

# Menopause

Use this guide to help you talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse about your hormone medicines. The guide lists all of the FDA-approved products now available to treat this condition. You will also find some general information to help you use your medicines wisely.



Menopause (sometimes called “the change of life”) is a normal time in a woman’s life when her period stops. During menopause, some women have problems like hot flashes, vaginal dryness and irritation, and weak bones. These things happen because a woman’s body makes less hormones.

There are medicines called **Hormone Therapy** that can help to cut down on some of the health problems that women have during menopause. **Women who take hormone therapy for menopause should take the lowest dose that works for them for the shortest time.**

Use this guide to help you talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse about what is best for you. This guide lists some basic information about menopause hormone therapy. Talk to your health care provider about all of the risks of taking your hormone medicines.

### **Women should not take hormone therapy if they:**

- Think they are pregnant
- Have unusual vaginal bleeding
- Have or have had blood clots
- Have certain cancers such as breast and uterine
- Have liver problems
- Have had a stroke or heart attack in the past year

# Menopause Hormone Therapy

There are 3 different kinds of hormone therapy medicines:

- **Estrogen-Only Medicines**
- **Progestin-Only Medicines**
- **Combination Estrogen and Progestin Medicines**

There are many different estrogen, progestin, and combination medicines. These medicines are taken using different schedules.

Like all medicines, each kind of hormone therapy medicine has common side effects. **There are also some serious health problems that can happen in women who take menopause hormone therapy.**

- For some women, hormone therapy may raise their chances of blood clots, heart attacks, strokes, breast cancer, and gall bladder disease.
- For a woman with a uterus, taking estrogen alone raises her chance of getting endometrial cancer.

The different kinds of hormone medicines are listed on the next few pages. Find your drug on the list. Ask your doctor to tell you what you should know about your hormone medicines. Write down the important facts here.

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## Estrogen-Only Medicines

Brand Name	Generic Name	Product Type
Alora	Estradiol	Patch
Cenestin	Synthetic Conjugated Estrogens	Pill
Climara	Estradiol	Patch
Delestrogen	Estradiol Valerate	Injection (Shot)
Divigel	Estradiol	Gel
Enjuvia	Synthetic Conjugated Estrogens	Pill
Estrace	Estradiol	Pill Vaginal Cream
Estraderm	Estradiol	Patch
Estrasorb	Estradiol	Skin Cream (Emulsion)
Estring	Estradiol	Vaginal Insert
Estrogel	Estradiol	Gel
Evamist	Estradiol	Skin Spray (Transdermal)
Femring	Estradiol Acetate	Vaginal Ring
Femtrace	Estradiol Acetate	Pill
Menest	Esterified Estrogen	Pill
Menostar*	Estradiol	Patch
Ogen	Estropipate	Pill, Vaginal Cream
Ortho-Est	Estropipate	Pill
Premarin	Conjugated Estrogens	Pill, Vaginal Cream Injection (Shot)
Vagifem	Estradiol	Vaginal Tablet
Vivelle	Estradiol	Patch
Vivelle-Dot	Estradiol	Patch

## Estrogen-Only Medicines: What You Should Know

### Warnings

- Do not use any of these medicines if you are pregnant.
- Do not use any of these medicines if you have unusual vaginal bleeding, blood clots, or liver problems.
- Do not use any of these medicines if you have or have had certain cancers such as breast or uterine.
- Do not use any of these medicines if you have had a stroke or heart attack in the past year.

### Common Side Effects

- Painful or Tender Breasts
- Stomach Cramps
- Spotting
- Weight Gain
- Upset Stomach/Nausea
- Hair Loss

### Less Common but Serious Side Effects

- Breast Lumps
- Unusual Vaginal Bleeding
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Problems Seeing
- Severe Headaches
- Chest Pain
- Shortness of Breath
- Pains in Legs
- Vomiting

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Progestin-Only Medicines

Brand Name	Generic Name	Product Type
<b>Aygestin</b>	<b>Norethindrone Acetate</b>	<b>Pill</b>
<b>Prometrium</b>	<b>Micronized Progesterone</b>	<b>Pill</b>
<b>Provera</b>	<b>Medroxyprogesterone Acetate</b>	<b>Pill</b>

For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>

## Progestin-Only Medicines: What You Should Know

### Warnings

- Do not use any of these medicines if you have had certain cancers, especially breast cancer.
- Do not use any of these medicines if you have had heart disease or blood clots.
- Women who have diabetes should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking these medicines.

### Common Side Effects

- Painful or Tender Breasts
- Stomach Cramps
- Upset Stomach/Nausea
- Vaginal Bleeding or Spotting
- Weight Gain
- Hair Loss

### Less Common but Serious Side Effects

- Breast Lumps
- Unusual Vaginal Bleeding
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Problems Seeing
- Severe Headaches
- Chest Pain
- Shortness of Breath
- Pains in Legs
- Vomiting

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
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## Combination Estrogen and Progestin Medicines

Brand Name	Generic Name	Product Type
<b>Activella</b>	<b>Estradiol/ Norethindrone Acetate</b>	<b>Pill</b>
<b>Angeliq</b>	<b>Estradiol/ Drospirenone</b>	<b>Pill</b>
<b>Climara Pro</b>	<b>Estradiol/ Levonorgestrel</b>	<b>Patch</b>
<b>Combipatch</b>	<b>Estradiol/ Norethindrone Acetate</b>	<b>Patch</b>
<b>Femhrt</b>	<b>Norethindrone Acetate/ Ethinyl Estradiol</b>	<b>Pill</b>
<b>Prefest</b>	<b>Estradiol/ Norgestimate</b>	<b>Pill</b>
<b>Prempro/Premphase</b>	<b>Conjugated Estrogen/ Medroxyprogesterone</b>	<b>Pill</b>

For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>



## Combination Medicines: What You Should Know

### Warnings

- Do not use any of these medicines if you are pregnant.
- Do not use any of these medicines if you have unusual vaginal bleeding, blood clots, or liver problems.
- Do not use any of these medicines if you have or have had certain cancers such as breast or uterine.
- Do not use any of these medicines if you have had a stroke or heart attack in the past year.

### Common Side Effects

- Painful or Tender Breasts
- Stomach Cramps
- Spotting
- Upset Stomach/Nausea
- Weight Gain
- Hair Loss

### Less Common but Serious Side Effects

- Breast Lumps
- Unusual Vaginal Bleeding
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Problems Seeing
- Severe Headaches
- Chest Pain
- Shortness of Breath
- Pains in Legs
- Vomiting

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
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## Important Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- Are hormones right for me? Why?

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- What are the benefits and risks?

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- What are the side effects?

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- How long should I use hormone therapy?

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- What is the lowest dose that will work for me?

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- Are there other things that I can use or do?

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## **To Learn More:**

**FDA Office of Women's Health  
Menopause and Hormone Therapy Information**  
<http://www.fda.gov/womens/menopause/default.htm>

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This guide should not be used in place of talking to your doctor or reading the label on your medicine bottle. The drug and risk information in this guide may change. Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/> for the latest facts on each product listed in this guide.