



Hormones, Menopause and Cancer



- **Menopause** is a natural biological process, occurring in women in their 40s and 50s
- As **oestrogen** levels **decline**, women may experience hot flushes, night sweats, mood shifts, vaginal dryness, sleep disturbances, and reduced bone density
- Menopause does **not** cause cancer, but a woman's risk of developing cancer increases with age
- Oestrogen is produced mainly in the ovaries, but after menopause, fat tissue becomes the main source
- Hormone replacement therapy (**HRT**) is sometimes prescribed to **ease** menopause symptoms



Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

- Some breast cancers are hormone-sensitive, and long-term use of combined oestrogen-progesterone therapy (beyond 3 to 5 years) can increase breast cancer risk
- Beyond cancer, oestrogen decline also affects bone and heart health, increasing risks of osteoporosis, fractures, and cardiovascular disease
- CANSA advises women to be fully informed before choosing whether to use HRT

Lower Cancer Risk

- Obesity after menopause raises the risk of breast cancer, maintain a healthy body weight
- Engage in regular physical activity
- Avoid alcohol and tobacco use
- Keep up with mammograms and other screening

