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Written for Women just like you!

What Every Woman Must Know About The Menopause

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DISCLAIMER

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None of the information in this book is intended to diagnose, treat or cure any disease or illness. This book is not intended to take the place of any established medical practices nor in any way replace any authorized medical advice. Always seek out the opinion and diagnosis of your personal physician before implementing any health-related regimen.

Introduction

Menopause! There it`s been said....For many years menopause was a word often only heard in conversations from ladies of a *certain age* and then it was talked about quietly and in hushed tones.

Even now, women going through menopause rarely mention the subject to anyone other than extremely close friends and female family members. If you try to talk about menopause and its implications to most men, you will receive a blank stare and genuine confusion. It isn`t that they are not interested, just that they don`t understand the workings of the female anatomy or the emotional implications that accompanies menopause....and I have interviewed many men during the research for this book, so I know what I`m talking about!

Menopause is of course the completely natural process of a woman`s body moving out of its childbearing years and into a liberated and more relaxed stage of her life....hopefully! But not everyone finds it a positive experience and it can have a negative mental and psychological impact on many women. This transitional period is littered with physical changes, adjustments, and quite often fear and depression.

Many women kindly contributed their own experiences of menopause to this book, for which I am extremely grateful. I truly believe that this is the most comprehensive book available and that is why I am so proud that you have chosen it to help guide you through your journey.

Chapter one is an introduction to what menopause is, why it happens and the effect it has on our body and quite often our mind!

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In Chapter Two, we talk about some of the symptoms that concern women the most, what they are why we get them. And more importantly, what we can do about them.

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From there we proceed to Chapter Three where we discuss HRT and its implications. When I was searching for help during my menopause, there was so much contradictory advice regarding hormone therapy, that I became really confused about the entire issue. I have tried to keep it as simple as possible and as in all the topics, I have included both sides of the argument.

Then we move to quite a controversial topic – Holistic Therapy. Chapter Four discusses the various remedies available and leaves you to make up your own mind as to whether this route is for you or not.

Chapter Five talks about Alternative Therapies that you may or may not have heard of, but perhaps not realized they could help your symptoms.

In Chapter Six we cover some of the Natural Remedies and we present options that you may or may not have considered. Here we explain about each one to enable you to make an informed choice.

The last Chapters is for you to show to the man in your life.....print it out and put it somewhere prominent....stick it to his forehead....just make sure that he reads it!

Feel free to read this book through from cover to cover -- or to pick and choose those areas you feel may help you most. And the beauty of this eBook is that you can print the most helpful suggestions out, keep them in your purse or any other handy place. The more information you have the better decisions you will be able to make, based on your own individual needs.

Well, what are we waiting for? Let us go and take charge of our lives right now....Here's wishing you a great menopause!

Chapter One: What's Going On? An Overview

For some women, the transition through menopause offers no problems at all and they sail through calmly and serenely looking forward to the freedom from monthly cycles, birth control and stomach cramps.

They are the women who seem to blossom as they excitedly plan the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead. They grasp the chance to shine, because they realize that women are much smarter at this stage of life and they know how to relax and have fun.

But if you are not one of these women and are feeling anxious and isolated at the changes happening to your body, helpless to do anything about the symptoms...and terrified of what might lay ahead, then please believe me when I say YOU ARE NOT ALONE! There are literally millions of other women all over the world, feeling just the way you feel today.

Once the realization hit home that I was going through the menopause, I immediately felt old and fat..... and generally past my sell by date. I was vaguely aware that skin would become drier and I would lose estrogen which would affect my body, but I knew little else about what menopause entailed. I decided that I had nothing at all to look forward to and was about to become unbearably miserable until the whole thing was over. My best days were behind me and hot flashes and memory loss were my future.

And I know that I`m not the only woman experiencing these emotions. There are more than 50 million women in the US currently affected by menopause. This book is written for all

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women just like us. Women who want to know everything there is to know about menopause and how to make informed choices about their future. All the information you need to help make the transition as easy as possible, is included in this book. We talk about the signs of menopause, symptoms to prepare for and the options available. But the best thing of all is that, we offer genuine solutions to the problems that you may be having..... because we`ve been there. Remember though, that all the therapies and medications in the world will not heal a negative body image or poor self esteem. Now is the time to show your body some love and respect.....after all, it has served you very nicely over the past few decades – has it not?

What Causes Menopause? Hormones, That`s What...

Menopause is due to hormonal changes within a womans` body and a totally natural progression to post menopause.

When we are born, there are usually somewhere between one and three million eggs stored in our ovaries. As we age some of these eggs are lost during our monthly cycle and some die naturally....eventually we run out. When that happens, menopause occurs....simple as that.

Estrogen is important to a womans` health and also an essential part of the reproductive process. It is responsible for regulating the menstrual cycle and preparing the body for pregnancy. As we approach menopause the production of estrogen dramatically reduces to around half of what it was. Now, as estrogen affects many parts of our body, including heart, breasts, skin and brain, it makes sense that this particular hormone is the main suspect for causing our menopausal symptoms.

Menopause can occur as early as the mid 30`s and is known as premature menopause, but it is usual for it to take place between the ages of 45 and 55. Optimum age is 51. The age for each woman varies and there is no way of forecasting when you will begin yours. By taking steps to build your confidence and

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self-esteem, you will help gain a positive perspective to life as a mature woman.

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In our society, there is a youth culture mentality, whilst the focus of the menopause is usually on loss. We should take notice of other societies where women only achieve status as an individual at this time in their life and middle age is seen as a time of wisdom, maturity and valuable experience.

Post-menopause can be a wonderful opportunity to explore our new freedom, develop as an individual and redefine our goals and dreams.

Perimenopause? What In The World Is That

You are not alone if you didn't realize that menopause is actually split into different phases....Peri-menopause, Menopause and Post-menopause. The term peri is a prefix and simply means around, so peri-menopause means 'Around the Time of Menopause'.

Peri-menopause is actually the when the start of menopausal symptoms begins and lasts around four years. Although some people refer to the time between perimenopause and menopause as pre-menopause, others don't recognize the pre-menopause as a separate phase.

Some women get really upset when their periods start to become erratic, heavier or lighter. The first time they have a hot flash, they may pass it off as being an unusually warm day or they may blame themselves for wearing heavy clothing. When they start making small mistakes with things that would normally be easy, they convince themselves that they have been working too hard and are tired.

The point is, once you are aware which symptoms to look for, you won't brush them away as meaningless and will be prepared for them and ready to take control....By the way, all of

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the excuses above were ones that I made when I began experiencing symptoms during peri-menopause. In my defence I hadn't even heard of it at the time, let alone known that I was going through it.

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Male Menopause Fact or Fiction?

Now, before we go any further, I would like to take a few moments to contemplate the possibility that the male menopause may actually exist. I would not want to be accused of being sexist and so feel it important to include at least a mention of this hitherto little known phenomenon!

If you have ever noticed your male friends or relatives acting..... well.....strangely....perhaps forgetting things....sweating profusely for no reason, don't be alarmed. They may be experiencing male menopause. Now before you start sniggering maliciously, more people are actually acknowledging that male menopause actually does exist. There is even a name for it "andropause."

How many times have you heard from your women friends that some unfortunate male is suffering from a "mid life crisis"? Well this may not be too far from the truth. Just like female menopause, the male version seems to involve a hormone level decrease around middle age. By the age of 50, half of all men will experience a reduction in testosterone levels, causing a variety of ailments:

- ◆ Hot flashes
- ◆ Night sweats
- ◆ Tiredness
- ◆ Muscle aches and pains
- ◆ Reduced muscle mass
- ◆ Irritability

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- ◆ Change in body shape
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Reduced sex drive

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Strictly speaking men can't have a menopause, as the definition of the menopause is the time at which periods cease. However, if someone you know has suddenly begun to experience any of the above symptoms, persuade them to seek help. Unfortunately, men often feel uncomfortable discussing such things, but thanks to recent studies, doctors have now begun to realize the importance of offering treatment.

Chapter Two: Symptoms Of Menopause

Now before you get too depressed, it`s highly unlikely that you will endure all the symptoms at once, but rather they will occur periodically throughout your menopause. And if you think about it, these are all symptoms that you have probably already experienced at some stage in your life already.

Some symptoms you may experience:

- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Weight Gain
- ◆ Bloating
- ◆ Hot Flashes
- ◆ Irregular Periods
- ◆ Vaginal Dryness
- ◆ Urinary Problems
- ◆ Mood Swings
- ◆ Lack of Concentration
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Difficulty Sleeping
- ◆ Change in Hair and Skin condition
- ◆ Irritation or Anger
- ◆ Night Sweats
- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Loss of Libido

Right, let`s get on and look at some of them in more detail...

Depression

Why is it do you think, that depression is something that people are ashamed of? Several of my clients would rather stick pins in their eyes (so they say), than admit that they suffer from

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depression. Although it is totally out of the control of the individual and so not something they should be embarrassed about – but there you go. Let`s be realistic for a moment. Life is tough....we all doubt ourselves at times....things don`t always go smoothly for us. Is it surprising then that some folk feel depressed and unmotivated?

Before I continue, let me just point out that menopausal depression is certainly not inevitable and some women experience no feelings of sadness or grief at all. Around 8% to 15% of menopausal women are believed to experience some form of depression and the most vulnerable time is at the perimenopause stage.

Once in the grip of depression, the sufferer feels extreme sadness and a sense of complete hopelessness as though a black cloud were hovering over them. They also feel that their situation will never improve and sometimes see no point in carrying on. This is a serious illness that should not be ignored. Medical assistance should be sought for any indications that a person....either you or anyone else, is suffering from depression.

