Menopause – The Natural Way

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Aims of this Webinar

• Examine what occurs during the menopause and the effects these changes have on a woman's health
• Explore the short term and long term effects of menopause
• Focus on naturopathic nutritional support for menopausal symptoms and women's health post-menopause
The Menstrual Cycle

Menopausal changes

• From age 35, more anovulatory cycles occur.
• By late 40’s, the number of follicles remaining in ovaries is small.
• Follicles become less sensitive to FSH and LH.
• FSH and LH levels increase prior to menopause.
• Progesterone declines first leading to temporary state of oestrogen dominance
Menopause
Menarche = periods start
Menopause = *periods cease*

Chinese, Indian and North American traditional cultures respect and honour older women for their wisdom.

Aristotle spoke of the change that occurs between the 5th and 6th decade

Before the 20th Century, majority of women did not survive till menopause

Evolutionary theory offers idea of living long enough to raise your last child
Symptoms

• Early stages or ‘perimenopause’:
  – Hot flushes / flashes / ‘power surges!’
  – Irregular periods
  – Heavy periods – can lead to anaemia
  – Mood swings
  – Fatigue
  – Insomnia
  – Anxiety
  – Depression
  – Palpitations
  – Weight gain

• Long term:
  – Vaginal dryness
  – Vaginal atrophy
  – Changes to hair, skin and nails
  – Low libido
  – Bone health – loss of bone mass
  – Increased risk of cardiovascular disease
Early Menopause & POF

- **Early menopause** = menopause occurring before the age of 45
- **Premature menopause or Premature Ovarian Failure (POF)** = menopause occurring before age 40
- Can occur naturally – family history
- **Causes:**
  - Total hysterectomy
  - Bilateral oophorectomy
  - Tubal ligation
  - Damage to ovarian blood supply during surgery (e.g. Ovarian cyst removal) can cause ovaries to wither
  - Side effect of chemotherapy or radiation therapy
  - ‘Fragile X Syndrome’ ‘Turner’s Syndrome’
  - Autoimmune disease
  - Tamoxifen – can temporarily stop periods
- Rule out thyroid imbalance, pituitary/hypothalamic tumour, hyperprolactinaemia, PCOS.
Oestrogen

3 forms:

- Oestrone – E1
- Oestradiol – E2
- Oestriol – E3

Produced by ovaries, fat cells, adrenal glands

- Oestradiol (E2) is the main oestrogen produced in premenopausal women. Can be converted into oestrone.

- Oestrone (E1) main circulating oestrogen in post menopausal women. Produced normally from ovaries and conversion of androstenedione in adipose tissue and the liver.
Oestrogen

• 2 types of oestrogen receptor; alpha and beta
• Alpha receptors expressed primarily in womb, heart, kidney and liver
• Beta receptors expressed primarily in ovary, GI tract, bladder, prostate
• Both are expressed in bones, breast tissue, adrenal glands and thyroid gland.
• Example; alpha receptors mediate growth promoting effects of oestrogen whilst beta receptors limit longitudinal bone growth in females.
Systemic effects of hormonal changes

• **Skin;** oestrogen receptors are found in the dermis and epidermis layers of skin.
  – Wrinkles, loss of collagen and hyaluronic acid, skin loses elasticity and moisture retaining capacity, thinner and slower to heal.

• **Hair;** growth slows, thinner, change in texture.

• **Vaginal dryness:**
  – Cells get thinner, less flexible, less lubrication
  – Vagina can shrink
  – Similar changes affect urethra epithelium
Systemic effects of hormonal changes

- **Heart:**
  - Oestrogen exerts antioxidant effect, low levels = increased oxidative stress
  - Post menopausal women shown to have lower levels of nitric oxide
  - Oestrogen influences favourable balance of HDL and LDL cholesterol: this alters during menopause
  - Slower metabolism, thyroid problems and central weight gain add to increased CVD risk
Systemic effects of hormonal changes

• Bones:
  – Oestrogen reduces production and function of osteoclasts via inhibition of PTH (parathyroid hormone) activity and increases osteoclast apoptosis via influence on signalling molecules
  – High FSH stimulates osteoclast formation and inflammatory molecules which increase bone turnover
  – Drop in testosterone affects bone metabolism; testosterone triggers osteoblasts
  – Other risk factors for osteoporosis include early menopause, being underweight, smoking, lack of exercise, excess thyroid medication, family history.
Systemic effects of hormonal changes

• **Mood swings & anxiety:**
  – Oestrogen supports blood flow in brain; low levels affect circulation
  – Lack of sleep due to hot flushes and other symptoms affect mood balance
  – Family and career issues provide additional stress

• **Libido:**
  – Can wane with drops in hormone levels and vaginal dryness
  – Can surge with freedom from unplanned pregnancy!

