

Menopause therapy subsidies break 20-year drought¹

New PBS additions to ease menopausal hormone therapy shortage

Australian women suffering from the debilitating symptoms of menopause will have access to the first new kind of menopausal hormone therapy to be subsidised by the Federal Government in more than two decades.

From 1 March, three menopausal hormone therapies – Estrogel[®] Pro (estradiol / progesterone), Estrogel[®] (estradiol) and Prometrium[®] (progesterone) – will become available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) to help alleviate menopausal symptoms women who have reached menopause.¹

Currently, more than 100,000 Australian women are paying privately for these medicines.² Without the subsidy, women could pay around \$650 per year for modern menopause therapy, depending on individual pharmacy pricing. Under the PBS, eligible patients will pay just \$7.70 (pension and concession card holders) or up to \$31.60 (general patients) each month for Estrogel Pro, Estrogel or Prometrium.³

The new subsidies follow:

- The 2024 Parliamentary Inquiry into Menopause and Perimenopause recommendation that newer forms of menopause therapies be subsidised through the PBS to bolster supply and “*ensure appropriate access and lowered costs for all women who need it*”.⁴
- Therapeutic Goods Administration advice that supply shortages of currently PBS-listed menopausal treatment options will persist throughout 2025, and that prescribing those therapies for new patients should be limited to “*help preserve available supply for existing patients*”.⁵

The funding move is being welcomed by women’s health experts, including Dr Sonia Davison, Endocrinology Lead at the Jeans Hailes Clinic, who said: “This is wonderful news that will make a meaningful difference to the lives of countless Australian women”.

“This decision acknowledges the impact of menopause on women’s lives and ensures they have access to modern treatment without a sizeable cost burden,” she said.

“For far too long, menopausal women have had their experiences dismissed and faced barriers to accessing affordable treatment options.”

One in four women experience severe or prolonged menopausal symptoms that affect their quality of life and may require treatment.⁶

“While menopause is a normal and natural part of ageing, it’s important that women realise that the symptoms affecting their quality of life are very treatable,” Dr Davison said. “They should not suffer in silence”.

“Too often, menopause is dismissed as simply hot flushes or moodiness. The reality is that, for some women, the dramatic drop in hormone levels can cause a raft of symptoms that may last for years.”

Menopause describes the natural stage of a woman's life when her menstrual period permanently stops. It is caused by a drop in reproductive hormones – especially estrogen – that can begin many years earlier, during a phase known as perimenopause.⁷

Menopause hormone therapies such as Estrogel Pro, Estrogel and Prometrium help to replace the hormones lost by the body, to bring them back up to premenopausal levels, thereby reducing symptoms that may interfere with daily life.^{8,9}

Menopause, which typically sets in around the age of 51,¹⁰ can lead to hot flushes, night sweats, sleep deprivation, muscle and joint pain, mood changes and increased irritability, brain fog, and decreased concentration and executive function. Symptoms typically last for around seven years.¹¹

“There’s a reason that menopause is known as ‘the change of life’. It really can be life-altering and can impact almost every aspect of a woman’s life – from her sense of self, physical and mental wellbeing, to relationships and even her ability to work,” said Dr Davison.

Research shows that more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of Australian women aged 45-64 who had reached menopause have been troubled by menopausal symptoms. For more than 40 per cent of these women, the symptoms made daily activities difficult.¹²

“Sadly, for some women, the physical and psychological symptoms of menopause can be debilitating and completely overwhelming,” said Dr Davison.

“In 2025, menopause should not be overlooked or taboo. We must all understand that while menopause is normal, the discomfort, poor health and reduced quality of life often caused by menopause are not unavoidable consequences of ageing.”

About the menopausal hormone therapies

Estrogel is a body-identical estrogen gel applied daily to the skin on the shoulders and arm or inner thigh. It works to replace the estrogen lost by the body, to bring estrogen back up to premenopausal levels.¹³

Most women can take Estrogel without side effects. Some women may experience side effects, including headache, nausea, abdominal pain, breast swelling or pain, breast enlargement, menstrual cramps, heavy menstrual bleeding, vaginal discharge, weight change, water retention with swelling, depression, mood swings, vertigo, flatulence, vomiting, benign breast or uterine tumour, weakness, glucose intolerance, change in libido, high blood pressure, skin decolouration, acne, or appearance of milk secretion. Not all women can safely use Estrogel, including women with a history of breast cancer or other estrogen dependent malignant tumours, or women with clotting issues.¹³

Prometrium is a body-identical progesterone which is taken orally as a soft capsule, and works to protect the health of the uterus in women taking estrogen therapy.¹⁴

Most women can take Prometrium without side-effects. Some women may experience side effects, including headache, abnormal breakthrough bleeding or spotting, change in menstrual cycle, unusual tiredness, weakness, weight gain, acne, breast pain or tenderness, mild mood changes, changes in libido, and insomnia.¹⁴ Not all women can safely use Prometrium, including

women with known or suspected breast or genital cancer, severe liver disease, undiagnosed vaginal bleeding, or clotting disorders.¹⁴

Both Estrogel and Prometrium are modern MHTs known as ‘body-identical’ hormones, which means that they are identical to the hormones produced by the body, with the same chemical and molecular structure. They are not synthetic hormones.

Estrogel Pro is a medicine co-pack containing both Estrogel and Prometrium.

Besins can confirm that Estrogel Pro, Estrogel and Prometrium remain in good supply, bolstered by a recent manufacturing expansion.

Further information is available in the [Estrogel](#) and [Prometrium](#) Consumer Medicines Information.

From 1 March 2025

PBS Information: PBS approved. Refer to PBS schedule for full details.

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About Besins Healthcare Australia

Besins Healthcare is a family-owned pharmaceutical company which has dedicated over a century – and five generations of the Besins family – to advancing women’s and men’s health worldwide.

Specialising in hormone treatments for menopause, reproductive health, and testosterone deficiency, our trusted therapies provide effective solutions for patients worldwide. Since 2013, Besins Healthcare Australia has supported healthcare professionals and patients with niche medications addressing fertility challenges, contraception, menopause, pre-term birth, miscarriage, and androgen deficiency. Committed to patient welfare, we also invest in the professional development of healthcare providers to ensure the highest standard of care.