

WHAT IS MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY (MHT) AND IS IT SAFE?

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



HOT FLUSHES



VAGINAL DRYNESS



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.

MHT is the most effective way to control menopausal symptoms and may also give other health benefits.

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 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).

TYPES OF MHT (HRT)

MHT IS AVAILABLE AS



TABLETS AND CAPSULES



SKIN PATCHES



GELS



VAGINAL

TREATMENTS

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.

The type of MHT needed and the associated risks vary according to:

- Your age
- Whether you have had a hysterectomy
- Whether you have other health conditions.



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



Oestrogen alone is suitable for women who have had a hysterectomy.



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

Oestrogen plus progesterone

Safety facts:



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 progesterone 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.

Oestrogen alone

Safety facts:



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 progesterone.



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 oestrogen therapy

Safety facts:

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

For further information:



NON-HORMONAL TREATMENT OPTIONS

AMS fact sheet – Nonhormonal treatment options for menopausal symptoms



LIFESTYLE CHANGES AND MENOPAUSE

AMS fact sheet – Lifestyle and behaviour changes for menopausal symptoms



WEIGHT AND HEALTH

AMS fact sheet - Maintaining your weight and health during and after menopause



COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

AMS fact sheet – Complementary medicine options for menopausal symptoms.



FIND AN AMS DOCTOR

If your symptoms are bothering you, your doctor can help.

If you have any concerns or questions about your menopausal symptoms, visit your doctor or go to the Find an AMS Doctor service

menopause.org.au/health-info/find-an-ams-doctor on our AMS website.

Australasian Menopause Society:

www.menopause.org.au



**AUSTRALASIAN
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EMPOWERING MENOPAUSAL WOMEN

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