Symptoms of Serious Depression:

- ◆ Tired, lethargic, no energy
- ◆ No interest in any of the activities normally enjoyed
- ◆ Hopelessness, feels useless
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating and makes mistakes
- ◆ Can`t be bothered getting out of bed or going outside
- ◆ Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- ◆ Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide
- ◆ Takes no interest in her personal appearance

What Causes Menopause Depression?

On the one hand we have serotonin, which is the hormone responsible for our emotions and moods. When levels of serotonin drop, we experience an emotional imbalance, mood swings and depression. No-one knows for sure what causes our

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hormones to fluctuate so much during early menopause, but now at least you will know what to expect. Forewarned is forearmed.

The other reason for depression is that many women find the physical symptoms of menopause just too difficult to cope with. Weight gain, bloating, urinary problems and fatigue are all deeply personal issues that are bound to affect a woman's self esteem. When these are added to the pressures of work, family life and other responsibilities, everything becomes too much to handle and melancholy sets in.

Who Is Most At Risk?

If you or a close family member has a history of emotional disorders, you may be at an increased risk of developing depression during your menopausal years. It is quite unusual to suffer from depression for the first time during menopause, unless you have displayed symptoms previously. Women who have gone through surgical menopause are also at increased risk as surgery causes a drop in estrogen levels. Other factors that may make a woman vulnerable to depression during menopause are:

- ◆ Stressful events occurring at the same time as menopause
- ◆ Poor diet, high alcohol intake, smoking and lack of exercise
- ◆ Regret that she can no longer have children
- ◆ Poor support network from both friends and family
- ◆ Unhappy with home life, relationships and career
- ◆ Financial hardship
- ◆ Low self esteem and poor body image
- ◆ Severe symptoms of menopause

Treating Depression

Depression is a serious illness that should never be treated as "normal" or "expected", not even during menopause. If you or anyone you know is suffering from depression or any type of anxiety disorder, please seek immediate help from your doctor. Too many people refuse to get help for anxiety and depression

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disorders and they end up suffering needlessly.....Don` t be one of them!

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Your doctor will take your depression seriously and take into account your health, history and listen to your wishes before making his recommendations. Often a short course of antidepressants may be all that is needed to get you up and about again. HRT may be an option (we discuss this in greater detail in chapter 5). It may be that counseling could be beneficial, either used alone or in conjunction with estrogen or antidepressants.

Weight Gain

"I`ve been eating the same amount I always have....I`m doing the same amount of exercise....and yet I`ve put on ten pounds".

If I had a dollar every time someone said that to me, I would be a very rich woman. The problem is, as I was doing my research for this book and I came to this chapter, I read over and over again that weight gain during menopause was due to eating more, exercising less, taking in more sugary snacks blah blah blah.....Now normally I would not feel so strongly about this and would accept that the `experts` know best. But, you see, on this subject....I am an expert and I disagree so strongly with the assumptions that menopausal women are eating more, exercising less etc., that my head could burst.....purely a figure of speech I hasten to add...but you get my drift.

For years, I have taught clients how to overcome many problems, including stress, anxiety, phobias.....and weight loss. Such was my interest in the latter that I developed my own program and taught it successfully to literally hundreds of women (only 9 men, but hundreds of women).

During this time I counseled many wonderful ladies who were at different stages of menopause and desperate for help as the weight continued climb steadily, no matter what they tried.

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It was then that I began searching for information and formed my own opinions regarding weight gain and menopause. I will share my findings with you now, but please do remember that these are my opinions only – yours may be different.

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Menopausal Weight Gain: Make Up Your Own Mind

Fluctuating hormones! There I've said it.....I think that weight gain during menopause is practically guaranteed due to fluctuating hormones. I will probably receive a large number of derogatory comments from weight loss `gurus`, but so be it.....let me explain.

Our hormones have a direct influence on metabolism and fat storage and so it is more difficult than normal to control our weight during menopause. As we enter "the change" our ovaries begin to produce less estrogen than usual and less than the body requires. Therefore our body searches for other sources from which to obtain estrogen so that it can top up its levels to where they need to be. And hey presto.....guess what type of cell has a guaranteed supply of estrogen.....yes, the good old fat cell.

The body needs estrogen, but does not produce enough to keep us healthy at menopause and so it works hard to convert calories to fat thereby producing its own supply. Quite a neat trick really. Unless you're trying to lose weight!

Middle age spread isn't a terribly flattering expression, but that's exactly why it is so called. Thickening of the middle is often one of the first indications of menopause and is due to the levels of estrogen and testosterone dropping.

Testosterone helps the body create lean muscle out of the calories that we consume. This muscle demands more calories than fat cells, therefore increasing our metabolic rate. Unfortunately, as we enter menopause and testosterone levels decrease, we lose a lot of our muscle mass. Less muscle mass requires fewer calories. A double whammy!!

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So, on the one hand you have the so called experts claiming that your weight gain is simply down to lifestyle. And on the other hand you have me claiming that it is not your fault, it is simply mother nature doing her best to keep you fit and well. It`s up to you which explanation you prefer, but really it`s fine either way, as the suggestions I am giving you are the same whatever you believe.

So It`s Not My Fault: I`m Off The Hook

Just so that we`re clear. Although you are not entirely to blame for weight gain during menopause, this does not mean that you can absolve yourself of all responsibility for your thickening waistline. You still need to make sure that you are eating properly, drinking plenty of water and moving that body to keep your weight at a healthy level....okay, you will probably find it more difficult to remain at the weight you had prior to menopause, but perhaps....for the time being anyway....you may have to accept that you will be a few pounds heavier than usual.

Mother Nature`s Blueprint For Fat Loss

Notice that I say "fat loss" and not weight loss. This is because there is a big difference between the two. You can lose a pound or two by not drinking for a day, but what we`re after is pure, unadulterated FAT loss.

Unfortunately, I do not have the space to lay out my entire fat loss program for you and perhaps you are already quite happy with your eating plan. What I will say however, is that if you do decide you want to lose a few pounds during menopause, deprivation and very low calorie intake is not the way to go.

I don`t know about you, but as soon as someone says to me "don`t do that", I feel compelled to do it....even if I hadn`t

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before....(eg: Don` t under ANY circumstances think of a Black Cat....see what I mean!). It`s the same with trying to restrict yourself food wise. The minute you`re told, "you can`t have that", isn`t that the one food you start to crave?

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Similarly, trying to keep your calorie intake too low, will only serve to make you crave sweet, sugary foods and also send your metabolism plummeting. Try eating three meals per day plus two or three healthy snacks. This will keep your metabolism at it`s optimum level, whereas skipping meals and severely restricting calories, will do the exact opposite.

If we all ate only when we were hungry and stopped when we were full, how many of us do you think would be overweight?

My 3 Top Tips:

- ◆ Take Smaller Bites And Chew Your Food 20 times(at least)
- ◆ The Minute You Feel Comfortably Full...Stop Eating
- ◆ ALWAYS Leave Some Food On Your Plate.

Chewing is an extremely important part of healthy digestion. Most people put food in their mouth, chew a few times and swallow. By eating quickly, you are not giving your meal enough time to hit your stomach –approximately 20 minutes – so by the time it does get there, you`ve already eaten everything off your plate.

The benefits of thoroughly chewing your food are greater than simply improving digestion. It will cause you to slow down when you are eating and become more relaxed around food. Your meals will begin to taste even better and your enjoyment will increase.

Just as you would not dream of trying to put fuel into your car if it was full, stop putting food into your body when you are full. Start to listen to the signal that tells you to stop eating because you`ve had enough.....it is there I promise, but if you have been ignoring it for many years, you will have to pay close attention

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to hear it again. Your stomach is around the size of your closed fist and so your portion size needs to take that into account.

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I know that you were told to eat the food on your plate when you were small, but I am asking you to do the opposite. Once you can break the habit of always clearing your plate, you will find that you actually enjoy the food that you do eat even more.

The above suggestions sound easy enough, after all, it's what slim people do naturally. But it takes time and dedication until you perform them naturally every time you eat. Repeat them over and over until they become second nature.

The Psychology Of Overweight Self Sabotage

Perhaps this is something that you haven't considered before, but what if you overeat, continue eating when you're full or refuse to take exercise – even though you are desperate to lose weight. Why would you do that? Read on for a possible explanation.

You've planned your diet strategy, stepped up your exercise routine and lo and behold – it works – you start losing weight. But then it all goes wrong. You stop exercising, eat high calorie foods and all your motivation flies out of the window.

What's Self Image Got To Do With It?

Our self image was formed in childhood, when our subconscious mind was open and accepted all information as truthful, whether it was or not. Although, our opinions of ourselves are still being continually moulded by our experiences of success or failure. For example, each time we try to lose weight and fail, this failure is stored in our memory bank and reinforces the negative self image that we have of ourselves as dieters.

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The good news is that with a little effort, our self image can be changed.

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If you see yourself as overweight and unmotivated, then that is the way you will ALWAYS behave. The brain of an overweight person is programmed to eat too many high calorie foods, jump on and off the dieting merry-go-round and not exercise regularly, so why would it be surprising that you continue to do so even when starting on a diet plan?

A poor image and negative self-talk are habits that can be hard to shake. Old neural pathways are like software discs that play the same old negative programmes over and over. You need to replace the programme so that brand new positive thoughts and feelings will eventually take over.

A plastic surgeon noted that even after he had performed corrective surgery on his patients, they still retained their old self image, complete with their original `defects`. As a result, they still acted as they always had, embarrassed, shy and lacking in confidence. This led to the surgeon noting that when the self image is `reconstructed`, the person changes, but if the self image stays the same, the person`s behaviour also stays the same. We cannot force new behaviors, but we can work on changing the self image that drives those behaviors.