• **Weight gain**
  – Metabolism slows as part of ageing process and it becomes harder to lose weight
  – Low oestrogen = low leptin production
  – Declining testosterone levels result in loss of mean muscle mass which burns calories at a higher rate
Endocrine system

- **Thyroid imbalance** can produce many symptoms similar to menopause; weight gain, mood swings, dry skin, low libido
  - Underlying thyroid imbalances often accelerate during menopause

- **Adrenal stress** adds to the picture:
  - ‘cortisol steal’ impairs oestrogen production
  - High adrenaline impairs T3 receptors
  - Hot flushes and sweats can be triggered by hypoglycaemia and high levels of stress hormones
THYROID WEBINAR BY DR ELISABETH PHILIPPS

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Many of us may be suffering from thyroid issues and not even be aware of it. We can find it difficult to get going in the mornings or think that our weight gain or thinning hair down to our age, but in fact we may have a problem with our thyroid. Those of you who are practitioners may recognise the signs in your clients, but because even the conventional diagnostic tests may not be sensitive enough to diagnose it, your client may need more convincing. This cutting edge webinar, hosted by Dr Elisabeth Philipps, will be broadcasting live and you can have the opportunity to ask questions directly to the expert.

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ADRENAL SUPPORT

Always running around, or running on empty? Learn how to support your adrenals to maintain energy, balance stress levels and avoid ill health.

The adrenals can be considered the cornerstone of health and vitality, and yet it has been estimated that 80% of us will experience adrenal fatigue at least once in our lives. For many, recovery can take months or even years, as low adrenal function can sometimes bring other aspects of health toppling down.

Your adrenals are pyramid-shaped glands that sit on top of your kidneys, and release hormones that regulate your stress response. So if you are juggling a hectic work/life/family schedule, for and vitamins, as well as fuel. If you don’t have the resources and energy to provide these, or replenish your stocks afterwards, then you may be playing a dangerous game. There may come
Ageing & Andropause

• The ‘male menopause’ is on a longer time scale
• Gradual loss of testosterone leads to:
  – Fatigue
  – Low libido and sexual vigour
  – Thickening of skin
  – Hair loss
  – Changes in posture and bone health
• Ageing affects both sexes!
HRT

- 1943: oestrogens extracted from mares urine to form ‘Premarin’ the first HRT
- Driving factors were preserving youth and beauty; menopause viewed as ‘oestrogen deficiency’
- New forms of HRT include progestogens
  - Mixed forms used if womb still present as oestrogen only HRT increases the risk of endometrial cancer.

**Increased risk of:**
- CVD
- Breast cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Endometrial cancer
- Blood clots
- Stroke

- For males, testosterone replacement includes risk of prostate cancer
So, what are the alternatives?

- phytoestrogens
- Herbs
- menopause
- Vitamins
- Minerals
Phytoestrogens

• Act as SERM’s: Selective Oestrogen Receptor Modulators

• Bind to oestrogen receptors to provide much weaker forms of oestrogen

• Agonist / antagonist actions according to receptor site

• 3 main classes
  – Isoflavones
  – Coumestans
  – Lignans

• www.updates.nutrigold.uk
Phytoestrogens

• Isoflavones = 4 types: genistein, daidzein, biochanin A, formononentin

• Primary soya isoflavones = **genistein** and **daidzein**

• Genistein proven inhibit bone resorption by osteoclasts whilst stimulating osteoblast activity
Phytoestrogens

• Incorporate traditional fermented soya foods from organic whole soya beans; tempeh, tofu, and tamari.
• Avoid raw and processed soya foods such as textured soya protein
• Isoflavones also found in chickpeas, lentils, red clover, kidney & aduki beans
• **Lignans**; golden flaxseeds are rich source
• **Coumestans**; alfalfa and mung sprouts
• Isoflavones shown to reduce total and LDL cholesterol and triglycerides
Probiotic bacteria

