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Week 34: WFL

Tammy Trent

Terri DeNeui

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** Hello, everybody. Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Tammy Trent, and I'm so glad you're here today. I think you'll be so glad you're here today, too, because we have Dr. Terri DeNeui with us. A leader in the field of hormone health and wellness, with years of experience transforming lives, she is on a mission to demystify the complexities of hormonal balance in her new book *Hormone Havoc*.

Dr. Terri, I'm so glad you're here. I've had so much fun talking to you before the show even started because you are a girl who is filled with information and really, really good stuff. I had studied you before you came on the show, and I wrote down probably a million different questions. I've tried to condense them down to a few. So I think today is going to be really, really good. It's been so good for me already. But let's start at the top. Let's talk about hormones and why they're the foundation of living well.

**TERRI:** Thank you. I'm so excited to be here, and that is a great question. It is one of the biggest things people don't understand about hormones, is that the receptors for hormones, so when there is a receptor on a cell, that means something has to attach to it to do a job. They are literally in every single cell in the human body, head to toe. So it is foundational to everybody's system.

The word *hormone* in Greek actually means to impale, to urge, to move on, to cause, to be active. So the meaning of the word itself kind of explains how important it is for every single system in the body: heart, cardiovascular, bone, skin, gut, brain, especially. The list goes on and on.

**TAMMY:** So it affects everything about our well-being, whether it's our anxiety, depression, brain fog, focus, or happiness. It affects everything.

**TERRI:** Energy, pain, sleep.

**TAMMY:** So when do we start losing that? I've learned as I've gotten older at 56, like gosh, at 30, maybe some things started depleting at 40, even more at 50. I'm like, what do I do now? I'm without. And I think so many of our worlds feel upside down and we don't know how to get our life back. So many times I've gone to the doctor, too, and I've gotten a quick fix, but I don't feel like it's really fixed me or taken care of things. But it's maybe masked something or just temporarily. I don't know that medicine was always meant to be temporary as much as it is. Let's get to the root problem here. If somebody feels like their life is upside down, what steps can they take to find wellness again?

**TERRI:** You said a lot there. You said a lot of really important things. One is when does this start? How do I know something is going on hormonally? It is a little different for women than men. In women, it typically starts after that second baby, actually, no matter the age. We tend to not bounce back. Our testosterone decline happens quite significantly after a second child. But then for women, that's the first hormone that goes.

A lot of women don't even realize that their ovaries make testosterone. They've heard about estrogen and progesterone probably, but not testosterone. So testosterone is the first hormone that starts to decline in women. That typically starts in our 30s. And then in our 40s progesterone starts to decline. And of course, we all know that in our 50s is when we have that estrogen decline.

For men, it is a little bit slower. Men tend to start to decline normally in their 40s and by the time they're in their 50s, that testosterone is low. But interestingly, we're seeing more and more hormone issues in younger people today. It has a lot of root causes. A lot of it is food. A lot of it is just our environment and just the information that is constantly coming at us, and the melatonin levels; and there is just a plethora of things. But by and large, just the average, those

are about the ages. And it can feel like everything you just said, depression, moodiness, anxiousness, can't sleep, can't focus. For men, it is losing the desire to do the things they love like fishing, golfing, whatever it is.

And for women, the biggest one probably, and this is what I did my doctoral work on is depression. So many women just feel depressed and they'll say, I don't have a reason. I have a great life. I have a great family. I don't know why I feel so sad all the time. And then they'll go to their regular practitioners and maybe get a band-aid fix like an antidepressant or a sleeping pill or an anxiety pill and that's just a band-aid to fix the symptom.

And you're right. You said something really important. You said, "I don't think we were meant to stay on all these medications. It is not fixing, we're not deficient in, a Xanax or something like that." But those medications typically were meant for a temporary stop/gap solution until you figured out the root cause of the problem. That's what is missing in a lot of the diagnostic things today; just finding the root cause. We just go on medication and we stay on it for years and that's just kind of it.

