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epilepsy and the menopause

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can be taken at the same time as antiepileptic medicine. Since some antiepileptic drugs can cause a calcium loss the HRT can successfully counteract this.

Extra doses of HRT may be prescribed to counteract the symptoms of the menopause such as hot flushes and changes of mood.

If HRT is prescribed to prevent excessive loss of calcium which causes thinning of the bones (osteoporosis), and is more common in women taking antiepileptic drugs, it is likely that an oestrogen-progesterone combination is preferred because of a known link between increased seizures and oestrogen. As well as taking HRT, many menopausal women take calcium and vitamin D to minimize loss of calcium in the bones.

Epilepsy can develop at any time in life and for some it may present itself coincidentally with the menopause. On the other hand some women who have had epilepsy for many years find that seizure control improves during menopausal years and sometimes seizures stop completely.

Some women consider HRT to be a controversial treatment and prefer to use homoeopathic treatment, and one of the most popular is the use of evening primrose oil. Those who are taking antiepileptic medication and prefer this option should take medical advice before embarking on the treatment.