Tagliaferri, Avery (Penguin/ Putnam Publishers), 2006. 304 pp. Paperback $16.95. Several experts come together in this book to present a variety of traditional and alternative options for treating menopause symptoms. The introduction covers topics such as hormone alternatives, tailor-made herbal formulas, and problems with a "shotgun" approach. Each chapter offers a different therapeutic approach. Herbalist Amanda McQuade Crawford, author of The Herbal Menopause Book: Herbs, Nutrition & Other Natural Therapies [see AHA 12:4] does an excellent job discussing topics such as how to reduce stress and insomnia and get off antidepressants and taper HRT. Her tea blend for osteoporosis consists of nettles (Urtica dioica), wild oats (Avena sativa), red raspberry (Rubus idaeus), red clover (Trifolium pratense), and lemon balm (Melissa officinalis). Naturopath Tori Hudson, who wrote Women's Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine [see AHA 15:2], explains the soy controversy, lignans, and natural vs synthetic hormones. Traditional Chinese Medicine is covered by Isaac Cohen, author of Breast Cancer: Beyond Convention and Gail Sheehy discusses "the second adulthood." Acupuncturists Tagliaferri, M.D. and Cohen, O.M.D., are co-founders of the Complementary and Alternative Medicine Program at the Carol Franc Buck Breast Care Center, University of California, San Francisco.


THE MENOPAUSE BIBLE: The Complete Practical Guide to Managing Your Menopause. By Robin N. Phillips: Firefly Books, 2005. 256 pp. Hardcover $27.95. This book presents up-to-date, medically-correct information in an easy read that includes diagrams and attractive, full-color photographs. It covers topics related to menopause, such as nutrition, diet, weight gain, exercise, sex, and depression. A chapter on hormone replacement and alternative therapies, includes the use of herbal remedies such as black cohosh.

THE ESTROGEN ELIXIR: A History of Hormone Replacement Therapy in America. By Elizabeth Siegel Watkins. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. 368 pp. Hardcover $45.00. I cannot resist including this book, although it only has a few references to phytoestrogen herbs. Not since Barbara and Gideon Seaman's Women and the Crisis in Sex Hormones in 1977, has a book addressed the shifting role of hormonal drugs so bluntly. "Beginnings" describes Edgar Allen and Edward Doisy's work to isolate estrogen. Thanks to Robert Wilson's book, Forever Feminine, estrogen became the number one prescription with 15 million sold in 1966. That almost doubled over the next decade as the pharmaceutical company Ayerst, with 70% of the market, shifted the emphasis to long-term use. Then, in 2003, over half the women taking estrogen stopped when the Women's Health Initiative questioned whether it should be prescribed at all. Watkins draws on research, records, and interviews, with multiple perspectives from physicians, pharmaceutical manufacturers, government regulators, feminist health activists, and media, as well as patients as she examines the medicalization of menopause. She is at the University of California, San Francisco, and author of On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-1970.

THE EFFECTS of ESTROGEN on BRAIN FUNCTION. By Natalie L. Rasgon. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 180 pp. Hardcover $42.96. Also from Johns Hopkins is this scholarly book highlighting clinical aspects of estrogen use and examining the risks and benefits. Designed as a guide to recent research for clinicians and scientists, it combines the work of a group of experts in the fields of psychiatry, pharmacology, neurology, geriatrics, and estrogen. These researchers cover the current knowledge of how estrogen works on mood, cognitive performance, brain metabolism, and the central nervous system. Citing the ongoing confusion over the risks and benefits of estrogen therapy, they call for additional research. They also open the door for the use of alternative therapies like herbs.
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