



# Skin, Menopause and HRT

**Dr Katie Barber**

BM BCh MRCGP DRCOG DFRH

Clinical Director, GP and  
Accredited Menopause  
Specialist

Changes to the skin are common around the time of menopause. Loss of oestrogen causes a reduction in production of ceramides and sebum which can cause drying of the skin and associated itching. Reduced collagen production and loss of elasticity also leads to thinning and sagging of the skin and wrinkles can become more pronounced. Hormonal fluctuations can also exacerbate rosacea and acne, especially in women who suffered with spots in their teenage years. In addition, oestrogen deficiency can cause thinning and loss of hair.

It therefore becomes even more important to care for your skin, and avoid any products such as soaps that could cause further drying. An emollient cream can be used as a soap substitute, and you should moisturise your face and body regularly. Protect yourself from sun damage by using a high factor SPF in the summer and avoid excessive exposure. Triggers such as caffeine, alcohol and spicy foods can set off rosacea as well as hot flushes and sweats.

Oestrogen replacement can help improve skin and hair quality and reduce itching by reversing some of these changes and promoting water retention and plumpness in the skin. Increasing the level of oestrogen in relation to testosterone could also help prevent spots.

Some women worry that taking HRT will affect their skin in a negative way, especially if they have had side effects from contraceptive hormones in the past. Progesterone only contraceptives, such as the 'mini pill', implant or depo injection can cause or worsen acne but HRT can be given as a combination of oestrogen and natural progesterone, rather than using these synthetic hormones. Progesterones can also be delivered locally into the uterus using a hormone releasing coil (Mirena or similar), and progesterone capsules can sometimes be used off label vaginally in order to reduce the chance of side effects including spots.

01235 634606

[enquiries@oxfordmenopause.com](mailto:enquiries@oxfordmenopause.com)

[www.oxfordmenopause.com](http://www.oxfordmenopause.com)

The Carriage House, School Road,  
Ardington, Wantage, OX12 8PQ

OXFORD MENOPAUSE  THE CARRIAGE HOUSE CLINIC

Oxford Menopause Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 13618225.

Oxford Menopause Ltd is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

OML24-18-Skin\_Menopause\_HRT

Testosterone can cause acne, and this is one of the commonest side effects when women take testosterone replacement as part of their HRT regimen. Regular monitoring to ensure that levels remain within the normal range for a female, and don't go too high, can avoid this but some women will experience acne even at normal physiological levels if they are particularly sensitive.

It is sometimes necessary to try a few different options before finding the combination of HRT that maximises the benefits but avoids any unwanted side effects. Often side effects, such as spots, are transient and improve as the body adjusts to the new hormone levels. It is always best to discuss any concerns with your menopause specialist.

01235 634606  
enquiries@oxfordmenopause.com  
www.oxfordmenopause.com

The Carriage House, School Road,  
Ardington, Wantage, OX12 8PQ



Oxford Menopause Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 13618225.

Oxford Menopause Ltd is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).