Once we understand that we have created everything in our life, good and bad, we realize that we also have the power to change anything in our life by merely changing our thoughts

If we focus on what is wrong, we never find what is right.

Sugar v Health:

Even those of us who don't take sugar in tea or eat lots of sweets may be consuming far more sugar than is healthy. For example, a recent report revealed that some savory foods available in supermarkets contain more sugar than ice cream - and that ready meals, breakfast cereals and even low-fat 'diet' ranges are often packed with it.

Is Sugar Addictive?

Researchers found that sugar may be addictive. Cravings set the stage for a cycle of addiction in which every new hit of sugar makes you feel better temporarily but, a few hours later, results in more cravings and hunger. Those who avoid sugar often report having little or no cravings for sugary things. When researchers fed rats a diet that was high in sugar, they noticed that the rats became anxious when the sugar was removed, and experienced symptoms similar to the withdrawal symptoms of smokers or morphine users - chattering teeth, the shakes and depression

When a fruit is whole, the natural sugars are held within the fruits structure, but when they juiced or blended, the structure is broken down. Although still a healthier option compared to fizzy drinks, juice is best confined to mealtimes.

However, perhaps the most worrying link is that between high sugar intake and cancer. One recent study found that women with the highest blood sugar levels increased their chance of developing cancers by 26 per cent. While people who add sugar to their food and drink at least five times a day are at a 70 per cent increased risk of the disease.

Sugar Aging! Are You Kidding Me?

Eating a lot of sugar can lead to premature ageing. Blood Sugar reacts with the minerals in your body creating free radicals, that cause damage such as wrinkles and accelerated ageing. The recommended intake of 'added sugars' - such as honey, fruit juice, jam, soft drinks and those in processed food, as well as the sugar you add to food - is 10 per cent of your total daily calorie intake. One level teaspoon of sugar contains 16 calories. Foods containing more than 15g sugars per 100g are high in sugar; low is 5g sugars or less per 100g.

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Watch out for brown sugar, too; it may contain slightly higher levels of a few minerals, but otherwise it's just as short on protein and vitamins as the white stuff. Of course, it goes without saying that the best way to control your consumption is to make sure you have a predominantly home-cooked diet.

People who consume the most sugar have the lowest intakes of essential nutrients. Once your palate adjusts to a savory diet, you'll be more likely to appreciate sugary foods as an occasional treat rather than a daily staple. Your skin, health and waistline will all thank you for it!

Oh No! Not The 'E' Word!

Yup, afraid so, it's the dreaded 'E' word.....Exercise. Whichever way you look at it, you need to move that body to look and feel your best.

Any activity which gets you moving and increases your heart rate even slightly, will benefit your well being. It will also help maintain a healthy weight and increase the amount of muscle in your body, which in turn will demand more energy (calories).

Look at these benefits you get from just 30mins:

- Reduce the risk of developing and/or dying from heart disease
- Reduce high blood pressure
- Reduce high cholesterol or the risk of developing high cholesterol
- Reduce the risk of developing diabetes
- Reduce or maintain body weight or body fat
- Build and maintain healthy muscles, bones, and joints
- Reduce depression and anxiety
- Strengthen your heart and lungs
- Promote better sleep

No matter which way you look at it, in order to get fit and lose weight you will have to instil a certain amount of exercise

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discipline into your life. The reason is that your body was built to move. It needs to release energy every single day.

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The hardest part is getting started, so find something that you really enjoy doing and make that commitment to start today. By putting it off it will be put on the back burner of "things to do", that you never get round to doing.

I`m not even suggesting that you rush out and join a gym or sign up for your local Salsa class (although both ARE fabulous ideas), no, I am simply saying MOVE more. Even daily activities done with gusto will burn calories and ultimately fat.

The following are a few examples of the number of calories used per half hour of activity:(based on a 10 stone person)

◆ Ironing	71
◆ Housework	92
◆ Cycling	126
◆ Walking (3mph)	139
◆ Washing Car	143

Make exercise a priority. I absolutely guarantee that you will notice a positive difference.

The only place that result comes before work

- is in the dictionary

Remember that a little extra weight can help to lesson other symptoms associated with menopause. Menopausal weight gain is regulated by our body, which helps prepare us against osteoporosis. Getting upset over this inevitable part of being a woman will only make things worse as stress hormones are also a contributing factor in weight gain in the menopause.

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Eat healthy, natural foods. If you can't tell what the food is, it's probably packed with fat and sugar and all sorts of preservatives and additives....give it a miss.

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Focus on being healthy and living a fulfilling and active life. Aerobic activity will increase your metabolism as well as your self esteem. Weight bearing activities will increase muscle mass and ward off osteoporosis. An increase of 2kg of muscle results in a 10% increase in our metabolism....that's a LOT! Give yourself time to adjust and continue to improve and enrich your life and you will grow to accept and even love your changing shape.

Bloating and Urinary Problems

If you thought that hot flashes were embarrassing....how about excessive burping and terrible flatulence, which you have no control over? Closely related to an increase in intestinal gas and fluid retention fluctuating hormones are once again the culprits. Bloating is most prevalent around peri-menopause and just before menopause. Once again, those pesky hormones estrogen and progesterone are the main offenders. When estrogen levels fluctuate during peri-menopause, so does the incidence of water retention, which leads to bloating

The frequency which bloating occurs will vary for each woman. Some women experiencing bloating for a few days, but will then have no problems for over a year. It's possible to wake up in the morning with a flat stomach and then have it bloat steadily throughout the day.

Bloat Remedies:

- ◆ Asparagus contains elements that improves the movement of food through the colon.
- ◆ If you don't chew your food thoroughly, your stomach will need to work harder to break it down.
- ◆ Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, onions, beans, brussel sprouts, corn, potatoes and milk, are difficult to digest. Avoid eating too many of these in one meal.

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- ◆ Eating half a cup of pineapple can help reduce bloating, as it contains an enzyme that enables better digestion and relieves discomfort in the stomach.
- ◆ Papaya has plenty of antioxidants and the digestive enzyme aids digestion.
- ◆ Cutting out dairy products, sodium, and `trigger` foods.
- ◆ Mint Leaves in water is well known to aid digestion. It is also a great way to lessen the bloated feeling and helps relieve any gas in the stomach
- ◆ Even a small portion of celery can help detoxify your system and flush out unwanted water.
- ◆ Exercise will strengthen the abdominal wall.
- ◆ Stress and anxiety make bloating worse. Take a day off...have a massage...or spend time just relaxing.

While menopausal bloating is annoying, it is rarely permanent and it's one symptom that doesn't necessarily require medical assistance. Having said that, if bloating continues for long periods, or is very painful, then consult with your doctor. For most of the time, doctors will prescribe a simple solution.... lifestyle change.

Urinary Incontinence

While we`re discussing embarrassing menopausal symptoms, here is another one... urinary incontinence. If you always thought that this was just something that happened to the elderly...think again.

More than 40% of menopausal women suffer from incontinence.

The bladder is the organ responsible for collecting urine produced by the kidneys and it can hold a certain amount of fluid. When it is full, the liquid must be expelled through the urethra and this happens during urination. Our pelvic muscles and sphincter keep our body from expelling the urine until we are ready.

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Although it is certainly not inevitable that you will suffer from incontinence, if you do, you can help yourself by understanding why it happens and what you can do to stop it. There are three types of incontinence.

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Stress Incontinence

This is the most common type of incontinence experienced by women approaching menopause. Many will wear a sanitary towel as they may leak a small amount of urine when coughing, sneezing, during activity or whenever they exert themselves. As we age, our pelvic muscles become weaker which in turn weakens the walls between the bladder and the vagina.

Urge Incontinence

Whenever you feel the sudden urge to urinate and it is happening quite frequently, that is urge incontinence. Unfortunately, as the bladder contracts, you may only receive notice of a few seconds that you need to `go`.

Overflow Incontinence

A particularly unpleasant symptom of menopause, overflow incontinence is characterized by a constant trickle of urine. Sufferers don't completely empty their bladders and the flow of urine is not very strong. By not emptying the bladder, it fills up and then overflows and that's where the constant trickle comes from.

Causes of Incontinence

At the risk of repeating myself yet again, it's all the hormones' fault... and specifically our old friend estrogen. Estrogen normally keeps the urethra and the lining of the bladder healthy. It also stimulates blood flow to the pelvic region, increasing strength in the pelvic muscles. As our estrogen levels drops, the pelvic muscles may become weaker than they were before. The

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muscles may simply not have the amount of strength needed to hold the opening to the bladder closed.

Fortunately for those poor individuals who suffer from incontinence, there are several treatment options to make this embarrassing menopausal symptom a thing of the past.

Incontinence Remedies:

- ◆ Lifestyle Changes – Practice pelvic floor exercise. There are many variations and some that can even be done whilst standing in the shopping queue! There are also devices that can be purchased that will help get those muscles back into shape.
- ◆ Cut out Caffeine and Tobacco – Both are believed to worsen incontinence.
- ◆ Herbs – There are some herbs that help stimulate the natural production of estrogen.
- ◆ Eat a balanced diet that is high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- ◆ Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water per day. Try delaying urination for five minutes on the first day and delay by a little longer the next day, working up to a delay of 15 minutes. You should be able to `retrain` your bladder to hold more urine.

While no one enjoys discussing such an intimate subject, if none of the above work and incontinence is affecting your life, it might be time to visit your doctor. There are surgical procedures available that your doctor will explain, so that you can put this embarrassing problem behind you and get on with living your life.

