



# Menopause



## Things to take to Heart:

- Spend time in solitude. Honor your metamorphous. You are the caterpillar becoming the butterfly. Its OK to take time out for yourself. Its OK to focus on yourself and your needs.
- Embrace life! Find things you enjoy. Try new things. Do something unexpected! Take a trip. Go dancing.
- Take an extended vacation or staycation. A sabbatical or a “Crone’s Year Away” is ideal. Plan it now. Talk about it. Its yours to create!
- Consume a colorful, organic, whole food diet with lots of vegetables, exercise, get 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Monitor stress levels. Hydrate. Remember lessons from “Basic Care for the Human Body 101”.

**Herbal allies:** While there are still many un-answered questions as to how and why herbs help with menopausal symptoms and why they work for some women and not others. We still have much to learn!

When trying out any new herb, research it carefully to make sure there are no medication or health contradictions.

- Black cohosh (nonphytoestrogen) useful for hot flashes, mood swings, sleep disorders and body aches.
- Licorice (Phytoestrogen) mildly estrogenic, balancing herb. Also supportive to the adrenals.
- Oatstraw (nourishing) mineral rich, blood sugar stabilizing, mellows mood, stabilizes emotions, improves circulation, lubricates vaginal tissues.

## What’s Happening in Menopause?

We’ve all heard about it, some of us eagerly await its arrival while others dread the hormonal change. But what is it? What happens in menopause? Its commonly referred to as the “change of life”. Susun Weed aptly describes it as a metamorphous at a cellular level which mirrors the three classic stages of initiation: isolation, death and rebirth/reintegration on all levels. The transformation the body goes through with the loss of estrogen acting upon the tissues is profound. 75-85% of women experience uncomfortable symptoms as a result of declining estrogen levels. Symptoms can include hot flashes, weight gain especially in the abdominal areas, difficulty with sleep, heavy menstrual flooding, and uterine fibroid growth. There are over 300 bodily functions influenced by estrogen.

In the US, the average age menopause occurs is between 40 and 60 years. Menopause is defined as 12 consecutive months with no periods. Perimenopause may precede this by 3 to 5 years and symptoms may persist for as long as 10-15 years following the cessation of menstruation.

Hormonal changes begin several years prior to symptoms developing. Typically the first symptoms may begin around the age of 40 and manifest as minor changes in menstrual cycle length, followed by more noticeable irregularity, anovulation, hot flashes and night sweats. Symptoms progress but each woman’s experience is unique and is likely colored by her perceptions and attitudes towards the closure of her fertile years. It is a time of loss but also of rebirth. Celebrate the change!

The first measurable change in reproductive hormones is the rise in follicle stimulating hormone (FSH). As a woman’s egg supply is depleted fewer egg follicles are stimulated resulting in less estrogen. Low levels of estrogen reduce the amount of inhibin (a glycoprotein) released from the ovary, as a result, the pituitary doesn’t receive the message to turn off FSH production.

A blood test can be used on Day 2 of the cycle to measure FSH levels. In young women, FSH is normally low during this time of the cycle. A test result over 10 mIU/mL suggests the ovaries are producing insufficient amounts of estrogen. The ovaries are unkindly said to be “failing”. A test result over 40 mIU/mL suggests menopause is in full swing. Luteinizing hormone is also likely to be elevated at this time. In the absence of estrogen feedback, FSH and LH levels typically rise about 10 and 4 times the level of that of a younger woman respectively.

With the decrease in the occurrence of ovulation, progesterone levels also decline resulting in additional symptoms which may include headaches, anxiety, swollen or painful breasts, painful joints, edema, weight gain, food cravings, moodiness, depression, insomnia, infertility and miscarriage.

More serious long term side effects can develop which are heavily influenced by dietary and lifestyle choices such as osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease.

**Need help soothing the symptoms and easing the transition? We can help!**  
**WISH—520-743-0575**

## Remedies for Dry Vagina

Topical: Lubricants which contain Wild Yam or Black Cohosh leaf, St. Johnswort flower and Calendula flower oils.

Internal: Take in generous amounts of essential fatty acids and healthy oils. Hydration is also important, consume 1/2 your body weight in ounces of water each day.

Vitamin E—100-200 IU per day for 4-6 weeks can help increase vaginal lubrication.

Chew on a sliver of Dong Quai Root during lovemaking.

Insert a capsule of lactobacillus acidophilus vaginally 4-6 hours prior to lovemaking to increase lubrication and help protect against biofilm imbalances (yeast or bacterial infections).

