



## FOR YOU

# A guide to menopausal hormone therapy with Estrogel®

Estradiol Hemihydrate

This booklet is intended for patients prescribed ESTROGEL® as menopausal hormone therapy for menopause symptoms<sup>1</sup> and will help your understanding of ESTROGEL®. It is not a substitute for talking to your healthcare professional.

 **BESINS**  
HEALTHCARE  
By your side, for life

## About menopause

The menopause. The change. Peri. There are many names for menopause, although the word itself simply means your final menstrual period.<sup>2</sup> Because you never know which one will be your last, menopause is usually declared when you haven't had a menstrual period for 12 months.<sup>2</sup> Perimenopause (or 'peri') is the period of time before menopause, when the two major female hormones, estrogen and progesterone, start to change.<sup>2</sup> Your estrogen levels can swing from high to low, while your progesterone levels start to drop.<sup>2</sup> Once you have had your final period, your body stops producing estrogen – which leads to the symptoms of menopause such as hot flushes and mood swings.<sup>2,3</sup>

When does all this kick off? Peri usually happens in your 40s, lasting around four to six years (although it can be as short as one or as long as ten).<sup>4</sup> Most women reach menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 years, though the average age for women in Australia is between 51 and 52.<sup>2</sup> Once you have gone 12 months without a period you are classified as postmenopausal.<sup>2</sup>

### STAGES OF MENOPAUSE<sup>2</sup>

HORMONE  
CHANGES  
PERIMENOPAUSE

FINAL  
MENSTRUAL PERIOD  
MENOPAUSE

12 MONTHS  
AFTER FINAL  
MENSTRUAL PERIOD  
POSTMENOPAUSE

## Your menopausal management options

There are several options for managing the symptoms of menopause:

- **Menopausal hormone therapy (MHT)** – where the body's hormone estrogen and progesterone are replaced, this can be via gels or creams, patches stuck on your skin, tablets or capsules, or as implants or pessaries (inserted into the vagina)<sup>2</sup>
- **Non-hormonal medications** that only your doctor can prescribe for people who cannot take MHT<sup>5</sup>
- **Complementary therapies** like vitamins, herbal remedies, hypnotherapy etc. may be helpful for specific symptoms. However, speak with your doctor as not all options are backed by evidence and may interfere with other medicines you are taking<sup>6</sup>

## About MHT

MHT used to be known as hormone replacement therapy, or HRT. Depending on your individual needs there are a variety of MHT options to help replace the estrogen levels as you approach and go through menopause.<sup>7</sup> MHT options include:



**Estrogen alone** – recommended for people who have had a hysterectomy<sup>2</sup>



**Estrogen + progestogen** – recommended if you still have a uterus as taking the progestogen component protects your uterus from the risk of endometrial cancer<sup>2</sup>

## Why Estrogel?

Estrogel contains the female hormone estrogen, and is identical to the hormone produced naturally in your body.<sup>1,8</sup>

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

## What is Estrogel used for?

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

After menopause, some women may develop fragile bones (osteoporosis).<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

## About 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.<sup>1</sup>

It is a non-greasy, non-staining, clear, colourless gel that is odourless when dry.<sup>1</sup>

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

### 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.<sup>1</sup>

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



**USUAL DAILY DOSE  
= 2 PUMPS**



**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 pack

Before using your new Pump Pack for the first time, you need to prepare it for use as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- 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 GEL<sup>1</sup>

1.



- Press once to dispense one measure of gel. Press twice to dispense two measures. Talk to your doctor about the right dose for you
- Apply to clean, dry, unbroken skin at the same time each day

2.



- Spread the gel down one arm, starting at the shoulder and moving down to the wrist
- If using a second pump, apply in the same way to the other arm
- If using a 3rd or 4th pump, it can be applied to the arms or to the inner thigh
- It is not necessary to massage or rub in EstroGel
- Do not apply to the breasts or vagina

3.



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

## How long to continue taking EstroGel

Every woman is different and the length of time you will have symptoms can't be predicted. Most women will have symptoms for 5 to 10 years.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, it's important to have regular check-ups with your doctor.

