



Luna  
HORMONE HEALTH

# MID-LIFE HORMONE CARE GUIDE

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## **LUNA'S MIDLIFE HORMONE GUIDE**

And now for a brief legal disclaimer....

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# Why is access to HRT so hard to get?

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**Let's be real — navigating menopause is overwhelming, isolating, and ... infuriating.**

You're dealing with real symptoms, searching for real answers, and somehow still being told to just *push through it*. But here's the thing: **you are not alone, and you absolutely don't have to feel this way.**

Here's a stat that might shock you: according to a survey of U.S. OB-GYN residents, only **1 in 5** received formal training in menopause medicine. That means a huge number of providers simply don't feel equipped to help — not because they don't care, but because the education system has let them (and you) down.

**But why is it so hard to find care? It all traces back to one flawed study.** Back in 2002, a study called the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) sent shockwaves through the medical community. The media ran with a scary headline — that hormone therapy was risky for *all* women — and just like that, decades of progress took a major hit. The problem? That message was wrong. The study was poorly designed, and the takeaways were misrepresented. But the damage was done.

## **But things are finally changing**

There was a relatively silent period of low-no research about women's hormone care for years. But with time, new research began reviving older ideas about the potential benefits of mid-life hormone care and the momentum built quickly. The American Heart Association published a paper advocating for more widespread use of HRT to prevent heart attacks, the National Health Service in England began reconsidering and then widely promoting HRT.

In 2022, The Menopause Society (formerly NAMS) took a hard look at the old research, brought in an expert advisory panel, and released a new consensus based on updated science. These are exciting times for women's health - the momentum for menopause care continues to build!

Luna looks here (and a few other places) for the latest research, recommendations, and guidelines.

- International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health - [www.isswsh.org/](http://www.isswsh.org/)
- International Society for Sexual Medicine - [www.issm.info/](http://www.issm.info/)
- American Urologic Association - [www.auanet.org/](http://www.auanet.org/)
- American Urogynecologic Society - [www.augs.org/](http://www.augs.org/)
- The Menopause Society - [www.menopause.org](http://www.menopause.org)

***The narrative is shifting — and we're here for it.***

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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This guide was created to support ANY woman looking for hormone support in mid-life. If you'd like to be a patient at Luna Hormone Health, we would love to see you. If you are not able to see us in Massachusetts, this guide is still useful and full of resources to guide your journey.

I think most people know this, but even if your OBGYN was incredible during your reproductive years (we love that for you 🧡), it doesn't mean they were trained in menopause care. Remember that stat? Only 1 in 5 residents received formal menopause training. That means close to 80% will know almost NOTHING about menopause.

Don't be surprised if you need to seek out someone who *specializes* in mid-life care. You deserve an expert in your corner. The goal is to find a provider who can sit down, look at *your* health history, and help you make a comprehensive plan that fits your goals.

## ARRIVE TO YOUR APPOINTMENT PREPARED

A little prep goes a long way. Here's how to make the most of your first visit with a menopause specialist:

1. Know your family history. Write down any diseases or illnesses that run in your family.
2. Keep a symptom journal - especially for perimenopause. Write down your symptoms and what day of your cycle are these occurring on.
3. What other support do you feel you need? At Luna we connect patients with mental health support, personal trainers, pelvic floor therapists, nutritional support, etc.
4. Learn before your appointment! Check out our recommended books and podcasts on the references page for resources you can trust.
5. Think about what feels right for you. Are you open to hormone therapy? Interested in a more herbal or holistic route? There's no wrong answer — just *your* answer.

# WHAT TESTS DOES LUNA ORDER FOR PATIENTS?

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These are the key tests that we request that will most likely be covered by insurance. Any copayment due for lab work is determined by your insurance plan.

## 1. Standard Tests: CBC, CMP, and Lipid Panel

These three are basic tests often included as part of an annual checkup. These tests evaluate blood counts, general health, and cholesterol levels.

## 2. Metabolic Screening: Hemoglobin A1C, Fasting glucose, Fasting insulin

Together these tests are much more powerful than a single fasting glucose level.

