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Weight gain in women

Women tend to put on weight as they transition through menopause and this weight gain might intensify after menopausal symptoms like hot flushes diminish. This excess accumulation of fat can be difficult to reverse. Why does this weight gain occur and why is it so hard to shift? While some claim that it might have something to do with eating too much and not exercising enough, there are a number of hormones that are implicated.

There is a misconception that oestrogen, the major female hormone, promotes weight gain. In fact the opposite is true. Oestrogen simulates a feeling of fullness, builds muscle, boosts the action of insulin and encourages fat burning. HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) in the form of oestrogen leads to fat loss whereas studies indicate that relative oestrogen deficiency around the menopause period and beyond leads to weight gain. Furthermore, the science suggests that the accumulation of testosterone, which can occur with an increase in weight around menopause, and progesterone, used in hormone treatments, can be responsible for weight gain. Both testosterone and progesterone are capable of impeding the action of insulin which undermines the body's capacity to burn fat.

While taking oestrogen is not advocated as a weight loss strategy, utilising transdermal oestrogen or Oestrogen Replacement Therapy applied to the skin might be helpful. Women who are struggling to lose weight need to have a comprehensive hormonal and glucose or sugar metabolism [assessment](#). Boosting thyroid hormone function, if levels of this hormone are low, might assist with weight loss as would improving glucose metabolism, if this essential function is not operating efficiently. Fat burning can only proceed once glucose deployment proceeds smoothly.

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