Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT)

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www.menopause.org.au

www.menopauseinfo.org
Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT)

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 Flushes
- 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.

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.

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**TYPES OF MHT (HRT)**

MHT is available as:

- Tablets and capsules
- Skin patches
- Gels
- Vaginal

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**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.
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
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Breast Cancer
4#0*:,'A 5-++#5**"4#-,. 0#12!,!#0'30',%& #0*' $#2'+#03'" #113% % #122& 22& #0#1'2& #0 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 e012:97#01-$++,-31#0+,#.5'2& 0'1)$2-01!,.0- *71$#731#.2!& -0%#* $-0+$ treatment.

Vaginal estrogen therapy

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

If used as supplied, vaginal estrogen therapy is safe to use long-term, some women.