



Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT)

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www.menopause.org.au

Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT)

www.menopauseinfo.org

menopause
Info

International **IMS**
Menopause Society
Promoting education and research on midlife women's health



What is Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) and is it Safe?

At menopause, a decrease in estrogen levels can cause symptoms such as:

- Vaginal Dryness
- Hot Flashes
- Mood Changes
- Problems sleeping

Menopausal Hormone Therapy or MHT (also known as Hormone Replacement Therapy or HRT) is the **most effective way of improving menopausal symptoms**.

The added risk for blood clots, stroke and breast cancer while taking MHT is very small and similar to that for many other risk factors such as being overweight. MHT is the most effective way to control menopausal symptoms and may also give other health benefits. MHT is safe to use for most women if started in their 50s or for the first 10 years after the onset of menopause. If you had an early menopause (before 45 years) you should continue treatment, at least, until the average age of menopause (51 years).

Different types of MHT are associated with different risks. **Your doctor can work with you to reduce your risk by using different hormonal treatment options.**



TYPES OF MHT (HRT)

MHT is available as:

- Tablets and capsules
- Skin patches
- Gels
- Vaginal



SAFETY FACTS

Estrogen plus progestogen

If you still have your uterus (have not had a hysterectomy), then you need a treatment that combines estrogen and progestogen.

Blood Clots

Patches and gels have minimal or no risk. When using tablets the risk doubles, but is still very low (1 extra case per 1000 women).

Heart Disease

No increased risk if MHT begins within 10 years of onset of menopause or before the age of 60.

Breast Cancer

Overall, 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime. The added risk of breast cancer with MHT is very small. The risk increases the longer you take MHT and decreases after stopping. Using a different progestogen may reduce the risk.

Stroke

No increased risk for women without underlying stroke risk factors who are in their 50s or during the first 10 years of menopause. Women with risk factors can probably safely use a patch or gel form of treatment.

SAFETY FACTS

Estrogen alone

Estrogen alone is suitable for women who have had a hysterectomy. Vaginal estrogen therapy is useful for women who have local symptoms such as vaginal dryness.

Blood Clots

Patches and gels have minimal or no risk. When using tablets the risk doubles, but is still very low (1 extra case per 1000 women).

Heart Disease

May decrease the risk of heart disease if started within 10 years of menopause or before the age of 60.

Breast Cancer

Overall 1 in 8 women will develop breast cancer during her lifetime. Studies suggest that there is either no increase, or a very small added risk of breast cancer when using oestrogen only MHT. Breast cancer risk is lower with oestrogen only MHT compared with oestrogen plus progestogen.

Stroke

No increased risk for women without underlying stroke risk factors who are in their 50s or during the first 10 years of menopause. Women with risk factors can probably safely use a patch or gel form of treatment.

Vaginal estrogen therapy



Vaginal estrogen therapy is useful for women who have local symptoms such as vaginal dryness.

SAFETY FACTS

If used as supplied, vaginal estrogen therapy is **safe to use long-term**, except after breast cancer in some women.