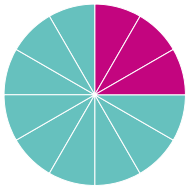
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM HRT

Bristol Menopause Research Group

When will it start working?



It can take up to three months for your menopause symptoms to settle, but most women feel better sooner.

Will I have any side effects?

Some people have headaches, breast pain, sickness or mood changes when they first start (or change) their HRT. These usually improve after a few weeks. If you have bad side effects, you can talk to your GP.

What about bleeding?

It is very common to have some irregular bleeding when you first start your HRT. This should settle after 3-6 months. Your should see your GP if:

- you have very heavy bleeding ie. changing towels/tampons more often than every two hours or passing clots larger than 50p, or
- you have bleeding that lasts more than 7 days, or
- you have bleeding after sex

AFTER 6 MONTHS...

- **if you are taking sequential HRT** (i.e. only taking progestogen for two weeks of the month or using Evorel Sequi) then you should either have no bleeding or a monthly period. You should see your GP if you have any heavy or irregular bleeding.
- **If you are taking continuous HRT** (i.e. taking progestogen every day or using Evorel Conti) then you should see your GP if you have any bleeding after 6 months.

Do I need to see my GP again if I am happy with my HRT?

Yes. Everyone taking HRT should have a review with their GP at least once a year to make sure your treatment is still safe and right for you.



What if my HRT isn't working, or stops working? Everyone is different, and it may take a while to find an HRT regime that suits you. Here are some common problems:

1. **Forgetting to take HRT daily.** This can cause problems with symptoms and irregular bleeding. Try setting a daily alarm on your phone or using a reminder app or keeping your HRT somewhere visible, so it is easier to remember to use it regularly.

2. **Problems with the type of HRT used.** Sometimes HRT may not work as well if it is not put on correctly. For example:
   - Are you spreading the gel over a large enough area?
   - Are you dressing before it has fully dried?
   - Are patches wrinkling, lifting at the edges, or falling off?

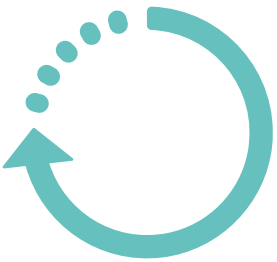
   Everyone's skin is different. If you are having problems applying your HRT, please speak to your GP surgery. You may need to try a different type of HRT.

3. **Lifestyle factors:** Poor diet, lack of exercise, alcohol and stress can all make your symptoms worse. Are there small changes you could make to improve your lifestyle?

4. **Dose of HRT.** If your HRT dose is too low or too high, you may continue to have symptoms. Sometimes the dose needs to be changed over time because your body is producing fewer natural hormones. Speak to your GP if you would like to discuss changing your dose.

5. **Other medical conditions.** Some symptoms may be caused by other health conditions, such as thyroid problems, digestive (gut) problems or mental health conditions. Your GP can talk to you about these.

How long will I need to take HRT?



Many people find they no longer need HRT after a few years and can stop it safely.

Some people continue to have symptoms into their 60s or beyond. These people may choose to continue HRT after discussing the risks and benefits with their GP.

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