- Hemoglobin A1C - a number that represents a 90 day average of your blood sugar.
- Fasting blood sugar - looks at your blood sugar before eating breakfast.
- Fasting insulin - evaluates how much insulin your body needs to maintain your fasting blood sugar.

## 3. Thyroid Panel

Thyroid disorders affect one in 10 women, and about 60% of people with a thyroid problem are unaware of their condition. Luna asks for a TSH, free and total T4, free and total T3, and two types of thyroid antibody levels (anti-TPO and anti-thyroglobulin).

## 4. Vitamin D

Vitamin D: 42% of patients have low Vitamin D, which plays a key role in immune function and mood.

## 5. Anemia Panel (iron, ferritin, folate, and vitamin B12)

Anemia is a major cause of chronic fatigue, hair thinning, and low energy. Low vitamin B12 is common! Luna tests for iron and ferritin separately.

## 6. Bone Density Testing

HRT is both adequate and effective in the prevention of osteoporotic fractures in at-risk women. All women experiencing estrogen loss will experience bone loss. A DEXA scan evaluates the current status of your bone density and future testing lets us see your progress over time.

## 7. Sex Hormone Levels

Hormone levels are not required to be tested prior to starting HRT (except for testosterone); but, they are very helpful in identifying your starting point, and providing insight into your progress during. Luna tests Estradiol, Progesterone (sometimes), and Testosterone.

# WHAT TYPES OF HRT ARE AVAILABLE?

Hormone therapy is not one-size-fits-all. Many formulations, combinations, and dosing schedules exist and can be personalized to your specific needs. Bio-identical hormones are a major topic of interest and also confusion! Bio-identical means that the hormone in your medication matches the hormones your body naturally produces. Bio-identical hormones are available at your local pharmacy, or via prescriptions provided by compounding pharmacies. Luna does not support purchasing products claiming to offer hormone replacement via any non-regulated source.

## Estradiol Therapy

Women without a uterus can take estrogen alone to relieve many menopause symptoms; however, the addition of progesterone (bio-identical progesterone) helps to protect bone density as well as support better quality sleep and mood.

## Estradiol and Progesterone Therapy

Women with a uterus require a combination of both estradiol and progesterone. At Luna we prioritize the use of bio-identical hormones as they offer the widest variety of benefits for most patients.

## Testosterone

Testosterone is a naturally occurring hormone in both women and men. Replacing testosterone is considered optional in addition to estradiol and progesterone. Many women feel much better with their testosterone treated as well. Testosterone can help to support:

- Mood and energy
- Recovery after physical activity, including joint health
- Mental acuity and focus
- Libido (although libido is not driven only by hormones!)

## Administering Hormone Therapy

Estrogen therapy and combination therapy can be delivered to the body in a variety of ways:

- Oral medication
  - Pills or capsules
- Topical medication (absorbed through the skin)
  - Patches
  - Sprays
  - Gels or creams
- Vaginal Estradiol
  - Vaginal cream, capsules, or tablets
  - Vaginal ring - Estring - treats pelvic tissue (does not increase serum estradiol)
  - Vaginal ring - Femring - treats whole body (increases blood levels)

# HOW TO GET HORMONE THERAPY

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For healthy women (without contraindications) who are younger than 60 and within 10 years of menopause onset, the benefits of hormone therapy outweigh the risks for treating menopause symptoms. Are you older than 60? More than 10 years since menopause? You can still be evaluated for both systemic treatment and vaginal hormones by a menopause specialist.

*If you are reading this and have symptoms - you deserve evaluation!*

## If Your Healthcare Provider Won't Discuss Hormone Therapy

1. Bring along information from credible sources (see the references page)
2. Print the updated position statement from The Menopause Society and bring it to your appointment.
3. In Massachusetts? Come see us at Luna Hormone Health
4. If you are not located in Massachusetts (or able to travel here for an appointment) please find a provider in these directories (links on the reference page at the end)
  - The Menopause Society Provider Directory
  - The M Factor Provider Directory
  - The 'Pause Life Provider Directory

## You Should Not Accept Any of the Following

- Your healthcare provider should not tell you:
  - This is just your new normal
  - Menopause is natural
  - HRT causes cancer
  - You are too young for menopause symptoms or HRT
  - You are too old for menopause symptoms or HRT
  - HRT is “dangerous” and will not discuss further
  - You can only use HRT for a short or defined period of time.
- It is unacceptable for your healthcare provider to tell you that they don't prescribe HT without reviewing your specific medical history and labs.
- Do not allow your provider to impose time restrictions on your hormone therapy without ongoing evaluation.

