

# The Simple Guide to MHT

## THE FACTS ABOUT MHT (MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY)

- ◆ MHT is the most effective treatment for menopausal flushes and sweats. It
- ◆ is safe for most perimenopausal and recently menopausal women (less than 10 years post-menopause).
- ◆ If commenced early and no contraindications arise, women can continue MHT for as long as it's needed.
- ◆ From the International Menopause Society: MHT is considered safe when initiated before the age of 60 years in symptomatic women with no contraindications.
- ◆ Transdermal estrogen (eg. patch or gel) plus micronised progesterone (prometrium) or Mirena is the safest and most breast friendly combination MHT.
- ◆ No increase in risk of blood clots or stroke if estrogen is given transdermally (through the skin). This is very important if overweight, smoker, aged over 60 or having classic migraines.
- ◆ Vaginal estrogen (cream or pessary) only has local effects, so very low risk. You can use alone or with other MHT as needed.



Dr Kelly Teagle,  
Wellfemme Founder



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## MHT CONTRAINDICATIONS

### You usually shouldn't use MHT if you have:

- ◆ Breast, endometrial or other hormone-dependent cancers, current or previous (but vaginal estrogen may be acceptable)
- ◆ Undiagnosed vaginal bleeding.

### Relative contraindications (may be able to use):

- ◆ Established cardiovascular disease
- ◆ Venous thromboembolic disease
- ◆ Active liver disease
- ◆ Possibly migraine with aura
- ◆ Active SLE/ some autoimmune conditions

Note: well treated blood pressure is not a contraindication.

## USING MHT

- ◆ Estrogen-only if you don't have a uterus (eg. hysterectomy)
- ◆ Estrogen + progestagen if you have uterus ("combined MHT")
- ◆ Transdermal estrogen (patches or gel) is safer than oral
- ◆ Micronised progesterone or Mirena are low-risk progestagens
- ◆ Low- risk combined MHT might include an estrogen patch (changed twice a week), or estrogen gel applied daily, plus either oral micronised progesterone or a Mirena IUD.
- ◆ If unusually young, or sudden menopause (such as surgery/ chemo) or severe symptoms, higher dose may be needed
- ◆ You can reduce dose or stop MHT later if symptoms abate BUT
- ◆ there are long term health benefits with ongoing MHT use
- ◆ There is no absolute time limit of when you "have to stop" MHT

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## MHT RESOURCES

- ◆ WellFemme:
  - [Blog posts](#) and [webinars](#), including [this webinar about MHT](#)
- ◆ Australasian Menopause Society:
  - [Information Sheets](#)
  - [Australian Guide to Equivalent MHT/HRT doses](#)
- ◆ [North American Menopause Society Position statement](#) on MHT
- ◆ [International Menopause Society's resources](#) for women, including the videos "[What is MHT?](#)" and "[Is MHT safe?](#)"
- ◆ British Menopause Society Infographic: [Understanding the Risks of Breast Cancer](#)

