

# Vaginal Oestrogen Therapy

Oestrogen is a naturally occurring hormone, which is commonly used in the treatment of urinary incontinence. Oestrogen increases blood flow to the tissues around the urethra, bladder and vagina, making the tissues stronger so that they can function more effectively.

After Menopause ð Oestrogen levels drop ð the tissues supporting the vagina, urethra and bladder lose their strength ð incontinence results.

Oestrogen can be administered in several ways: -

- Oral: - for example, "Premarin" tablets
- Patches: - Oestrogen is absorbed into the skin
- Implants: - slowly releases Oestrogen into the body
- Pessaries: - tablets are inserted into the vagina
- Creams: - applied to the vagina via an applicator

Pessaries and creams are commonly used for urinary incontinence as they can be applied directly to the problem area. Vaginal Oestrogen is **used at bedtime twice weekly for three months** when the dose is then reviewed by a doctor.

Side effects from vaginal are minimal as very little of the drug is absorbed into the rest of the body. However, because of this, vaginal Oestrogen doesn't help other menopausal symptoms, and does not reduce the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis like other forms of the Oestrogen therapy do. However it is important to note that Ovestin Cream is safe in women with previous history of Breast Cancer

Incontinence will not be "cured" by vaginal Oestrogen therapy alone. It is important to remember that Oestrogen is only effective in combination with other treatments, such as pelvic muscle exercises, bladder re-training and correct posture whilst emptying your bladder.