**TAMMY:** What about the myths? Myths and facts—I love that you talk about a lot of that in your book. This is such a great book, by the way. It is filled with so much information. I'm telling you, there is stuff. I would start reading through these different chapters and thinking, okay, I've got to read these four or five times to get this and to understand it. But it is so good! Because we could spend hours online and I'm telling you, it is not always the right information. So when you have a doctor who has put time into the research of this, you have had years of study in this. When you put it in book form, it is all in there.

You talk about facts and myths and there are a lot of them. And stuff that I didn't even know, to be honest with you. Maybe my generation, I didn't know a lot about hormones, even in my 30s and 40s.

**TERRI:** Well, our moms didn't talk about it. That generation didn't talk about it.

**TAMMY:** That's right. So I didn't even know until I hit 50, what's progesterone? And what's estrogen? And how does this testosterone—do I need testosterone? I'm a woman! Do I need it? So do we need it?

**TERRI:** Yeah, so women make testosterone just like men in the ovaries, but obviously just not near as much. So it is about 10% of the production that men make. So a little bit goes a long way for females. But that's one of the biggest myths is that testosterone is a male hormone and estrogen is a female hormone. Men actually make estrogen as well and they need it in a small amount just like women need testosterone. It balances; it is powerful for the brain.

And of course, some of the other big myths are breast cancer, is it going to cause heart attacks? I thought hormones caused this or that. Those are the ones I spend a lot of time dispelling in the book.

**TAMMY:** Tell me about that one because that's one that I almost learned reading in your book about that big myth that estrogen is cancer feeding or will cause cancer if you go on hormone therapy. So many women have stopped that or won't even entertain that thought. Tell me about that.

**TERRI:** Yeah. So in the early 2000s, the largest research trial to date on women's health was started and that was the Women's Health Initiative trial. They were looking at—the whole reason they did it was because physicians had seen for decades that the women that were on estrogen hormone had much less heart attacks. So they wanted to prove that estrogen reduced heart attack risk. And they also wanted to look at the impact on breast cancer.

The trial was stopped early, and there were two parts of the trial. It was a synthetic estrogen and a synthetic estrogen with a progestin, which is a synthetic progesterone. Well, with the synthetic progestin arm, the breast cancer rates went up exponentially. Heart, disease rates, Alzheimer's disease rates—so they stopped the trial. But unfortunately, what happened was the media reported all hormones are bad and cause breast cancer and heart attacks and strokes—and it was just that one arm.

So everybody kind of threw the baby out with the bath water. Physicians quit prescribing. Patients were flushing their hormones down the toilet. And then a month later, they were either suicidal or homicidal. They needed their hormones and they couldn't get them, and it was unfortunate. So all the studies now that have been coming out since 2004, so 20 years of data, we now see that oh actually, the estrogen arm of the trial was protective against heart attacks, Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, and it was the progestin arm only—that progestin is the only hormone. It is just going to take us so long to unravel from that misinformation but hormones aren't the problem.

But I've got to say a little bit more about that because there's—there are some people more at risk for breast cancer. We see these women that are doing the Angelina Jolie if they have this BRCA positive, they're getting everything out and off. And that's pretty extreme and it has a lot to do with hormone metabolism, what's your diet like, and that's just something that we don't talk about in medicine. We're not talking about sugar and its impact on cancer. So just kind of don't want to throw that hormone baby out with the bath water. We've got to kind of look at everything that's going on in that individual.

**TAMMY:** Totally! So from your book, I wrote a couple of things down, tell me myth or fact. Hormones have no impact on mental health.

**TERRI:** Myth!

**TAMMY:** Total myth. Totally false. So it has everything to do with your mental health.

**TERRI:** I can speak to that personally. [Laughing]

**TAMMY:** Can you? How can you personally?

**TERRI:** Well, besides all the patients that I've seen, but even when I first started in this space I came from a hospitalist, emergency medicine background, and really became disenchanted with

kind of how we're doing medicine with just prescription, prescription, prescription. And when I started learning about hormones it was pretty interesting. I started seeing depression and anxiety completely resolving in the majority of my patients, just with testosterone and progesterone only.

