



## The truth about HRT

Menopause is not optional - every woman will go through it.

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The menopause affects all women across the world. We will all go through it. Many women experience symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, low mood, irritability, reduced motivation, headaches, muscle and joint pains, poor sleep, urinary frequency, low libido and vaginal dryness. Some women experience very severe symptoms that last for decades whereas some women do not experience symptoms at all.

Once a woman has gone through her menopause she will always have low hormone levels. Having low estrogen levels increases a woman's future risk of heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, depression, osteoarthritis and dementia. Regardless of whether a woman takes HRT or not, all women need to be given individualised advice about their menopause which should include advice about their lifestyle including exercise and nutrition.

## Hormone Replacement Therapy - what's does it mean?

We need to start talking about the menopause as being “female hormone deficiency” so we are thinking more about the importance of replacing these hormones forever by taking HRT rather than only thinking about taking HRT to improve menopausal symptoms. Taking HRT has been shown in many studies to reduce the risk of all these conditions and also reduce risk of death in women who take it for at least 14 years.

Many women will be menopausal for decades so it is essential we are given the correct support and information to ensure our menopause is a positive and healthy experience. Many women say that they want to take something “natural” for their menopausal symptoms rather than take HRT. However taking HRT is actually natural, as it replaces missing hormones and certainly women who have experienced an early menopause and are under 45 years really need to take HRT to replace the hormones their body should otherwise be producing. Older women often choose to take HRT as there are many health benefits from taking HRT including lower risk of heart disease and osteoporosis.

In the Victorian times, women used to die quite soon after their menopause whereas now many women live for decades after their menopause.

It is more “natural” to have hormones in our bodies than not have hormones. There are many plants in nature that are poisonous, such as the foxglove. So it is important to consider what the word “natural” means!

There are a huge number of supplements marketed as being natural and aimed at menopausal women yet there is no good evidence that they reduce symptoms nor lower future risk of heart disease and osteoporosis. Body identical HRT is derived from yams, the root vegetable, and is the same molecular structure as our own hormones. If you are taking any supplements then you should know exactly what they contain and how they are working.

