Menopause and hot flashes - a time dreaded by every woman in the world. The thought creates uncertainty and a transition period that is filled with a lot of unknowns and anxiety. Hot flashes are mostly caused by the hormonal changes of menopause, but can also be affected by a stressful lifestyle.

The median age of onset of menopause, defined as the last menstrual period, is 50 to 52 years and is associated with a permanent loss of ovarian follicular activity. Most women will begin to experience menopausal symptoms 3 to 5 years prior to their last menstrual period, often manifested as hot flashes, mood swings, increased anxiety, night sweats, insomnia, vaginal dryness and a variety of symptoms that hit and run.

Research has documented that a diminished level of estrogen has a direct effect on the hypothalamus, the part of the brain responsible for controlling your appetite, sleep cycle, sex hormones and body temperature.

Many physicians refer to the hypothalamus as the body's thermostat. The drop in estrogen confuses the hypothalamus and it causes the body's thermostat to run hot causing hot flashes. The brain is very much involved in menopause when the body runs hot the brain responds by sending signals to the heart, blood vessels and nervous system. The major function of the message is to get rid of the heat. Epinephrine and related chemicals norepinephrine, prostaglandins and serotonin. This message is received instantly. Now all of the physical symptoms kick in and your heart pumps faster, the blood vessels in your skin dilate and circulate more blood to radiate off the heat and your sweat glands release sweat to cool you off even more. Now your body is in the hot flash cycle and you experience all of the various symptoms that come with menopause. This process can happen at anytime - day or night. Some women report a six to eight degree increase in body temperature. Mood swings, anxiety, anger as well as other emotions surface and you become a monster yet you are not sure why or how to stop it.

Every woman faces this time of uncertainty and the physical discomforts that come with it. Menopause is a major transition in every woman's life - an ending of childbirth years, school functions and PTA's. With time the intensity of hot flashes decreases and the symptoms are less severe. If you can identify the situations that trigger your hot flashes you have taken a big step in getting the upper hand. Stress is a major trigger and you must make sure your brain is not running on empty. The nutritional support program I will outline will take into consideration stress and all of its side effects.

Menopause and aging include the following problems: insomnia, mood swings, loss of sexual drive, physical and mental fatigue, high cholesterol and heart health.

Exercise, such as walking increases your endorphin levels, increasing your threshold for pain. Endorphins are natural pain relievers. Try to use relaxation and deep breathing to stay relaxed - deep breathing alone can change the chemistry of your brain. Meditation, massage and yoga are very helpful in reducing tension and muscle pain. One of the keys to easy menopause and hot flashes is magnesium chloride. Your brain and body must have it everyday. Magnesium is responsible for over 300 enzymatic reactions in the body. Muscles cannot relax without it.

Menopause is simply the cessation of menstruation periods. This occurs naturally in every female or suddenly with a hysterectomy. The menopausal path is often rocky with many ups and downs. Hormones become out of balance and the estrogen levels drop as much as 4 to 5 years before the last menstrual period. The average age of menopause is 51 years of age, but may occur anywhere from 30 to 60 years of age. Every woman chooses to get pregnant, but cannot escape menopause. Perimenopause usually lasts 2 to 5 years, but you can experience symptoms as long as 10 to 15 years before menopause. You may feel like you are losing your mind and cannot remember not only where you keys were, but what you got up to get when you go across the room. And then there are the heavy periods, hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, vaginal dryness, reduced sex drive, urinary/bladder urgency, and mood swings. These symptoms are not life threatening, but they are definitely challenging. Arguments exist in the medical community that many of these symptoms may be due to a lack of progesterone rather than a lack of estrogen. The drop in progesterone creates an estrogen dominance.

Many women experience anxiety and depression during perimenopause. You might notice more aches, pains and inflammation. Menopause brings new risks that can be life threatening. Foremost, is significant loss of bone mass that occurs in the first 5 to 7 years making you more vulnerable to osteoporosis. With the reduction of estrogen, women are at risk for heart disease (coronary artery disease), and colon cancer.