Hot Flashes

If you have ever experienced a hot flash, then you will know exactly how it feels. Sometimes you can feel it rising up your body, heating every inch as it goes, until eventually a deep

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purple blotch envelops your neck and face leaving you looking like an indignant beetroot.

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Other times it comes out of nowhere and feels like you`ve been hit with a flame thrower. If you`re lucky it can be all over in a minute, for some women the ordeal can last up to half an hour. Then of course, you have to try and find somewhere to freshen up, as more often than not, you end up a sweaty, sticky mess.

Hot flashes (or flushes as they`re known in the UK), are the most common symptom of menopause. They and often start several years before other signs of menopause and are known to affect more than 60 percent of women in the U.S. They can occur day or night and can often trigger insomnia due to constantly disturbed sleep patterns.

Fortunately the frequency and severity of hot flashes gradually decline with age. Eighty percent of all women with hot flashes have them for 2 years or less. Only a small percentage of women will still be having them after 5 years.

Once again decreasing levels of estrogen are responsible. They causes the glands to release more of other hormones that affect the brain's thermostat and this causes the body`s temperature to become unsteady

In most hormone replacement therapy relieves the discomfort of hot flashes, but not all women are comfortable taking it.

Identify your "trigger" foods that start a hot flash. Some women say spicy foods can induce one, others claim that caffeine is the cause. Start making notes of which foods and drink you had prior to an attack. Where you were and even what time of day it was. It may be that you see a pattern forming.

Other things to try are:

- ◆ Layering clothes so that you can peel them off to cool down.

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- ◆ Carrying a hand held fan with you – day and night.
- ◆ Wear cotton whenever possible and the same applies for your bed linen.
- ◆ Carry water with you and keep it by your bed.
- ◆ Eat smaller meals. Eating a large amount of food in one go makes your digestive system work hard. This alone can cause the sweats.
- ◆ Relax. Getting stressed always makes things worse...no matter what it is.

Mood Swings

Don't you just love `em? Those days when everything seems to go wrong...the kids are playing up...hubby`s in one of his funny moods....everybody`s winding you up....you don`t know if you`re sad or angry or just plain mad... even the cat`s out to get you....or could it be you?

Over 15% of women experience mood changes and other emotional difficulties during menopause.

Mood changes have a lot to answer for and many menopausal women find themselves at the centre of misunderstandings and disagreements with people because of them. And you will never guess what causes mood swings? Yup, those declining estrogen levels. As your body stops producing hormones that trigger ovulation and menstruation and your periods become more erratic, estrogen levels fluctuate wildly.

Of course, dealing with all of the symptoms that mother nature chooses to throw at us, doesn`t help our state of mind. Intense symptoms such as night sweats, insomnia, bloating, can leave us so physically and emotionally exhausted that we don`t know what day it is. And the more tired we get, the more we find that all those unimportant trivial matters really bother us.

Vaginal Problems

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Although we may not hear much conversation about vaginal discomfort, it is a symptom of menopause and therefore one that must be mentioned.

Without the production of estrogen (there it is again!) by the ovaries, the skin and surrounding tissues of the vulva and vagina become thinner and less elastic. This is an inevitable consequence of the menopause and the majority of women will experience some form of the symptoms.

- ◆ **Vaginal dryness** is often the first symptom. This is caused by a reduction in the production of mucus by the glands of the vagina. Dryness typically responds very well to creams containing estrogen or a combination of ingredients. There are moisturizing lubricants available, which are specifically designed to reverse menopause dryness. Red Clover has been the topic of research into relieving dry skin as it contains a plant estrogen.
- ◆ **Painful sex (dyspareunia)** is a common problem at this time. Thinning of the vaginal and vulval skin makes them more prone to damage, especially during sex, if lubrication is inadequate. Even harsh underwear can cause soreness.

If sex becomes uncomfortable at menopause, it is important to explain the problem to your partner. This will avoid any feelings of rejection.

Lack Of Sexual Desire:

Many women who are experiencing such personal symptoms as bloating, vaginal dryness and incontinence, do not feel much like engaging in anything, let alone sexual intercourse. Most of their energy will be spent on trying to adjust to the physical changes within their body.

By being honest with your partner about your feelings and concerns, they will be able to offer you the support and understanding that you desperately need during this period. If self esteem and self image are affecting you, speaking with a counselor will address the issues before they develop into a major problem.

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Vaginal symptoms such as discomfort, dryness and itching, occur in about 30% of women during the early post-menopausal years. This figure rises to 47% during the later post-menopausal period.

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If treatment is required, testosterone – either patches or implants - may help to improve your lack of libido. Although testosterone is a hormone, it differs very much from estrogen. If your doctor decides to prescribe testosterone, it is usually given at the same time as the estrogen based HRT. The reason being is that, at the moment, there is a lack of research to confirm that testosterone is safe to take alone.

Osteoporosis After The Menopause:

As we age we gradually lose bones tissue as they become weaker, brittle and less dense. This affects women quicker than men, especially after menopause when the levels of estrogen begin to dip. Osteoporosis occurs when you have a lot of bone loss. Extra care is needed as bones will break more easily if you fall.

Around thirty percent of bone material will have been lost by the time a woman reaches the age of 70 years old. However, not all women go on to develop osteoporosis. It is more likely if you experience any of the following:

- ◆ Go through menopause before the age of 45.
- ◆ Have several family members who had osteoporosis.
- ◆ Extreme underweight. A very low level of estrogen and poor diet can have a negative impact on the bones.
- ◆ Smoke.
- ◆ Lack calcium and or vitamin.
- ◆ Sedentary lifestyle for a number of years and take little or no exercise. Have already had a bone fracture after a minor fall or bump.
- ◆ Have taken, or are taking, steroids for three months or more. Bone deterioration is a side-effect of steroids.

Importance Of Calcium

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If you don't include enough calcium rich foods in your diet, such as leafy green vegetables and oily fish, your body may not receive adequate calcium. Taking a supplement will provide that extra calcium boost that you may be lacking. As the risk of osteoporosis increases the longer you are without the benefits of estrogen, it is probably worthwhile to consider continuing calcium supplements well into post-menopause.

Calcium performs best when it is supplied other vitamins as it improves its utilization by the body. This is why many calcium supplements also contain vitamin D, magnesium and vitamin C.

Help For Osteoporosis

- ◆ Exercise - weight-bearing exercise helps to build and strengthen bone and bone health. Try tennis, dancing, weight training, aerobics and brisk walking.
- ◆ Lifestyle - smoking can have a detrimental effect on bones. If you smoke, now would be a good time to give up. In addition, you shouldn't drink too much alcohol.
- ◆ Diet - a varied, well-balanced diet is important for healthy bones. A diet that includes bread, potatoes, pasta and cereals, fruit and vegetables, dairy products, and protein (from fish, pulses, eggs nuts and seeds) should provide the nutrients that your body requires.

What Should I Avoid?

- ◆ Caffeine - the balance of calcium can be affected by too much.
- ◆ Salt - eating a lot of salt can increase the amount of calcium passed in your urine. The recommended maximum daily intake is 6grams.
- ◆ Fizzy drinks - contain a lot of phosphate, which is added to improve the flavor. It has been suggested that too much phosphate can reduce the amount of calcium your body is able to utilize.

How Much Calcium Is Enough?

The recommended calcium intake is 700 milligrams (mg) a day for adults. You may need to increase your intake if you have been diagnosed with osteoporosis. A well balanced diet will provide all the calcium you need. If you have osteoporosis or are at risk of developing it, your doctor may recommend that you take calcium supplements. If this is the case, be sure to take only the recommended dose. Too much calcium can lead to stomach pains and diarrhea.

Complementary Therapy

Increasingly being used alongside conventional medicine as treatment for osteoporosis, complementary therapies are now offered by many hospitals. Ask your health professional and find out what is available.

If you are suffering with symptoms, you are not alone:

- ◆ About 80% of women will experience menopausal symptoms in their lifetime. Approximately 45% of them will find the symptoms extremely upsetting.
- ◆ Hot flushes occur in 70–80% of peri-menopausal women and are most common in the first year after the final menstrual period.
- ◆ Japanese women have a low incidence of menopausal symptoms. One possibility is that it may be a result of their high consumption of soya products.
- ◆ Only 10% of menopausal women seek medical advice

Take a look at the last bullet point on the list...**out of the 80% of women with symptoms, only 10% seek help.**

Help is out there, you only need to ask.

Chapter Three – HRT

Under The Microscope

Hormone replacement therapy replaces depleted hormones that the ovaries no longer produce thereby helping to relieve symptoms of the menopause. HRT is particularly useful for preventing hot flashes, vaginal dryness and related symptoms and may help if you are having sleep difficulties.

Ok! I've Heard Of It – But What Exactly Does It Do?

There are three main types of HRT:

1. **Estrogen only HRT** is recommended for women who have had their ovaries and womb removed. Usually a combination of estrogen and progesterone is used, rather than estrogen alone if the womb remains intact. This is because by taking estrogen on its own the risk of cancer in the womb lining is increased.
2. **Cyclical or Continuous Sequential HRT** is recommended for women who have gone through a natural menopause, or who are approaching the menopause but still having monthly periods and menopausal symptoms. Cyclical HRT contains estrogen and a progestogen - a form of progesterone, and will mimic a woman's menstrual cycle by producing regular bleeding. Estrogen is taken every day and then progesterone is also added for the final 12 to 14 days of the 28 day cycle. Can be taken as a daily tablet, a weekly or twice weekly patch, daily gel, or a 6 monthly implant
3. **Continuous Combined HRT** is recommended for women who have made the transition through menopause. In other words, if you have not had a monthly period for over a year. In this case, you will normally be advised to take a continuous combined HRT preparation. It contains similar hormones to cyclical HRT and

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involves taking a daily dose of both estrogen and progesterones. As both substances are finely balanced, they but do not normally produce regular bleeding. You may, however, have some irregular bleeding when you first start taking this type of HRT. You should see your doctor if the bleeding continues for more than a few months, or if you suddenly start bleeding after some months with no bleeding.

