

HORMONAL TREATMENT FOR ACNE

What is hormonal treatment for acne?

Hormonal treatments for acne are pills that contain an estrogen (usually ethinyl estradiol) and a progestin. They work by limiting the production of male-type hormones and sebum (oil), the two things that contribute to the formation of acne.

When can I start taking the medicine?

There are 3 ways you can start taking the medicine:

1. You can start taking pill on the Sunday after your normal menstrual period begins. By using this method, you have the potential of having bleeding-free weekends.
2. The other standard method has patients begin pills with the start of their period. The advantage to this method is that there is no need for back-up birth control.
3. You can also start the pill today. Called the "quick start" method, you will need a negative pregnancy test before start and use of back-up contraception for 3 weeks.

What are common side-effects?

Common side effects of therapy include nausea, vomiting, breakthrough bleeding, weight gain, and breast tenderness. These minor side effects tend to resolve after the first 2-3 cycles as the body adjusts to the medicine. Other side effects can include mood changes, darker pigment on the skin, and decreased sexual desire.

Reasons why you should not take this medication:

You cannot use this medicine if you have/are:

- Heart disease or very high blood pressure (160/100mm Hg)
- A history of blood clots or a family tendency to form blood clots
- Upcoming major surgery with prolonged immobilization;
- Severe obesity or very high cholesterol
- A smoker and if you are older than the age of 35
- Known or suspected breast cancer or other estrogen dependent neoplasm
- Undiagnosed abnormal vaginal bleeding
- A history of cholestatic jaundice of pregnancy or jaundice (yellow skin and eyes) with prior pill use
- Pregnancy or breastfeeding
- Hypersensitivity to any component of the medication
- Migraines with focal neurologic symptoms
- Diabetes with evidence of kidney, eye, vessel or nerve problems
- Severe liver problems