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**September is National Menopause Awareness Month:
NHLBI Offers Comprehensive Guidance for Women on Understanding Menopausal
Hormone Therapy**

Women facing decisions about menopause and hormone therapy can find comprehensive information in a new booklet from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). *Facts About Menopausal Hormone Therapy* provides updated information on the hormone trials of NHLBI's Women's Health Initiative (WHI) and summarizes the risks and benefits of hormone treatment.

The long-term WHI hormone studies evaluated the effects of menopausal hormone therapy on many health issues facing women, including heart disease, breast cancer, colorectal cancer, and osteoporosis. Still more information was gained about quality of life issues and cognition.

In 2002, the WHI estrogen-plus-progestin study was stopped because of an increased risk of breast cancer and because, overall, risks from use of the hormones outweighed the benefits. The combination therapy increased the risk for heart attack, stroke, and blood clots. The hormone treatment also reduced the risk for hip and other fractures, and colorectal cancer. Two years later, the WHI estrogen-alone study was halted because of an increased risk of stroke and no significant effect on the risk of heart disease. Estrogen-alone also increased the risk for venous thrombosis (blood clots deep in a vein). Like the combination therapy, estrogen-alone reduced the risk for hip and other fractures.

The new booklet describes these research findings in detail and describes the current guidance on the use of menopausal hormone therapy. New study findings on the effects of combination therapy on cognition and urinary incontinence are also included.

“For women with menopause symptoms, making personal, informed decisions about hormone therapy can be challenging and often confusing. We’re providing an in-depth

resource to help women understand the issues and discuss them with their health care providers, “said NHLBI Director Elizabeth G. Nabel, M.D.

In addition to a detailed description of WHI and other research findings on hormone therapy, the booklet addresses alternatives to hormone therapies that can alleviate menopause symptoms, provides a check-list for discussing hormone therapy with a physician, and a comprehensive list of health screenings that all women of menopausal age should be including in their health regimens.

[Facts About Menopausal Hormone Therapy](#) can be downloaded free of charge (at <http://email.nhlbihin.net/product2.asp?source=&sku=05-5200>). Printed copies can be ordered online or by phone through the [NHLBI Health Information Center](#), 301-592-8573 or 240-629-3255 (TTY).



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