

HORMONE HEALTH



When You Cannot Take Estrogen: What Actually Works for Hot Flashes

A new class of drug now cuts hot flashes without touching a hormone. And a long list of things sold in every pharmacy does nothing at all.

Swipe

THE OLD ANSWER WAS THIN

Some Women Simply Cannot Take Estrogen

A history of breast cancer, a previous clot, a stroke. Others just don't want to, and until recently the honest answer for them was thin.

THE REAL MECHANISM

A Drug Aimed at the Actual Cause, Not Borrowed From Another Illness

Deep in the hypothalamus, KNDy neurons drive the hot flash. Estrogen quiets them. Now a drug can block the same pathway directly, without any hormone at all.

FEZOLINETANT, BY THE NUMBERS

64% Reduction in Hot Flashes at 12 Weeks

In a phase 3 trial of over 500 postmenopausal women: 64 percent on the 45 mg dose, 59 percent on 30 mg, versus 45 percent on placebo alone.

NOT OPTIONAL

This Drug Comes With a Liver-Monitoring Rule

After reports of serious liver injury, the FDA requires blood tests before starting, then monthly for three months, then at six and nine months.

ANTIDEPRESSANTS, SORTED

Some Work. Two Popular Ones Don't.

Citalopram and escitalopram are the sensible starting point. Sertraline and fluoxetine are not worth taking for this. Paroxetine must never be combined with tamoxifen.

WHAT DOES NOT WORK

Black Cohosh, Acupuncture, Soy: No Better Than Placebo

Systematic reviews find black cohosh no more effective than placebo. The placebo response itself runs 20 to 50 percent, which is why so many remedies seem to work.

THE BOTTOM LINE



Hormone Therapy Still Wins. But There Is Now a Real Second Option.

Nothing here beats estrogen. But for the woman who cannot take it, there is finally a genuine, carefully prescribed answer instead of a shrug.