



## "Will my hot flushes return when I stop taking HRT?"

I do get asked this question by many women & it is a particularly good question to ask.

Hot flushes are possibly the most recognisable symptom of the menopause. Some flushes last seconds and some can last much longer and can continue over several years both peri & post-menopausal.

Mostly though, hot flushes are experienced in the first year post-menopausal (so that's one year after your last period). This is to do with the reduction & fluctuating levels of oestrogen in women.

Stats show that women with a higher body mass index (BMI) report a much higher incidence of hot flushes. They report more frequent and intense flushes. So being overweight will contribute to those flushes and sweats. Although I have met many women who are slim and experience hot flushes too.

Smoking is also evidenced as contributing to hot flushes.

You may want to stop HRT because, well, you obviously have a choice, it's your life and your decision.

You may have to stop HRT due to other health issues, such as cancer, various therapies or you feel that you just cannot get on with HRT.

Many women who try & stop HRT do so without any issues or return of hot flushes. Please note though that stopping HRT should be done GRADUALLY with the dose being lowered, so as not to shock your system into wondering what on earth has happened. Each woman is individual and what causes issues such as the return of hot flushes and other symptoms to some will not occur for others.

So be safe, ensure you talk it through with your GP if they are experienced in menopause health or with your women's health nurse or menopause specialist.

Many women decide to stay on HRT because the benefits to their health & lifestyle outweigh any risks. There is evidence that HRT protects bone density against osteopenia and osteoporosis. HRT is also proven to help in the prevention of

cardiovascular disease and there is increasing evidence that suggests it can also protect against cognitive decline.

Some women in their 80's & 90's still take HRT because of the benefits to their health and quality of life.

Just remember by informing yourself with all the facts you can make the right choice for you.