



# Healthy Women

Presented by the Coalition of Labor Union Women

## Hormone Replacement Therapy

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is estrogen therapy combined with the natural hormone progesterone or its synthetic form progestin. HRT is used to lessen the symptoms of menopause and prevent osteoporosis and heart disease. Only one quarter of postmenopausal women take estrogen. However, there may be an increased risk of cancer. Ask your health care provider which treatment options may be best for you.

### The Facts

- Women are now living more than one-third of their lives after menopause.
- The loss of estrogen during menopause is the single most important factor in the increase of risk in postmenopausal women for cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.
- One-half of women quit taking HRT after one year.
- Eighty percent of women who take HRT quit after three years.

### The Benefits

- Reduces the risk of osteoporosis.
- Produces increases in HDL (good cholesterol). Even small increases in HDL can potentially lower your risk of coronary heart disease by as much as 25 percent.
- Treats the symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, night sweats and vaginal dryness.
- May reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.
- May reduce the risk of diabetes.

## **The Risks**

- Estrogen raises the risk of endometrial or uterine cancer.
- Estrogen may increase a woman's triglyceride levels (chemical fat).
- Estrogen may increase the risk of blood clots in women.
- Studies show that 34 percent of new cases of postmenopausal breast cancer is caused by HRT, weight gain or both.
- Side effects including breast tenderness, sensations of bloating, weight gain, menstrual-type bleeding and headaches.

**Partner with your health care provider. Act now to prevent serious illness later.**

For additional copies, please contact the National CLUW Office  
1126 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 - (202) 466-4610 - fax (202) 776-0537