

Wellness

REVIEW

Is the “Change of Life” Ruining Your Life?

The menopausal phase of life is a time of huge change for many women. The physical and emotional changes can be overwhelming, debilitating and extremely frustrating. Many women experience a rollercoaster ride of symptoms during menopause, including bewildering mood swings, hot flushes, fatigue, cognitive impairment, insomnia and depression. These are all common symptoms that can occur in varying degrees during menopause and greatly impact on quality of life for many women.

If you aren't coping well with the physical or emotional changes of menopause, talk to one of our Practitioners today about the natural treatment options available to support you at this time.

What is Menopause?

Menopause is not a disease; it is a natural part of every woman's life that usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, when the ovaries cease to function and stop producing oestrogen.

In the few years prior to your final period, also known as the perimenopausal phase, the production of oestrogen by the ovaries slows down, hormone levels start to fluctuate and you may notice changes such as:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Vaginal dryness
- Dry skin
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Weight gain
- Low libido
- Fatigue
- Changes in the menstrual cycle, such as longer, shorter or irregular periods
- Lighter bleeding during your period
- Unpredictable and heavy bleeding

Eventually oestrogen levels decrease and menstruation stops completely. Once you have gone without a period for 12 months, you have officially reached menopause. The major hormonal shift that occurs is a gradual process, which is why menopausal symptoms can last for a number of years for some women.

Nature's Answers to Menopausal Miseries

Healthy Eating

Making positive changes to your diet can reduce the symptoms of menopause.

- Phytoestrogens (plant oestrogens) replace some natural oestrogens lost during menopause, and may reduce menopausal symptoms - good sources of phytoestrogens include organic soy products such as tofu, linseeds, whole grains and legumes.
- Eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables every day.
- Include lean meat, fish or chicken in your diet.
- Drink six to eight glasses of filtered water daily.
- Decrease caffeine intake (coffee, tea, soft-drinks).
- Limit alcohol to one to two standard glasses, or less, per day.

Herbal Medicines to Relieve Emotional and Physical Symptoms of Menopause

A combination of traditional Chinese herbs may help with emotional symptoms of menopause. Bupleurum (*Bupleurum falcatum*), Chinese peony (*Paeonia lactiflora*), dong quai (*Angelica polymorpha*), licorice (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis*) and ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) are all herbs that may work in synergy to relieve depression, irritability and headaches associated with menopause.

Physical symptoms of menopause, such as hot flushing, night sweats, lower back pain and dry skin may be relieved with herbs such as rehmannia (*Rehmannia glutinosa*), Chinese yam (*Dioscorea opposita*), and zizyphus (*Zizyphus spinosa*).

Regular Physical Activity

Aim for 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week to maintain general health, control weight and help keep your bones strong and healthy. Exercise is so important at this stage of life and if you find it difficult to exercise enough each week, try joining a walking group, an aerobics class, a yoga class or finding an exercise buddy to help you achieve your exercise goals!

Looking Forward to a Bright and Healthy Future!

Menopause is just the beginning of a new phase of your life. The 'Change of Life' often causes women to reassess many areas of their lives, and it is the ideal time for you to review your lifestyle choices and make your own health a priority. We can support you through menopause so you can focus on a healthy future with strong bones, a healthy heart, energy and vitality.

Talk to your Practitioner about your menopausal symptoms and a personalised treatment protocol can be created just for you!

