

# SOME HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR HORMONE PRESCRIPTION

Dear Patient,

You and your doctor or midwife have decided that a prescription for some type of hormone therapy is appropriate for you. We are hearing back from patients that insurance coverage for some of these, especially brand names, is being reduced. Here are some things to know that may help you decide how you want to manage your prescriptions.

- If you have been prescribed oral estrogen such as **Premarin, Enjuvia**, or **Estrace**, there is a generic estradiol that can be substituted. This is not chemically identical to Premarin and Enjuvia, but this usually does not make a difference.
- If you have been prescribed oral combination estrogen and progesterone, such as **Prempro, Activella** or **FemHRT**, there is no generic combination. However, you can use separate generic estradiol for the estrogen and generic medroxyprogesterone for the progesterone, which would require 2 pills per day instead of one, and probably 2 copays.
- If you have been prescribed an estrogen gel such as **Elestrin** or **Estrogel**, there is no generic for this.
- If you have been prescribed vaginal estrogen such as **Premarin cream, Estrace cream, Vagifem** or **Estring**, there are no generics for these. But you should realize that for most of these medications, the dose decreases after the first 2 weeks, so in the long run you will be filling prescriptions less frequently. Switching to an oral form of estrogen will require a discussion with your doctor or midwife, as there are more risks involved with taking a medication that goes through your whole body.
- If you have been prescribed an estrogen patch such as **Vivelle, Climara**, or **Minivelle**, there is a generic patch available. However, our experience has been that patients are almost universally dissatisfied with the generic patch as it is much thicker and bigger than these brands, and it does not stay on well. If you would like, you can try one out to see how it works for you. Using a patch for estrogen therapy is thought by many to be the safest regarding risks of blood clots and stroke, so switching to an oral generic estrogen will require a discussion with your doctor or midwife.
- If you have been prescribed a combination estrogen/progesterone patch such as **ClimaraPro**, there is no generic for this.

Remember that for many insurances, a mail order pharmacy is an option that may make your prescriptions more affordable. You may want to look into this on your insurance carrier's website, as well as what is covered for generics or alternative brands. Also, you may want to investigate getting your prescription filled at a different or large store pharmacy. You can always call on the phone and ask their price without having to turn in a prescription to be filled.

Ultimately, you will need to decide how much you are willing to pay out of pocket for these medications that are often prescribed to improve your quality of life.

Please do not call our office just asking for a "cheaper prescription." This is individual and varies with insurance coverage. You will need to figure out what works for you and your plan. Then you should call our office. If a prescription change is appropriate for you, we will do that. Otherwise, you may need to schedule an appointment for further discussion.



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