

PhysicianRxSM

Women's Health - Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The risk of long-term HRT (estrogens with or without progestins) for prevention of chronic diseases in postmenopausal women outweighs the clinical benefits.
- Oral **estradiol** (Estrace), **estropipate** (Ogen) and **medroxyprogesterone** (Provera) provide the best value among HRT products for treatment of symptoms associated with menopause.

Efficacy

- Different HRT formulations (oral, transdermal or gels) demonstrate comparable short-term safety and efficacy in relieving hot flashes, night sweats and vaginal atrophy.
- Both oral and transdermal patch HRT products consistently increase bone mineral density and reduce the risk of osteoporotic fracture.
- Vaginally administered estrogen products (creams, rings, vaginal tablets) are similarly effective to each other for local symptoms of vaginal atrophy without vasomotor symptoms.
- Estrogen-androgen combination products lack any substantial evidence of effectiveness. There is no evidence an androgen gives additional benefit over an estrogen product alone in treating of post-menopausal vasomotor symptoms.
- There is no evidence that micronized **progesterone** (Prometrium[®]) provide greater clinical advantages over synthetic progesterone derivatives, such as **medroxyprogesterone** (Provera[®]).

Safety

- Other than convenience, there is **no** compelling evidence showing certain types of estrogen or estrogen/progestin products confer superior clinical advantages in safety or efficacy because of:
 - a lowest effective dose or route of administration (i.e. gel, emulsion or patch)
 - avoiding first-pass hepatic effects with transdermal administration.
 - addition of different progestin products used in combination with estrogen for prevention of endometrial hyperplasia in women with a uterus.
- Because of long-term safety concerns, the FDA and National Treatment Guidelines recommend that HRT be used in the lowest effective doses for the shortest duration of time for treatment of menopausal symptoms.

Cost Comparison

There are many options that vary in cost, but have similar benefits:

Generic Medications (Oral): ~ oral - \$2 - 17*

Brand names in () are non-preferred/non-formulary and are listed as reference only.

oral estrogens	estradiol (Estrace [®]), estropipate (Ogen [®]),
progestins	medroxyprogesterone (Provera)

Brand Medications: ~ \$32 - 64*

	Preferred/Formulary	Non-Preferred/Non-Formulary
Oral estrogens	Cenestin [®] , Premarin [®]	Enjuvia [®] , Menest [®]
Oral estrogens/progestins	FemHRT [®] , Premphase [®] , Prempro [®] , Prefest [®]	--
Oral estrogens/androgens	--	Estratest [®] , Syntest [®]
Transdermal/Topical Products	--	--
Twice weekly	Esclim [®] , Estraderm [®] , Vivelle [®] , Vivelle Dot [®]	Alora [®] , Combipatch [®]
Once weekly	--	Climara [®] , Climara Pro [®] , Menostar [®]
Once daily	--	EstroGel [®] , Estrasorb [®]
Oral progestins	--	Aygestin [®] , Prometrium
Vaginal Products	Premarin vaginal cream	Estring [®] , FemRing [®] , Vagifem [®]

*Approximate cost estimates based on a 30-day supply. Actual prices may vary depending on the pharmacy and the amount or strength of medication dispensed.

References

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Note: Since many medication options are available, our physicians and pharmacists developed this to provide you with information about the available alternatives, as well as potential advantages and lack of advantages of the various products. This medication summary was developed based upon an evaluation of information from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), scientific studies, and input from practicing doctors and specialists.