

MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

What is menopause?

When a person has had no period for a year, menopause has occurred. This usually happens around age 51, but it can be sooner or later. In the time leading up to menopause, your periods may change. They can be lighter or heavier, or they may not come every month.

There are many symptoms of menopause. For people who have only vaginal dryness, topical treatments work well. For people with other bothersome symptoms such as hot flashes, problems sleeping, mood changes, and low libido, the treatment that works best is called Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT). If you're not having symptoms or they don't bother you, then no treatment is needed.

What is Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT)?

Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) is made of 1 or 2 hormones — estrogen with or without progesterone — that are like the hormones your body makes before menopause.

People who have had surgery to remove their uterus, called a *hysterectomy*, only need to take one hormone — estrogen. This is also called ET.

MHT and ET have risks and benefits, just like all medicines.

Before you start MHT, you need to know about the most common benefits, risks, side effects, and other choices you have. We are happy to answer any questions you have.

What are the benefits of MHT and ET?

- Help with hot flashes.
- Help with vaginal dryness.
- Lower the risk of osteoporosis (thin bones).
- Reduce the risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs).
- Reduce the risk of incontinence (unable to control urine/water).
- Reduce the risk of diabetes (sugar).

What are the risks of MHT?

- Blood clots, if it is taken by mouth — This is especially true for people with other risk factors like smoking and lack of exercise.
- Invasive breast cancer if MHT is used for more than 10-15 years
- Heart disease if MHT is started in your 60s, combined with high blood pressure, smoking, high cholesterol, and lack of exercise

What are the risks of ET?

- Uterine cancer if you have a uterus. People with a uterus should take MHT.
- Blood clots if ET is taken by mouth — This is especially true for people with other risk factors like smoking and lack of exercise.
- Possible worsened heart disease if started in your 60s, combined with high blood pressure, smoking, high cholesterol, and lack of exercise
- Possible breast cancer — if used more than 5-10 years. Risk is less than for people taking MHT.
- Possible ovarian cancer — the longer it's taken, the higher the chance

What are the side effects of MHT and ET?

Side effects usually don't last long and don't need to be treated.

- Breast tenderness
- Nausea

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF GREATER TEXAS

- Water retention — bloating
- Headaches
- Irregular vaginal bleeding

What are my other choices?

You may choose not to take MHT. Depending on your symptoms, changes to your lifestyle or other medicines may help.

If you need birth control and also have hot flashes, combined hormonal birth control, like the Pill, Patch or Ring, may be the best choice for you, as long as you don't smoke or have certain health problems.

We can talk about any of these options with you, and help you with whatever you decide to do.

Call us right away at 1-800-230-PLAN (7526) if you have:

- Sudden back/jaw pain along with nausea, sweating, or trouble breathing
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Trouble breathing
- Achy soreness in the leg
- A new or bigger lump in the breast
- Bleeding from the vagina that is not expected