

[IMAGE]

Suzanne Somers Is Enjoying Wellness at 62

And Promoting the Medication-Free Life

By Ramon McLeod, Editor-in-Chief

While Suzanne Somers has many stories worth telling, the most important ones actually have little to do with her career as an actress. For Suzanne, a breast cancer survivor, every day is another step in the journey toward wellness that encompasses healthy mind, body and spirit.

She's an actress, highly successful businesswoman, prolific author, and devoted wife, married to the same man for more than 40 years. And now, at the age of 62, Suzanne Somers has a new passion: life without pharmaceuticals.

Though she portrayed an airhead in her most famous role as Chrissy Snow in "Three's Company," Somers is no lightweight in matters involving healthy living. In her most recent book, *Breakthrough: Eight Steps to Wellness*, Somers explains the damaging impact hormonal imbalances have on both women and men while arguing strongly that there are natural alternatives to hormone-replacement drugs like Premarin, which she claims should only be used as a last resort.

The Seven Dwarves

Suzanne Somers - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark For Somers, her rebellion against drugs began when she was diagnosed with breast cancer and accelerated when she entered menopause. "I had what I call the Seven Dwarves of Menopause: I was itchy, bitchy, sleepy, sweaty, bloated, forgetful and all dried up. I went from doctor to doctor to find some relief, but each doctor was offering me synthetic hormones.

"And they said, well, you're depressed, so we can give you Prozac. You are having trouble sleeping, so we can give you Ambien. Your joints are aching, so we can give you joint and painkillers. And you're having anxiety attacks, so we can give you Valium, and your blood pressure is a little high, so we can put you on blood pressure medicine. That is the first five of what I call the menopausal cocktail.

"I refused them all. And there was no real sleep for me. I'd go to bed, sleep 15 minutes, [and then] the racing thoughts would start. No sleep. That's suffering, and it's dangerous."

Somers says she has spent thousands of hours researching the effects of hormonal decline and the capabilities of biologically-identical hormones, natural products that can, it is claimed, do what patented synthetic pharmaceuticals are designed to do: restore hormonal balance.

"Hormones are the juice of youth for all of us, men and women," Somers says. "And we're draining out younger and younger. It is now common for women to start perimenopause in their mid-to-late 30s. It is now common for men to start draining out of testosterone at 45 to 50."

The Hormonal Teeter-Totter

In interviews and a recent, well-received speech to chiropractors at Parker Seminar in Las Vegas, Somers described what she calls the hormonal teeter-totter. On one side are what she describes as the "minor" sex hormones, i.e., estrogen, progesterone, testosterone and DHEA. On the other side are the "major" hormones produced by the thyroid gland, the pancreas (insulin) and the adrenal gland (adrenaline, cortisol).

"When you're draining out of minor hormones, cortisol, insulin, and thyroid go high," she says. "So when people say I'm eating less, I'm exercising more but I'm still gaining weight and I'm fatigued all the time, here's your culprit: the minor hormones are out of balance. ... You've got to get that estrogen, progesterone, testosterone back to normal levels."

Premarin, which is typically prescribed to women experiencing menopause, is designed to replace low levels of estrogen. But Somers, who used birth control pills containing Premarin for decades, was unwilling to return to the medication.

Suzanne Somers - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark "I went from doctor to doctor, and they all wanted to give me drugs until finally I realized that I had to find out more on my own. MDs typically get four hours of instruction on prescribing hormones ... I have spent 1,000s of hours researching this."

According to Somers, she finally heard about an endocrinologist who knew about bioidentical hormones (chemically identical to those made by the human body) and began a course of treatment about eight years ago. Today, she takes no pharmaceuticals.

"If we can all find out how good we can feel on biologically identical hormones, which are non-patentable and an exact replicate of what we make in our bodies, we won't need the [pharmaceutical companies] drugs anymore ... and they make so much money off of us."

The Power of Real Food

Somers' interest in natural health goes well beyond her crusade in favor of biologically identical hormones. She also believes her Baby Boomer generation is going to pay dearly for the changes in diet that began in the early 1960s in American homes.

"When we were kids, we grew up on real food," she says. "But then we were introduced to chemicals in our diets. Processed foods, fruits and vegetables sprayed with pesticides and fertilized with chemicals. But at least we had real food when we were kids."

"But look at young people, eating food out of bags; I worry greatly about them. You have to eat real food, organic if you can afford it, and eat anti-oxidants, turmeric, cayenne, thyme, basil, rosemary ... nature's antioxidants. These are all delicious, but we've become so accustomed to chemicals we prefer [unhealthy foods]."

Key Hormones: What They Do and What Happens When They're Unbalanced

Estrogen

What It Does: Responsible for female characteristics and sexual functions. Also present in men, but at much lower levels. **When Unbalanced:** Low estrogen levels are the primary culprit in hot flashes, night sweating, dryness, loss of sex drive, and mood swings associated with menopause. Low levels can also increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and bone fractures.

Progesterone

What It Does: Important for ovulation and menstruation.

When Unbalanced: Low progesterone levels can lead to insomnia, foggy thinking, mood changes, joint and muscle pain, and weight gain.

Testosterone

What It Does: Responsible for male characteristics and sex drive. Also found in low levels in women.

When Unbalanced: Lower sex drive, decreased muscle mass, increased risk of heart disease. Lethargy and

weight gain can also accompany low levels.

Thyroid

What It Does: A group of three hormones produced by the thyroid gland control metabolism (conversion of oxygen and calories to energy), a critical function in the human body.

When Unbalanced: Fatigue, apathy, short-term memory problems, depression, and in extreme cases, hallucinations.

Suzanne Somers - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark ***Insulin***

What It Does: Regulates blood glucose (sugar) levels.

When Unbalanced: Cells cannot absorb glucose molecules well when insulin is too low or when there is resistance to insulin. Without treatment, effects on the body are catastrophic.

Adrenaline

What It Does: Increases blood flow and heart activity, making the body ready for extra exertion and energy.

When Unbalanced: Often caused by undue stress, high adrenaline levels result in anxiety attacks, chronic fatigue syndrome, weight disorders, fibromyalgia, arthritis, and shortness of breath.

Cortisol

What It Does: Helps regulate blood pressure and cardiovascular function, as well as the body's use of proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

When Unbalanced: Stress can cause high cortisol levels which can lead to high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and lowered libido.

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