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Medically reviewed and edited by Dr. Danielle Weiss Published: November 29, 2022 Update July 30, 2024 [min Research](#) has shown a link between estrogen levels and obesity in menopausal women. Postmenopausal women who have been through menopause experience higher rates of obesity than men of the same age. Hormonal imbalances are responsible for many of the changes women experience during menopause, and hormone replacement therapy may be able to help. In this article, we'll discuss hormone replacement therapy, how it is linked to weight loss, its benefits and risks, and alternatives. Find out if you're eligible for GLP-1s, and get started on your weight loss journey for as low as \$75/month. How Do Hormones Affect My Weight? Hormones regulate almost all the functions in the human body. They are essential for ensuring healthy growth and development, and they also regulate our mood and sleep cycles. As women grow older, hormones that are essential for controlling weight, such as estrogen and testosterone, decrease. So it becomes increasingly difficult to get rid of excess weight and body fat, especially abdominal fat. All hormones are important and a hormonal imbalance can cause many health problems, including decreased bone mass, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, and weight gain. Estrogen is one of the main hormones that regulate weight, but it's not the only one. Testosterone also plays a role in weight regulation. When estrogen levels are low, it can lead to weight gain. Many women experience weight gain after menopause, and this is often due to a combination of factors, including changes in hormone levels, lifestyle, and genetics. Estrogen is responsible for regulating glucose and controlling where fat is stored. Decreased estrogen can cause increased belly fat even if you don't have weight gain elsewhere. Insulin is your insulin levels are high, your body is unable to burn fat. And instead, it stores it in the body. So when your insulin level increases due to insulin resistance which can arise because of low estrogen levels weight gain occurs. Progesterone While progesterone doesn't directly impact weight gain, when there is an imbalance of estrogen and progesterone, the body may retain more fluid which can result in a bloated appearance. Cortisol Together with adrenaline and norepinephrine, cortisol is the main hormone that controls the body's response to stress. It is essential for survival, but it also increases your appetite especially cravings for sweet, salty, or greasy foods. What is Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)? Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is a treatment that replaces the hormones that are missing or low in the body. It is used to relieve the symptoms of menopause. The two main hormones used in HRT are estrogen and progesterone. Both hormones are typically administered during therapy, but estrogen-only therapy may be prescribed for those who have had a hysterectomy (womb or uterus removal). Testosterone may also be prescribed in HRT as it aids fat loss, improves sex drive, and increases muscle mass. How Does Hormone Replacement Therapy Work? When menopause begins, the body produces less estrogen and progesterone, which causes several bodily changes weight gain is often one. To reduce some of the effects of menopause, you can ask your doctor about starting hormone therapy. Hormones used in HRT may be synthetic or bioidentical hormones. What are the different types of hormone replacement therapy? There are many forms of HRT, and they all have their own advantages and disadvantages. Your doctor will talk to you through the different options before you start treatment. Some ways HRT may be administered include: Tablets/Skin patches: Estrogen and/or progesterone are inserted into the skin via a patch or spray. Injections: Estrogen and/or progesterone are injected into the muscle. Creams: Estrogen and/or progesterone are applied to the skin. Vaginal estrogen: Estrogen is applied to the vagina to relieve vaginal dryness and discomfort. Low-dose vaginal estrogen can also be used to help with hot flashes and night sweats. Hormone replacement therapy can expect to: Experience less severe symptoms of menopause: Have an improved sex drive: Experience less vaginal dryness and discomfort: Lose weight and reduce body fat, especially belly fat: Feel less anxious and have fewer mood swings: Sleep better: Experience less chronic pain: Have a reduced risk of heart disease, dementia, and osteoporosis: Enjoy softer, smoother, and more youthful skin: Improve or protect bone health: Reduce colon cancer risk: Reduce hormone replacement therapy offers several potential benefits, like any other treatment it also comes with risks and side effects. Some initial side effects of hormone replacement therapy that may pass within the first three months of treatment include: Indigestion, stomach cramps, or bloating: Headaches and nausea: Feeling sick: Swollen or tender breasts: Skin irritation: Irregular menstruation: Women who use hormone therapy typically stay on the treatment for five years or fewer. Long-term use of HRT carries an increased risk of the following side effects: Heart attacks: Strokes: