

# Vaginal Estrogen Therapy

WARWIKI

Patient Information · Low-dose, local treatment for dryness and bladder symptoms

Vaginal estrogen is a **low-dose estrogen placed directly in the vagina** — as a cream, tablet, or ring — to treat the dryness, irritation, painful sex, and urinary symptoms that come from falling estrogen after menopause. Because it works locally, very little reaches the bloodstream, making it safe for most people.

## What It Treats

After menopause, low estrogen thins and dries the tissues of the vagina and urethra — a condition called **genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM)**. Vaginal estrogen restores that lining and can:

- Ease **dryness, burning, and itching**, and **painful sex**
- Reduce urinary **urgency and frequency**
- Lower the risk of **recurrent urinary tract infections**

## Is It Safe?

For most people, yes. Vaginal estrogen is **very low-dose and local** — quite different from the estrogen pills or patches used for hot flashes — with little absorbed into the body. If you have a history of breast or other hormone-sensitive cancer, it can still often be used; discuss it with your team as a shared decision.

## LEARN THE TERMS

### GSM

Genitourinary syndrome of menopause — dryness, thinning, and urinary symptoms from low estrogen.

### Vaginal estrogen

Low-dose estrogen placed in the vagina (cream, tablet, or ring).

### Local vs. systemic

Local acts where it's placed; systemic (pills/patches) treats the whole body.

### Maintenance dose

The lower, ongoing dose after the first few weeks.

### Recurrent UTIs

Repeated bladder infections that vaginal estrogen can help prevent.

### Moisturizer / lubricant

Nonhormonal products that can be used alongside.

**HOW LONG BEFORE IT HELPS?** Many people feel better within a few weeks, with the full benefit by about 8–12 weeks. It works only while you keep using it, so it's meant as ongoing care — the symptoms tend to return if you stop.

## How to Use It

- 1 Starting:** most forms are used **nightly for about 2 weeks** to restore the tissue.
- 2 Maintenance:** then drop to **about twice a week** (the ring is replaced every 3 months).
- 3** Use it at **bedtime** so it stays in place; wash your hands before and after.
- 4** Continue long-term — it's safe to keep using and the benefit depends on regular use.

## Forms Available

- **Cream** — flexible dosing with an applicator
- **Tablet / insert** — tidy, pre-measured
- **Ring** — placed every 3 months, low-maintenance

## Good to Know

- You can add a nonhormonal **moisturizer or lubricant** for extra comfort.
- A little discharge or spotting when starting is common; it usually settles.
- It pairs well with pelvic-floor therapy and other bladder treatments.

### Call your team if you have:

- Any **vaginal bleeding after menopause** — always have this checked
- New breast lump or unusual symptoms
- Irritation that worsens instead of improving

## THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1.** Vaginal estrogen is a low-dose, local treatment for menopause-related dryness, painful sex, and urinary symptoms — with very little absorbed into the body.
- 2.** Use nightly for about 2 weeks, then twice weekly long-term (or a ring every 3 months); benefit depends on ongoing use.
- 3.** It's safe for most people — discuss any cancer history with your team. Always report bleeding after menopause.