And then myself, as I went through, I'm 57, I'll be 57 this year and as I transitioned through these hormone changes myself, everything I heard my patients complain about I was experiencing and that makes it personal. So depression and anxiety are big ones that people struggle with and don't have to. And of course, memory. We know now estrogen plays a huge role in the brain and memory.

**TAMMY:** I need more! I need more! I need more!

**TERRI:** Seriously! That's how I know sometimes when my estrogen is low, I'm like where am I? Where is my car?

**TAMMY:** I go downstairs and I'm like what am I doing down here? I need more estrogen.  
[Laughing]

**TERRI:** So it is profound under mental health and it is a big piece that is missing. We see more and more mental health providers coming through and becoming trained in hormone therapies because they're learning the impact it has on mental health.

**TAMMY:** So good! So important. Hormones play a key role in gut health. Myth or fact?

**TERRI:** Total fact. And the gut plays a key role in hormones. It is a reciprocal situation.

**TAMMY:** Can we heal our gut?

**TERRI:** We should be healing our gut. Our guts are pretty messed up pretty much as a country; just our food and the lack of fiber and things like that. But it has everything to do with it. A lot of people are taking probiotics but they don't understand why they're taking probiotics.

**TAMMY:** I've got mine in me right now. I think it is because I'm *strengthening* my gut.

**TERRI:** Yes! So we have good bacteria in the gut and bad bacteria in the gut. Probiotics feed the good bacteria so they grow and the good bacteria eat the bad bacteria. But when you have an imbalance and you have more bad bacteria than good, these bad bacteria release these enzymes, these molecules, really called lipopolysaccharides that cause a huge amount of inflammation in the body. But it also disrupts your hormone metabolism and can cause a lot of hormone issues.

**TAMMY:** So inflammation is a big deal too. Trying to manage that and dealing with things in our gut.

So I want to ask you about probiotics. When I'm thinking about that, should I take 30 million billion? Is 40 million billion better or is it also quality over quantity? Do I get the live ones at the store or can I take a plant-based? Maybe that's a whole other show for us.

**TERRI:** It's a whole other show. I tell you.

**TAMMY:** You know, let me tell you, speaking of a whole other show, you're going to love this! Because starting very soon, we're going to, actually every Wednesday, we're going to do a Wellness Wednesday and maybe you can come back for that. We're going to dedicate it to that.

**TERRI:** We can do a whole show on the gut.

**TAMMY:** Seriously. Maybe we'll bring you back for that. We'll have a conversation about that. I mean there is so much about our gut too. So if your gut is out of whack and out of balance, is it throwing off the hormones that I'm putting in my body right now?

**TERRI:** It is throwing off the hormone metabolism for sure. So no matter whether your body makes hormones, you're taking hormones, whether you're male or female, it doesn't matter, they're going to metabolize through the liver. Certain metabolites are more cancer-causing that

our body is beautifully designed to grab hold of and excrete out through the bowels daily. But when we have an overgrowth of bad bacteria in our gut, those enzymes that are holding on to those to get rid of them get broken up and those hormone metabolizers get reabsorbed into the bloodstream.

So when I was talking earlier about cancer, this is one of the things that's not really being looked at, it is in more progressive cancer clinics, but the gut's role in that. It does play a huge role in hormone metabolism.

**TAMMY:** So interesting. Okay, fact or myth: Testosterone therapy always leads to aggressive behavior in men.

**TERRI:** That is a total myth.

**TAMMY:** It is a myth. So men can be out of balance also with their hormones?

**TERRI:** Oh, absolutely.

**TAMMY:** So if women are watching right now and you feel like I'm going to scream. My marriage is on the brink right now and my husband is not a nice man, could his hormones be out of whack?

**TERRI:** A hundred percent he probably has low testosterone. I have to tell you—I just have to say this because this is one of the things I hear all the time, "My doctor said my hormones are normal."

**TAMMY:** Right! Oh, my goodness! I hear that all the time too, because I'm in a range. I'm in a range but I'm not optimal.

