

YOUR GUIDE TO MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY WITH ESTROGEL¹

(estradiol 0.06% gel)



ESTROGEL
ESTRADIOL HEMIHYDRATE

This booklet is intended for patients prescribed EstroGel as menopausal hormone therapy to ease the symptoms of menopause.¹ It is designed to help your understanding of EstroGel. It is not a substitute for talking to your healthcare professional.

ABOUT MENOPAUSE

The term 'menopause' refers to the final menstrual period. During this time the production of female hormones (estrogen and progesterone) is reduced, resulting in low levels of these hormones in the body. As a result of low estrogen levels, many women experience troublesome symptoms such as hot flushes and mood swings.^{2,3}

Most women reach menopause between 45 and 55 years of age, and the average age for women in Australia to reach menopause is 51–52 years.²



ABOUT MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

Menopausal hormone therapy (MHT), previously known as hormone replacement therapy (HRT), is used to ease symptoms of menopause.²⁻⁴

Estrogen is the main hormone prescribed to ease menopausal symptoms; it works by replacing the estrogen lost in women's bodies at menopause, so that they have a similar level of estrogen in their body as before their menopause.⁴

Women with a uterus need hormone therapy with both estrogen and progestogen. This is because estrogen alone can overstimulate the cells lining the uterus, causing an increased risk of endometrial cancer (cancer of the uterus). Taking progestogen alongside estrogen minimises this risk.⁴

Your doctor will discuss which type of menopausal hormone therapy may be suitable for you.

WHY ESTROGEL?

Estrogel contains the natural female hormone estrogen, and is *identical* to the hormone produced naturally in your body.^{1,5}

It works by replacing the estrogen in your body so that you have a similar amount of estrogen as before your menopause.¹

WHAT IS ESTROGEL USED FOR?

Estrogel is used to alleviate symptoms occurring after menopause (such as hot flushes) when they are interfering with your daily life.¹

During menopause, some women may develop fragile bones (osteoporosis). If you are at an increased risk of fractures due to osteoporosis and other medicines are not suitable for you, Estrogel may also be prescribed to prevent osteoporosis after menopause.¹

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about why this medicine has been prescribed for you.



TAKING ESTROGEL

Estrogel is a gel that you apply directly to your skin, once a day in the morning or evening. Try to use the gel at about the same time each day.¹

It is a non-greasy, non-staining, clear, colourless gel that is odourless when dry.^{1,6}

The gel is dispensed from a Pump Pack, where one pump is equal to one measure of Estrogel.¹



HOW MUCH TO USE?

Your doctor will decide how many measures (or pumps) of Estrogel you need to apply each day. The usual daily dose is 2 measures (i.e. 2 pumps) of gel per day, spread on a large area of skin. At this dose, the Pump Pack will last 4 weeks.¹

USUAL DAILY DOSE = 2 PUMPS



Your doctor will prescribe the lowest effective dose for the shortest time to treat your symptoms.¹

Take Estrogel as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. Speak to your doctor if you have any questions about your prescribed dose.

HOW TO USE ESTROGEL

PREPARING YOUR NEW PUMP PACK¹

Before using your new Pump Pack for the first time, you need to prepare it for use as follows:

- Remove the cap from the canister.
- Press the plunger down a few times until the gel comes out.
- Do not use this first dose of gel from your Pump Pack. This dose should be discarded.
- Your Pump Pack is now ready to use.



HOW TO APPLY THE GEL¹

1

- Press to dispense one measure of gel. The usual daily dose is **2 measures** (2 pumps). Talk to your doctor about the right dose for you.
- Apply to clean, dry, unbroken skin at the same time each day.



2

- Apply to top and bottom of one arm from shoulder to wrist.
- It is not necessary to massage or rub in EstroGel.
- Do not apply to the breasts or vagina.



3

- Dries within 2 to 5 minutes.
- To avoid spread of medication to others, wash hands with soap and water after application.



If you have been prescribed 2 measures (or pumps) of EstroGel per day, apply the first pump to one arm as described above, and the second pump in the same way to the other arm.¹

Refer to the Consumer Medicine Information, available at besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support for advice on how to apply other doses of EstroGel.

FOR HOW LONG SHOULD YOU CONTINUE TAKING ESTROGEL?

Every woman is different and the length of time you will have symptoms can't be predicted. On average, women experience menopausal symptoms for about 8 years.⁴

Only 10% of women (1 in every 10) will have symptoms that last longer than 10 years.⁴ For this reason, it's important to have regular check-ups with your doctor so they can assess your symptoms and determine whether ongoing treatment with EstroGel is right for you.¹

Your doctor will prescribe the lowest effective dose for the shortest time to treat your symptoms.¹

Seeing your doctor regularly is recommended to monitor your symptoms and treatment.

Your doctor is the best person to advise on whether ongoing treatment with EstroGel is right for you.



IF YOU FORGET TO TAKE IT

- If it is more than 12 hours until your next dose, apply the gel as soon as you remember and apply the next dose at the normal time.¹
- If it is less than 12 hours until your next dose, skip the missed dose and apply the next dose at the normal time.¹
- Do not use a double dose (two doses at the same time) to make up for a forgotten dose.¹
- If you forget a dose you may have breakthrough bleeding or spotting.¹

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS WITH ESTROGEL?