Combined HRT is available as:

- ◆ Patches
- ◆ Tablets
- ◆ Skin Gels applied daily
- ◆ Implants inserted under The Skin
- ◆ Pessaries
- ◆ Vaginal creams
- ◆ Nasal Sprays

Possible Side Effects:

- ◆ Water Retention
- ◆ Weight Gain
- ◆ Tender Breasts
- ◆ Heavier Periods
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Feeling Nauseous
- ◆ Headaches

If you find that your only symptoms are vaginal or urinary, then vaginal estrogen is available in the form of a tablet, cream, pessary or vaginal ring.

Estrogen used in HRT is taken either from plants or from the urine of pregnant horses. The progesterone is synthetic.

If you do decide to take HRT and experience any side effects, speak with your doctor about the various types available.

How Effective Is HRT?

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Not too long ago HRT was being heralded as the answer to menopausal symptoms and women were queuing up to take advantage of this wonderful discovery. However, more recently, the long-term benefits of HRT have been put under scrutiny.

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Initially, it was believed that women who took HRT, would be offered protection against heart disease and strokes. This was possible it was claimed, by slowing down the development of hardening of the arteries.

Since then, studies have revealed that this is not the case. In fact, they seemed to point to HRT increasing the risk of developing breast cancer and endometrial cancer (cancer in the womb lining). Although HRT does appear to offer some protection against developing bowel cancer.

How Safe Is HRT?

There has been a lot of discussion associated to the risks of taking HRT. Studies were carried out, which raised concerns over the safety of HRT, particularly over a possible increased risk of breast cancer. Concerns were also raised over a possible increase in the risk of heart disease. HRT *does* increase your risk of developing certain problems but many consider this increase worthwhile, in order to gain the benefits that HRT can provide. The risks of taking HRT are discussed below.

Endometrial Cancer

Findings suggest that sequential HRT – the type that produces a bleed –slightly increased the risk of endometrial cancer. Initially, the risk of stroke and heart disease also appeared to increase slightly amongst women taking HRT.

However, final analysis showed that there was no increased risk with estrogen only HRT. For women taking combined HRT, there also appeared to be no increased risks.

Ovarian Cancer

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There continues to be uncertainty regarding HRT and the possibility of increased risk of ovarian cancer. Different studies have given inconclusive results. Whilst one trial reported no increase in users of HRT, another suggested a small increase. The risk was recorded as 1 extra case for every 2,500 women taking HRT for 5 years. As you can see, any risk is very small.

Breast Cancer

Estrogen only HRT carries a lower risk of breast cancer than combined HRT. Latest trials show that women who do suffer breast cancer, have a more treatable type than those who do not take HRT. The risk of breast cancer falls once treatment stops and drops back to average after around 5 years of non use.

However, once again, these findings are not as clear cut as one would hope. Apparently, even amongst those women taking combined HRT, the added risk was applicable only to women who had taken it for more than 5 years before the trial, as well as during the 5 years of the trial. This would indicate that the increased risk, was only associated with long usage of HRT.

Is it any wonder that women are confused as to the safety of HRT? What medical professionals do seem to agree about is the recommendation that HRT is used only as a short term treatment – no longer than 5 years - to relieve symptoms of menopause. It is also now generally agreed that there should be an annual assessment to decide whether it is still in the best interest of the woman to continue with treatment.

Other Symptoms Associated with HRT

Fluid retention

Fluid retention is not usually caused by using HRT, but it can be made worse. Bloating can be due to fluid retention, as can swollen ankles, leg discomfort and breast tenderness. Losing weight is sometimes enough to cure the problem, but if the problem persists over several months, the dose or type of HRT may need changing.

Weight gain

Always a concern for the figure conscious woman and as we have discussed, weight gain is common around the time of the menopause. There is no scientific evidence that HRT causes further gain. If you do notice that you gain weight after starting HRT, it is probably due to fluid retention and should settle in around one month.

Premenstrual Symptoms

Just when you thought that you had said goodbye to stomach cramps and mood changes, they can re-appear with HRT taken cyclically. Speak with your doctor if this happens and he will discuss whether a different preparation would suit you any better.

Nausea

Feeling of nausea associated with HRT can be reduced by taking tablet HRT at night with food instead of morning. If that offers no relief, try changing from tablet to another form.

When To Consult Your Medical Advisor

- ◆ If side effects persist for longer than expected.
- ◆ Symptoms are not responding as predicted.
- ◆ Any changes in your pattern of bleeding should be reported purely as a precautionary measure. Changes would include increased duration, frequency or heaviness and erratic bleeding.
- ◆ If you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of your treatment or symptoms, make an appointment to discuss your concerns with your physician or medical practitioner.

Can I Take HRT To Prevent Osteoporosis?

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Until recently HRT was recommended to help prevent osteoporosis. Research has now highlighted potential health risks, so when considering whether to take HRT, the benefits must be measured against the risks. Most women decide that taking it just to try to prevent osteoporosis, is not worth the potential risk.

However, your chance of developing osteoporosis is increased if you have an early menopause and in that case HRT may be recommended until you reach the age of 50.

How Do I Know If I Should Be Taking HRT?

Although the risks of taking HRT outweigh the benefits for many women, there are cases where HRT may not be advisable:

- ◆ If you have had ovarian, breast or cancer of the womb.
- ◆ A history of angina, heart attack or stroke.
- ◆ If you have uncontrolled high blood pressure.
- ◆ If you are pregnant.
- ◆ You suffer from liver disease.
- ◆ Either you or your family have a history of blood clots.
- ◆ You have an undiagnosed breast lump.
- ◆ If you are being investigated for abnormal vaginal bleeding.

HRT is a very contentious issue and probably will be for many years to come. As more studies are carried out regarding its effectiveness, information and recommendations should become much clearer. New therapies and treatments will undoubtedly be introduced to the market and advancements will be made in the treatment of menopausal symptoms. Keep yourself up to date with the latest research and findings, so that you are able to make an informed decision about your future treatments.

Chapter Four: Mind & Body

The Holistic Menopause

If you had been a woman in times long past, you would have been held in extremely high regard, due to your ability to bleed whilst at the same time appearing to defy death. You also had the wonderful gift of keeping civilization alive with the ability to produce new life.

Upon menopause a woman retained the blood inside her body, which was considered even more fantastic as she now retained the power for her sole use to do with as she elected.

Unfortunately, we live in a world of science and technology and we have lost sight of much of the beauty and the magic and the wisdom that menstruation and menopause holds. Often they are reduced to `conditions` or `symptoms` or worse still `illnesses`.

As a woman, it can feel as though the ability to menstruate, carry a child and give birth, are simply part and parcel of our gender. They are such natural events that we forget how wonderful they truly are and what purpose they ultimately have. Even menopause is a wonderful time in our lives when we can experience calm, wisdom and power.

Menopause is our time to reclaim our bodies and our lives and to understand what both require, in order to thrive and flourish. We have choices to make and for us menopause is a wonderful time and a new beginning.

Nutrition – More Than Just Food

Food is life and eating the correct diet will support the endocrine system and promote good health throughout the menopause. It

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will help the body through the transition period and encourage your hormones to remain in balance.

Eat Little and Often: To enable remaining hormones to be fully utilized. Large gaps between meals are likely to lead to a drop in blood sugar, which will have you reaching for the nearest sugar coated snack. This sudden increase in blood sugar requires more insulin and you create a cycle which leads to bingeing, irritability and mood swings. They can be overcome by eating little and often and by limiting your intake of simple sugars such as cookies, cakes, fizzy drinks etc.

Limit Intake Of Dairy And Red Meat: Red meat is high in phosphates, which encourages the bones to release calcium. This is the last thing we need at anytime of life, but especially during menopause when osteoporosis is an ever present threat. Too much dairy is mucus forming and tend to have a high saturated fat content.....which is perfect for making young calves nice and fat.....but not ideal for a menopausal lady. It`s fine to make an exception for live, organic yogurt, as it is so beneficial to our system.

Dietary Fiber Is Important To your Good Health: Consuming over processed, sugary foods will make you feel lethargic and hungry for most of the time. On the other hand, eating a diet which includes a good proportion of fiber will give you extra energy and make you feel fuller for longer. It will also help speed up your metabolism as it passes through your digestive system.

Fresh vegetables (including skin whenever possible), fruit, wholegrain and oats are all good sources of dietary fiber. Whenever you have the option, select brown, wholemeal products over their bland, white counterparts. The latter has had most of the fiber sucked out and what remains is of not much use to anyone.

Essential Fatty Acids for Better Nutrition: Vital to build cells, keep skin and arteries supple and....to balance hormones. The body needs a supply of fatty acids on daily basis as part of your diet. They can be found in found in nuts, seeds, oily fish and

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vegetables. Omega 3 oils are especially helpful in menopause. They are also important in supporting our immune system, metabolism and for encouraging skin repair. Oily fish, pumpkin seeds, walnuts and dark green vegetables are all good sources. Linseed has proven to be a particularly rich source and can be taken in seed or oil form.

Increase Intake Of Phyto-estrogens: There has been a buzz lately about phyto-estrogens helping ease some of the symptoms of menopause. Apparently a group of foods that contain an estrogen like substance, have a similar action to hormones.

