WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of treating and/or reducing the likelihood of acquiring symptoms or diseases due to the menopause, in postmenopausal women, said method comprising administering a sex steroid precursor selected from the group consisting of dehydroepiandrosterone, dehydroepiandrosterone-sulfate, androst-5-ene-3β,17β-diol, and 4-androsten-3,17-dione to a patient in need of said treatment wherein the said sex steroid precursor is administered at a therapeutic amount which increases the level of circulating androgen metabolites without increasing the circulating level of estradiol above the values found in normal postmenopausal women in order to avoid the risk of breast and uterine cancer.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the sex steroid precursor is administered on the skin.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the sex steroid precursor is administered intravaginally.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the sex steroid precursor is administered orally.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 200 mg per day or less.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 100 mg per day or less.

7. The method of claim 2 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 30 mg per day or less.

8. The method of claim 2 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 15 mg per day or less.

9. The method of claim 3 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 50 mg per day or less.

10. The method of claim 3 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 25 mg per day or less.

11. The method of claim 3 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 13 mg per day or less.

12. The method of claim 3 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 6.5 mg per day or less.

13. The method of claim 4 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 200 mg per day or less.

14. The method of claim 4 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 100 mg per day or less.

15. The method of claim 4 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 50 mg per day or less.

16. The method of claims 1, 2, 3, and 4 wherein the average 24h- level of circulating estradiol is below 10 pg/mL.

17. The method of claim 2 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is administered by means of a topical formulation selected from the group consisting of cream, lotion, gel, ointment, sustained release patch, and the like, and wherein said formulation contains 10% of sex steroid precursor or less.

18. The method of claim 2 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is administered by means of a topical formulation selected from the group consisting of cream, lotion, gel, ointment, sustained release patch, and the like, and wherein said formulation contains 2.0% of sex steroid precursor or less.

19. The method of claim 3 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is administered by means of a intravaginal formulation selected from the group consisting of cream, lotion, gel, ointment, ovule, suppository, ring, and the like, and wherein said formulation contains 10% of sex steroid precursor or less.

20. The method of claim 3 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is administered by means of a intravaginal formulation selected from the group consisting of cream, lotion, gel, ointment, ovule, suppository, ring, and the like, and wherein said formulation contains 2.0% of sex steroid precursor or less.

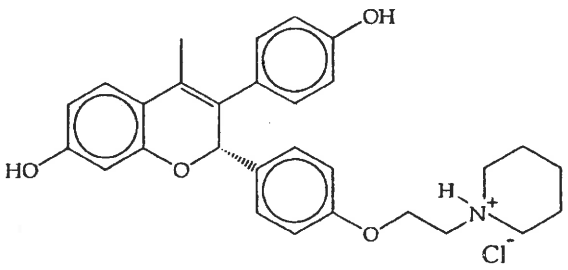
21. The method of claim 4 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is administered by means of an oral formulation selected from the group consisting of capsules, plug capsules, pills, tablets, syrups.

22. The method of claim 1, further comprising administering as part of a combination therapy, a therapeutically effective amount of a Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulator.

23. A method of treating and/or reducing the likelihood of acquiring symptoms or diseases due to the menopause, in postmenopausal women, said method comprising administering a sex steroid precursor selected from the group consisting of dehydroepiandrosterone, dehydroepiandrosterone-sulfate, androst-5-ene-3β,17β-diol, and 4-androsten-3,17-dione to a patient in need of said treatment wherein the said sex steroid precursor is administered at a therapeutic amount which increases the level of circulating androgen metabolites and further comprising administering as part of a combination therapy, a therapeutically effective amount of a Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulator in order to decrease the risk of breast and uterine cancer normally present in postmenauposal women and to prevent bone loss, fat accumulation and diabetes type 2.

24. The method of claims 21 and 22 wherein the Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulator has the following chemical structure.

Acolbifene (EM-652.HCl; EM-1538)



25. The method of claims 1 and 23 wherein the symptoms or diseases due to the menopause are selected from the group of diseases consisting of Osteoporosis, vaginal atrophy, vulvo-vaginal dryness, hypogonadism, diminished libido, skin atrophy,

connective tissue disease, urinary incontinence, breast, endometrial, ovarian and uterine cancers, hot flashes, loss of muscle mass, insulin resistance, fatigue, loss of energy, aging, and physical symptoms and signs of menopause

26. A method of treating and/or reducing the likelihood of acquiring vaginal diseases or problems in postmenopausal women, said method comprising administering a sex steroid precursor selected from the group consisting of dehydroepiandrosterone, dehydroepiandrosterone-sulfate, androst-5-ene-3β,17β-diol, and 4-androsten-3,17-dione to a patient in need of said treatment wherein the said sex steroid precursor is administered at a therapeutic amount which increases the level of circulating androgen metabolites without increasing the level of estradiol above the values found in normal postmenopausal women.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein the sex steroid precursor is intra-vaginally administered.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 25 mg per day or less.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 13 mg per day or less.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein the therapeutic amount of sex steroid precursor is 6.5 mg per day or less.

31. The method of claim 26 wherein the vaginal diseases are selected from the group of diseases consisting of vaginal dryness, vulvo-vaginal dryness, vaginal pruritus, vaginal atrophy, atrophic vaginitis, dyspareunia, vaginal bleeding at sexual

activity, sexual dysfunction, loss of libido, loss of compactness of collagen fibers of the vaginal wall, and low muscularis thickness of the vaginal wall.

32. A pharmaceutical composition comprising 3-13 milligrams per dosage of a sex steroid precursor selected from the group consisting of dehydroepiandrosterone, dehydroepiandrosterone-sulfate, androst-5-ene-3, 17-diol, and 4-androstene-3,17-dione and further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier selected from the group consisting of pure or mixed natural or semi-synthetic tri-, di-, or mono glycerides of saturated, unsaturated or hydrogenated fatty acids; butter; palm, palm kernel, partially hydrogenated cottonseed, and coconut oils and its triglyceride derivatives; hydrogenated fatty alcohols and esters; polyoxyl stearate; rearranged hydrogenated vegetable oils; eutectic mixture of mono-, di-, triglycerides derived from natural vegetable oils; triglyceride esters; Tween 61; theobroma oil; and a combination of the foregoing.

33. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 32 wherein the pharmaceutical composition is a suppository or an ovule and wherein the pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, diluent or carrier is Witepsol H-15.

34. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 33 wherein the precursor is DHEA.

35. A method of treating vaginal conditions of the layer lamina propia or layer muscularis comprising vaginal administration of DHEA in a daily dose of 3-13 mg.

36. A vaginal suppository comprising 3-13 milligrams of DHEA, and further comprising a lipophilic excipient.

37. A vaginal suppository comprising about 6.5 milligrams of DHEA and further comprising saturated fatty acid esters.

38. A vaginal suppository comprising 6.5 milligrams of DHEA and Witepsol H-15.

39. A 1.3 milliliter vaginal suppository comprising 0.50 percent of DHEA (by weight relative to the total suppository) and 99.50 percent of Witepsol H-15 (by weight relative to the total suppository).