**Important information about HRT:**

The safest form of HRT is either a patch, gel or spray that is applied to the skin (transdermal) as this carries no additional risk of blood clots or stroke compared to HRT that is taken by mouth as tablets.

There may be a small additional risk of developing breast cancer with taking HRT and this depends on the type of HRT and how long you have been taking it. We recommend that you regularly examine your breasts and report any changes to us for further evaluation. Make sure that you are up to date with the breast screening programme. Simple lifestyle measures like keeping your weight in the healthy range, exercising regularly, stopping smoking and limiting your alcohol intake to less than 14 units weekly will reduce your risk of breast cancer.

In addition to the lifestyle measures mentioned, maintaining a healthy diet with adequate calcium intake, sunlight (vitamin D) exposure and regular weight bearing exercise (like walking, running or skipping) will help to protect your bones from thinning termed osteoporosis. For lighter skin, adequate sunlight exposure is deemed as 10-15 minutes daily between April to September and up to 30 minutes daily for darker skin.

Please ensure you take your HRT as prescribed. If you are prescribed a separate progesterone tablet it is important to take this regularly as this protects the lining of your womb from any overgrowth that can lead to cancer. A Mirena coil, which releases progesterone locally into the womb would be an effective alternative to progesterone tablets especially if contraception is also needed.

If you still have bleeds with your HRT, then this is normally switched to a no bleed regime within 5 years of starting HRT. If you are on a no bleed regime but continue to have vaginal bleeding please speak to a member of the team.

If you suffer from vaginal dryness then it may be useful to use vaginal moisturisers and lubricants such as those from the Sylk or YES range, or using coconut oil. Oestrogen creams, pessaries and rings can also be prescribed to help with this condition.

When to seek medical advice:

* Your medical history changes
* You develop side effects, irregular vaginal bleeding or breast concerns
* You would like to change or stop your HRT regime
* If you have any questions or concerns

Please read the following information which recaps the benefits and risks of HRT:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| If you are on a tablet form of HRT – would you like to switch to a transdermal method like a patch/gel/spray? | Yes/No/ Not applicable  If yes, please book a telephone consultation with a member of the team |
| If you suffer from vaginal dryness, would you like a prescription for vaginal oestrogen? | Yes/No/ Not applicable |
| I have read and understood the information provided above.  Signed: | Date: |

<https://yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/library/women-s-children-s/gynaecology/342-managing-symptoms-of-the-menopause/file?msclkid=a6e8b7b8cf7e11ec8ebe5f9bfd08a479>

Also have a look at the following link for a useful infographic about understanding the risks of breast cancer:

<https://thebms.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/WHC-Infographics-JANUARY-2023-BreastCancerRisks.pdf>