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

**REFER TO THE ESTROGEL CONSUMER MEDICINE INFORMATION, AVAILABLE AT [BESINS-HEALTHCARE.COM.AU/PATIENT-SUPPORT](https://www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support) FOR ADVICE ON HOW TO APPLY OTHER DOSES OF ESTROGEL.**



# EstroGel FAQs

## Are there any side effects with EstroGel?

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 (swelling of hands and feet); depression, mood swings; vertigo (dizziness); flatulence, vomiting; benign (non-cancerous) breast or uterine tumour; increased volume of uterine leiomyoma (fibroids in your uterus); vaginitis or vaginal candidiasis; feeling weak (asthenia); glucose intolerance; change in libido; hypertension; skin discolouration, acne; appearance of milk secretion (galactorrhea).<sup>1</sup>

These side effects are usually mild. Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are using EstroGel.



**PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ THE ESTROGEL CONSUMER MEDICINE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT [BESINS-HEALTHCARE.COM.AU/PATIENT-SUPPORT](https://besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, OR CONSULT WITH YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST ABOUT THESE AND OTHER LESS COMMON SIDE EFFECTS.**

## Can anyone take EstroGel?

Most women can safely take EstroGel if they do not have certain medical conditions (including, but not limited to): known, past or suspected 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.<sup>1</sup>

**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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

Your doctor or pharmacist can advise you on what medicines you need to be careful with or avoid while taking EstroGel. You can also refer to the EstroGel Consumer Medicine Information available at [besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support](https://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.<sup>1</sup>

## 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.<sup>1</sup>

If you are currently using another type of MHT where you have a period, finish your current medicine pack before you start using EstroGel.<sup>1</sup>

## 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.<sup>9</sup>

Skin products such as moisturisers and sunscreens can be applied 1 hour after application of EstroGel.<sup>9</sup> This is also when skin can be washed or immersed in water (e.g. bathing or swimming).<sup>9</sup>

## 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.<sup>1</sup>

## Where to go for further support

### 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.

VISIT [MENOPAUSE.ORG.AU](https://www.menopause.org.au) FOR ACCESS TO INFORMATIVE FACT SHEETS AND EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND VIDEOS ABOUT MENOPAUSE AND OTHER IMPORTANT MIDLIFE HEALTH TOPICS.

### 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](https://www.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.

## 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](https://besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support)

For more information please visit [besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support](https://besins-healthcare.com.au/patient-support)



**References:** 1. EstroGel Consumer Medicine Information. 2020. 2. Hailes J. Understanding menopause [Internet]. 2019. Available from: [https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/uploads/Understanding\\_menopause.pdf](https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/uploads/Understanding_menopause.pdf) 3. Australasian Menopause Society. Menopause what are the symptoms? [Internet]. Available from: [https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/Menopause\\_What\\_are\\_the\\_symptoms.pdf](https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/Menopause_What_are_the_symptoms.pdf) 4. Hailes J. What is menopause? [Internet]. About Menopause. 2005 [cited 2023 Oct 10]. Available from: <https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/about-menopause> 5. Australasian Menopause Society. Non-hormonal treatment options for menopausal symptoms [Internet]. Available from: [https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/Non\\_hormonal\\_treatment\\_options\\_for\\_menopausal\\_symptoms.pdf](https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/Non_hormonal_treatment_options_for_menopausal_symptoms.pdf) 6. Australasian Menopause Society. Complementary medicine options for menopausal symptoms [Internet]. Available from: [https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/AMS\\_Complementary\\_Therapies\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/AMS_Complementary_Therapies_Sheet.pdf) 7. Australasian Menopause Society. What is Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) and is it safe? [Internet]. Available from: [https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/What\\_is\\_MHT\\_and\\_is\\_it\\_safe\\_V7.pdf](https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/What_is_MHT_and_is_it_safe_V7.pdf) 8. Australasian Menopause Society. Bioidentical hormone therapy [Internet]. Available from: [https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/AMS\\_Compounded\\_Bioidentical\\_HT.pdf](https://www.menopause.org.au/images/factsheets/AMS_Compounded_Bioidentical_HT.pdf) 9. EstroGel Approved Product Information. 2021.

EstroGel® is a registered trademark of Besins Healthcare. Besins Healthcare Australia Pty Ltd. ABN 68 164 882 062. Suite 5.02, 12 Help St, Chatswood NSW 2067. Office phone (02) 9904 7473. [www.besins-healthcare.com.au](https://www.besins-healthcare.com.au) EST-1946, February 2024.

**BESINS**  
**HEALTHCARE**  
By your side, for life