



Hormonal Therapy: *More than just birth control*

What is hormonal therapy?

Hormonal therapy (HT) is medication that provides hormones made by the ovaries. These hormones are estrogen and progesterone. Many patients associate HT with birth control, but there are many other uses of HT. This handout will explain why HT is used and how it works.

What is HT used for?

HT is used for treating:

- Irregular periods
- Heavy periods
- Painful periods
- Endometriosis
- Acne
- PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome)
- Hirsutism (abnormal hair growth)
- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- Iron deficiency
- Menstrual flares of other diseases (Inflammatory bowel diseases, Irritable bowel syndrome, seizures, autoimmune disorders)
- Menstrual headaches associated with periods
- Some bleeding disorders (e.g, Von Willebrand Disease)
- Prevention of some types of ovarian cysts
- Benign breast disease

HT is also associated with:

- Reduced risk of ovarian, colon and endometrial cancers

HT does not:

- Decrease your future fertility (chances of having a baby)

How does HT work?

HT contains the same kind of hormones your ovaries make: estrogen and progesterone. While the levels of these hormones normally fluctuate throughout your menstrual cycle, HT gives your body a steady dose of estrogen and progesterone. This helps reduce the symptoms by signaling to your ovaries and preventing ovulation, thinning the uterine lining, decreasing the amount of menstrual bleeding and reducing period cramps and midcycle (or ovulation) pain.

What are the options for HT?

There are two main categories of HT: combined HT, which have both estrogen and progesterone and progesterone-only HT.

Combined (estrogen + progestin)	Progesterone only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pills ● Patch ● Vaginal Ring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pills ● Injection ● Arm Implant ● Intrauterine Device

Is HT safe?

HT can be safely used by most girls who have started their period. HT is very well tolerated, offers great benefits and fertility is returned to normal once HT is stopped. Some medical conditions make it less safe to use certain hormones. Your provider will carefully assess your medical and family history to determine safe options for you.

Each HT method has its pros and cons, and your provider can review which methods are best for you.