

## Phytosterols

Phytosterols are natural substances in plants that are very similar to hormones or hormone precursors. When humans eat plant foods, phytosterols are ingested and are found in the serum and tissues of healthy people (Zava 1997). Phytosterols have been shown to have a wide range of beneficial effects on the body, ranging from anti-inflammatory and cholesterol reducing effects to immune modulating activity. Our bodies have a mechanism for self-healing, and when given the necessary nutrients and building blocks, the body becomes able to regulate the hormones from within. When ingested, these phytosterols can naturally balance the hormone system and restore the body to its optimal functioning without causing a further imbalance in the hormones.

Remember, phytosterols are not hormones. Rather, they are the food for hormone production in the body. Research has found that because phytosterols produce the prohormones DHEA and progesterone, a broad spectrum of conditions can be addressed or prevented through its use. These natural hormone precursors (DHEA and progesterone) made from dioscorea are easily absorbed into the system and have the ability to support the body's **Endocrine System** (system of glands that produce hormones).

## Why phytosterols are better for you than synthetic progesterone (Progestins)

Progestins are progesterone-like substances which are patented by drug companies. They are not as safe as natural progesterone and do not provide the full spectrum of its biological activity. Women with menopausal, PMS or fertility problems can get these from their physicians, but there may be side effects from these drugs. It is clear that natural progesterone derived from phytosterols is a much safer alternative to progestins.

## What is my endocrine system and does it really need supporting?

The endocrine system is a system of glands that make secretions directly into the bloodstream (as opposed to an exocrine gland which makes secretions through a system of ducts). The secretions are known as hormones, which are actually chemical messengers that stimulate a part of the body to increase or decrease its functional activity. These hormones are necessary for regulating the function of every cell and organ in your body as they work to maintain the balance necessary for true wellness. **Both men and women** have 87 hormones, however, the various hormones occur in different levels in men than in women.

## Why does my endocrine system need supporting?

Like most physiological functions of our body, hormone levels begin to decline as we age. There may be many different reasons as to why this occurs, however, one reason this happens is that we don't consume the proper foods which supply our bodies with the necessary building blocks to make the hormones we need.

## How do I know if my endocrine system is functioning properly?

Our endocrine system influences the following processes:

- **Works in harmony with the body's immune system**
- **Supports efficient fat metabolism**
- **Conversion of food nutrients to energy**
- **Supports natural recovery from stress**
- **Water retention**
- **Inflammatory response**
- **Cholesterol levels**
- **Mental alertness**
- **Maintenance of the balance of calcium and phosphorus in the blood and bones**
- **Growth rate**
- **Mood**
- **Body temperature**
- **Hunger**
- **Sex drive**
- **Sleep**
- **Energy level**
- **Depression**
- **Metabolic rate**

Problems in any of these areas may indicate that your endocrine system is not functioning at an optimum level.