

HRT – Practical prescribing

Types of HRT

Estrogen

Estradiol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5mg (combined only)/ 1mg / 2mg oral • 25mcg / 37.5mcg / 40mcg / 50mcg / 75mcg / 80mcg/ 100 mcg patches • 0.06% Oestrogel 0.75mg • 500mcg / 1mg Sandrena gel • 10mcg vaginal tablets • 7.5mcg vaginal ring
Estriol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.1% / 0.01% vaginal creams, vaginal pessary, 50mcg/g vaginal gel
Conjugated estrogens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.3mg / 0.625mg / 1.25mg

Non-Estrogens

Gonadomimetic Tibolone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5mg oral tablet (for systemic symptoms)
DHEA Prasterone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.5mg pessary (for genitourinary symptoms)
SERM Ospemifene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60mg oral tablet (for genitourinary symptoms)

Progestogens

Micronised progesterone	
Dydrogesterone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combined only
Norethisterone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combined only
Levonorgestrel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combined and IUS
Norgestrel	
Medroxyprogesterone acetate	

Testosterone

Implants (off licence, limited availability)
Gel (off licence)

Routes of therapy

Oral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tablets (estrogen only, progestogen only, or combined), SERM (for urogenital atrophy)
Transdermal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patches (estrogen only or combined) / gels (estrogen only) / Spray (estrogen only)
Sub-cutaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implants (estrogen only, testosterone only, off licence, limited availability)
Vaginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ring/tablets/creams/pessary/ gel (all estrogen only), DHEA
Intrauterine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUS (progestogen only)

Estradiol – equivalent doses*

	Ultra low	Low	Medium	High
Oral	0.5mg	1mg	2mg	3-4mg
Patch	Half 25	25	50	75-100
Gel-pump	½ pump	1 pump	2 pumps	3-4 pumps
Gel-sachet	½ x 0.5mg sachet - 0.25mg	0.5mg	1-1.5mg	2-3mg

*The table has been drawn up as a practical guide based on a combination of pharmacokinetics, clinical trials and clinical experience. The dose equivalents are subject to significant individual variations in absorption and metabolism.

Regimens

Estrogen only

Estrogen and progestogen

- Sequential/cyclical preparations
- Continuous combined
- 3 monthly bleeds

Tibolone

- Hysterectomised patients
- If uterus is present
- Perimenopausal women
- Post menopausal women
- Perimenopausal women

Common side effects

Estrogen

- Fluid retention
- Breast tenderness
- Bloating
- Nausea / Dyspepsia
- Headaches

Progestogens

- Fluid retention
- Breast tenderness
- Headaches
- Mood swings
- PMT-like symptoms

Dealing with side effects

Estrogen

- Reduce dose
- Change route
- Change type
- Which hormone is causing the side effect?

Progestogens

- Change type
- Reduce dose if available
- Change route
- Alter duration

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