Comfrey is a wonderful herb to use externally when the skin needs flexible strength. Rub into the skin the morning and evening and use as a lubricant during love play. Use as an ointment, oil or salve. Expect results in about 3 weeks.

Slippery Elm Vaginal Gel by Susun Weed. Slowly heat 2 Tbsp slippery elm powder in a cup of water, stirring until thick. Cool before spreading over and inside the vulva and vagina. This gel lubricates, heals and nourishes.

Heal the adrenals. Avoid coffee, alcohol, white sugar, stress, steroid and cortisone drugs.

### Other Natural Lubricants:

- Coconut oil (solid at room temp, tastes good, liquefies at body temperature).
- Acidophilus tablets
- Comfrey ointment
- Slippery elm gel
- Olive oil
- Aloe vera gel (fresh or bottled)

### Further Reading:

- (1) New Menopausal Years by Susun Weed.
- (2) The Cortisol Connection by Shawn Talbott, Ph.D.
- (3) Women's Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine by Tori Hudson, ND

## Hair Loss

Approx 50% of women experience hair loss during the menopausal years. Normal hair loss is 50-100 hairs per day.

- Rule out nutritional deficiencies: protein, zinc, trace minerals, vitamin D, iron.
- Rule out other hormonal imbalances (thyroid, pituitary) and other health concerns: scarlet fever, syphilis, autoimmune disease, excessive vitamin A intake, medication side effects, etc.
- Consume Nettle infusion—2-4 cups per day. Rich in minerals.
- Use herbal Hair Rinses like: Lemon Balm, Lemon Grass. Brew an infusion, cool and pour over the scalp.
- Rosemary Essential Oil—Rub a few drops into the scalp several times a week to repair damage and increase hair growth and improve texture.
- Essential Oils for hair growth: lavender, lemon, thyme, sage and carrot seed. Mix 20 drops of any of these essential oils into 4 ounces of plain olive oil or almond oil. Rub oil into scalp and leave in overnight. Essential oils to reduce hair loss include birch, calendula, chamomile, cypress, rose and yarrow.
- Supplement with: protein, beta carotene, B Complex, Vitamin C, Zinc and essential fatty acids. Consume a mineral rich diet and address any nutritional deficiencies. Consider blood chemistry analysis.



## Help for Hot Flashes

The majority of women will have had at least one hot flash by the time they reach age 60. 85% of women experience hot flashes during menopause. 80% of those women suffer with hot flashes for 2 months to 2 years while the other 20% may be plagued with hot flashes for 10 years or more.

- Hot flashes are outward signs of metamorphosis. They are power surges, try to find positive ways to channel the energy.
- Keep cool, stay hydrated. Eliminate coffee, black tea, alcohol, soft drinks, and spicy foods.
- Experiment with the diet, organic sources of eggs, meat and butter may improve symptoms.
- Practice mindful breathing, allow your breath to flow from your body slowly. High levels of oxygen fan the flames of the internal fire.
- Practice Kundalini Meditation and moving energy through your body. Engage in exercise.
- Hot flashes deplete nutrients, be sure to obtain adequate levels of B complex vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium, potassium, calcium and trace minerals.
- Vitamin E— 200-400 IU per day. Check for contradictions.
- Herbs may provide some relief from the intensity.
- Red clover and/or Oatstraw infusions—1-2 cups per day.
- Chickweed tinctured from the fresh plant. 25-40 drops 4x per day to reduce the severity and frequency.
- Motherwort tincture—5-30 drops added to water or juice as needed for stress, anxiety, cool hot flashes, stop palpitations, increase vaginal lubrication, tame the emotion, calm the mind and improve mood.



## Making an Infusion

An infusion is a medicinal herbal tea. It extracts more nutrients than a tincture or tea and has a more potent medicinal quality than a tea. Use one ounce of dried leaf or flower per quart of water. Or one ounce of seed, roots, bark or berries per pint of water. Add the herb to a quart or pint jar, boil the water, remove from heat and pour boiled water over the herb and steep for 20-30 minutes for seeds and berries; 1-2 hours for flowers; 4 hours for leaves and 8 hours for roots and bark.

Cap the jar and allow to steep for the required time. Strain and store in the refrigerator. Consume within 2-3 days. The usual dose is 1-2 cups per day. Infusions of rosemary and other herbs can be used as hair rinses.

Visit your local herb shop or visit [www.MountainRose.com](http://www.MountainRose.com) to purchase herbs.