

Hormone therapy not advised for preventing disease after menopause

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(HealthDay)—Using hormone therapy to prevent chronic health issues,

such as heart disease and bone loss, in postmenopausal women may do more harm than good, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) says.

After reviewing current evidence, the [task force](#) has issued an updated draft recommendation, reaffirming its final statement issued in 2012. The expert panel advises against the use of hormones—including estrogen and progestin—to prevent [chronic conditions](#) among postmenopausal women, including those who've had their uterus removed.

Hormone therapy in postmenopausal women first came under scrutiny in 2002, when a large U.S. trial known as the Women's Health Initiative abruptly halted a look at the benefits and harms of [hormone therapy](#) because it appeared to raise the risks of breast cancer, heart attack, stroke and blood clots.

Women typically enter menopause around the age of 50. Following menopause, women's hormone levels change. These changes may increase a woman's risk for long-term [health issues](#), such as heart disease and fractures due to bone loss.

Giving [postmenopausal women](#) estrogen and progestin may help prevent these hormone-related health issues, but at a potential cost, the task force said.

"The benefits of using menopausal hormone therapy to prevent chronic conditions like [heart disease](#) and diabetes do not outweigh the harms in women who have gone through menopause," said panel member Dr. Maureen Phipps in a task force news release.

"It's important to note that this draft recommendation applies only to women who have gone through menopause and are considering hormone

therapy to prevent chronic conditions," said panel member Ann Kurth.

"It does not apply to women who are considering hormone therapy to manage menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes or night sweats," she said.

The task force also said its recommendations don't apply to younger women who've gone through menopause earlier than usual. The recommendations also don't apply to younger women who had their ovaries removed before they reached menopause.

The panel's draft recommendation was posted on the task force's web site. The public can comment on this draft until June 12.

More information: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides more information on [menopausal hormone therapy](#).

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