Soya bean products (especially tofu and miso) have been shown to contain around 70% isoflavones. Today, the typical diet contains almost no isoflavones because we eat hardly any foods that contain it. Foods such as pulses or legumes, lentils, chickpeas, soya and most beans. Once converted by the body, they have an action that slightly mimics that of estrogen.

Women in areas such as Japan where soy is consumed as part of their every day diet, tend to experience fewer menopausal hot flashes...Interestingly, there is no Japanese word for hot flashes... Although it has been pointed out that there could be other factors involved. Phyto-estrogens have also been shown to reduce the level of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) to levels they were prior to menopause, thus reducing hot flashes, night sweats and alleviating vaginal dryness.

Phyto-estrogens can be found in a variety of whole foods including grains and cereals, dried beans and lentils, flaxseed, sunflower seeds and peanuts. In the vegetable group, we have asparagus, sweet potatoes, carrots, garlic and broccoli. For fruits, choices include pears, plums and strawberries. Common herbs and spices such as thyme oregano, nutmeg, turmeric and licorice also have estrogenic properties.

One word of warning regarding phyto-estrogens..... just as too much estrogen is unhealthy after menopause, too much phyto-estrogen may also be unwise. One way to overcome this is to

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consume your phyto-estrogens naturally from foods, rather than from supplements.

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Enjoy Raw, Multi Colored Fruit And Vegetables: Storage and cooking both diminish the vitamin and mineral content of food. Wherever possible, eat your fruit and vegetables raw....wash thoroughly first.

Physical Activity – Get That Body Moving: Regular activity will not only make you feel healthier it will increase your positive body image and improve your self esteem and confidence. Hot flashes, night sweats, mood changes and insomnia will all be improved.

Weight bearing activity, will improve bone density so that they become stronger with less chance of osteoporosis. Aerobic exercise can also protect against heart disease and strokes. By making sure that you enjoy your exercise, you will be more likely to maintain it as part of your regular routine.

Water! Water! Water: Yeah! Yeah! You've been hearing the same advice since you were in elementary school gym class. Drink plenty of water.keep yourself hydrated. And you probably heard this same advice as an adult when you started your first membership in the local fitness club.

But let's face it. As a beverage, water just doesn't have that . . . ZING . . . that other drinks have. Coffee is good and hot, for example, and propels you into the real world on Monday mornings with that shot of caffeine.

And herbal tea is perfect for unwinding in the evenings.

Okay, so you even have an occasional cola or wine when you feel like celebrating. But water? Who actually drinks water these days? Well, you should.

Dehydration may be a far more serious problem than most people think. It very well could be the underlying cause of many

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of our aches, pains and other health problems from arthritis to heart problems.

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Water is of special significance to your brain and consequently to your central nervous system. Huh? In basic English it means that water helps your central nervous system "feel" the things you do. Of course, we think of pain first, but anything you touch and feel is brought to you by your CNS - central nervous system.

Joints need to be lubricated to work at their best performance. The water contributes to the creation of the synovial fluid between the bones in the joints. Cushioning the bones, this fluid helps to "grease" the joint, if you will, allowing it to move more smoothly with far less pain. If you're dehydrated, the two bones creating the joint rub together causing the pain

When the brain cells become dehydrated, the little water that is running through your microtubules (cells) actually gets thicker. This in turn hinders the efficient delivery of nutrients and enzymes.

Pretty impressive, huh? And we haven't even mentioned yet that water is a crucial component in delivering nutrients to every part of your body. Consider this fact alone. Water is also found in your lymph....which is the fluid of your immune system that is designated with the task of fighting off illnesses.

Once you see the all-encompassing need your system has for water, then you gain a better understanding of the appearance of the symptoms of dehydration.

Nearly 40 percent of the population is dehydrated at any one time. Moreover, the mechanism by which we recognize actually being thirsty is so weak that it's often mistaken for hunger.

But not only that, dehydration slows your metabolic processes. Consider this: even mild dehydration can slow your metabolism by three percent.

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And guess what dehydration is considered by some experts to be the number one cause of fatigue in the afternoon. Now, I know drinking water doesn't appeal to you nearly as much as having that chocolate bar, but . . .

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Got Brain Fog? Hydrate Yourself

If you find yourself throughout the afternoon or evening struggling to balance your check book or other basic math problems . . . yep! You're probably experiencing a case of mild dehydration.

Thinking of substituting other liquids? While drinking coffee may give your body liquid, the caffeine in the coffee acts as a diuretic, kicking much of that water out through urination. Caffeinated tea and coffee both contain stimulants which put the adrenalin glands under pressure. They can also contribute to hot flushes, fatigue, anxiety and panic attacks

And of course, any soda containing caffeine acts in the same manner. And in fact, soda may be even worse. For many people, soda doesn't really quench a thirst, it only make you more thirsty.

And before you ask.....alcohol is a toxin which strains the liver, depletes the body of vitamins and minerals....so no, it cannot be drunk as a substitute for water.

How Much Water?

We've pretty much narrowed your drinking choices down to water. Right about now you may be thinking is: How much water?

It seems as if every health official or self-proclaimed natural health expert has a different opinion on how much water is enough. Most experts say that a minimum of eight glasses a day is sufficient.

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For the most part, when people say "glasses" they're referring to eight ounce servings of water. This would be a total of 64 ounces for the day.

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The hotter the climate, the more water you'll need to drink. For one thing, you're losing more fluids through your perspiration alone.

Part of the damage dehydration does -- aside from starving your body of much needed nutrients -- is throwing your delicate balance of minerals off. Your body's salts and sugars no longer exist in the proper ratio and that could spell disaster for your health.

Now, you're armed with some of the most cutting edge information on water around....so no more excuses for not drinking the stuff!

Essential Vitamins

Nothing will replace eating a balanced diet for providing your body with all the nutrients that it requires. If, however, your eating habits veer from good to abysmal, supplements can help to bridge the resulting gap.

Hormonal changes of menopause can put added strain on your body as the declining levels of estrogen leave you without its protective effects. Another reason, you may choose nutritional supplements to maintain good health before, during and after menopause.

B Vitamins

Lack of the B vitamins is said to manifest itself in mood swings poor temper and high stress levels. They are often taken together and can be beneficial in women who don't obtain enough B vitamins in their diet, such as vegetarians or vegans. Women who already have adequate levels of the B vitamins will

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not notice as much of an improvement as women deficient in this vitamin group.

Vitamin E

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Vitamin E has shown mixed results in research studies for treating hot flashes and vaginal dryness caused by menopause and post-menopause. If you aren't obtaining enough vitamin E in your diet, you can take a daily amount in capsule form.

If you are in doubt as to whether you are getting enough vitamins from your diet, it is well worth discussing with a nutritionist. Many people simply go off and buy their vitamin tablets with little thought for their daily requirements. If you are taking supplements for vitamins that your body already has in adequate supplies, you are at best wasting your cash. At worst, you could be overdosing on certain vitamins and doing more damage than good.

As unexciting as it may sound, holistic healers recommend healthy living as the best way to ease symptoms of menopause. How well balanced, you and your lifestyle are when you reach menopause, will largely determine how smoothly the transition will flow. If you are burning the candle at both ends in your 30's and early 40's, you are more likely to experience menopausal symptoms when your hormones start playing up. See this as an internal alarm, letting you know that now is a good time to start paying better attention to your health.

Mind and body....one is not much use without the other....be sure to nurture both!

Chapter Five: Alternative Therapies

Because of recent concerns regarding HRT, some women have turned to complementary and alternative treatments to gain relief. Most of them you will no doubt have heard of...but how many have you tried?

Acupuncture

We've all seen the demonstrations on television or watched a movie with this therapy in it and it can look quite scary. But acupuncture is not as painful as it looks (thankfully). Usually, a therapist uses no more than a dozen needles at a time (more than enough if you ask me!)

Once the needles hit that correct depth for your condition, though, you may feel a deep aching sensation. Many individuals report this. And once these instruments are in the proper position it's not unusual for the therapist to move them gently around or even stimulate them with electricity or heat. After the needles are in place, the acupuncturist maintains their position for approximately 20 minutes.

At the end of the actual treatment, he probably will also talk to you about the best self-care methods for your particular situation. A visit to an acupuncturist usually lasts a minimum of 30 minutes.

What's The Secret Behind Acupuncture?

Yes, you figure there must be some secret behind the success of acupuncture. The secret lies in a theory -- not very familiar to Western medicine -- that health is, more than anything else, a balance between the complementary extremes. The legendary

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yin and yang must be balanced to achieve optimal life force or as it's called in the East: qi or chi.

And Now the Explanation

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According to Western Medicine

As you might guess, conventional Western medicine has quite a different view of acupuncture. The fact that this community even accepts that it does work for some represents a huge step for them.

But it works, western experts say, not because of any balance of life forces within your body. Rather, acupuncture is no more than a demonstration in the power of neuroscience.

Where eastern acupuncturists see meridians western neuroscientists see nerves. They say the acupuncture points are locations that stimulate not only your body's nerves, but also your muscles as well as your connective tissues.

This stimulation, in turn, apparently boosts the activity level of your body's natural pain killers as well as increase blood flow throughout your system.

Even the medical community is having a difficult time knocking acupuncture from its perch of popularity these days. When acupuncture was initially introduced about 25 years ago to the general population the medical officials immediately scoffed at the entire premise of the practice.

And for the most part, the idea of alleviating pain or improving health conditions through the insertion of very thin needles on points of the body appear rather bizarre to most of us. But you cannot escape the fact, that for a great many individuals, needle therapy does indeed offer some relief from their symptoms.

Aromatherapy

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Wonderfully aromatic and very beneficial for a variety of symptoms. Uses the diluted essential oils of plants. These can be used in massage, as an alternative to perfume or in a relaxing bath. Geranium combats fluid retention, is pain-relieving and has a balancing effect on the hormones; clary sage is an anti-depressant; bergamot is calming and pain-relieving; lavender regulates menstruation, soothes headaches, encourages relaxation and is sleep-inducing; jasmine and rose are uplifting, relaxing and soothing to skin; rosemary and lemongrass are energizing

Yoga

Yoga has been around for many years and is enjoying a re-surge in popularity as many people are realizing its potential.

Yoga movements are designed to bring energy and balance to the mind and body. Women entering or going through the menopause may find that by practicing yoga they become more relaxed and their general well being is improved. This is because when our hormones are out of balance, by gently stretching out the muscles of the body, circulation is improved, thus promoting better oxygenation to the cells and tissues of the body. The skin will look healthier and hair will shine.

You will certainly experience peaceful feelings when practicing yoga and regular practice of the poses and breathing exercises will calm and sooth you as well as relieving any feelings of anxiety that you may have. Suppleness and joint mobility will increase and you should notice a reduction in the intensity of hot flashes and night sweats.

Reflexology

Regular reflexology treatments can support a menopausal woman physically, mentally and emotionally....and apart from anything else, they`re just so wonderfully relaxing. And don`t worry if you have ticklish feet, the pressure used is firm enough to make sure that you don`t dissolve into fits of laughter.

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Having an understanding reflexologist who is aware of the physical changes behind menopausal symptoms can, be enough to relieve stress on it`s own.

Page | 50 *Alexander Technique*

Developed by an Australian actor, this technique involves trying to perfect the ultimate posture. Thus you are able to breathe correctly help energy to flow freely and achieve mind and body freedom. No trials have yet been carried out to specifically measure the effects of the Alexander technique on symptoms of menopause. However, the breathing technique of paced respiration has been shown to reduce hot flashes by 39%. So this is certainly one technique worth trying if you`re one of the many sufferers of this irritating affliction.

Chinese Medicine

Gained increase in popularity in the last few years and those that have tried it are usually devotees for life, often combining it with more conventional therapies. Our reproductive organs are governed by kidney qi and spleen qi and menopause is viewed as a deficiency of kidney and spleen. A course of herbs is usually recommended along with mind and body techniques such as yoga, tai chi or acupuncture.

Homeopathy and Flower Remedies

Both are well respected remedies and both need to be recommended by a qualified practitioner, in order to gain the most benefits.

Sexual Activity

Ok, so not strictly an alternative therapy, but still very important. Love making with a trusted partner promotes good circulation to the sexual organs and stimulates the endocrine glands. Seeing yourself as a desirable woman also increases self-esteem and dispels negative images of ageing.

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Massage & Acupressure

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Can both be useful in highlighting imbalances and increasing self-knowledge about our body's needs. And what can possibly be better than a totally relaxing and indulgent massage?

Exercise

I know that you're probably thinking that exercise isn't an alternative therapy....but I'm afraid for some people it can certainly be classed as such. I am also aware that I have talked about exercise in a previous chapter, but as it is the one thing that most of us resist doing at all costs, I felt obliged to mention it again.

Just In case the message still isn't getting across....EXERCISE IS ONE OF THE BEST THERAPIES THERE IS..... Even a few minutes every day of walking, yoga, swimming, dancing...anything that increases your heart rate even slightly, can be a wonderful anti-depressant. That's not just me trying to persuade you to get moving, it's true! The brain releases endorphins which are the feel good chemicals. It also encourages toxins and lymph drainage, promotes good posture, balance, improved co-ordination and improves lung capacity.

If there was a pill that gave you all these benefits and also increased metabolism, burned fat and helped you look and feel great....how much would you pay? Why not take advantage while it's free!!

Chapter Six:

Herbal Remedies &

Supplements

There are many supplements available that women swear helps ease their menopausal symptoms. But for every woman who advocates taking supplements, there is someone who will tell you they are a waste of money.

Those who do not support the use of herbal remedies, claim that no strong evidence has been found to support them having any effect on menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and anxiety. It is said that more menopausal women have turned to using herbal remedies following recent HRT health scares, but that their safety is untested, and there is limited information on how they interact with other medicines.

When I was searching for natural alternatives to ease my menopausal symptoms, I could not find a source of information that included both positive and negative accounts of each supplement. I have put that right for you in this book and given an honest account for both taking herbal remedies and the argument against taking them.

The Case For Supplements:

Once you have read through the first list, take time to read through the.... Ah! But.... list and then as always, make up your own mind about whether they have a place in your life. And of course, please consult your doctor or health professional before embarking on any course of remedial treatment.

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Agnus Castus

Stimulates and stabilizes the pituitary gland and rebalance hormones. Often recommended for women who experience early menopause, it is also claimed that it increases the level of progesterone when used regularly.

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Black Cohosh

Black Cohosh, which is the root and rhizome of the plant, is a herb used by Native Americans and part of the buttercup family. It has been used for many years to treat hot flashes, night sweats and hormonal imbalance. Advocates say that it helps to stimulate estrogen, supports the pituitary gland and increases serotonin (the `feel good` hormone) levels. This would assist with anxiety and depression and may even help improve a low libido!

Dandelion

Dandelion has a detoxifying effect so supports the liver in eliminating built-up toxins and helps it process out any excess hormones you are taking. Also helps to reduce fluid retention. When the liver works well, the kidneys work better, and tissues no longer bloat. If you have any digestion problems, take your dandelion before meals, otherwise anytime is fine.

Dong Quai

Used for centuries by Asian healers. It is claimed that it supports the balance of female hormones and promotes hormonal health during the menopause. Dong Quai is also used to alleviate vaginal dryness, regulate periods and reduce hot flushes. One of the most popular supplements used amongst menopausal women.

Evening Primrose Oil

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A rich natural source of gamma-linoleic acid. Evening primrose oil encourages healthy skin and aids hormonal imbalance. Helpful when used to reduce stress during menopause.

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Ginseng

Native Americans and the people of China and Korea have been using the root known as ginseng for thousands of years in their medicinal preparations. Ginseng a phyto-estrogenic herb containing hormones similar to the ones that human beings have, can help menopausal women. When experiencing the effects of a hormonal imbalance, women take ginseng as a hormone substitute.

Kava Kava

In trials, kava kava users showed improvement in symptoms of stress and anxiety. Improved feelings of well-being, mood, and menopausal symptoms including hot flashes were also noted. Again, these positive effects were gained without side effects.

Lemon Balm

This herb has antibacterial and antiviral properties and is mildly sedating. Traditionally it has been useful by helping to balance the hormones. Lemon balm can help relieve depression during menopause.

Motherwort

Part of the mint family and primarily considered a herb for women, motherwort is native to Europe and Asia. Success using motherwort in combination with other plants has been noted. Primarily to ease the anxiety and hormonal shifts associated with hot flashes. Transitions are often traumatic and this plant can ease much of the anxiety.

Red Clover

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Red clover contains large amounts of a group of compounds called isoflavones, a type of phyto-estrogen found in plants. Phyto-estrogens have mild estrogenic properties and this is believed to be the reason red clover is able to offer relief for symptoms of the menopause. Isoflavones are also believed to play a role in lowering the risk of heart disease and may also help to prevent osteoporosis.

Sage Extract

You will probably be more used to using Sage in the kitchen than as a supplement. It is silvery green and very distinctly fragranced. Working on the action of the sweat regulating mechanism in our brain, Sage helps to balance the body's thermostat and is good for combating hot flashes and night sweats.

And so there you have it, the case for using herbal supplements to help ease symptoms of the menopause.

Ah! But....

Initially herbs do treat hormonal imbalance by introducing plant-based estrogens into the body. But, there is the possibility, that by introducing these hormones to a woman's body, it may subsequently become less capable of producing its own estrogen.

Also, most herbal medicines do not have to comply with the stringent safety, quality and manufacturing regulations that govern conventional medicines. The majority of them are unlicensed for the treatment of medical conditions and they may also have side effects. For instance....

Agnus Castus

Minor gastrointestinal upset and a mild skin rash with itching have been reported in less than 2% of the women monitored while taking agnus castus. It is not recommended that men take agnus castus. The potential side effects may

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include slight skin rashes, itching, nausea, upset stomach and headaches during treatment.

Black Cohosh

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There are claims that research has found the herbal remedy to have no significant benefit on menopausal symptoms. However, other trials found it to be beneficial and found that it gave a similar reduction in symptoms to conventional menopausal medications. Black cohosh is claimed to carry the risks of headaches, dizziness, gastrointestinal disturbances and possibly liver toxicity. Although liver injury is rare it could potentially be serious. Its estrogenic qualities mean that it should not be used in women who cannot take estrogen. Such as women with breast cancer.

Dong Quai

In trials, dong quai was compared with placebo and found not to significantly improve menopausal symptoms. However, in another trial of a dong quai and chamomile combination, it was found to be significantly more effective than placebo in reducing hot flashes. Dong quai contains coumarins, which make them unsuitable if you take anti coagulants such as warfarin.

Evening Primrose Oil

One trial found that evening primrose oil did not reduce the frequency of hot flashes any more than placebo. Advice must be taken before taking evening primrose oil with a combination of drugs that increase the propensity to seizures.

Kava Kava

Although kava kava was previously recommended for anxiety, reports of liver damage must be taken seriously. Kava has been withdrawn from the UK market because of concerns over safety.

Motherwort

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Can aggravate heavy bleeding, so if you are susceptible, use it sparingly.