Blood clots: Breast cancer: An observational study conducted by the Women's Health Initiative found that: Estrogen-only HRT lowers the risk of breast cancer. Combination HRT which uses estrogen and progesterone or progestin slightly increases the risk of breast cancer depending on type or hormone, length of treatment and other factors: Women with a family history of breast cancer should not consider hormone replacement therapy and should consult their doctor about alternate treatments. What Are Some Signs of Hormone Imbalance? If you've been struggling to lose weight and the scale won't budge no matter how hard you try, you may be experiencing a hormonal imbalance. Here are some symptoms to watch out for: Irregularities in the menstrual cycle, such as missed periods: Sleep disturbances, such as struggling to fall asleep or waking frequently: Acne that won't go away: Excessively dry skin: Difficulty remembering things: Bloating, nausea, constipation, diarrhea, and other digestive problems: Stomach cramps or back pain during a period: Chronic fatigue: Depression: Mood swings: Chronic headaches: Low sex drive: Vaginal dryness and changes in the shape and density of breast tissue: Menopausal women who have been through menopause experience higher rates of obesity than men of the same age. Hormonal imbalances are responsible for many of the changes women experience during menopause, and hormone replacement therapy may be able to help. 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It is essential for preventing fat storage in the abdomen. Low testosterone is associated with sugar cravings and insulin resistance. Estrogen Falling estrogen levels can result in weight gain as estrogen is responsible for

necessary.According to the North American Menopause Society, hormone levels tested during perimenopause (usually the period between ages 40 and 45) are not typically accurate, as hormone levels fluctuate too much.However, a hormone test may provide useful fertility insights when menstruation stops too early.What Else Could Be Preventing Me from Losing Weight?If youre struggling to lose weight, your hormone levels may be responsible for those extra pounds or it might be those late-night snacks or all those Frappuccinos with extra cream.Below are some other reasons why you may be gaining weight:Youre not eating a balanced dietYoure consuming too many caloriesYoure drinking too many sugary drinksor consuming empty caloriesYou arent getting enough quality sleepYour stress levels are too highYoure not getting enough physical activityYou have a medical condition such as depression or hypothyroidism thats making you gain weightBefore seeking hormone replacement therapy, determine whether a few simple lifestyle changes can help you lose the extra pounds. Shed pounds with GLP-1 medication prescribed online by licensed healthcare providers for as low as \$75/month. Who Should Not Have Hormone Replacement Therapy?While hormone replacement therapy can be really beneficial to some women, a doctor may advise against this course of treatment for those who:Come from a family with a history of blood clots, or ovarian, uterine, or breast cancerHave uncontrolled high blood pressure, or liver or heart diseaseAre currently pregnantExperience unusual vaginal bleedingAre smokersWhat are Some Alternatives to Hormone Replacement Therapy?If youre someone who's not a suitable candidate for HRT, but you still want to regulate your hormones for weight loss and other benefits, you may want to explore the following options:Alternative medicine treatments, such as acupressure and acupunctureHerbal medicines, such as essential oilsMedical treatments that can rebalance hormones, such as antidepressantsLifestyle changes, such as a healthy diet and increased exerciseHomeopathic remediesWhen Should I See a Doctor for Weight Gain?If youve experienced sudden or unintentional weight gain, you should seek medical attention.Maybe you've just been snacking more often due to stress in which case, more mindful eating and a good meal plan may solve the problem.However, if your hormones are causing weight gain or you have a more serious underlying medical issue, only a healthcare professional can help.If eating moderately or incorporating more exercise into your routine doesn't change the way you look and feel, get in touch with a doctor.Where Can I Learn More About HRT and Weight Loss?Are you heading toward menopause? Are you worried that your hormones are affecting your weight? Have you tried everything, but the scale still wont budge? Book a telehealth appointment with a board-certified doctor or nurse practitioner to find out if hormone replacement therapy is right for you. Dr. Weiss earned her MD from NYU School of Medicine, completed her residency at Scripps Mercy San Diego, and an endocrinology fellowship at Stanford University. Shes Board Certified in both Internal Medicine and Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism. Talk To A Doctor LifeMD makes it easy to stay on top of your health because talking to a doctor, filling your prescriptions, getting your labs doneand moreare all easy and cost-effective. Come discover a healthcare solution built around you and your life.

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