

## *Key 2*

# *Understanding your internal fountain of youth*

### A Cinderella Story

Our path to the discovery of Key 2 is a Cinderella story. Sam and I are like fairy godmothers. As we asked many questions about ways to balance the hormones of women undergoing menopause, we found a hormone—relaxin—that most people have never heard of. And we responded to her weeping.

I call relaxin the Cinderella hormone—she has stayed in the kitchen the past 60 years. Though she is the hardest working of all the female reproductive hormones, she is kind and gentle, and almost no one has recognized her importance. Relaxin assists many body functions and helps your other hormones work well together, but she rarely gets any credit.

Relaxin's stepsisters—estrogen and progesterone—are related to her but do not have the same mother. They have different characteristics and behave in a different manner from relaxin; they have a dark side. The outside world has embraced the two stepsisters, and some people have exploited them by making them seem more potent than they are.

The prince (you) is unhappy and confused by the two stepsisters being sold as the answer to your happiness. Never quite satisfied with the two stepsisters, the prince still looks for the right mate—and decides to host a ball to find just the right one.

Sam and I—the fairy godmothers?—want Cinderella (porcine relaxin) to be known so that the prince can be happy. We know that in this case there is still another sister, a beautiful one who looks almost like Cinderella (human relaxin, a maternal twin, is nevertheless for this use an imposter). The real Cinderella must appear at the ball so that the prince can find the one he truly loves.

Cinderella comes to the ball, dances with the prince, and he falls in love with her. But at midnight Cinderella must leave, and she drops a glass slipper. The prince picks it up and uses it to find for the real Cinderella. Who will fit into her delicate shoe?

As the story goes, the stepsisters (estrogen and progesterone) try on the shoe, which fits neither of them. The almost twin (human relaxin), who looks like Cinderella, also tries it on. She looks so much like Cinderella that the prince thinks she may be the one. Alas, she has a bunion and cannot fit into the shoe.

Finally the true Cinderella (porcine relaxin) tries on the slipper. It fits perfectly. The prince hums with happiness: The kingdom (your body) is in balance; there is perfect harmony once Cinderella comes into the fold. They live happily ever after.

### Searching for a Magic Wand

My sister Cathy is a year younger than I. As children, we shared the same bedroom for many years. We have our differences, but we are close. About 12 years ago she asked me whether I was interested in learning more about menopause even though we had not yet reached that part of our lives. “We could prepare for it,” she said. There were not so many books on the topic then as there are now.

I agreed she had a good idea, and together we developed a strategy. She selected newsletters on the topic, and we divided the tasks of reading them, sharing information, and asking our brother, Dr. Sam Yue, to clarify confusing medical terms and some of the more technical issues. We subscribed to newsletters put out by physi-