

WOMEN'S HEALTH TRENDS

Alternatives To Oral Hormone Therapy

(NAPSA)—There could be good news for many women concerned about taking hormone pills to relieve menopausal symptoms. It may be possible to skip the pills and wear a patch. Better news: it may be just as effective, while leaving fewer hormones in your system.

A recent survey on women's feelings about hormone therapy was conducted by an educational Web site, MenopauseRx.com. It discovered more than half of the women had bothersome menopause symptoms of hot flashes and night sweats despite taking oral medication. In addition, more than two-thirds also had mood and sleep disturbances and decreased libido. Yet, only 27 percent had ever tried a medical patch instead of pills.

The women surveyed also reported concern about the total dose of hormones they took. Recent research changed the way physicians and patients treat menopause symptoms. The current recommendations by the American College of Ob/Gyn advocates using hormone therapy for the relief of menopause symptoms at the lowest possible dose for the shortest time necessary.

One advantage of topical therapy over traditional pill therapy is that the effective dose is usually lower. Estrogen patches (such as Vivelle-Dot®), for example, use less hormone because the medication is absorbed through the skin directly



Most women don't know that hormone therapy for menopause can be delivered through a medical patch.

into the bloodstream to be delivered to the body. Pills require "extra" hormone because oral estrogen must be absorbed by the digestive system. As the estrogen is metabolized by the liver it is converted into a less active form before reaching the bloodstream. The skin delivers the hormone it absorbs more effectively. This can mean lower dosages of estrogen for the same relief.

What's more, the patch releases estrogen evenly over time, maintaining a steady level throughout the day. This results in around-the-clock symptom relief. The pill provides a sudden increase in estrogen and then a drop-off; as a result, some women get erratic symptom relief.

To learn more, visit www.MenopauseRx.com/PatchTherapy.htm.