

# YOUR GUIDE TO MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY WITH ESTROGEL PRO



## ESTROGEL<sup>®</sup> PRO

A medicine co-pack containing  
one pack of Estrogel<sup>®</sup> (estradiol 0.06% gel) and  
one pack of Prometrium<sup>®</sup> (micronised progesterone)<sup>1</sup>



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



## ABOUT MENOPAUSE

The term 'menopause' refers to the final menstrual period. During this time the production of female hormones (estrogen and progesterone) is reduced, resulting in low levels of these hormones in the body. As a result of low estrogen levels, many women experience troublesome symptoms such as hot flushes and mood swings.<sup>2,3</sup>

Most women reach menopause between 45 and 55 years of age, and the average age for women in Australia to reach menopause is 51–52 years.<sup>2</sup>



## ABOUT MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

Menopausal hormone therapy (MHT), previously known as hormone replacement therapy (HRT), is used to ease symptoms of menopause.<sup>2-4</sup>

Estrogen is the main hormone prescribed to ease menopausal symptoms; it works by replacing the estrogen lost in women's bodies at menopause, so that they have a similar level of estrogen in their body as before their menopause.<sup>4</sup>

Women with a uterus need hormone therapy with both estrogen and progestogen. This is because estrogen alone can overstimulate the cells lining the uterus, causing an increased risk of endometrial cancer (cancer of the uterus). Taking progestogen alongside estrogen minimises this risk.<sup>4</sup>



## WHAT IS ESTROGEL PRO?

EstroGel Pro is a medicine co-pack containing two menopausal hormone therapies: EstroGel and Prometrium.<sup>1</sup>

EstroGel contains the natural female hormone estrogen, and Prometrium contains the natural female hormone progesterone.<sup>5,6</sup> These two hormones are **identical** to the hormones produced naturally in your body.<sup>5-7</sup>

EstroGel Pro can only be prescribed by a doctor, and is for women with an intact uterus.<sup>1,5,6</sup>





## 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>5</sup>

It is a non-greasy, non-staining, clear, colourless gel that is odourless when dry.<sup>5,8</sup>

The gel is dispensed from a Pump Pack, where one pump is equal to one measure of Estrogel.<sup>5</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>5</sup>

**USUAL DAILY DOSE = 2 PUMPS**



Your doctor will prescribe the lowest effective dose for the shortest time to treat your symptoms.<sup>5</sup>

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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<sup>5</sup>

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

- 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>5</sup>

1

Press to dispense one measure of gel.

Apply to clean, dry, unbroken skin at the same time each day.

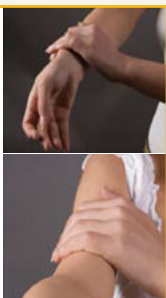


2

Apply to top and bottom of one arm from shoulder to wrist.

It is not necessary to massage or rub in Estrogel.

Do not apply to the breasts or vagina.



3

Dries within 2 to 5 minutes.

To avoid spread of medication to others, wash hands with soap and water after application.



If you have been prescribed 2 measures (or pumps) of Estrogel per day, apply the first pump to one arm as described above, and the second pump in the same way to the other arm.<sup>5</sup>

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**Refer to the Estrogel Consumer Medicine Information, available at [www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients](http://www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients) for advice on how to apply other doses of Estrogel.**

## FOR HOW LONG SHOULD YOU CONTINUE TAKING ESTROGEL?

Every woman is different and the length of time you will have symptoms can't be predicted. On average, women experience menopausal symptoms for about 8 years.<sup>4</sup>

Only 10% of women (1 in every 10) will have symptoms that last longer than 10 years.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, it's important to have regular check-ups with your doctor so they can assess your symptoms and determine whether ongoing treatment with Estrogel is right for you.<sup>5</sup>

Your doctor will prescribe the lowest effective dose for the shortest time to treat your symptoms.<sup>5</sup>

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### 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>5</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>5</sup>
- Do not use a double dose (two doses at the same time) to make up for a forgotten dose.<sup>5</sup>
- If you forget a dose you may have breakthrough bleeding or spotting.<sup>5</sup>



## ESTROGEL FAQs

### ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS WITH ESTROGEL?

Most women can take Estrogel without side effects.<sup>9</sup>

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; depression, mood swings; vertigo; flatulence, vomiting; benign breast or uterine tumour; increased volume of uterine leiomyoma; vaginitis or vaginal candidiasis; feeling weak (asthenia); glucose intolerance; change in libido; hypertension; skin decolouration, acne; appearance of milk secretion (galactorrhea).<sup>5</sup>

These side effects are usually mild, and usually occur during the first months of treatment.<sup>5,9</sup>

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are using Estrogel.

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**Please ensure you read the Estrogel Consumer Medicine Information available at [www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients](http://www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients) 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.<sup>9</sup>

Estrogel can't be taken if you have certain medical conditions. These include, but are not limited to: 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>5</sup>

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**Your doctor is fully aware of all of the reasons why a woman should not take Estrogel and will have assessed you to see if treatment is appropriate. 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. 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>5</sup>

Your doctor will know 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 **[www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients](http://www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients)** 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>5</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>5</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>5</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>5</sup>

Skin products such as moisturisers and sunscreens can be applied 1 hour after application of EstroGel. This is also when skin can be washed or immersed in water (e.g. bathing or swimming).<sup>5</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>5,9</sup>



## ABOUT PROMETRIUM



Your doctor or pharmacist will tell you how many capsules you need to take each day.