**TERRI:** So that reference range just so you know, is that specific lab that your practitioner used, it is an average of that lab's population of results. Right? So you've got a bell curve average.



What I tell people—and it is an average of a lot of sick unhealthy Americans, right? So you always want to be on the right of that bell curve. A male testosterone "normal"—and I don't even like the word "normal"—reference range is about 200 to about 1100.

Well, what we know is when men have testosterone levels under 600 the risk for all causes of disease and death goes up. So why would I want to be on the left side of the bell curve? I want to be on the right side of the bell curve. That's important to understand about testosterone. But yes, men can actually get really grumpy. You know the movie, *Grumpy Old Men*, those guys just needed some testosterone. They can get grumpy.

The myth about aggression and all of that comes from the anabolic steroid world where those bodybuilders shoot their testosterone levels up really, really high with a synthetic testosterone that can cause a lot of aggression and anger. So it is all about the medication, the modality, and how high are your levels and those kinds of things.

**TAMMY:** I love when you talk in your book about, so many great stories too, and you talk about a patient named Bobby. They came and you treated her. Then she came in for a follow-up and you asked how she was doing. She started crying and you were like, oh, no! But I love what happens after that.

**TERRI:** Yeah, her husband was a retired gynecologist. She told me when she got it together, "I haven't liked my husband for 25 years." And she said, "And I now know it was me and not him." She was lamenting the loss of time.

Then he showed up two weeks later and said, "Before we get started, I just want to thank you for giving me my wife back." I can't tell you how many stories like that. And he also said, "Had I known about this therapy when I was practicing, I would have put every woman on it." It was profound for their family. Their daughters are patients. It is so important.

**TAMMY:** I believe it, Dr. Terri and I feel it in my own life, being on bioidentical hormones myself for the last six months has been a huge change for me. I've felt a better balance in my life.

I've felt clarity. Maybe some of the people here don't agree—[Laughing] But the brain fog, the clarity, the energy. I've always had a lot of energy but I feel more balanced. I think so many people just finally get to a place and just say, I have my life back.

**TERRI:** Yeah, the zeal for life, the zest for life. The desire to get up and do what God designed you to do every single day. That's what happens as we get older and we lose our hormones and we're on all these medications that are band-aiding, that have side effects. We're just like nyeh. We don't want to do the things that God put us on this earth to do and bless other people with our gifts.

**TAMMY:** Absolutely. There is so much more we need to talk about and we're running out of time. So please I hope you come back because I didn't even hit on thyroid. Like I wanted to talk about so many things. So please come back. Would love it. Your book has so much information in it and I think we just touched the surface today. We're unpacking so many things. There is so much information in this book. I know you're going to want to get it and we want to get it to you.

But first, I want you to take a minute and watch something that is really, really important to me. When I think about health, I think about these precious people fighting so hard for wellness and health and are extremely limited. But I believe there is one amazing thing that we could at least do today to bring them better health and better wellness in their bodies. I want you to see this and see how you can be a part of making that change in their lives.

### **On the mission field**

**JOHN:** So I'm here in Liberia. We're here speaking to these families about the loss that they are suffering because of the lack of clean drinking water. Many families have suffered from cholera and other waterborne illnesses.

I'm in the home of a young woman named Blessing today. Blessing's here with her brand-new baby. So, Blessing, I know that you lost a child. Tell me your baby's name that you lost.

**Open captions**

>> His name was Morris.

**JOHN:** Do you know why he died?

**Open captions**

>> During the dry season, our water source gets very low. We try to scoop out the water that looks the cleanest. I gave this water to my son to drink. And that's when he started to get sick. The water makes him vomit and have diarrhea.

**JOHN:** Now that you have this new baby, Cyrus, how do you give him water? What are you doing now?

**Open captions**

>> Right now, I don't know what to do. This is the only water we have to drink. I can only trust God to provide us clean water someday.

**JOHN:** We know you need clean water but if you could talk to my friends back home, what would you say to them to help prevent Cyrus from ever having to drink that very water again?

