing right now.

And a lot of those toxins, a lotta those chemicals, are hormone disruptors. And they mess up how our hormones work. So they can create some of these symptoms that we blame on perimenopause and menopausus.

150 years ago, our great-great-grandmothers probably didn't have the same kind of symptoms we have, because they didn' have all of the hormone disrupters in the environment.

I think everybody knows these days that there's chemicals out there, and everybody know that they're bad for us, but this is something that has really not hit mainstream medicine yet.

No, definitely not. I-I think you're right. In the last decade or more, we've really started to realize that what we spray on the food, what spray in our lawn, spray our bodies, wash our clothes in, the makeup we use.

The studies show that on average women use like 10 products. between our hair and our makeup and detergents. These chemicals are trying to get into the receptors of our hormones and they don't fit perfectly.

It's like putting the wrong key in the lock. But it prevents the hormone from getting in to the receptor and that can create problems. a really big cause of low testosterone in men.

Stress is one of the causes, toxins is another cause. So this is these things that we're talking about, true for men and for women. When we work with people, we do so much more than just the hormone prescription because we also want to address all of these other factors that impact how your hormones work in your body.

We want make sure you have the right nutrients that you need to be able to make and use your hormone, and partly that depends what you're eating. we want you to have good healthy nutrition, but it also depends on what can you absorb and digest.

a really comprehensive approach just makes the most sense. And that's why we use what we call our Love the Way You Feel system, where we're looking at four pillars of health.

We're Looking at hormones, including our female or male sex hormones. we look at our stress hormones like cortisol, we Look at a full thyroid panel. It's not just the screening test, We look At insulin, which is the hormone that regulates our blood sugar.

That's a whole other conversation. So we looked at Hormones and the balance. because we all have a unique pattern of hormones. Sometimes one is too high, the other one's too low.

And so this is all about coming back into balance so you can feel your balance. The second pillar is gut health, because we need to have a healthy gut, we have the right microbes, and we can digest and absorb our food.

We need you to be eating the good food for you. A healthy diet, but it has to the be the one for your. You want to address toxins in the environment, you can't avoid all of them.

But there are some simple things that we could do. Flesh them out of our system as much as possible. Because we always want the hormones in healthiest body that can.

And then we want help support you with healthy lifestyle habits so you could maintain the benefits for the long term. It's all about balance, right? And it's about precision medicine.

Like, we say this all the time. This is a one-size-fits-none approach, I cannot write the same prescription for a 39-year-old and a 45- year- old and 55- years old.

And even two 55 years. Right, exactly. Twin sisters may need completely different things, because it is not just about You know giving them back hormones it's that a whole process of making sure you can clear out and detoxify heal and still your cut balance all your hormones and optimize your lifestyle and life's the foundation right we need to make sure that.

you're making good, healthy food choices. You're going to sleep and getting enough time in bed and moving your body in a healthy way and dealing with stressors.

We can't take the stress away, but helping you to cope with stresses and making sure you have a good support system around you is really, really important.

Yeah. And those people who come to see us have pretty good lifestyle habits. Most people are trying Nobody's perfect, but it can be really frustrating when you're kind of doing the things like you are trying your best.

You're trying to buy the better detergents and eat your vegetables and yet you still just don't feel like yourself and you can't lose weight no matter what.

Like you can stand on your head and it just doesn't work anymore. That's the most frustrating thing, isn't it? I feel like the two things that are the more frustrating, there's a lot of things are not good, but the things aren't the frustrating is the darn belly fat that just will not go away and when your brain just does not work, you know what you want to say but you cannot find the word.

It's true, it's very frustrating and I think that In the world we're living in right now, we are being bombarded with information from every which direction we look in.

In some respects, there's so much good to that. There's many wonderful people out there trying to get the word out that we shouldn't be afraid of hormones.

We've been doing this for 20 years, but there's been studies that were debunked and misinterpreted, and now everyone is realizing, hey, we've really done a disservice.

And so I'm thrilled that menopause is having its moment and that nutrition and exercise and lifestyle are really taking a forefront. But it can be really confusing when you hear this on this podcast, and this from this social media, this influencer, what should I take?