If you are taking Prometrium as part of menopausal hormone therapy together with estrogen, Prometrium can be taken in two ways:<sup>6</sup>

### ONE CAPSULE DAILY

- 100 mg/day (one 100 mg capsule)
- At bedtime
- From days 1 to 25 of your 28-day cycle

Some light bleeding may occur, but bleeding is less likely with this treatment schedule.<sup>6</sup>

OR

### TWO CAPSULES DAILY

- 200 mg/day (two 100 mg capsules)
- Take both capsules at bedtime
- From days 15 to 26 of your 28-day cycle

You will usually have a few days of bleeding (like a period) after you finish taking the capsules.<sup>6</sup>

**If you have any questions regarding your dose and how to take Prometrium, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.**

If you have trouble remembering to take your medicine, ask your pharmacist for some hints.

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## **HOW TO TAKE YOUR DOSE**

- Prometrium should be swallowed whole with a glass of water.<sup>6</sup>
- Do not take Prometrium with food as this may affect the way Prometrium works.<sup>6</sup>
- Bedtime dosing is recommended as some patients may experience sleepiness or drowsiness after taking Prometrium.<sup>6,10</sup>

## **IF YOU FORGET TO TAKE A DOSE**

- If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose at the usual time.<sup>6</sup>
- Otherwise, take it as soon as you remember, and go back to taking your medicine as you would normally.<sup>6</sup>
- Do not double your dose to make up for the dose you missed.<sup>6</sup>

## **FOR HOW LONG SHOULD YOU CONTINUE TAKING PROMETRIUM?**

Every woman is different and the length of time you will have symptoms can't be predicted. On average, women experience menopausal symptoms for about 8 years.<sup>4</sup> You will need to continue taking Prometrium for as long as you are using Estrogel.

Only 10% of women (1 in every 10) will have symptoms that last longer than 10 years.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, it's important to have regular check-ups with your doctor so they can assess your symptoms and determine whether ongoing treatment with Prometrium is right for you.

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**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 Prometrium is right for you.





## PROMETRIUM FAQs

### ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS WITH PROMETRIUM?

Most women can take Prometrium without side effects.<sup>6,10</sup>

Some women may experience side effects including: headache; abnormal breakthrough bleeding or spotting; change in menstrual cycle; unusual tiredness, weakness or weight gain; acne; breast pain or tenderness; mild mood changes; changes in libido; and insomnia.<sup>6</sup>

Although these symptoms are usually mild and short-lived, always tell your doctor if you notice these or anything else unusual while taking Prometrium.<sup>6</sup>

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Please ensure you read the Prometrium Consumer Information available at **[www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients](http://www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients)** for further information, or consult with your doctor or pharmacist about these and other less common side effects.

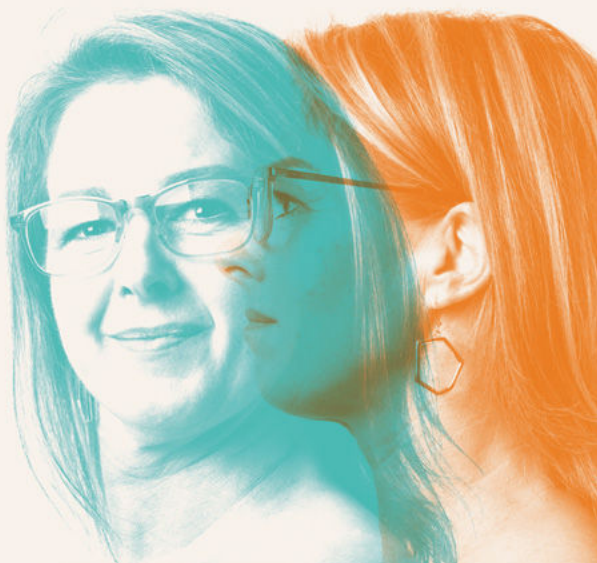
## CAN ANYONE TAKE PROMETRIUM?

Most women can safely take Prometrium.<sup>6,10</sup>

Prometrium can't be taken if you have certain medical conditions. These include, but are not limited to: an allergy to any of the ingredients in Prometrium, including soya; undiagnosed vaginal bleeding; missed abortions or ectopic pregnancy; severe liver problems; cancer of the breast or genital tract; blood clots or a history of blood clots; bleeding on the brain; and porphyria disorder (a blood disease).<sup>6</sup>

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**Your doctor is fully aware of all of the reasons why a woman should not take Prometrium and will have assessed you to see if treatment is appropriate. If you are unsure whether you should take Prometrium, talk to your doctor.**



## CAN YOU TAKE PROMETRIUM WITH OTHER MEDICINES?

Prometrium is always taken together with an estrogen.<sup>6</sup>

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. Don't forget to mention herbal medicines. Some medicines may affect the way other medicines work, and some medicines may interfere with Prometrium if taken at the same time.<sup>6</sup>

Your doctor will know what medicines you need to be careful with or avoid while taking Prometrium. You can also refer to the Prometrium Consumer Medicine Information available at **[www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients](http://www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients)** for a list of medicines that may interact with Prometrium. If you are prescribed any new medicines, tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are already taking Prometrium.<sup>6</sup>



## HOW SHOULD YOU STORE PROMETRIUM?

You should store Prometrium in the original container, in a cool dry place where the temperature stays below 30°C.

Do not refrigerate.<sup>6,10</sup>





## WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER SUPPORT

### 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.

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**Visit [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://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.**



### 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.

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**Visit [www.menopause.org.au](http://www.menopause.org.au) for access to informative fact sheets and easy-to-understand videos about menopause and other important midlife health topics.**



## MORE INFORMATION

Ask your doctor if you have any questions about Estrogel or Prometrium or if you have any concerns before, during or after taking Estrogel or Prometrium.

Further details can also be found in the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) available from your doctor, pharmacist or **[www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients](http://www.besins-healthcare.com.au/patients)**





**ESTROGEL<sup>®</sup> PRO**

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HEALTHCARE  
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