

The evolving landscape of hormone replacement therapy: Benefits, risks, and advances in menopausal care.

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Introduction

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has been a cornerstone of menopausal care for decades, offering relief from symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness [1]. The therapy involves supplementing the body with estrogen, progesterone, or a combination of both to restore hormonal balance after menopause [2]. HRT has been shown to improve quality of life, prevent bone loss, and reduce the risk of osteoporosis [3]. Studies have also suggested that it can provide cardiovascular benefits if started early in menopause, by improving lipid profiles and enhancing arterial health [4].

The use of HRT is not without risks [5]. Long-term use of combined estrogen-progestin therapy has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer, stroke, and deep vein thrombosis (VTE) [6]. These risks prompted a reevaluation of HRT in the early 2000s, leading to more cautious prescribing practices [7].

In recent years, advances in HRT formulations and delivery methods have improved the safety and efficacy of treatment [8]. Transdermal patches, gels, and low-dose oral preparations are now available, offering more targeted approaches with fewer side effects [9]. Bioidentical hormone therapy, which uses hormones that are chemically identical to those produced by the body, has also gained popularity, although its safety and efficacy are still being studied [10].

Conclusion

While HRT remains an effective treatment for menopausal symptoms and related health issues, it is important to weigh the benefits against the risks. The evolving landscape of HRT, with advances in formulations and delivery methods, continues to improve patient outcomes. Personalized treatment plans and ongoing monitoring are key to maximizing the benefits of HRT while minimizing its potential risks.

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