Menopause causes major transitions for your body. You must be patient and allow your brain and body to adjust to all the changes.
Suggested Nutritional Support

**T-L Vite** – 1 capsule daily. T-L Vite is a multivitamin/mineral designed beneficial for postmenopausal women.

**Mood Sync** – 1 or 2 capsules, twice to three times daily for anxiety and depression. *Caution: If you are taking an SSRI, SNRI, tricyclic, or MAOI antidepressant, do not use Mood Sync.* Instead use Anxiety Control 2 capsules, three times daily, plus L-T,® 1 to 2 capsules, three times daily.

**SBNC** – 2 capsules, twice daily to address neurotransmitter deficiencies.

**Sleep Link OR 5-HTP** – 2 capsules (50 mg) an hour before bedtime, with juice. *Caution: If you are taking an SSRI, SNRI, tricyclic, or MAOI antidepressant, do not use Sleep Link or 5-HTP.* Instead use Anxiety Control, 2 capsules and a 3 mg Melatonin capsule, 30 minutes before bed.

**ProDHA** – 2 capsules, twice-daily OR **Pure Fish Oil Capsules** – 1 capsule, twice daily. *Caution: Do not use if you take anticoagulants (blood thinners), are allergic to iodine, or if you will have surgery within a week.** Omega-3 (EFAs) fights inflammation that is often due to a reduction of estrogen.

**Carnitine** – 500 mg capsule twice daily, morning and afternoon OR use **Policosonal** 10 to 20 mg daily.

**Mag Link** – 1 to 2 capsules in the morning and 1 to 2 in the afternoon or evening OR use **Mag Chlor 85** – 10–20 drops in juice, 2 to 3 times daily. *If diarrhea or loose stools occur, take capsules or drops by spacing further apart or decrease dosage by 1*

**DHEA** – 1 capsule daily, (25 mg or 50 mg, depending on age) upon arising in morning. If you are taking HRT, consult with your physician before using. You should use either HRT or DHEA, but not both simultaneously.

**Transitions** – 2 capsules, twice daily. Transitions provides natural hormone balancing factors including isoflavones, phytoestrogens, progesterone enhancers, and tonic herbs. Phytoestrogens are plants that contain estrogen-like substances. Isoflavones are a subclass of the phytoestrogens. Both phytoestrogens and isoflavones mimic some of the effects of estrogen and may lower menopausal symptoms, risk of osteoporosis, hypertension and heart disease, and breast cancer. Transitions contains black cohosh and isoflavones in the recommended amounts.

These two herbs help relieve menopausal symptoms by establishing the body's natural balance with your organs and glands.

**FemCreme** – If menopausal, 1 metered pump, twice daily of FemCreme for 21 days, then off 7 days, and repeat. If you are perimenopausal, use 1 pump, twice daily beginning the 12th day after menstrual flow starts and continue to day 27. FemCreme contains natural progesterone plus black cohosh. Using the pump version gives you 24 mg of progesterone and 20 mg of black cohosh. Progesterone opposes estrogen and helps the body breakdown estrogen and its metabolites so it can be removed. Progesterone helps to balance symptoms of estrogen dominance reducing symptoms of PMS.

**Cal Mag Zinc capsules with Boron and Vitamin D** – 3 capsules at bedtime.

**Soy** – 1 to 2 servings per day of either powder form or capsules form with isoflavones. Soy provides phytoestrogens helping to replace estrogen that drops at menopause. Eating or drinking soy also helps to elevate your estrogen levels.

**Pumpkin Seed (Curbita)** – 1 capsule twice a day for urinary incontinence or urgency. Pumpkin seed contains phytochemicals that help strengthen the muscles of the urinary tract enhancing the ability to hold urine in as well as totally empty the bladder.

If you are stressed out or anxious prior to meals, use L-T,® 1 or 2 capsules, 30 minutes prior to eating to quiet your GI tract and reduce your stress OR **Vi capsule of GABA 750** dissolved in 8 ounces of warm water. Stress causes a release of insulin and adrenaline that tightens up the digestive muscles, causing bloating. If this is a chronic condition, consider digestive enzymes such as **Super Pancreatin**.

**REFERENCE:**


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