And that's hard. And so having someone to manage all that and make it make sense for you and not just what everyone else is doing. I think that is important because it might be true, but is it true for YOU?

And so having somebody who can help you work through that, answer your questions, have a balanced conversation. We use all different kinds of hormones, pills and patches and creams and all sorts of things.

So there's not one right way. we do hormone testing in urine and blood and saliva. There's no one way right. And we're happy to talk through all of the different options and personalized therapy.

But it is important to know that while menopause is having its day and it has become so much easier, thank goodness, for women to get help with managing their hormones.

For the last more than 20 years, menoppause care was not taught at medical school. And so a lot of doctors are just starting to try to figure it out now.

that's good and we applaud them and and were very thankful for that but but this is really complex and it's not so simple to just write a prescription and so sometimes women are finding that they're disappointed so we've been doing this for a long time way back when when doctors were still scared of hormones we were screaming from the rooftops that these are important And that message hasn't changed.

It's not really that we have new research that's changed everything. We just went back and reevaluated the old research. That we've been talking about for 20 years and finally it's made the light of day.

So we're really grateful that women are getting the care that they need. But if you're just not getting what you want, We are happy to work with you. We have an approach that really works.

we have a process and a system we can help you walk through step by step. You can really go deep, restore your health in ways that go way beyond hormones.

Hormones are just one piece of the puzzle. They're a really important piece, but they're just that's true. I think something that resonates with our patients a lot is feeling hurt, feeling listened to, and having time.

not feeling like they only had a few minutes with their provider and that the provider felt rushed and i think that's especially for female health for women's health i know men appreciate that too but i do hear from our female patients all the time that they feel so fortunate to have a team behind them to get responses quickly when they send a message to be able to give in for an appointment or receive a phone call from their providers When they don't feel good when something's going wrong and to be taking such a comprehensive approach and Talking through all the things that are going on in their life I think that makes a really big difference in our care and also to me believe somebody I heard somebody talking the other day about how they went to the emergency room and they were having a really rapid heart rate.

And they we're told that it was just anxiety and were kind of dismissed without being evaluated. So if a man showed up in the room with a rapid rate, they'd be whisked in to get the EKG and all the things, right?

And a woman who came in this week was struggling with her weight. She was super frustrated and her doctor literally told her that they tested her thyroid and it's normal.

They just came to a conclusion and informed her that she had a problem with her relationship with food. And it's just, you know, she felt so dismissed and it can feel so hopeless.

It doesn't have to be that way. There's things going on in your body that are changing. Part of it is the world we live in, part of is food that's available to us, and part is hormones that is changing, which is part the age and the environment.

But there are solutions. You don't feel this way, we see women and men transform every day, get their energy back, their brain comes back online and they can think.

Their mood is good. They feel motivated to go to the gym and chop their broccoli and clean up their closet. It's such a wonderful way to practice medicine.

We get thank you cards and people who tell us that their life has changed. I don't know, I couldn't imagine practicing medicine any other way. And my reason for opening this practice in the first place is that for 20 years I had symptoms.

I was tired all the time, struggled with my weight, was screaming at my kids, my poor husband had to put up with me. It was so confusing because nothing in my medical training helped explain why I felt this way, but when i learned about hormones and i got my hormones back in balance i thought my life back and they just couldn't go

back to practice in an old way because it just didn't make sense anymore so we've been doing this signature wellness has been here for 20 years we have a fabulous team we now are known nationally we had practitioners come in from all over the country to learn what we do and how we it.

Our whole team helps to educate other practitioners. We love to do that, we want to support other practices to practice medicine this way, and we're so glad that they're interested to it, so if any of this resonated with you, please know that you do not have to put up with feeling this.

There is help available It may not be covered by your insurance. The answer may be not found in the bottom of a prescription bottle. Your regular doctor may really not know what to do with you, but there are people out there who do, and you do.

Thank you for listening to This Is Not Normal. If today's conversation helped you realize that you don't have to put up with feeling this way, follow the podcast, leave us a review, share it with someone who needs to hear it.

And if you're ready to take your next steps, then schedule your free discovery call at signaturewellness.org.