

# The benefits of HRT

The right type of HRT, at the right dosage, can do a great job of easing your symptoms of the perimenopause and menopause. Once you start taking HRT your symptoms should start to improve within three months – and often much more quickly. Remember, you don't need to wait until you're experiencing severe symptoms before you start taking HRT. In fact, there are more benefits to your health from start to take HRT earlier in your perimenopause.

## How long will it take for my symptoms to improve?

Hot flushes and night sweats usually stop within a few weeks of starting to take HRT, but vaginal and urinary symptoms (such as dryness, pain and discomfort during sex, and recurrent urine infections) can sometimes take several months to settle.

Within a few weeks you may also notice that you're sleeping better, your mood and concentration improve, aches and pains begin to ease, your energy levels increase, and your skin and hair look healthier.

## What are the benefits of HRT?

As well as helping to ease menopause symptoms, evidence shows that HRT can benefit your health in other important ways.

### Your risk of cardiovascular disease will reduce

There's evidence to show that taking HRT reduces your risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke. HRT can also help to lower cholesterol levels, which reduces the risk of heart disease. These benefits are greatest if you start taking HRT within ten years of your menopause.

### You're less likely to develop osteoporosis

Taking HRT can help to prevent – and even reverse – the bone loss that occurs due to low oestrogen levels during and after menopause. This means you'll be less likely to break a bone as a result of osteoporosis.

## Other possible health benefits

Some studies indicate that women who take HRT have a reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease and other types of dementia. However more research is needed before we know this for sure. Some research has also shown a reduction in the risk of bowel cancer in women in who take HRT. Not only that, some research shows a reduction in the risk of type 2 diabetes and osteoarthritis.

## What if HRT doesn't work?

You may need to talk to your doctor about adjusting the dose or the type of HRT if you continue to have symptoms after the first three months of taking it. It's also common for symptoms to improve, then get worse again. This often happens during the perimenopause when your hormone levels are fluctuating, and it's usually a sign that you need a higher dosage.