

## The Women's Health Initiative – Randomized controlled Trial Data

Associates For Women's Medicine wanted to address some of the confusion surrounding the recent statement released by the NIH regarding hormone replacement therapy and certain adverse outcomes.

At this time the data being released is preliminary and we feel there is no reason for panic. We have not yet had the occasion to analyze the full report. However, we feel the preliminary report did demonstrate that the risk of adverse outcomes such as breast cancer or pulmonary embolus or stroke is exceeding low. Furthermore this occurred in only one arm of the study and involved only a portion of the women involved. Our suggestion is to not panic and not make a rash decision to discontinue your hormone replacement medication. In no case should you discontinue your hormone replacement medication abruptly as this can result in hot flashes and discomfort that may be unnecessary.

If you have had a hysterectomy and you are on estrogen alone, there is no indication to discontinue your medication at this time. The study that was discontinued was the arm involving the combination products of estrogen and progesterone. Although the study showed a slight increase in breast cancer, stroke, and heart disease in this combined group, there was also a decrease in colon cancer, endometrial cancer and hip fractures. We feel these decreases are just as significant. The study was also clear that estrogen and progesterone in combination did not prevent coronary heart disease. If you are taking these medications for this reason you should consider discontinuing them with the evaluation and advice of your provider.

We believe in treating patients as individuals. Therefore, every patient needs a complete evaluation of their history and the rationale for instituting and continuing hormone replacement therapy. This can only be done with your medical record during an office visit with your provider. Patients should make an appointment and we will assist you in making a good decision for yourself. Your provider can also advise you on how to discontinue your hormones if you choose to do so.

For more information please visit the website of The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology at [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org). There you can find a statement on the Estrogen and Progestin Trial of the Women's Health Initiative study.