

RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin

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A joint initiative of the Patient Services Section and the Drug and Therapeutics Information Service of the Pharmacy Department, Repatriation General Hospital, Daw Park, South Australia. The RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin is distributed in electronic format on a weekly basis, and aims to present concise, factual information on issues of current interest in therapeutics, drug safety and cost-effective use of medications.

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Premarin[®] and Premia Continuous[®]

As of 1st June 2009 Premarin[®] (conjugated oestrogens) and Premia Continuous[®] (conjugated oestrogens plus medroxyprogesterone acetate) will no longer be available for subsidised supply through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS) in Australia; however, both will continue to be available as a private prescription. According to the manufacturer, the reason for this is due to increased costs associated with the manufacture of these two preparations.

The table below outlines oral oestrogen preparations (oestrogen as a sole ingredient) that are currently available in Australia and their approximate daily doses. Should patients be unable to obtain Premarin[®] or Premia Continuous[®] via a private prescription, the PBS eligibility of the various preparations is also listed.

Generic name	Trade name	Strengths available	PBS eligibility	approximate dose equivalence ¹
oestradiol valerate	Progynova	1 mg, 2 mg	Yes	1–2 mg
oestriol	Ovestin	1 mg	No	2 mg
conjugated oestrogens	Premarin	0.3 mg, 0.625 mg	No (After 1/6/2009)	0.625 mg
oestradiol	Estrofem	1 mg, 2 mg	No	1–2 mg
	Zumenon	2 mg	Yes	
piperazine oestrone sulfate	Genoral, Ogen	0.625 mg, 1.25 mg	No	0.625–1.25 mg

1. Rossi S, editor. 2009 *AMH. Australian Medicines Handbook*. Adelaide: Australian Medicines Handbook Pty Ltd, 2009.

With regards to Premia Continuous[®], should a patient be unable to obtain this product via private prescription, there is not a similar preparation available which contains an oral oestrogen and medroxyprogesterone acetate. Three other oral continuous preparations are available — one which contains oestradiol and drospirenone (Angeliq ½[®] which is not PBS subsidised), and two which contain oestradiol and norethisterone (Kliogest[®] and Kliovance[®]) which are both PBS subsidised. Note that these two preparations contain different amounts of oestradiol and norethisterone.

Should an alternative for either the Premarin[®] or Premia Continuous[®] be required, the decision as to which preparation to use will need to be individualised according to the patient's clinical circumstances. It is recommended that the oestrogen dose used be the minimum required to control menopausal symptoms and older women (> 50 years of age) will often require a lower dose to minimise adverse effects. Note that combined hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is recommended in women with a uterus because of an increased risk of endometrial hyperplasia and cancer associated with oestrogen-only HRT; however, combined HRT has a higher risk of breast cancer. Oestrogen-only HRT is recommended in women post-hysterectomy and with no history of endometriosis.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION – CONTACT THE PHARMACY DEPARTMENT ON 82751763 or email: chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au
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