CLAIMS

1. An orally administered solid dosage form capable of delivering ethinyl estradiol with improved bioavailability to a patient in need thereof, said solid dosage form comprising: (i) about 0.5 μg to about 50 μg of ethinyl estradiol and (ii) an oral dissolution enhancing carrier that provides for at least 15% absorption of the ethinyl estradiol through the oral mucosa when said solid dosage form is orally administered to the patient with 2 ounces of water or less.

2. The solid dosage form of claim 1, wherein the solid dosage form is a chewable tablet and the oral dissolution enhancing carrier is present in an amount of about 10% to about 95% by weight of the solid dosage form and is selected from the group consisting of lactose, corn starch, maltodextrin, dextrose, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol, fructose, sucrose or mixtures thereof.

3. The solid dosage form of claim 2, further comprising norethindrone acetate or noerthindrone in an amount of about 0.3 mg to about 1.5 mg.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of administering ethinyl estradiol to a female patient for contraception with improved bioavailability comprising the step of orally administering a solid dosage form containing ethinyl estradiol that releases an effective amount of the ethinyl estradiol in the oral cavity for absorption through the oral mucosa;

wherein at least about 15 percent of the ethinyl estradiol contained in the oral solid dosage form is absorbed through the oral mucosa, and

wherein the solid dosage form is administered with 59.147 ml (2 ounces) of water or less, and wherein the solid dosage form is a chewable tablet comprising: (i) 2 to 15 μg of ethinyl estradiol; (ii) about 0.3 mg to about 1.5 mg of norethindrone acetate or norethindrone; and (iii) 30% to 90% by weight of an oral dissolution enhancing carrier that is mannitol.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the solid dosage form is orally administered without taking water therewith.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the dosage form is a chewable tablet for chewing prior to swallowing.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the chewable tablet is chewed without taking water therewith.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the dosage form is for once daily administration.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the dosage form is an orally disintegrating tablet.

7. The method according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the mannitol is present in an amount of about 40% to about 80% by weight of the composition.

8. An orally administered solid dosage form for delivering ethinyl estradiol with improved bioavailability to a patient in need thereof, said solid dosage form comprising: (i) 2 μg to 15 μg of ethinyl estradiol and (ii) an oral dissolution enhancing carrier that provides for at least 15% absorption of the ethinyl estradiol through the oral mucosa when said solid dosage form is orally administered to the patient with 59.147 ml (2 ounces) of water or less, wherein the solid dosage form is a chewable tablet and the oral dissolution enhancing carrier

is present in an amount of 30% to 90% by weight of the solid dosage form and is mannitol.

9. The solid dosage form of claim 8, further comprising norethindrone acetate or norethindrone in an amount of about 0.3 mg to about 1.5 mg.

10. A solid dosage form containing ethinyl estradiol for use in hormone replacement therapy or to treat symptoms of menopause,

wherein the solid dosage form is formulated to release an effective amount of the ethinyl estradiol in the oral cavity of a patient for absorption through the oral mucosa

wherein the solid dosage form is for oral administration with 59.147 ml (2 ounces) of water or less, and

wherein the solid dosage form is a chewable tablet comprising (i) 2μg to 15 μg of ethinyl estradiol; (ii) optionally, 0.3 mg to 1.5 mg of norethindrone acetate or norethindrone; and (iii) 30% to 90% by weight of an oral dissolution enhancing carrier that is mannitol.

11. The solid dosage form for use according to claim 10, wherein the solid dosage form comprises 0.3 mg to 1.5 mg of norethindrone acetate or norethindrone.

12. The solid dosage form for use according to claim 10 or 11, wherein at least 15 percent of the ethinyl estradiol contained in the solid dosage form is absorbed through the oral mucosa.

13. The solid dosage form for use according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the solid dosage form is orally administered without taking water therewith.

14. The solid dosage form for use according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the tablet is chewed prior to swallowing.

15. The solid dosage form for use according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the dosage form is for once daily administration.

16. The solid dosage form for use according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the oral dissolution enhancing carrier is present in an amount of 40% to 80% by weight of the composition.

17. Ethinyl estradiol for use in treating a patient with hormone replacement therapy or for treatment of symptoms of menopause, the use comprising an orally

administered solid dosage form of ethinyl estradiol with 59.147 ml (2 ounces) of water or less, the solid dosage form releasing an effective amount of the ethinyl estradiol in the oral cavity for absorption through the oral mucosa, wherein the solid dosage form is a chewable tablet comprising (i) 2 μg to 15μg of ethinyl estradiol; (ii) optionally, 0.3 mg to 1.5 mg of norethindrone acetate or norethindrone; and (iii) 30% to 90% by weight of an oral dissolution enhancing carrier that is mannitol.

18. The ethinyl estradiol for use according to claim 17, wherein the medicament comprises the solid dosage form and no water.

19. The ethinyl estradiol for use according to claim 17 or 18, wherein the oral dissolution enhancing carrier is present in an amount of 40% to 80% by weight of the composition.

20. Oral use of a chewable tablet comprising an ethinyl estradiol composition for contraception, said composition comprising 2 to 15 μg of ethinyl estradiol, about 0.3 mg to 1.5 mg of norethindrone acetate or norethindrone, and 30% to 90% by weight of mannitol, wherein said use is with or without water, and provides at least about 15% of the estradiol to be absorbed through the oral mucosa.

21. The oral use of claim 20, wherein said use is with up to about 59.147 ml water.

22. The oral use of claim 20, wherein said use is without water.