

Micronised Progesterone or Utrogestan®

What is Utrogestan?

Utrogestan is a type of progestogen called 'micronised progesterone'. It is derived from plants, including yam, a root vegetable. It is identical in structure to the hormone progesterone produced in our bodies. Because of this, it is often referred to as 'body identical'. This is different to unregulated, compounded bioidentical hormones.

If you take HRT and still have your womb (uterus) you will need to take a type of progestogen or progesterone, in addition to estrogen. This is because taking estrogen can lead to a build-up in the lining of your womb, over time. Taking a progesterone, such as Utrogestan, prevents this occurring and reduces associated risks.

How is Utrogestan taken?

Utrogestan is given as a 100 mg capsule. There are two ways of taking Utrogestan.

- If you have had periods in the last 6-12 months, the usual recommended dose is two 100mg capsules, taken together each evening, for two out of four weeks, on a repeating basis.
- If you have not had a period for over a year, the usual recommended dose is taking one 100mg capsule every evening, without a break.

It is completely safe to take it in this way.

Utrogestan is a natural sedative so can sometimes cause drowsiness. It is therefore recommended you take it at bedtime.

It is best to take Utrogestan on an empty stomach because eating food can actually increase its absorption (though this is not detrimental).

Are there side-effects with Utrogestan?

Some people experience side-effects initially, which can include vaginal bleeding, abdominal bloating, lower abdominal pain or discomfort and breast tenderness. Bleeding can be intermittent or continual and last for 3-6 months after starting HRT. If your bleeding worsens or does not improve with time, you should seek guidance from your clinician.

Some women find that their mood is lower when they take Utrogestan. This side-effect is less common compared to taking a progestogen (a synthetic progesterone), but it can still occur in around one in ten people taking utrogestan. If you experience this side-effect and it does not improve, there are alternative ways of taking Utrogestan and this can be discussed with you by your healthcare professional. The Utrogestan can be used, often at a lower dose, vaginally. This means that less is absorbed into your body so the chances of side effects are reduced.

What are the advantages of Utrogestan compared to older types of progestogens?

As Utrogestan is a body identical hormone, women usually experience less side-effects compared to the older types of progestogens.

The older types of progestogens given as tablets or as a combination patch, can be associated with a slightly higher risk of blood clot and heart disease. Studies have shown that women who take Utrogestan however, do not have a higher risk of clot or heart disease.

Taking Utrogestan has not been shown in any studies to be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. For women taking the older types of progestogen, the risk of breast cancer is very low. The level of increased risk with the older types of progestogen is lower than the level of risk of breast cancer in women who are overweight, or women that drink around two glasses of wine every day.

