

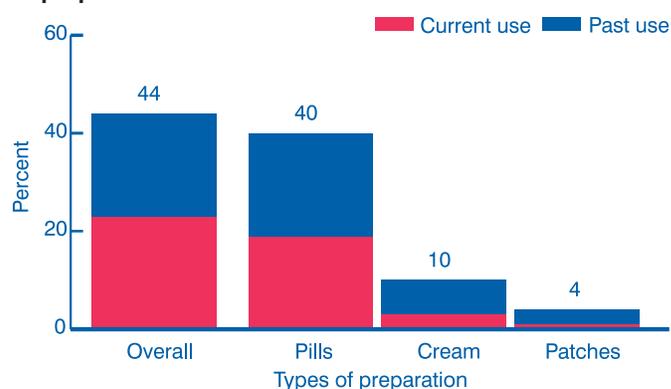
## Use of Hormone Replacement Therapy Among Postmenopausal Women in the United States, 1988–94

Although much has been written about the risk and benefits of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), there is much less documentation of its actual use in the United States. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) is one of the few national surveys that collected information on noncontraceptive female hormone use from a representative sample of women 17 years of age and older. This fact sheet draws data from NHANES III (1988–94) to show patterns of HRT use in the United States, and factors associated with HRT use.

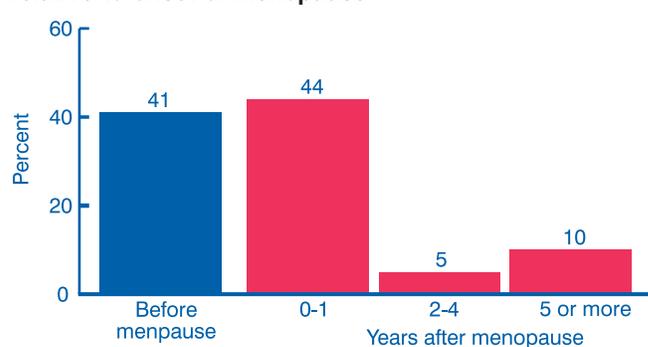
### When did women start using HRT, in what form, and for how long?

- Overall, 44 percent of postmenopausal women reported having ever used HRT. Pills were the most popular type of hormone preparation (40 percent), followed by cream, suppository, or injection (10 percent), and then by skin patches (4 percent). Some women used more than one form of preparation (figure 1).
- About 22 percent of postmenopausal women reported currently using HRT at the time of the NHANES interview. Among women who had ever used HRT pills, about one-half of them were currently using them. About one-third of cream or skin patch users were still using them at the time of the NHANES interview (figure 1).
- Among women who ever used HRT, 41 percent started this therapy before they experienced natural or surgical menopause, 44 percent started within 1 year after menopause, 5 percent started between 2–4 years after menopause, and 10 percent started 5 or more years after menopause (figure 2).

**Figure 1. Hormone Replacement Therapy use and types of preparation**



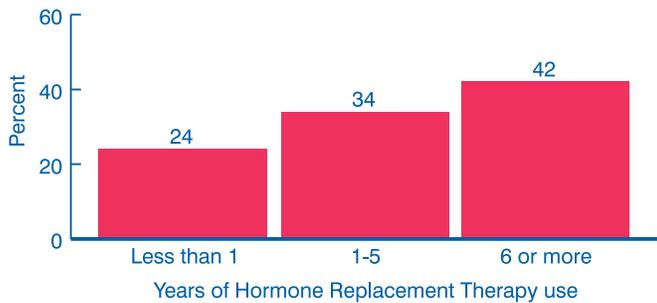
**Figure 2. Hormone Replacement Therapy initiation relative to onset of menopause**



SOURCE: CDC/NCHS: NHANES III

- Among women who were 10 or more years beyond menopause, 39 percent had ever used HRT in pill form. In this group, 24 percent stopped taking HRT pills within 1 year, 34 percent used HRT between 1–5 years, and 42 percent continued taking HRT pills for 6 years or more (figure 3).

