

# Tahlequah Drug Compounding

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## Women's Health & Wellness

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### What is a Saliva Test?

Most doctor referrals ask that we use a saliva test to evaluate and dose your hormone levels. Saliva testing is a convenient way of testing steroid hormones and allows us to accurately look at your individual levels. It will also confirm the hormones you are taking are being absorbed and utilized. Salivary hormone testing does not require a prescription and ZRT test kits can be obtained from Tahlequah Drug Company.

The laboratory we use is ZRT Labs out of Beaverton, Oregon. ZRT is a CLIA certified diagnostic laboratory that supports healthcare professionals. Operating for over two decades, ZRT stays ahead of developments in medical research and utilizes the most advanced technologies to help healthcare providers and patients detect hormone imbalances. At Tahlequah Drug, we especially like ZRT Labs because they have two doctors on staff we may fall if we need more information or direction with a hormone result.

You can visit their website for more information: <http://www.zrtlab.com/>

Saliva testing is currently used by NASA to determine an astronaut's cortisol and melatonin levels. At Tahlequah Drug Company we use the LCMS Hormones 5 test (formerly Female/Male Saliva Profile II test) to measure the following hormones:

Estradiol Progesterone Testosterone DHEA Morning Cortisol

### Why a Saliva Test instead of Blood Work?

Very simply put a saliva test is a window into tissue. When we consult with a patient we are interested in the estrogen levels within the breast or within the uterus. That estrogen is cellular and capable of mediating a response.

Once manufactured hormones are transported to the liver they are conjugated and bound to carrier proteins for transport. Hormone testing which looks at serum blood level reflects hormones that are present in a bound form. A bound hormone is an inactive hormone. When your body needs more of a hormone it does not go back through the menstrual cycle and produce more... instead, you rely upon the reservoir in the blood that is being transported.

According to Dr. Leon Speroff's book Clinical Gynecologic Endocrinology and Infertility the serum measurement of steroid hormones are:

- 1) unable to distinguish between bound and free estrogens and testosterone
- 2) has a large normal range
- 3) provides limited clinically useful information

Dr. Eldred Taylor explains the difference by saying, "Serum is the train that transports the hormones and saliva is the neighborhood the hormones live in."

A blood test may show “normal” hormone levels but may not reveal how the hormones are actually affecting the body. Many ladies have felt the frustration of sitting in the doctor’s office and being told their lab results look fine... yet they feel “not like myself”?

It’s only the unbound 1-5% of these hormones that are actually available to target tissues and that actively exert specific effects on the body. Unbound, free, active hormones are found in saliva. Acinar cells in the saliva gland only allow lipophilic (fat soluble) substances to pass from blood to saliva. No Sex Hormone Binding Globulins (SHBG) are found in saliva because they are too large a molecule to pass from the blood into the saliva.

Proponents of saliva testing acknowledge the ease of collection, safety, non-invasiveness, affordability, accuracy and capacity to circumvent venipuncture as the primary advantages when compared to blood testing and other types of diagnostic testing. However, many doctors are unfamiliar with reading saliva tests and prefer to do blood work they can bill in their office.