

# Hormone Replacement Therapy

## What is menopause?

Menopause is the time of life when a woman's periods stop and she can no longer get pregnant. A woman is in menopause when she hasn't had a period for 12 months in a row. Some people call menopause the change of life. Most women go through menopause between the ages of 45-55.

## What are the signs of menopause?

Menopause causes some women to have hot flashes, night sweats, trouble sleeping, mood changes and vaginal dryness.

## What is hormone replacement therapy?

It is medicine with hormones in it for women that have gone through menopause (change of life). It can help with hot flashes, night sweats, trouble sleeping and vaginal dryness. It can also help to keep bones from thinning and breaking.

## Can hormone replacement therapy cause problems?

It can give some women a higher chance of having:

- cancer of the lining of the uterus
- heart disease
- breast cancer
- ovarian cancer
- blood clots
- gallbladder problems
- strokes

Very few women who take hormones will have these problems. Ask your doctor or nurse if any of these things could be a problem for you.

## Questions to ask your doctor or nurse.

### If you take hormones now, ask

- How does taking hormones help my health?
- How could taking hormones hurt my health?
- How long will I need to keep taking hormones?
- Is it best for my health to take hormones or to stop?

**If you are thinking of starting hormones, ask**

- How would taking hormones help my health?
- How could taking hormones hurt my health?
- Is it best for my health to take hormones or not take hormones?

**If you decide to stop taking hormones, ask**

- How will stopping affect my health?
- What is the best way to stop?
- How will I feel if I stop?
- What can I do if I do not feel well when I stop?
- What can I do to stay healthy if I stop?



**Talking to your doctor about hormone replacement therapy**

Writing down your questions before you talk to the doctor can help you remember them. It may also help to bring a family member or friend with you.

**How can I find out more about hormone replacement therapy?**

- Call your local health department or clinic.
- or**
- Call the Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). The call is free.

