

efits of replacement hormones in relieving menopausal symptoms, hormone replacement therapy use has been associated with reduced risks of coronary heart disease, osteoporosis, and, in recent studies, colon cancer.¹⁶⁻²¹ These benefits appear to be manifest in users of either estrogen alone or combined estrogen-progestin therapy. Moreover, the addition of progestin to estrogen regimens appears to reduce or eliminate the increased risk of endometrial cancer associated with the use of estrogen alone.

There are lifestyle factors that may enhance the health of postmenopausal women, including regular exercise, maintenance of ideal body weight, and not smoking cigarettes. There is now evidence that hormone replacement therapy also may enhance the quality of life as well as prolong life for some women. The question of whether a woman with a personal history of breast cancer, however, should be prescribed menopausal hormones will remain unanswered until further research has been completed.

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Clinical Pearl

In a health maintenance organization, primary care patients with anxiety or depressive disorders had medical care costs about twice as high as those without these disorders, mostly because of higher use of general medical services rather than mental health services. There was no clear improvement in medical care utilization over the next year. (*Am J Psychiatry*. 1995;152:352-357.)