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## Hormone Replacement Therapy

**Also called:** ERT, Estrogen replacement therapy, HRT, Menopausal hormone therapy

Menopause [<https://medlineplus.gov/menopause.html>] is the time in a woman's life when her period stops. It is a normal part of aging. In the years before and during menopause, the levels of female hormones can go up and down. This can cause symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, pain during sex, and vaginal dryness. For some women, the symptoms are mild, and they go away on their own. Other women take hormone replacement therapy (HRT), also called menopausal hormone therapy, to relieve these symptoms. HRT may also protect against osteoporosis [<https://medlineplus.gov/osteoporosis.html>] .

HRT is not for everyone. You should not use HRT if you:

- Think that you are pregnant
- Have problems with vaginal bleeding
- Have had certain kinds of cancers
- Have had a stroke or heart attack
- Have had blood clots
- Have liver disease

There are different types of HRT. Some have only one hormone, while others have two. Most are pills that you take every day, but there are also skin patches, vaginal creams, gels, and rings.


Taking HRT has some risks. For some women, hormone therapy may increase their chances of getting blood clots [<https://medlineplus.gov/bloodclots.html>] , heart attacks [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartattack.html>] , strokes [<https://medlineplus.gov/stroke.html>] , breast cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/breastcancer.html>] , and gallbladder disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/gallbladderdiseases.html>] . Certain types of HRT have a higher risk, and each woman's own risks can vary, depending upon her medical history and lifestyle. You and your health care provider need to discuss the risks and benefits for you. If you do decide to take HRT, it should be the lowest dose that helps and for the shortest time needed. You should check if you still need to take HRT every 3-6 months.

*Food and Drug Administration*


### Start Here

- **Menopause and Hormones: Common Questions** [<https://www.fda.gov/media/130242/download>] (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/free-publications-women/la-menopausia-y-las-hormonas-preguntas-comunes-menopause-hormones-common-questions>]
- **Menopause: Medicines to Help You** [<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/free-publications-women/menopause-medicines-help-you>] (Food and Drug Administration)



# Treatments and Therapies

- 4 Things to Know about Menopausal Symptoms and Complementary Health Practices [https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/tips/things-to-know-about-menopausal-symptoms-and-complementary-health-practices]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)

## Related Issues

- Menopausal Hormone Therapy and Cancer [https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/hormones/mht-fact-sheet]  (National Cancer Institute)  
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/causas-prevencion/riesgo/hormonas/hoja-informativa-hormonas-menopausia]
- Menopause Hormone Therapy: Does It Cause Vaginal Bleeding? [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menopause/expert-answers/hormone-replacement-therapy/faq-20058499?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/menopause/expert-answers/hormone-replacement-therapy/faq-20058499?p=1]
- Menopause Treatment [https://womenshealth.gov/menopause/menopause-treatment] (Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)

## Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Estrogen Replacement Therapy [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?intr=estrogen+replacement+therapy&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Hormone Replacement Therapy [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%28menopause+OR+postmenopause%29&term=%22hormone+replacement+therapy%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

### References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Menopausal hormone therapy shows superior efficacy to complementary and alternative medicine... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40741676]
- Article: Transgender-Affirming Hormone Therapies, QT Prolongation, and Cardiac Repolarization. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40736733]
- Article: Changes in Quality of Life, Depression, and Menopausal Symptoms After Surgical... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40731820]
- Hormone Replacement Therapy -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Hormone+Replacement+Therapy%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

## Find an Expert

- Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health [https://womenshealth.gov/]  
Also in Spanish [https://espanol.womenshealth.gov/]
- Endocrine Society [https://www.endocrine.org/]
- National Institute on Aging [https://www.nia.nih.gov/]   
Also in Spanish [https://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol]

## Patient Handouts

- Deciding about hormone therapy [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000694.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000694.htm]
- Types of hormone therapy [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000695.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Deciding about hormone therapy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000694.htm>]

Estrogen overdose [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002584.htm>]

Types of hormone therapy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000695.htm>]

## Related Health Topics

Menopause [<https://medlineplus.gov/menopause.html>]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Hormone Replacement Therapy* is the National Institute on Aging [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>]

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