

# Take Charge Of Your Hormones

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As with so many medical issues, there is a lot of conflicting information about how to deal with menopause and its symptoms. We will try to clarify a few of these issues; but first let's talk about the facts. Menopause is actually a relatively recent phenomenon. The U.S. is one of the few cultures in the world where menopause is considered a disease; treated by pharmaceutical intervention, Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). American women have more symptoms and experience menopause at earlier ages than other countries.

Why do you think this happens? There are several causes, including: the "Standard American" Diet, lack of exercise, stress levels, birth control pills and environmental pollutants.

Contrary to popular belief, a woman rarely produces "No" estrogen, for in menopause estrone, another form of estrogen becomes dominant. In many cultures, this is considered the woman's "wisdom years"! However there are xenoestrogens, which mimic human hormones and interfere with normal estrogen function. These include solvents, chemicals, pesticides, emulsifiers used in cosmetics and soaps and meat from livestock fed hormones. Both xenoestrogens and excess estrogen can cause increases in cancers, hormonal imbalance, infertility, osteoporosis and causes increased body fat and fluid retention.

Really, our focus needs to be on "balancing" our hormones, our bodies strive always to keep in balance. Today, Premarin, is the most widely prescribed menopause drug to solve this problem, at sales over \$950,000 million/year. In case you haven't heard, premarin is made from a pregnant horse's urine. The horse is continually impregnated and foals are considered a waste by-product. Unfortunately, it is an imperfect match, it's not human and creates side effects. But there are also benefits that many women will attest to; it eliminates hot flashes, improves mood and decreases vaginal dryness. But, studies also show that risks with HRT are high for cancer, increased blood pressure and weight gain among others.

So, how should you handle menopause? First work with a competent practitioner, interested in helping you with your interests. If HRT is necessary, use it temporarily while trying to convert to natural therapies and changing lifestyle habits. The more natural plant hormones, phytoestrogens, are wild yam and soybean products. One symptom, vaginal dryness will improve with drinking more filtered water, kegel exercises, and eating soy foods. Also, eat foods with lignans, like flaxseed or beans, and increase fruits and vegetables. There are also helpful herbs like red clover, fennel, anise, and black cohosh and dong quai.

A big issue is hot flashes, which can be due to excess estrogen, so you need to release the natural endorphins from the body to function properly by using exercise, acupressure or acupuncture and deep breathing with stretching. Additionally, you should reduce exposure to xenoestrogens, reduce amount of animal protein, and increase B6 and magnesium by eating whole grains and beans. The herb, stinging nettles used as a tea, improves the ability to deal

with stress. Dong quai is effective for night sweats.

In conclusion, we can help many of our symptoms naturally, it may take more time to incorporate them and a little longer to get the best results for your particular body, but it far outweighs the risks of HRT drugs. It's more natural, so you will feel better about yourself and your health.

For more information on this topic or others, call The Wellness Forum for our program schedule at 512-707-6782.