

1.5.11 Using table 3, explain to women around the age of natural menopause that:

- the baseline risk of breast cancer for women around menopausal age varies from one woman to another according to the presence of underlying risk factors
- HRT with oestrogen alone is associated with little or no change in the risk of breast cancer
- HRT with oestrogen and progestogen can be associated with an increase in the risk of breast cancer
- any increase in the risk of breast cancer is related to treatment duration and reduces after stopping HRT.

Table 3 Absolute rates of breast cancer for different types of HRT compared with no HRT (or placebo), different durations of HRT use and time since stopping HRT for menopausal women

		Difference in breast cancer incidence per 1000 menopausal women over 7.5 years (95% confidence interval) (baseline population risk in the UK over 7.5 years: 22.48 per 1000¹)			
		Current HRT users	Treatment duration <5 years	Treatment duration 5–10 years	>5 years since stopping treatment
Women on oestrogen alone	RCT estimate ²	4 fewer (-11 to 8)	No available data	No available data	5 fewer (-11 to 2)
	Observational estimate ³	6 more (1 to 12) ⁴	4 more (1 to 9)	5 more (-1 to 14)	5 fewer (-9 to -1)
Women on oestrogen + progestogen	RCT estimate ²	5 more (-4 to 36)	No available data	No available data	8 more (1 to 17)
	Observational estimate ³	17 more (14 to 20)	12 more (6 to 19)	21 more (9 to 37)	9 fewer (-16 to 13) ⁵

HRT, hormone replacement therapy; RCT, randomised controlled trial For full source references, see Appendix M in the [full guideline](#)

¹ Office for National Statistics (2010) [breast cancer incidence statistics](#). ² For women aged 50–59 years at entry to the RCT.

³ Observational estimates are based on cohort studies with several thousand women. ⁴ Evidence on observational estimate demonstrated very serious heterogeneity without plausible explanation by subgroup analysis. ⁵ Evidence on observational estimate demonstrated very serious imprecision in the estimate of effect.

