

Menopause

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The Menopause marks the end of a woman's reproductive years and can be an emotional, psychological and intellectual turning point. It can be a great gift, a liberation and a chance to re-evaluate one's purpose in life. It may be accompanied by many uncomfortable and emotional and physical problems. It is due to hormonal changes that physical manifestations of the menopause can lead to distressing symptoms.

Hormonal changes vary in each individual and can be mild or severe.

The menopause generally occurs in women around age 50 but can be earlier or past 55 for some women, the most notable of these symptoms is probably the 'Hot Flashes' brought about by rushes of hormones into the blood, as the gland system is adjusting to the new situation.

Hot flushes can range from a few mild warmings to a raging heat that makes you sweat profusely.

Night sweats can range from uncomfortable to a stripping off of clothes and a drenched bed.

Mood swings can occur from minor to major and in some cases not at all. Most of these disturbances are due to decreases in oestrogen and progesterone in the body.

Common symptoms can be backache, depression, headaches, irritability, lack of libido, painful breasts, poor concentration, poor memory, stress, tiredness, vaginal dryness and weepiness. The majority of these symptoms last anything from 6 months to 4 years although some women have symptoms of a milder form into their 70's.

Hair, skin, nails, eyes, mouth and gums all undergo changes at this time. Bones also lose some of their density.

Skin firmness and shrinking of muscles underneath the skin are the result of reduced blood flow to the skin and subcutaneous tissues. Skin and hair can become dry. Skin often becomes itchy with no indication as to why. The itchiness can often become intense. Help from my peri-menopausal and menopause tonics and creams and oils can help here. The tonics will help deal with the oestrogen depletion, but there needs to be a positive outlook and attitude is paramount. Finding a new interest or developing a new skill is ideal.

My tonics will ease most of the associated problems and enable the body to establish a new level of hormonal function. Cases associated with great depression and anxiety may need further treatment.

The conventional medical approach to menopausal symptoms is to prescribe HRT (Hormone replacement therapy) however more and more women are refusing to take HRT. This is attributed to many side effects such as bloating, weight gain, anxiety, depression, migraine and headaches. Prescribed HRT can also interfere with many other medicines. There are also concerns about the increased risks of certain cancers such as breast cancer. It is also thought that the benefits such as reduced heart disease and protection from osteoporosis has been exaggerated.

Improving general health can reduce the need for HRT. Cut down the amount of saturated animal fats in the diet and eat lots of fruit, vegetables, beans, whole grains, seeds and nuts. A good diet, vitamins, minerals and herbs can be very effective in restoring hormonal balance.

Herbs.

- Vitex agnus - castus (Chaste berry) stimulates and regulates pituitary gland function.
- Dioscorea villosa (Wild Yam) well known for its powerful hormonal normalizing action.
- Salvia officinalis (Sage) reduces sweats and can eliminate them together with other herbs.
- Dang Gui (Chinese angelica) good for oestrogen rebalance and regulating the heart.
- Leonurus cardiaca (Motherwort) Tonic for the heart and works really well with Sage.
- Cimicifuga racemosa (Black Cohosh) reduces breast pain and stress.
- Nelumbinis nuciferae (Lotus Leaf) Excellent for sweating and mood swings.

Supplements.

- Soya Isoflavones - Nutritionally supports the body's natural oestrogen. 100mg high strength x1 per day.
- Evening Primrose Oil - 3,000 mg per day
- Vitamin B Complex - 50mg per day
- Zinc (as a citrate) 15mg per day.
- Magnesium -200mg per day (If insomnia is a problem)
- Vitamin C - 500 - 1000mg per day (Useful in constipation and heavy bleeding)

Lifestyle Advice.

- Both plenty of rest and exercise are necessary.
- Rest ensures that hormones do not accumulate in the body and cause imbalance.
- Exercise helps reduce stress and weight control. Excess body fat can interfere with metabolism.
- Exposing the body to sunlight helps regulate the pineal gland which controls cyclical processes in the body.

Diet Sheets available on request.