**Figure 3. Hormone Replacement Therapy pill use by women at least 10 years post-menopause**

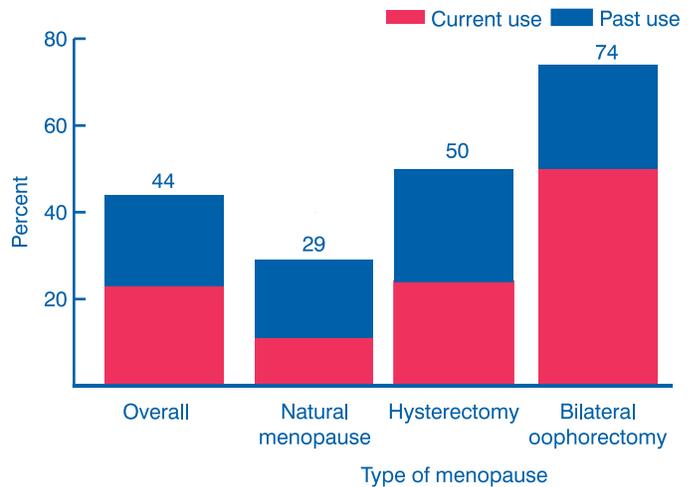


SOURCE: CDC/NCHS: NHANES III.

## How does HRT use differ by menopausal type, race/ethnicity, education, or poverty status?

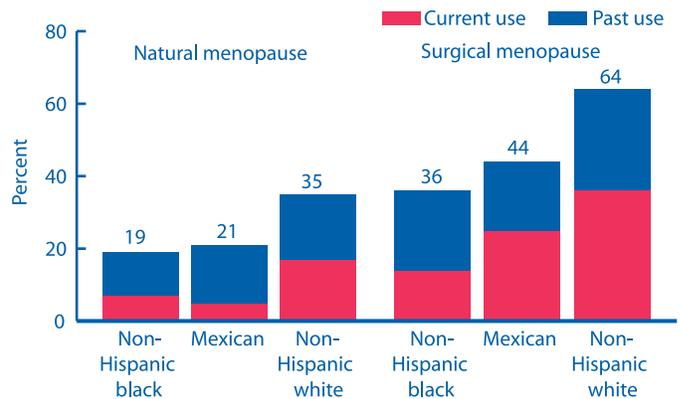
- Women with surgical menopause were much more likely to use HRT than women with natural menopause. About 74 percent of women who had both ovaries removed had ever used HRT, and 50 percent of those with a hysterectomy had ever used HRT. Only 29 percent of women with natural menopause had ever used HRT. Women with surgical menopause were also more likely to be current users than women with natural menopause (figure 4).
- Non-Hispanic white women were much more likely to use HRT than either non-Hispanic black or Mexican American women, regardless of their menopausal type (figure 5).
- The more educated a menopausal woman, the more likely she was to have ever used HRT or remained a current HRT user. The difference is more prominent between those who had not completed high school and those with education beyond high school (data not shown).
- Women’s family income was also associated with ever use and current use of HRT. The higher the family income, the more likely they were to have ever used or currently use HRT (data not shown).

**Figure 4. Hormone Replacement Therapy use by type of menopause**



SOURCE: CDC/NCHS: NHANES III.

**Figure 5. Age-adjusted Hormone Replacement Therapy use by race/ethnicity**



SOURCE: CDC/NCHS: NHANES III.

## Summary

NHANES III data showed that nearly one-half of postmenopausal U.S. women have used different forms of HRT at some time, and over one-third of HRT pill users have been on the therapy for more than 10 years. Also, HRT use is not evenly distributed among subgroups, with the use of HRT being associated with menopausal type, race/ethnicity, education, and family income. NHANES survey data provide information on who are using the therapy and for how long. This information informs policy makers and health professionals about groups most likely impacted by recommendations related to HRT use.

For more information about NHANES please visit our Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm>