

Appropriate use of hormones should alleviate concerns of cardiovascular and breast cancer risk.

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Since the publication of several recent randomized trials in the United States, prescriptions for hormonal therapy have dropped precipitously. This has been due, in large part, to the concerns about the increased risk of cardiovascular (CV) disease and breast cancer among the hormone users. This review takes the perspective that the appropriate use of hormones largely alleviates these concerns. The appropriate use of hormones pertains to treating younger, healthy women who have menopausal symptoms as well as using low-doses of hormones. In the randomized trials, suggesting an increased CV risk, the older women were largely asymptomatic and had other CV risk factors. Data are presented to suggest that there is no increased CV risk with hormonal therapy in younger, healthy women within 5 years of menopause. Moreover, a model is presented to attempt to explain the potential of preventing CV disease when estrogen is begun early, and the relative hazard associated with later use. **The risk of breast cancer with hormonal therapy is put into perspective with the realization that this risk is related to hormonal dose and duration of use, and that the absolute risk remains small. Use of progestogens, (*synthetic and not bio-identical progesterone was used in these studies*) in particular, appears to enhance this risk.** The appropriate use of hormones also pertains to using lower-doses. Here data are presented showing efficacy with lower-doses and improved safety. With the use of lower-doses of estrogens, the progestogen dose, as required in women with a uterus, can be minimized.