

HRT: The Decision Sheet

The window math, your personal risk checklist, and the questions to ask at the appointment.

✓ **Verified against published guidance** from the National Institute on Aging, Mayo Clinic & Cleveland Clinic · sources below

The window: starting before age 60, or within 10 years of menopause, the benefits may outweigh the risks for healthy women. Later than that, risks rise.

✓ Do This

Do the Window Math

- Your age today
- Years since your last period
- Under 60 or within 10 = window

COACH'S TIP Two numbers decide most of it.

Write Your Risk List

- Breast cancer, clots, stroke
- Heart or liver disease
- Family history counts

COACH'S TIP Bring the list to the visit.

Answer the Uterus Question

- Uterus: estrogen + progestogen
- No uterus: estrogen alone may do
- The add-on protects the lining

COACH'S TIP This decides the prescription shape.

Match the Form to the Symptom

- Hot flashes: systemic estrogen
- Vaginal-only: low-dose vaginal
- Pills, patches, gels, rings

COACH'S TIP Local symptoms need less hormone.

Ask for the Lowest Dose

- That controls your symptoms
- For as long as you need it
- Not a day longer

COACH'S TIP The dial adjusts. Use it.

Book a Yearly Review

- Re-check benefit vs risk
- Keep mammograms current
- Plans change as you do

COACH'S TIP A conversation, not a contract.

✗ Do Not

Do Not Read 2002 as the Last Word

- That analysis: 10 yrs past menopause
- And high heart risk
- Newer analysis differs

COACH'S TIP Ask what applies to you.

Do Not Expect a Longevity Drug

- Treats symptoms and bone
- Not heart-disease prevention
- USPSTF is clear on this

COACH'S TIP Right tool, right job.

Do Not Start Late Without the Talk

- 60+ or 10+ years out
- Serious risks rise
- Alternatives exist

COACH'S TIP A late start changes the math.

Do Not Hide Your History

- Clots, cancers, stroke, liver
- It changes the answer
- Honesty is protective

COACH'S TIP The risk list is the point.

Do Not Take Estrogen Alone With a Uterus

- The lining can thicken
- Endometrial cancer risk
- Progestogen protects it

COACH'S TIP One add-on, big difference.

Do Not Suffer Without Alternatives

- CBT and hypnosis help flashes
- Nonhormonal prescriptions exist
- Certain antidepressants work too

COACH'S TIP Cannot take hormones? Still options.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THIS SHEET

Three figures worth knowing

Before 60

Or within 10 years of menopause: the window where benefits most often outweigh risks

700+

Women in the KEOPS trial: no major adverse events, no breast cancer difference vs placebo

10 years

Average distance past menopause of the women in the initial 2002 analysis