

# Treating the Symptoms of Menopause - Northwest Indiana

Menopause can be a long road filled with ups and downs that can really affect a woman's life. Aggravating signs leading up to menopause include hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings and weight gain. Often women in this process do not find themselves interested in sex and sex is sometimes painful. The final stage is a cessation in menstruation and ovulation- Menopause, which leads to more issues that may require treatment. There's no way to prevent menopause, but women do not have to suffer. Here are a few options, naturally and with drugs, for treating different symptoms and conditions that may arise as a result:

## **Drug Treatments:**

### **Birth Control Pills**

MHT, or menopausal hormone therapy, is a controversial treatment in that it can hurt as much as it helps some women. While it can alleviate a number of symptoms like hot flashes, mood swings and trouble sleeping, it can also increase the risk of breast cancer, strokes and heart attacks. Even if a woman is not at risk for these, the side effects can also be unsavory. It is important to carefully discuss this treatment with a trusted physician. A woman must also do her own research and weigh the risks and benefits of MHT. This is not a treatment for everyone.

### **Non-Drug Treatments:**

Not all symptoms are severe to warrant medication. There are things that a woman can do to increase her comfort level. Simple changes in lifestyle can really make a difference. One of the most important things she can do is get plenty of exercise. Being active every day can reduce the severity of several symptoms. A menopausal woman having trouble sleeping can benefit from exercise, provided it is not right before bedtime. A good night's sleep is essential for normal functioning during the day. So, exercise also helps with the symptom of poor concentration and focus as well as mood swings. Because exercise releases endorphins, that helps elevate a woman's overall mood. Exercise also helps reduce the risk of bone loss and heart disease, which often affect menopausal women.

For hot flashes and night sweats, a woman needs to dress appropriately. Dressing in layers that can easily be removed throughout the day helps and wearing cool cotton nightclothes when going to bed. Strategically place portable fans around the house in case of emergency. To improve sexual enjoyment that has been inhibited by vaginal dryness, water-based lubricants can be purchased at any drug store and work well without irritation.

### **Natural Supplements**

Some herbal supplements contain a substance called phytoestrogen, which is a plant-based chemical that is similar to human estrogen. The theory is that it helps balance the estrogen levels, which helps alleviate menopause symptoms. Some products containing these phytoestrogen properties are soy, valerian root and black cohosh. A woman can also try supplements like ginkgo to help with memory and concentration.

There are no studies to test the efficacy of these natural supplements and their effect on menopause symptoms. A woman should discuss with her doctor before trying any herbal

supplement to make sure there will be no interactions with other medications. Menopause is a dreaded word for women, but it doesn't have to be. Treat the symptoms and think of it as a new lease on life. Call Dr. Yessenow at GAMA Healthcare for women for more information or to set up a consult or exam.