

# Women's *Heart Advantage*

## Heart Healthy Information: Hormone Therapy

Choosing whether to use hormone replacement is one of the most important health decisions women make. Many women have taken hormones to try to lower their chance of heart disease. But new information shows that taking some types of hormones may actually increase a woman's chances of developing heart disease and other serious conditions.

Studies show that women taking some types of hormone replacement are more likely to have serious health problems, which include heart attacks, strokes, blood clots and breast cancer. Hormones did help some women by decreasing their chance of hip fractures and colon cancer. Overall, however, the risks outweigh the benefits.

If you take hormones, or are considering it, here are some guidelines you should follow:

- You should not continue or start hormones to prevent heart disease. Talk with your doctor about other ways of preventing heart

disease. This may include exercise, diet changes or drugs to lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

- If you're taking, or thinking about taking hormones to prevent bone loss, talk with your doctor. Think about other treatments that can prevent bone loss and bone fractures.
- If you're taking, or thinking about taking hormones to treat hot flashes or sleeping problems, talk with your doctor. The short-term effects of using this drug for these types of symptoms is unclear. If you take hormones to control these symptoms, use as little as possible for as short a time.

Whatever you decide, talk regularly with your doctor because your risks may change over time. Safer and more effective treatments may become available. Stay informed.

