



WOMEN'S HEALTH

Supplements Offer Alternatives To HRT

(NAPSA)—For the estimated 42 million women in the United States over age 50, and the 20 million who will reach menopause in the next decade, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is no longer an automatic choice. After the recent news that HRT puts women at greater risk for heart disease, stroke, breast cancer and ovarian cancer, many women are seeking alternatives.

Fortunately, the world of supplements offers some excellent choices. According to the Dietary Supplement Information Bureau (DSIB, www.supplementinfo.org), which provides accurate, scientifically based information about vitamins, minerals and herbs, women can educate themselves about safe, effective alternatives.

In addition to taking a multivitamin tablet every day, women can consider various formulations that offer precise combinations of ingredients for peri-menopausal, menopausal and post-menopausal women. According to the DSIB, the following may help:

- **For hot flashes and night sweats:** Eat a healthy diet, low in animal fats and including fresh fruits and vegetables. Limit alcohol and caffeine, eliminate smoking and get regular exercise. Adding soy to the diet can reduce hot flashes and night sweats. Consider herbs like black cohosh, red clover and chasteberry. Some women find benefits in micronized progesterone and gamma oryzanol.

A non-commercial Web site, www.supplementinfo.org, provides accurate, scientifically-based information about vitamins, minerals and herbs so women can educate themselves about natural alternatives. ®

- **For heart health:** A healthy diet, stopping smoking, limiting alcohol and caffeine and regular exercise all help. Substitute olive oil (extra virgin, cold pressed) for other oils and eat cold water fishes like salmon and mackerel twice a week. Adding soy protein to the diet is recommended by The American Heart Association. In addition, vitamin E, vitamin C, vitamin B6, folate and B12, as well as Co-Q10, L-carnitine, and omega-3 fatty acids have all been shown to protect the heart. Magnesium, potassium and selenium are recommended. Hawthorn, garlic and psyllium seed have cardioprotective properties.

- **For preventing or slowing osteoporosis:** Doctors recommend that all women take calcium, usually in combination with vitamin D and magnesium, to strengthen bones and prevent bone loss. In addition, vitamin K, manganese, silicon and boron are recommended minerals. Other supplements to consider are microcrystalline hydroxyapatite (MCHC) and such herbs as horse-

tail and red clover. Limit alcohol and caffeine and eliminate carbonated beverages.

- **For stress, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness and fatigue:** Reducing hot flashes and night sweats helps lessen sleeplessness. For mood swings, stress, anxiety, depression and fatigue, S-adenosyl-L-methionine (SAME) and 5-HTP are popular choices. Herbal supplements like kava, passionflower, valerian, eleuthera and St. John's Wort also address these conditions. Vitamins C and B6 are helpful, as are the omega-3 fatty acids.

- **For aging:** Regular exercise, a healthy diet, no smoking, drinking plenty of quality water, and limiting alcohol and caffeine all help. A good multivitamin is essential. Of particular interest are vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin A and beta-carotene. Antioxidants play an important role in preventing the signs of aging. Selenium, Co-Q10, N-acetyl cysteine (NAC), and alpha-lipoic acid (ALA) can be beneficial, as can herbs like ginkgo, bilberry, hawthorn, eleuthera, cordycips, grapeseed extract and green tea.

For more on women's health and menopause, as well as many other health conditions, visit www.supplementinfo.org, which provides science-based information on supplements as well as contraindications and appropriate dosages.