

Treating menopause symptoms reduces abdominal fat tissue

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Women who undergo hormone therapy to relieve menopausal symptoms tend to have less fat tissue, particularly in the abdomen, than other menopausal women, according to a new study published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Menopause is the process a woman goes through when her monthly periods end following the aging of the ovaries and the subsequent reduction of estrogens, the feminine sex hormone. Women going through this transition often find they are more susceptible to weight gain, and scientists are still researching how to improve this transition.

"When we studied a large sample of women to better understand the effect of [menopausal hormone therapy](#) on body composition, our research revealed that women were less likely to accumulate abdominal fat tissue while they were undergoing menopausal hormone therapy," said Georgios E. Papadakis, M.D., F.M.H., of Service of Endocrinology, CHUV, Lausanne University Hospital in Lausanne, Switzerland. "However, the protective effect disappeared quickly after the participants stopped receiving menopausal hormone therapy."

The researchers examined data from a sub-study of the CoLaus study, an ongoing prospective study to assess factors that affect the outcomes of cardiovascular disease. The participants in the sub-study, called the OsteoLaus cohort, were postmenopausal women between the ages of 50 and 80. The 1,086 participants were questioned about their current and past use of menopausal hormone therapy. All the women underwent dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) scans to measure their [body composition](#).

The women who were currently on menopausal hormone therapy exhibited significantly lower levels of abdominal fat tissue than women who had never received menopausal hormone therapy. The

women going through menopausal hormone therapy also tended to have slightly lower total fat mass levels and body mass index measurements.

Among women who had previously used menopausal hormone therapy, the analysis found no residual effect on abdominal fat tissue. Regardless of how long women underwent menopausal hormone therapy and how much time had elapsed since they used MHT, the results suggested they experienced a rapid rebound in [fat accumulation](#).

"Abdominal fat poses a risk for cardiovascular and bone health," Papadakis said. "When [women](#) stop menopausal hormone therapy, they need to be aware of the risk and ideally should increase their physical activity to combat the possibility of [weight gain](#)."

More information: "Menopausal Hormone Therapy is Associated with Reduced Total and Visceral Adiposity," *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* (2018). [DOI: 10.1210/jc.2017-02449](#)

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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