# MIDLIFE STARTER TOOLKIT

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## Nutrition

1. If you have weight to lose, request a dietician consultation for support.
2. Consider intermittent fasting for the anti-inflammatory benefits.
3. Utilize a nutrition tracking mechanism (e.g., My Fitness Pal, or similar).
4. Consume adequate protein intake: 100g per day (30-40g per meal)
5. Consume adequate fiber: 30g per day
6. Add a high quality multi-vitamin with extra vitamin D

## Movement

1. Incorporate some form of movement (walking, stretching, etc) every day!
2. Focus on resistance training with progressive load three days a week (push day/pull day/leg day).
3. Cardiovascular training: regular walking, light jogging, biking or classes. Just move!

## Pharmacology

1. Consider HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy), if the benefits outweigh the risks.
2. Supplements - consider a multivitamin, protein support, fish oil, and creatine for muscles
  - a. Multi-vitamin that includes vitamin D and K, and a full B complex
  - b. Magnesium - support sleep, bowel health, and muscle twitching/cramping
  - c. Fish oil for heart health: 2 grams per day.
  - d. Creatine: 5 grams per day
  - e. Collagen for extra protein and skin/bone support

## Stress Reduction

Make sure that you are supporting your emotional health, eating well, and trying to take some quiet time to help manage the stress and anxiety that often comes with this life phase. This is easier said than done, but well worth it.

## Sleep Optimization

If you are planning to take or start HRT, talk with your provider about using bio-identical progesterone for its added bonus of sleep and bone support!

Do your best to sleep in a cool and dark room, and avoid screens before bed.

Consider adding Magnesium to your sleep routine as it helps with falling asleep, and muscle cramps or restless leg symptoms while sleeping.

## SOURCE LINKS

- AHA: Hormone Therapy and Cardiovascular Risk (2020)  
<https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000912>
- 2022 Menopause Society - HRT Position Statement  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35797481/>
- ISSWSH Testosterone in Women Guidelines  
[https://www.isswsh.org/images/PDF/jsm\\_18\\_5\\_849.pdf](https://www.isswsh.org/images/PDF/jsm_18_5_849.pdf)
- The Menopause Empowerment Guide (From Dr Mary Claire Haver)  
<https://thepauselife.com/pages/menopause-empowerment-guide-sign-up>

### HOW TO FIND A PROVIDER

- Massachusetts - Luna Hormone Health (Worcester, West Newton, and Telehealth)
  - [www.lunahormonehealth.com](http://www.lunahormonehealth.com)
- The Menopause Society - Provider Directory
  - <https://portal.menopause.org/NAMS/NAMS/Directory/Menopause-Practitioner.aspx>
- The M Factor - Provider Directory
  - <https://menopausecaredirectory.com/>
- The 'Pause Life - Provider Directory
  - <https://thepauselife.com/pages/recommended-physicians>

### FULLSCRIPT LINK

- Visit Luna's Fullscript store front with recommendations for common mid-life supplements with a discount!
  - [Luna's Fullscript Link](#)

### FAVORITE BOOKS

- The Menopause Moment – Dr. Kelly Casperson
- Estrogen Matters – Dr. Avrum Bluming & Carol Tavris, PhD.
- You Are Not Broken – Dr. Kelly Casperson
- Becoming Cliterate - Laurie Mintz, Phd.
- The New Menopause - Dr Mary Claire Haver
- The New Perimenopause - Dr Mary Claire Haver

### FAVORITE PODCASTS

- UnPaused - with Dr Mary Claire Haver
- You Are Not Broken - with Dr Kelly Casperson
- The Dr. Louise Newson Podcast