**Open captions**

>> I'd ask them to pray for us and tell them we need help right now. We need their help so that Cyrus and the other children in this village won't die.

**JOHN:** Can we please make her generation the last generation that ever has to suffer from the lack of clean water? We will be able to bring Water for LIFE to Blessing's village and villages just like Blessing's all over the world because you have a dream, you have a prayer. It just simply takes us being like Jesus and being willing to make a sacrifice to be a blessing.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** Every day, these families are doing everything they can to try to find clean water, but it is simply not there. They will scoop out what looks like the cleanest water but in reality, it's just as contaminated as the rest. To them, it looks like hope, but it is a counterfeit, and it is especially making these little ones very sick. Their little bodies just can't process this dirty unclean water.

The truth is, it's the only water source they have. Believe me, they're fully aware that with every sip they take, there is always that chance or that thought of death. But without it, they'll surely die. What horrible options! I can't even fully grasp the depth of the heartache that this kind of water brings to these villages. Watching your children dying because of it.

This crisis is generational, and it can't change—it won't change unless help arrives. You and I together can help. We can help change that for them and for future generations to come by giving them access to clean, life-giving water. But we have to act now to ensure that these children not only survive but thrive. And that entire community, all these communities, all these villages all around them, is given a chance to flourish.

I love when John asks Blessing if she could talk to us here at home. What would she say? And she said, "Pray." The first thing she said was, "Pray." I love that she knows the power of prayer—powerful prayer! Prayer truly changes things. It has the power to transform hearts and inspire actions to help bring change. So my prayer today is that we would align ourselves with compassion and purpose and feel motivated to respond as God's people.

Here's what that would look like. For \$48, you could help provide safe, clean drinking water for ten people for life. For \$144, you can help provide water for 30 people. And for \$4800, you can help drill an entire well, which will, on average, provide water for a total of a thousand people for life!

This is the last week we'll be bringing you the Water for LIFE emphasis. So let's give them real hope today by giving them real Water for LIFE.

### **Video begins**

**ANNOUNCER:** Every day thousands of lives are lost to a waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five. Through Mission: Water for LIFE, now in its 25th year, you could give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean life-giving water for thousands of children and their families before it is too late.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five children, a gift of \$48 will help provide for ten, and a gift of \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you the "God's Word for My Day" devotional set. These four seasonal devotionals each contain a daily reading, an encouraging verse, and a thought to ponder for each day of the year.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "His Word is Life" tumbler set. These two 20-ounce stainless steel tumblers, each inscribed with scripture, will inspire you throughout the day and help keep your drinks well-insulated while at home or on the go.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. You can also request our beautiful bronze sculpture, "A Cup of Water."

This is the last week! Please call, write, or make your gift online.

**End of video**

**In the studio**

**TAMMY:** I hope you're going online and giving the best gift that you possibly can give. You must know that it is going to make an enormous impact on the lives of so many today.

Remember, this is the last week we're doing Water for LIFE. We'll be doing it throughout the whole year but this is the last week. So please pick up the phone and make a call to us. When you do, if you want this book, *Hormone Havoc*, just request it, and we'll get it out to you right away.

Dr. Terri, it's been so great to have you here. Please come back.

**TERRI:** I will. Had fun.

**TAMMY:** Your knowledge is wealth to all of us. It is priceless. Thank you so much. Like she said, being well doesn't happen naturally; it takes effort. It takes an action on our part. Each choice we make, from the food we eat to the thoughts we have to our relationships, impacts our overall wellness. You are in the driver's seat. You get to choose the quality of your life. And what you're feeling might not be normal so it might be time to find someone who is trained in these therapies to listen to you and give you some hope that there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

I love that Jesus's desire for us is not to merely exist or to cope with our circumstances but to live abundantly. John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy, but I came that they might have life and have life more abundantly." What a promise from God to you and me and Dr. Terri. God wants us to live free and full and aligned with everything he has for our lives, especially our wellness.

God bless you, and we'll see you next time on *Life Today!*