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Revealing new information about hormone therapy, cancer, and rescuing foals

By Karolyn A. Gazella

Premarin is a widely prescribed hormone replacement (HRT) drug. Premarin actually stands for pregnant mare urine. The process is methodical and brutal to the mares. After the mare is impregnated, she is confined to a small pen, a catheter is inserted, and the urine is harvested during the entire pregnancy. After giving birth to the foal, the foal is taken away prematurely, the mare is re-impregnated, and the process begins again. The quality of life for the mare is horrific. But what happens to the foal?

To the drug industry, the foals are mere byproducts. They don't need the foal, just the urine. Each year, thousands of foals are sent to slaughter and sold to European meat distributors. When the drug was in its "hay day," reports indicated that as many as 65,000 foals were slaughtered in just one year. But in 2002, that changed. Why? Not because the drug industry finally realized that it's wrong to kill innocent foals and treat mares in this manner but because the drug is dangerous.

In response to the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study, strict warnings were placed on Premarin® and the drugs associated with its pharmaceutical active ingredients such as Prempro®. Because of the WHI and the broad media attention it received, sales of the drug have dropped dramatically. Even with the release of the WHI, the pharmaceutical industry continues to claim the drug is safe and continues to harvest the urine, producing more "byproducts." And most women don't even know about this "dark side" of the drug they are taking.

In December 2006 news from the MD Anderson Cancer Center and the Harbor UCLA Medical Center presented at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in Houston has linked the reduced usage of hormone therapy with a steep decline in breast cancer cases. Researchers noted that the most significant decline of breast cancer diagnosis was in

women age 50 to 69, which coincides with the reduction in hormone therapy use. According to Associate Professor of Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital Francine Grodstein, ScD, "...it is not news that HT [hormone therapy] increases the risk of breast cancer." While this may not seem "new" to some, researchers agree that this additional information provides even more scientific data as to the direct connection between cancer and Premarin use.

It is not a coincidence that there has been a significant decline in breast cancer cases following the dramatically reduced usage of hormone therapy drugs. There are safer alternatives to these drugs. More importantly, these alternatives do not come with the heavy price of an innocent foal and a young mare forced to endure such a horrible existence. If you need HRT, ask your doctor about alternatives that do not come from pregnant mare urine.

Thanks to many wonderful individuals and organizations throughout the United States, foals born to the Premarin industry are rescued and given a second chance. Medicine Horse Program is proud to partner with MyChelle Dermaceuticals to rescue foals each year. In addition to saving these wonderful beings, Medicine Horse matches the foals with teens with similar feelings—fear, abandonment, anger, and insecurity. The foals and teens come together to create an award-winning program known as the HopeFoal Project.

If you'd like more information on how you can rescue a foal, visit www.prismpmufoals.com. If you'd like more information on sponsoring a HopeFoal teen, call Medicine Horse at 720-406-7630.

Karolyn A. Gazella is the co-author of the book *Definitive Guide to Cancer* (available for \$35 June 2007). You can order the book from Medicine Horse Program and have \$16 of every book order go directly to helping more at-risk youth (720-406-7630). Karolyn is the Executive Director of Medicine Horse Program (www.medicinehorse.org) located in Boulder, CO.