Red Clover

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Trials of red clover extract, showed no benefit of red clover over placebo in reducing symptoms of hot flashes. Using phyto-estrogens has showed no increase in adverse effects. Whether its safety in women with cancers may be exacerbated by estrogen and similar compounds is uncertain. Also has estrogenic properties, which should not be used in women who cannot not take estrogen.

Sage Extract

Drinking sage tea to help cure an upset stomach is not recommended as sage contains thujone. Not a good idea if your stomach is already irritated. Apart from that, there is limited evidence of any effect on menopausal symptoms.

Vitamins

Vitamins are essential substances that cannot be manufactured by the body. Without vitamins the body cannot survive. There are two types.

- **Fat-soluble vitamins** (A, D, E and K) are usually found meat products, animal fat and vegetable oils, dairy products and fish. They are transported around the body in fat, and your body stores any excess in the liver and fatty tissues. This means you don't need to get them from food sources every day.
- **Water-soluble vitamins** (B, C, folic acid) are found in meat, fish, fruit, vegetables and wholegrains. They are transported around the body in water. This means your body can't store them because you pass the excess through urine. You need to eat foods containing these

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vitamins every day. Water-soluble vitamins can be destroyed by cooking, so steam and grill rather than boil.

Plenty of foods naturally contain vitamins, and some popular foods such as breakfast cereals are fortified with vitamins and minerals. That said, it is not always easy: fruit and vegetables age (an apple in a bowl loses vitamins hour by hour), and modern processing techniques have considerably reduced the vitamin and mineral content of many foods. Try to eat a wide variety of fresh foods. Frozen vegetables are also a good option: they can often contain more vitamins than vegetables stored for a long time at room temperature.

Are Vitamins And Minerals The Same Thing?

Vitamins and minerals are two completely different things. Minerals help the vitamins work.

Where do vitamin supplements come from?

- ◆ Most vitamin supplements have been extracted from natural foods.
- ◆ Vitamin A comes from fish-liver oil.
- ◆ Vitamin B comes from yeast or liver.
- ◆ Vitamin C is often extracted from small berries in roses.
- ◆ Vitamin E is extracted from soy beans or maize.
- ◆ Vitamins may also be synthetically manufactured, but synthetic vitamins are not always as effective.

What's the best time to take supplements?

The best time to take vitamins is during the day, after a meal.

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Never take supplements on an empty stomach - they will quickly pass out in your urine. This is especially true for the B and C vitamins that dissolve in water. The fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K can be stored in the body for up to 24 hours and are sometimes stored in the liver for even longer.

Chapter Seven:

Something For Him

Ok, so your wife has begun behaving oddly? Her behavior is somewhat erratic...to say the least? And she bites your head off for the slightest thing? Well what is that all about? You think your wife is having some sort of a breakdown, or perhaps she's seeing someone else. She seems cold, distant and can fly off of the handle in a split second and you don't know what's going on.

Just remember that hormones affect nearly every single cell in a woman's body and she has no control over them. This should make it easier to understand why this period in their lives can be confusing, frightening and often lonely

Peri-menopause is when your partner will start experiencing the first signs of menopause. Many women experience more symptoms during this stage than after menopause.

Remember that you can have the perfect ignition timing, spotless carburetor, and a full tank, but without good compression... that engine is not going to run. The mixture of fuel is either too much or too little and immediately this happens the engine misfires and cannot run properly. This is more or less how a woman's body functions, only her fuel is hormones. Too many, will produce symptoms, too little will produce symptoms. And these symptoms can appear without warning, ranging from being quite mild, to severe symptoms which can affect your partners quality of life dramatically. (And yours too no doubt)

But, this doesn't mean that the pair of you will not survive this stage, or that life as you both knew it is over for good.

What it does mean, is that you will just have to try and understand what is happening and learn to go with it....oh and retaining a sense of humor will help enormously!

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One word of advice. Please do not ever tell your wife/partner to "pull herself together". Look at it like this, your best mate has had one too many and fallen over and broken his leg in three places, would you expect him to get up and walk? Then please do not think that a woman affected by all these symptoms can just pull herself together and carry on with life, because she cannot. Be in no doubt that if she could she would. We don't enjoy feeling this way you know!

There are said to be over 30 symptoms of menopause, but talk to a woman and she will tell you it feels more like 100's. Remember the things she experiences are very real, they are not imagined or made up. So, in no particular order...I give you:

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

- Hot flashes/flushes and night sweats
- Irregular heart beat Irritability
- Mood swings, sudden tears
- Irregular periods; shorter, lighter periods; heavier periods
- Loss of libido
- Fatigue
- Feelings of dread, apprehension, doom
- Difficulty concentrating, disorientation, mental confusion
- Disturbing memory lapses
- Incontinence, especially upon sneezing, laughing;
- Itchy,crawly skin
- Aching, sore joints, muscles and tendons
- Insomnia
- Breast tenderness
- Headaches - increase or decrease
- Gastrointestinal distress, indigestion, flatulence, gas pain,
- Nausea
- Bloating
- Depression
- Weight gain

- Dizziness, light-headedness, episodes of loss of balance
- Gum problems, increased bleeding
- Burning tongue, burning roof of mouth, bad taste in mouth,

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Vaginal dryness
Osteoporosis (after several years)
Anxiety, feeling ill at ease

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Not every woman will experience all of the symptoms listed. Some will have a few, some several and some unfortunate woman experience many of them.

Try if you will, to put yourself in the shoes of someone going through changes over which they have no control. And then on top of that, imagine yourself suffering a range of symptoms that are as embarrassing as they are distressing.

Now, if in the midst of all this you had someone telling you to “pull yourself together” or “stop being a drama queen” – how would you feel?

Now please don't think that I am suggesting for a moment that you would behave in such an insensitive way to your partner, but I have come across many men that do. And I can tell you, for those poor women who have such a lack of support from their loved ones, the experience of menopause is a whole lot worse than for those women lucky enough to have an understanding partner.

This can be a testing time for both of you, but by understanding a little of what is happening, you will be in a far better position to make things easier for your partner. And after all, isn't that what being in a relationship is all about – being there for one another?

Criticism will cause tension and stress – and believe me, that's the last thing that a menopausal woman needs. She's going through huge changes and she needs love and support from those closest to her.. and that's you.

Conclusion

So that`s it. You now know as much as you need to manage your menopause effectively. If you are in tune with your body`s needs and take the time to nurture it, you will no doubt have an easier and more pleasant transition. This is our time to receive love, respect and to finally love our bodies. After many years of caring for and giving to others, the time is here for us to care for ourselves.

Now is the time to take control of your own life and your own health. I've approached this topic from every possible viewpoint and include many techniques. In this one-of-a-kind menopause manual, you're bound to find at least one remedy (and more than likely many) that works for you.

Enjoy life`s pleasures now, things that you may have denied yourself in the past. Massages, facials, spa days, anything that makes you feel pampered and special. Explore new things that you have not tried before or visit places you have only dreamed about.

Life should be viewed as ever changing. Homes, careers, locations we experience changes constantly, but since there really are no physiological changes attached to them, they don`t seem such a big deal. Yet menopause! Now that`s a biggie! Huge! Disastrous!

Women in Asian, African and Arabic countries don`t suffer as many of the symptoms as western women. Their attitudes really seem to help them go through the symptoms of menopause, and they report that their symptoms are not as bad.

When you were in your 20`s, with little experience of life, you may have struggled to handle menopause...but not now. Now you`re stronger, wiser, more confident and more capable than you ever were. This is your time. You`ve earned it!

Here's wishing you a very healthy menopause!

Appendix: Glossary of Terms

Acupressure: The application of pressure on certain points of the body aligned with meridians to control symptoms of health conditions or to promote health.

Acupuncture: An ancient Chinese medical practice, the application of very slim needles on specific points of the body corresponding to meridians to help control pain, relieve symptoms or improve health.

Bacteria: A single-celled micro-organism that exists either independently or as a parasite, dependent on another organism for life.

Blood sugar: Blood glucose.

Dehydration: A dangerously excessive loss of body water.

Electrolyte: A substance that dissociates into ions when placed into a solution and acquires the capacity to conduct electricity. Electrolytes in your body include sodium, potassium chloride, calcium and phosphate.

Estrogen: A female hormone produced by the ovaries. Estrogen is an essential part of a woman's reproductive process. It regulates the monthly menstrual cycle and prepares the uterus for pregnancy

Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH): Hormone found in humans and other animals

Gastroenteritis: Inflammation of the stomach and the intestines. This condition can provoke nausea and vomiting as well as trigger diarrhea.

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Homeopathy: Homeopathy is a system which is based on treating the individual substances which triggers the body's natural system of healing.

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Hormone: Produced naturally by your body, a hormone is one of several types of chemical substances controlling and regulating the activity of certain cells or organs.

Isoflavones: Comprise a class of organic compounds.

Menopause: Ovaries cease egg production and menstrual cycle stops.

Phosphates: Phosphate is a mineral in the body, and together with calcium makes up most of our bones.

Phyto-Estrogens: These are weak hormones found in plants

Perimenopause: Time leading up to menopause.

Post Menopause: Twelve months after last period.

Nausea: The urge to vomit.

Pituitary Gland: Gland located at the base of the brain

Progesterone: A female hormone, it's the principal hormone made in the ovary.

Serotonin: Also called 5-hydroxytryptamine, it's a hormone found in the pineal gland, blood platelets, digestive tract and brain. It acts as a chemical messenger, transmitting nerve signals between cells. It also causes blood vessels to narrow.

Testosterone: A "male hormone" that encourages the development of male characteristics.