

Oestrogel and Sandrena

What is Oestrogel?

Oestrogel contains the hormone 17 beta-estradiol, which is the main type of estrogen in our bodies. It is derived mainly from the yam, a root vegetable, and is a body identical type of HRT. It is packaged in a pump-action bottle called a 'pump pack', and each bottle has 64 pumps of estrogen gel in it.

How do you use Oestrogel?

The most common dose for Oestrogel is between two and four pumps a day. Usually, if you need more than two pumps it is preferable to divide the doses for use in the morning and in the evening. It can be very common for younger women to need higher doses of Oestrogel and this is safe.

The gel should be rubbed into your skin on either the outside of your arms or the inside of your thighs. It is not greasy and does not have an odour. It does not usually stain clothes and most women find it dries easily.

Once your skin is dry, you can wear clothes and exercise normally. It is usually advisable to wait around 30 minutes before using other creams on the area, including sun cream. You should wash your hands with soap and water after applying the gel.

Sandrena: estrogen gel in sachets

An alternative to a pump action bottle of estrogen gel is to use sachets of gel - these are branded as Sandrena. The gel comes in sachets of 0.5mg or 1mg and the dose will vary depending on your symptoms.

The gel works in the same way as Oestrogel and is used in the same fashion, by rubbing it into your lower body or thighs. Some women find that the Sandrena gel is absorbed in a different way to the Oestrogel.

The sachets can be particularly useful when travelling or just to keep in your handbag in case you are away from home when you need to apply a dose.

How do estrogen gels work?

The gel is replacing the estrogen hormone - the most important hormone for women and the one that reduces significantly during the perimenopause and menopause. In most cases, replacing estrogen effectively improves symptoms such as hot flushes, night sweats, mood changes and vaginal dryness.

If you still have your womb (uterus), you should also take a type of progestogen - either as a capsule, tablet or have the Mirena® coil inserted. A progestogen is needed to stop the lining of the womb building up, which can occur if only an estrogen treatment is used.

What are the advantages of estrogen gel compared to taking tablets?

The absorption of the gel is more reliable than taking it as a tablet because it goes straight into your bloodstream through your skin. There is no risk of blood clot using estrogen as a gel, whereas there is a small increased risk when taking estrogen as a tablet. In addition, women who have a history of migraines can still use estrogen as a gel - in fact, they should not take it in tablet form.

Many women enjoy the flexibility of changing the dose depending on their symptoms. Often people find that their need for estrogen can increase or decrease with time - the dose of gel can alter accordingly. Changing the amount of gel you use should only be in consultation with your menopause doctor or GP.

Estrogen can also be taken in the form of a spray, known as Lenzetto. It is sprayed on the skin of the inner forearm; it works in the same way as an estrogen gel and has the same advantages over estrogen tablets. For more information see 'Lenzetto estrogen spray' factsheet.

