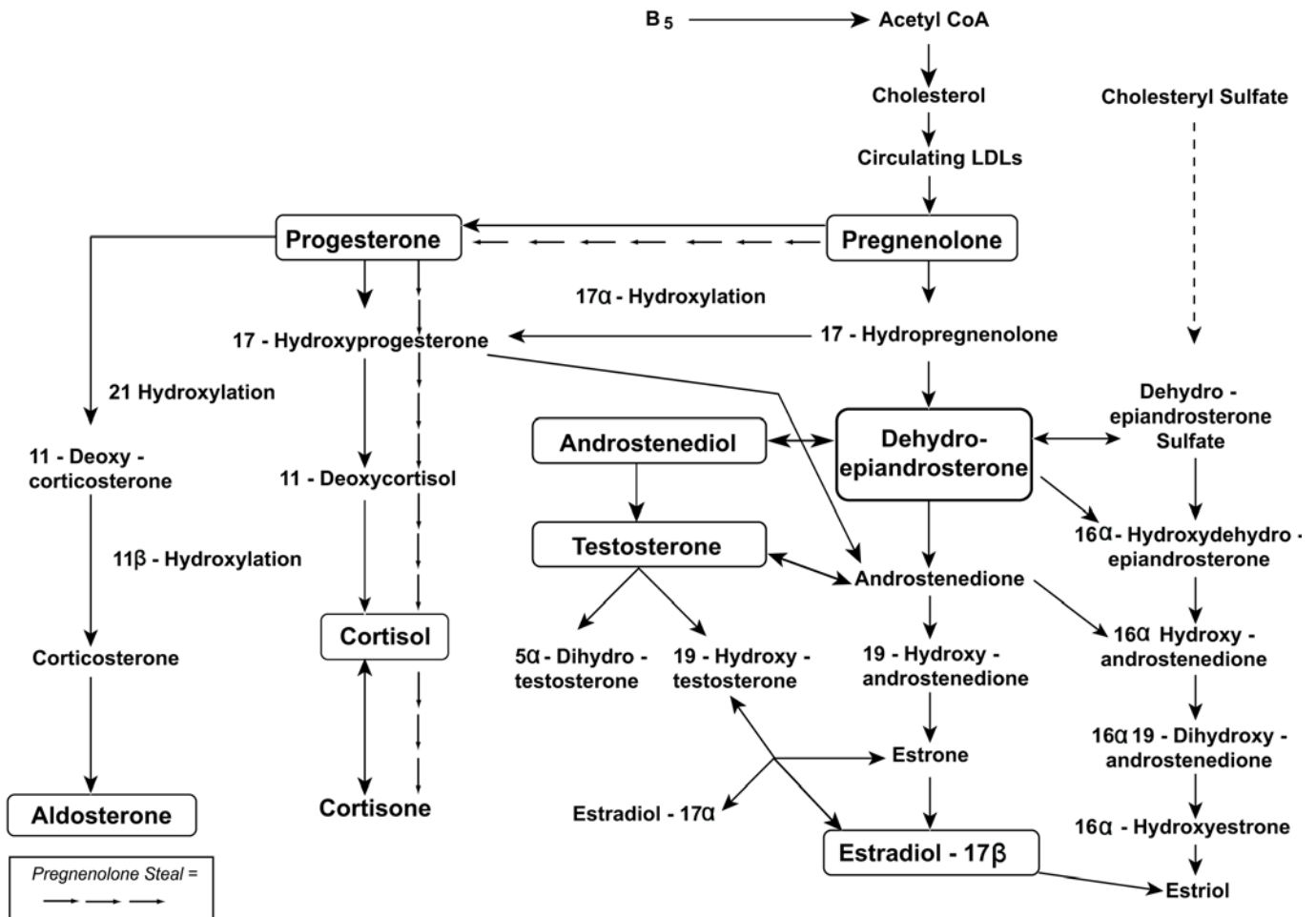


# Steroidal Hormone Principle Pathways

(Understanding Pregnenolone Steal, the Preferential Pathway Under Chronic Stress)



The body's preferential pathway under chronic stress is called Pregnenolone Steal or Cortisol Escape. When the body is in a "chronic stress response", pregnenolone, the precursor to all the rest of the steroidal hormones, is diverted (see arrows) to cortisol – cortisone. This is at the detriment of all the other steroidal hormones; i.e. progesterone, aldosterone (mineral/cortical pathway/sodium-potassium pump), DHEA and its metabolites: the sex hormones, estrogens and testosterone. As pregnenolone is diverted to cortisol-cortisone, DHEA depletion begins.

The result is an elevated cortisol to DHEA ratio. This is measurable with the Functional Adrenal Stress Profile. Simply divide the cortisol sum by the DHEA(s) average to get the ratio. A normal ratio is approximately 5:1 to 6:1.