• Healthy bacterial balance required to metabolize daidzein into equol which exerts weak oestrogenic action
• Probiotic bacteria required to maintain bacterial balance within vaginal tract
• **Menopausal women with low lactobacilli found to have greater incidence of vaginal atrophy**
• Early stages of menopause can involve temporary oestrogen dominance: healthy gut bacteria support detoxification and elimination of oestrogens, reducing enterohepatic recirculation
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- Golden turmeric has been shown to support IBS

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– Traditional Ayurvedic remedy for hot flushes; cooling herb
– Enhances the growth and proliferation of beneficial gut bacteria
– Anti-inflammatory
– Healing to membranes
– Supports liver detoxification
– Enhances nutrient absorption of both fat and water soluble nutrients
Vitamins & Minerals

- **Bone building nutrients**
  - **Calcium citrate**; look at dietary sources as high supplementation not always necessary
  - **Magnesium citrate**; also for energy production, & hormone balance
  - **Zinc citrate**; some research shows interaction with phytoestrogens in inhibiting osteoclast activity
  - **Vitamin D**; deficiency common in UK
  - **Vitamin K**; also for blood clotting, maintenance of mucous membranes
  - **Boron, manganese, folic acid, copper**
Vitamins & Minerals

• Chromium; support insulin function

• Vit C & Vit E;
  – Powerful antioxidant activity to combat increase in oxidative stress brought on by lower oestrogen levels
  – Vit C needed for maintenance of bone matrix
  – Vit E protective to fats and cholesterol
  – Vit E shown to reduce hot flushes
  – Supportive to adrenal function
Cholesterol balance & liver function

- **Lecithin powder (>25% phosphatidyl choline is required)**
- Phosphatidyl choline stimulates liver function, aiding detoxification and bile production
- Plant sterols proven to lower cholesterol and triglycerides
- [www.updates.nutrigold.uk](http://www.updates.nutrigold.uk)
Specific nutrients

• **Co-Q10:**
  - Antioxidant: particularly for cholesterol, levels are affected by statin medications
  - Regulates osteoclast and osteoblast differentiation
  - Energy production

• **Kelp:** nourishing for the thyroid gland and thyroid hormone production

• **Nettle:** source of iron, plant sterols, silica, potassium, quercetin and magnesium

• **Horsetail:** rich in silica, good for bone health and strengthening urinary tract

• **Sage:** traditional herb for regulating body temperature and sweating
Essential Fats

Omega 3 & Omega 6:

• balance of prostaglandin production
• irregular, longer or more painful periods can lead to a surge in pro-inflammatory prostaglandins
• Beneficial for CVD, risk of stroke and reducing inflammation
• Om3 helpful for mood balance & memory
• Evening Primrose and Flax suitable for vegetarians: use higher ratio of flax to EPO to balance Om3 levels and focus on co-factors necessary for conversion
• Krill offers high bioavailability and absorption
Pain management
free Newsletter at www.updates.nutrigold.co.uk/newsletters

• Early menopausal symptoms can include painful periods due to temporary oestrogen dominance

• Hop alpha acids:
  – Ideal alternative to standard painkillers as no gastric side effects
  – Selectively block COX-2 enzyme only
  – Matches ibuprofen for pain relief
  – Effective pain management
Summary

• Menopause is a natural transitional phase in a woman’s life – *not a disease of oestrogen deficiency!*

• The hormonal changes provoke short term and long term changes to a woman’s health

• Natural support is available for each stage and it’s presenting symptoms and also for long term bone and cardiovascular support
Nutrient Checklist

- Probiotic bacteria: digestion, phytoestrogen utilisation, vaginal & urinary tract wellbeing
- Phytoestrogens for hot flushes, skin and bone changes
- Vitamins & Minerals for bone health, energy and antioxidant protection
- Herbs for hot flushes, bone health & metabolism
- Lecithin, plant sterols & COQ10 for cholesterol balance and liver health
- Essential fats & hop alpha acids for mood, memory, inflammation and pain relief
See Nutrigold newsletters, webinars and updates service:

- Menopause Newsletter
- Adrenal Support
- An Alphabet of Antioxidants
- Calming & Cleansing the Colon
- Aloe Vera
- Alpha acids and pain relief
- Vitamin D – more than just a ray of sunshine
- Krill Oil
- The wherewithal to Detoxify
- Lecithin & Plant sterols
- Bowel Flora

Webinars:
- The Art of Detoxing – A Naturopathic Approach
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- Womens Health
- Adrenal Support
- Aloe- Vera
- Magic Magnesium
- Understanding Dysbiosis
- Pre-empting Premenstrual Syndrome
- Liver & Gallbladder Health
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