

What you need to know about breast cancer and HRT[†]

HRT provides a number of significant benefits for those taking it to relieve symptoms of the menopause. Clinical studies have shown that it is effective in treating hot flushes and night sweats; it also improves vaginal dryness. However, by taking HRT, particularly after the menopause, you are increasing your exposure to hormones and long-term clinical studies have suggested an increased risk of having breast cancer while on HRT.

Taking HRT for 5 years or more slightly increases the risk of breast cancer; so does having a later menopause. The risk for a post-menopausal woman taking oestrogen only HRT for 5 years is about the same as for a woman of the same age who's still having periods over that time and not taking HRT. An explanation of the additional breast cancer risk with different HRT preparations can be found below, and overleaf.

For all kinds of HRT, the extra risk of breast cancer goes up the longer you take HRT, but returns to normal within about 5 years after stopping HRT.

Your risk of breast cancer is also higher if you have a close relative (mother, sister or grandmother) who has had breast cancer or if you are seriously overweight.

What is the risk of breast cancer with HRT?

For every 1000 women aged 50-65

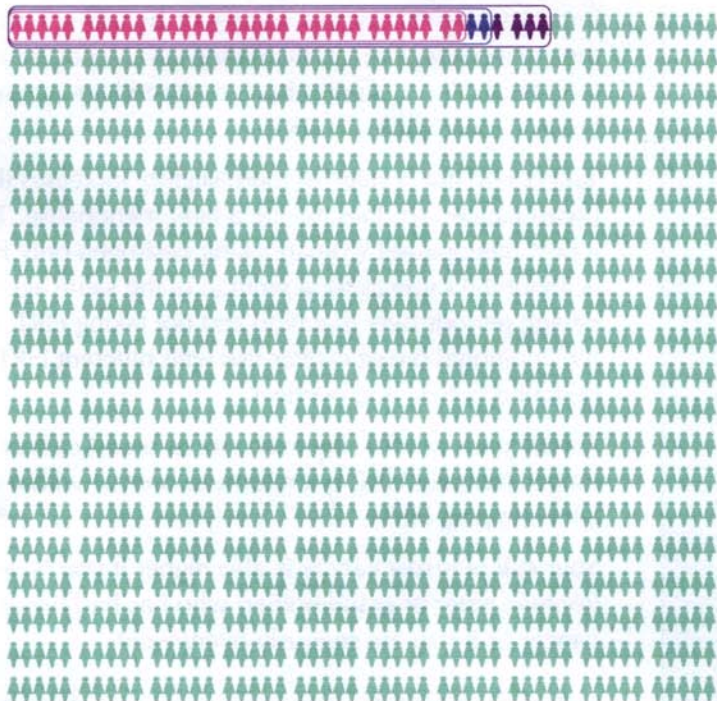
- Who have **never used HRT**, 32 will develop breast cancer¹
- Who take **oestrogen only HRT** for 5 years, an estimated 33-34 will develop breast cancer¹
- Who take **combination (oestrogen-progestogen) HRT** for 5 years, an estimated 38 will develop breast cancer¹
- For women who take **tibolone**, the estimated number of cases of breast cancer is about the same as the number for oestrogen only HRT





[†]HRT – Hormone Replacement Therapy



What is the risk of breast cancer with HRT?

Estimated cases of breast cancer diagnosed per 1000 women between the ages of 50-65 years¹



Never users of HRT		32 estimated cases of breast cancer
Oestrogen only* 5 years of use		33/34 estimated cases of breast cancer (+1 or 2)
Oestrogen-progestogen 5 years of use		38 estimated cases of breast cancer (+6)
Tibolone 5 years of use		For women who take tibolone the number of estimated extra cases of breast cancer is about the same as the number for oestrogen only HRT

*Not suitable for women with a uterus Adapted from reference 1

REFERENCE

1. Million Women Study Collaborators. The Lancet 2003; 362: 419-427