Most women can take Estrogel without side effects.⁷

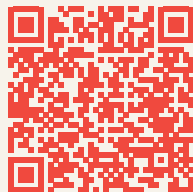
Some women may experience side effects including: headache; nausea, abdominal pain; breast swelling or pain, breast enlargement, menstrual cramps, heavy menstrual bleeding, vaginal discharge; weight change (increase or decrease), water retention with peripheral oedema; depression, mood swings; vertigo; flatulence, vomiting; benign breast or uterine tumour; increased volume of uterine leiomyoma; vaginitis or vaginal candidiasis; feeling weak (asthenia); glucose intolerance; change in libido; hypertension; skin decolouration, acne; appearance of milk secretion (galactorrhea).¹

These side effects are usually mild, and usually occur during the first months of treatment.^{1,7}

Tell your pharmacist or doctor as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are taking Estrogel.

Please ensure you read the Consumer Medicine Information available at besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support for further information, or consult with your doctor or pharmacist about these and other less common side effects.

Need further support? Visit besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support



CAN ANYONE TAKE ESTROGEL?

Most women can safely take Estrogel.⁷

Estrogel can't be taken if you have certain medical conditions. These include, but are not limited to: cancer of the breast or womb (endometrium); unexplained vaginal bleeding; excessive thickening of the womb lining (endometrial hyperplasia) that is not being treated; blood clots or a history of blood clots; liver disease; porphyria (a blood disorder); or a history of allergy to any of the ingredients in Estrogel.¹

Your doctor is fully aware of all of the reasons why a woman should not take Estrogel and will have assessed you to see if treatment is appropriate. If you are unsure whether you should take Estrogel, talk to your doctor.

CAN YOU TAKE ESTROGEL WITH OTHER MEDICINES?

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you get without a prescription from your pharmacy, supermarket or health food shop. Don't forget to mention herbal medicines. Some medicines may affect the way other medicines work, and some medicines may interfere with Estrogel if taken at the same time.¹

Your doctor will know what medicines you need to be careful with or avoid while taking Estrogel. You can also refer to the Consumer Medicine Information available at besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support for a list of medicines that may interact with Estrogel. If you are prescribed any new medicines, tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are already taking Estrogel.¹

WHEN SHOULD YOU START USING ESTROGEL?

If you have never used any other MHT medicines or you are switching to Estrogel from a period-free MHT product, you can start using Estrogel on any convenient day.¹

If you are currently using another type of MHT where you have a period, finish your current medicine pack before you start using Estrogel.¹



CAN YOU WASH YOUR SKIN AFTER APPLYING ESTROGEL?

Generally speaking, you should wait until one hour after application before washing your skin, applying other skin care products or being in close contact with your partner.¹

Skin products such as moisturisers and sunscreens can be applied 1 hour after application of Estrogel. This is also when skin can be washed or immersed in water (e.g. bathing or swimming).¹



HOW SHOULD YOU STORE ESTROGEL?

You should store Estrogel in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 30°C, in a location that is protected from light.^{1,7}

WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

JEAN HAILES FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Jean Hailes for Women's Health is a national not-for-profit organisation that was created to provide women with information, knowledge and clinical care to assist them in actively managing their own health and wellbeing throughout the whole of their life.

Visit jeanhailes.org.au to find out more about topics such as menopause, bone health, mental and emotional health, sexual health, and natural therapies and supplements.



AUSTRALASIAN MENOPAUSE SOCIETY

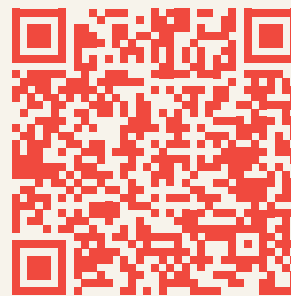
The aim of the Australasian Menopause Society is advancement of knowledge about menopause, and to improve the quality of life of women during and after menopause. It provides a range of educational materials and resources on midlife and menopause for the benefit of women and their health professionals.

MORE INFORMATION

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about Estrogel or if you have any concerns before, during or after taking Estrogel.

Further details can also be found in the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) available from your doctor, pharmacist or besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support

Need further support? Visit besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support



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For medical information call 1800 BESINS (237 467) or visit www.besins-healthcare.com.au

References: 1. Estrogel Consumer Medicine Information, prepared August 2019. 2. Jean Hailes. About Menopause. Available at <https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/about-menopause>. Accessed February 2020. 3. Australasian Menopause Society. What is Menopause? Available at <https://www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/185-what-is-menopause>. Accessed February 2020. 4. Jean Hailes. Menopause management. Available at <https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/menopause-management>. Accessed February 2020. 5. Panay N. *Post Reprod Health* 2014;20:69-72. 6. Brennan JJ *et al. Ther Drug Monit* 2001;23(2):134-8. 7. Estrogel Product Information, 08 May 2019.

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