PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Estrogens (Conjugated/Equine, Topical)

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it’s used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US
Premarin

Brand Names: Canada
Premarin

Warning

- Estrogens may raise the chance of uterine cancer. Progestins may lower this chance. A warning sign for cancer of the uterus is vaginal bleeding. Report any vaginal bleeding to the doctor.

- Do not use estrogens to prevent heart disease or dementia. Using estrogens may raise the chances of having a heart attack, a stroke, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, a blood clot, or dementia.

- Use estrogens with or without progestin for the shortest
time needed at the lowest useful dose.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent or lower the signs of the change of life (menopause).
- It is used to treat vaginal irritation and dryness.
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you have an allergy to estrogens (conjugated/equine) or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have had any of these health problems: Bleeding disorder, blood clots, a higher risk of having a blood clot, breast cancer, liver problems or liver tumor, heart attack, stroke, or a tumor where estrogen makes it grow.
- If you have unexplained vaginal bleeding.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.
Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

**What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?**

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- This drug may raise the chance of blood clots, a stroke, or a heart attack. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your doctor if you will need to be still for long periods of time like long trips, bedrest after surgery, or illness. Not moving for long periods may raise your chance of blood clots.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with your doctor. This drug may raise blood sugar.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- High blood pressure has happened with drugs like this one. Have your blood pressure checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- High triglyceride levels have happened with this drug. Tell
your doctor if you have ever had high triglyceride levels.

- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

- Have a bone density test as you have been told by your doctor. Talk with your doctor.

- Be sure to have regular breast exams and gynecology check-ups. You will also need to do breast self-exams as you have been told.

- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.

- Limit your drinking of alcohol.

- Avoid cigarette smoking. Smoking raises the chance of heart disease. Talk with your doctor.

- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.

- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.

- This drug is not approved for use in children. Talk with the doctor.

- Condoms, diaphragms, or cervical caps may not work to prevent pregnancy. Use some other kind of birth control while taking this drug.

- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any risks to your baby.
What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, feeling tired, not hungry, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of gallbladder problems like pain in the upper right belly area, right shoulder area, or between the shoulder blades; yellow skin or eyes; fever with chills; bloating; or very upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of a pancreas problem (pancreatitis) like very bad stomach pain, very bad back pain, or very bad upset stomach or throwing up.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the
face, or blurred eyesight.

- Pelvic pain.
- Change in eyesight.
- Loss of eyesight.
- Bulging eyes.
- Change in how contact lenses feel in the eyes.
- A lump in the breast, breast pain or soreness, or nipple discharge.
- Breast pain.
- Vaginal itching or discharge.
- Vaginal bleeding that is not normal.
- Very bad vaginal irritation.
- Memory problems or loss.
- Swelling.
- Call your doctor right away if you have signs of a blood clot like chest pain or pressure; coughing up blood; shortness of breath; swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm; or trouble speaking or swallowing.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:
• Headache.
• Hair loss.
• Breast soreness.
• Upset stomach or throwing up.
• Stomach cramps.
• Bloating.
• Vaginal bleeding or spotting.
• Vaginal irritation.
• This drug may cause dark patches of skin on your face. Avoid sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

**How is this drug best taken?**

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

• Use this drug at the same time of day.
• There may be days when you will not take this drug.
• Use cream vaginally.

**What do I do if I miss a dose?**
• Use a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
• If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
• Do not put on 2 doses or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

• Store at room temperature.
• Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
• Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

• If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
• Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
• Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
• If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it
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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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