



Moonsisters

HRT
THE MYTHS AND THE FACTS

HRT: Reclaiming Confidence, Health and Long-Term Wellbeing

Why your whole system feels overwhelmed — and what that means

A gentle note before we begin

If you're reading this there's a good chance you've questioned your body, your mind, or your confidence at some point during perimenopause or menopause. Maybe you've wondered whether how you're feeling is "normal", whether you should just push through, or whether HRT is something to be feared.

Let me say this clearly and kindly: you are not broken, you are not weak, and you are not failing at ageing. What you are experiencing is a biological transition that deserves understanding, compassion, and evidence-based support.

This guide is here to calm fears, clear up long-standing myths, and offer reassurance. It draws on the work of leading menopause experts including Dr Louise Newson, Dr Mary Claire Haver, Dr Sharon Malone, Dr Vonda Wright, Dr Lisa Mosconi, Dr Kelly Casperson, Dr Naomi Potter, Dr Natalie Crawford and others whose research has reshaped how we understand menopause today.



WHY HRT BECAME FEARED: THE LEGACY OF THE WHI STUDY

- For many women, fear of HRT can be traced back to one moment in history: the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study published in 2002.
- The headlines were terrifying. "HRT causes breast cancer." "HRT causes heart disease." Overnight, millions of women stopped their hormones, doctors stopped prescribing, and menopause care went into a long, damaging freeze.
- But here's what we now know:
 - The WHI studied older women, with an average age of **63**, many of whom were already years past menopause.
 - Most participants were given **synthetic** hormones, not the body-identical oestrogen and progesterone used today.
 - The data was misinterpreted, over-simplified and sensationalised.
- Dr Louise Newson and Dr Mary Claire Haver have been very clear on this: the WHI findings were never meant to apply to younger, symptomatic women starting HRT around the time of menopause.
- Subsequent re-analysis and decades of further research have shown that for most women:
 - Starting body-identical HRT at the right time is safe, effective, and protective.
 - Yet the fear lingered. And women paid the price.

The truth about HRT and cancer

Breast cancer

This is the fear women mention most often — and understandably so.

Here are the facts, explained gently and honestly:

- Oestrogen only HRT (used by women without a womb) does not increase breast cancer risk and may slightly reduce it.
- Combined HRT using body identical progesterone (micronised progesterone) shows little to no increased risk when used appropriately.
- The small increased risk seen with some older HRT types was linked to synthetic progestins, not natural progesterone.

Dr Louise Newson often compares the risk to everyday factors:

- Drinking a glass of wine most evenings
- Being overweight after menopause
- Not exercising regularly

All of these carry a greater breast cancer risk than modern body-identical HRT.

Importantly, HRT does not cause breast cancer — it may slightly increase the likelihood of a cancer already present being diagnosed earlier. Earlier diagnosis often means better outcomes.

Other cancers

- **Bowel cancer:** Combined HRT reduces risk
- **Endometrial (womb) cancer:** Progesterone protects the womb lining when oestrogen is used correctly
- **Ovarian cancer:** As Dr Newson states - there is no good quality evidence to show that women taking HRT have an increased risk of developing ovarian cancer.

WHAT HRT REALLY DOES FOR YOUR BODY

Menopause is not just about hot flushes or missed periods. Oestrogen receptors are found throughout the body, including the brain, bones, heart, skin, joints, bladder and gut.

When oestrogen declines, these systems feel it.

Brain & mood

Dr Lisa Mosconi's research shows that the menopausal brain undergoes a neurological transition, not a decline.

HRT can:

- Reduce anxiety and low mood
- Improve sleep quality
- Support memory and focus
- Reduce risk of depression

Many women say the biggest change is not physical, but the feeling of "coming back to myself."

Heart health

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in women, yet menopause is rarely discussed in this context.

Oestrogen supports:

- Healthy cholesterol balance
- Blood vessel flexibility
- Reduced inflammation

When started within 10 years of menopause, HRT reduces cardiovascular risk

Bones & muscles

From menopause onwards, women can lose up to 20% of bone density in the first few years.

HRT:

- Reduces fracture risk
- Protects against osteoporosis
- Supports muscle mass and strength

Dr Vonda Wright emphasises that strong bones and muscle are essential for independence as we age — and oestrogen plays a central role.

Joints, bladder, skin & sex

Oestrogen keeps tissues elastic, lubricated and resilient.

HRT can improve:

- Joint pain and stiffness
- Recurrent urinary symptoms
- Vaginal dryness and painful sex
- Skin thinning and collagen loss
- Libido and sexual comfort

A new study of 120 million woman showed that women who started their Oestrogen replacement HRT during perimenopause and continued it for 10 years plus had about **60%** lower risk of breast cancer, heart attack and stroke that those who **started later** or **not at all**. This study alone really highlights the positive benefits HRT has on our long term health when taken early.

IS HRT “NATURAL”?

A common concern is wanting to do things “naturally”.

Here’s the reframe many experts now offer:
Body-identical HRT replaces hormones your body has made for decades.

It is not adding something foreign — it is restoring balance.

Dr Naomi Potter often reminds women that:

- We don’t hesitate to replace insulin
- We don’t shame people for thyroid medication
- We don’t tell people to “push through” poor eyesight

Menopause hormones deserve the same respect.

Lifestyle changes absolutely matter — nutrition, movement, sleep, stress reduction — but for many women they are not enough on their own.

HRT is not a failure. It is a tool.

A HOPEFUL VIEW OF AGEING WITH HORMONES

One of the most beautiful truths about menopause is this:

your worth does not decline with your hormones.

In fact, many women report that with the right support they feel:

- More grounded
- More confident
- Less people-pleasing
- Clearer about boundaries
- More connected to themselves

Dr Lisa Mosconi describes menopause as a brain rewiring, one that can lead to emotional resilience and clarity.

HRT doesn't stop ageing — it supports *healthy* ageing.

And healthy ageing means:

- Strong bones • A healthy heart • A sharp mind
- Comfortable intimacy • Energy for life

A FINAL REASSURING NOTE

HRT is not right for every single woman,
and it should always be a personal,
informed decision.

But for the majority of women,
body-identical HRT is safe, protective,
and life-enhancing.

You deserve accurate information. You
deserve to feel well.
You deserve support.

Menopause is not the beginning of the
end – it is a transition into wisdom,
strength and self-ownership.

You are allowed to feel good in this
season of life.
And you don't have to do it alone.

A GENTLE NEXT STEP IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

Understanding menopause is powerful — but sometimes you need support to turn that understanding into feeling better.

As a menopause coach, I help women make sense of their symptoms, cut through the fear and misinformation, and find practical ways to feel more like themselves again.

That might include understanding hormones and HRT, navigating symptoms, or creating realistic lifestyle changes that actually fit your life.

This isn't about fixing you — it's about supporting your body through a natural transition, with compassion and clarity.

Your first discovery session is free

A relaxed, no-pressure chat to see what support might help and whether we're a good fit.

You don't have to do menopause alone.

MoonSisters are stronger together.

Book your FREE discovery session on my website

www.moonsisters.online



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About Rachael

Rachael is a certified menopause coach who supports women through midlife transitions with clarity, compassion and grounded expertise.

Her work focuses on helping women feel steady, confident and connected again — without pushing or pretending.