

[IMAGE]

More Reason to Worry About Combined Hormone Replacement Therapy

Recent studies have established a fairly conclusive link between some forms of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and an increased risk of breast cancer - particularly HRT regimens that rely on combined (e.g., estrogen and progestin) therapy. The latest study on combined HRT therapy goes one step further in suggesting that women need to be wary.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a correlation exists between the duration of replacement therapy use and breast cancer. The study assessed women between 65-79 who had been diagnosed with invasive breast cancer, and who use unopposed estrogen replacement therapy (EST), combined hormone replacement therapy (CHRT), or both.

The results of this study showed that women who used EST exclusively for extended periods of time were not more prone to developing breast cancer, while women who used CHRT showed an increased risk for breast cancer, especially when using CHRT for longer durations and regardless of whether CHRT was utilized in a sequential or continuous fashion.

Natural alternatives to hormone replacement therapy do exist, and each woman should weigh the benefits and risks before starting any regimen, particularly one based on combined hormone administration.

Additional information on the benefits and risks of HRT can be found at

www.amwa-doc.org/healthtopics/hrt_breastcancer_qa.htm or

www.acog.org/from_home/publications/press_releases/nr08-30-02.cfm.

Reference:

Li CI, Malone KE, Porter PL, et al. Relationship between long durations and different regimens of hormone therapy and risk of breast cancer. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, June 25, 2003: Volume 289, Number 24, p.3254.

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