

What should I do if I forget a pill?

Try to take your pill at the same time each day. If you forget a pill but remember later that same day, then take it. If you forget a pill and don't remember until the next day, then skip the pill for the missed day and take the pill that you are scheduled to take on the day that you remember. Do not make up missed pills. If you miss several pills, you may have some menstrual bleeding before your period is due. Use back-up contraception if you are sexually active.

Can I use an estrogen/progesterone patch instead of taking a pill?

When you first start replacing hormones, the dose of estrogen is very low. Patches don't come in low doses. Speak with your endocrinologist if you have any questions.

Can replacement hormones be harmful?

Women rarely have serious side-effects from taking hormones.

You may notice the side effects below. If they bother you, speak with your doctor or nurse. Your doctor may wait and see how your body adjusts to the hormones and, if needed, may change the pill to one that suits you better:

- tender breasts
- swelling of hands, legs, or feet
- slight weight gain or loss
- mild headache
- spotting or bleeding between menstrual periods
- feeling sick to your stomach

Will I be able to have a baby some day?

Without healthy ovaries, it is unlikely a woman will conceive a baby naturally. A donated egg may be fertilized

with her partner's sperm and placed in her uterus (as long as her uterus is healthy).

A woman who has healthy ovaries but no chemical message from the brain will likely need help becoming pregnant. She can be given GnRH or LH/FSH by injection to help her become pregnant.

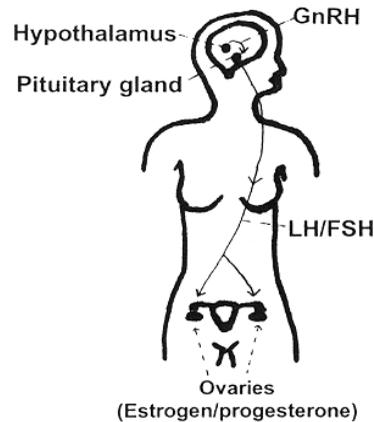
health information

Hormone Replacement for Adolescent Girls

Why do I need hormone replacement?

The hormones **estrogen** and **progesterone** are needed to change a girl's body to a woman's body. This process is called **puberty**. Estrogen and progesterone are made in the ovaries. They receive chemical (hormone) messages from

the brain. Estrogen and progesterone may be missing for one of three reasons:



1. You may have been born without ovaries, have poorly formed ovaries (as in Turner syndrome), or your ovaries may not work (for example, because of radiation or chemical damage as a result of cancer treatment).
2. Your pituitary gland in your brain may not send a chemical (hormone) message to your ovaries to produce estrogen and progesterone. The pituitary hormones are called LH and FSH. LH and FSH help the ovaries to produce hormones and eggs. Without these hormones, even healthy ovaries cannot make estrogen and progesterone. This can happen if the pituitary gland is missing or if it is damaged because of a tumour, infection, surgery, or radiation/chemotherapy.
3. Your hypothalamus in your brain may not be able to send its message (a hormone called GnRH) to the pituitary gland. No GnRH means that no LH and FSH are produced. No messages are sent to the ovaries. As a result, neither hormones nor eggs are produced.

Whatever the reason, the end result is the same: no estrogen or progesterone.

What do the puberty hormones do?

Hormones help the body in many ways. They:

- cause breasts to grow, hair to grow under your arms and in your pubic area
- help your body change from a girl's shape to a woman's shape
- cause many changes inside your body (for example, your uterus (womb) and vagina (birth canal) grow)
- work with other hormones to cause the growth spurt seen around puberty
- are needed for your body to have regular menstrual periods
- work with calcium to build stronger bones
- cause you to be a sexual person—to have sexual thoughts and feelings

How are the missing hormones replaced?

When you feel ready to begin puberty (usually when your friends are starting puberty (around 11 to 13 years), you and your doctor can decide to replace the missing hormones. You will start by taking a pill or patch with a low dose of estrogen. Your doctor will want to use low doses at first so that your body will change slowly.

You will have regular check-ups with your doctor. Your dose of estrogen will gradually be increased when your body is ready. You will notice your breasts begin to grow and hair appear under your arms and in your pubic area (some girls who take hormone replacements find they don't have a lot of pubic hair).

After you have been taking estrogen pills or patches for 1½ to 2 years, and when your doctor feels it is the right time, you may also start taking progesterone so your body will have regular monthly periods. Progesterone allows the lining of the uterus to stay healthy. Girls that don't have a uterus may not have to take progesterone.

Estrogen and progesterone can be taken as two separate pills or as one combined pill (the birth control pill). Taking the birth control pill is an easy way to get both hormones. Some girls with acne find that their acne improves while taking the birth control pill.

To choose the best pill for you, your doctor needs to know what other medicine you take. Birth control pills come with instructions. Read these instructions carefully. Your doctor or nurse would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Some packages of pills have different doses of estrogen and progesterone in each pill. The pills must be taken in the right order.