

Vaginal estrogen therapy

We have recommended vaginal estrogen therapy. This is not systemic hormonal therapy and not considered hormonal replacement therapy (HRT). Studies have been done to evaluate the safety of using topical vaginal estrogen therapy. Research done on breast cancer survivors using only vaginal estrogen suggests that there is no associated increased risk of breast cancer recurrence as compared to those who used no form of local estrogen. Additional studies show no increased risk of uterine cancer and studies evaluating blood levels of estrogen have shown that there is no significant absorption into the circulation. Therefore, low dose vaginal estrogen cream and tablets are felt to be safe and effective in the treatment of urogenital atrophy.

The urogenital tissue consists of the vagina, external genitalia, bladder and the urethra, which is the tube where the urine is expelled. This tissue is estrogen sensitive and after the menopause, it undergoes a process that we call atrophy. This is when the tissue thins, loses its blood supply, loses collagen, and loses its ability to lubricate.

Many women are familiar with the vaginal dryness, lack of lubrication, pain from intercourse, and vaginal irritation that may arise in the menopause. These symptoms mainly result from the lack of estrogen in the tissue. The urinary tract can also exhibit symptoms from the lack of estrogen. Some of these symptoms include urinary frequency, urgency, recurrent urinary tract infections, and urinary leakage.

Vaginal estrogen therapy is available in several different forms. We have recommended it in one of the following forms; vaginal cream which is known as **Estrace cream**, **Estradiol cream** or **Premarin cream**, vaginal tablets which are called **Vagifem**, **Yuvafem** or **Imvexxy**, or an intravaginal ring called **Estring**.

Instructions for use of the APPLICATOR for Estrogen cream

1. Remove cap from tube of cream.
2. Remove applicator from plastic bag.
3. Screw nozzle end of applicator onto tube of cream.
4. Gently squeeze tube from the bottom to force sufficient amount of cream into the barrel to provide the prescribed dose. Use the marked stopping points on the applicator as a guideline to measure the correct dose. Fill to the 1 GM marking (Approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the tube).



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5. Unscrew applicator from tube.
6. To deliver medication gently insert the applicator deeply into the vaginal and press plunger downward to its original position.
7. Your provider may have also instructed you to apply a small amount on you fingertip around the opening of the vagina and labia in a thin layer.