

# Menopause Facts Sheets



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## Menopause Fact Sheet 1 Sleep Management

- During the menopause physiological changes take place which lead to hormone changes. These hormone changes differ between individuals going through the menopause. As a result of hormone changes within the body, a wide range of symptoms can occur.
- One of the symptoms women report when they are going through the menopause is night sweats. To try to cool down, menopausal women may remove sheets, duvets or clothing as this can be a way to try to keep cool during the night. Further tips to help with night sweats are:
  - ✓ Wear lighter clothing
  - ✓ Keep the bedroom cool at night
  - ✓ Increase levels of exercise
  - ✓ Reduce stress levels
  - ✓ Avoiding potential triggers, such as spicy food, caffeine smoking and alcohol
  - ✓ A variety of products that claim to help ease the symptoms of night sweats are available on the market. These products have their own research to suggest that they draw the heat away from the body when it starts to heat up which can help to prevent or control sweating. These products include complete bedding sets that claim to optimise body temperature.
  - ✓ There is limited evidence available, other than information on bedding manufacturers' websites to support the use of specialist bedding as an effective intervention for night time sweats during the menopause, but some women have reported benefits of using special bedding as part of the overall management of menopausal symptoms.



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## **Menopause Fact Sheet 2** clothing during the menopause

Different women experience the symptoms of the menopause in different ways, hot flushes are very common at this time of hormonal changes. Hot flushes cause you to sweat heavily, and can make you very uncomfortable. Some women find that, with the right clothing they can limit this discomfort.



One way of doing this is to use comfortable, breathable clothes .

There are some ranges available with menopausal women in mind. These include nightwear, underwear, sportswear and outerwear. The materials used in these breathable clothes are made from small fibres, which lie close to the woman's skin and lift (wick) moisture from the material.

This moisture is then transported to the outer surface of the material, where it can evaporate, reducing the discomfort and embarrassment of hot flushes. This type of material is called wicking. It can be made from man-made fibres, silk, bamboo or wool.

There is little research to show which fabrics are most useful for women during the menopause, so you might need to try different ranges to see which is best for you.



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Suffering from hair loss can be a disheartening and upsetting experience for most women. Unfortunately, during the menopause it can often occur due to plummeting levels of oestrogen and an increase in testosterone.

### Menopause Fact Sheet 3

#### Hair thinning during the menopause



#### Diet, lifestyle and home remedies for hair loss

There are few women who would be willing to sit back and watch their hair fall out. Instead, a number of home remedies can be employed alongside herbal or conventional remedies to make sure that your hair is kept as healthy as possible.

Keep stress to a minimum. This will also help you sleep well at night, reducing another factor which might cause you to lose your hair. Exercise will help reduce stress, improve sleep and circulation of blood to the scalp to help you keep your hair on.

Be nice to your hair. Use gentle shampoo when you wash it and try to avoid tugging and tangling it. Dying it regularly can cause hair to become unhealthy and more likely to fall out. A scalp massage can stimulate extra blood flow to the scalp, which may prevent further hair loss

There are certain foods which can improve the quality of your hair. Protein and iron rich foods (found in red meats) are good for strengthening your hair. Vitamin C, found in citrus and other fruit, is also beneficial, not least for helping you to absorb iron into your bloodstream

**Are there herbal remedies to help me?**  
If your hair loss is the result of hormonal changes caused by the menopause, using a soy based supplement will be a good start. The best are made from fermented soya beans because absorption or take-up by the body is better. Vitamin C/E are also good supplements

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If you are really worried and your hair loss is causing you concern, talk to your GP don't try remedies off the internet, they may harm you as you don't know what's in them... **always talk to your GP**



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## Menopause Fact Sheet 4 Vaginal Dryness

Women can have vaginal dryness (also known as vaginal atrophy) can occur at any point in a woman's life. It has several causes and is related to hormonal changes affecting moisture levels within the body including the vaginal area. Vaginal dryness has been found to affect over half of 51-60 year olds, it often occurs around the time of the menopause due to changing levels of Oestrogen.

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Vaginal lubricants can be purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy, Boots, CO-OP etc. these are water based and you can apply them into the vagina and around the vulva pre or during sex to ease any dryness.

*Talk to your  
partner...  
don't hide it,  
solve it...*

Vaginal moisturisers – vaginal moisturisers work for several days. Applying them regularly should make the vagina and surrounding tissues more pliable/stronger. These can also be purchased at your local pharmacy.



### What can I do to help myself?

- Perform pelvic floor exercises – exercises for strengthening muscle tone in the vaginal area..
- Washing the genital area- try to wash with lukewarm water or a soap free cleanser. Intimate washing with soap, bath oils and shower gels can aggravate dryness so using products with perfumes in should be avoided.
- Eating a balanced diet- this is likely to contribute to a feeling of wellbeing. In addition it may be advisable to avoid things that dry out bodily tissues such as caffeine and alcohol.

If you are really struggling to cope go and talk to your GP there are other medications available but they need to be prescribed based on what's best for you

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If the menopause is causing you problems you should **talk to your doctor** about the relative benefits and risks of taking HRT, and other options such as non-HRT treatments. The decision to prescribe HRT should be based on a thorough evaluation of the potential benefits and possible risks of treatment undertaken by your healthcare professional

## Menopause Fact Sheet 5 Hormone replacement therapy



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### Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)

HRT can help relieve many of the symptoms of the menopause such as the hot sweats and vaginal dryness. It also reduces the risk of osteoporosis.

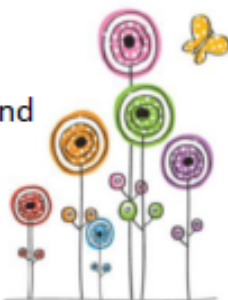
Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is one of the main treatments for menopausal women. As the name suggests, HRT replaces some of the hormones that are reduced during and after the menopause. It usually includes a combination of oestrogen and progesterone.

**There are several ways HRT can be taken, including:**

- Cream or gel, applied to the skin or directly into your vagina for vaginal dryness. symptoms
- Tablets, taken by mouth or placed directly into your vagina to treat dryness.
- A patch that you stick on your skin.
- An implant, administered under local anaesthetic. Small pellets of oestrogen are inserted under the skin of your stomach, buttock or thigh.

HRT can help relieve many of the symptoms of the menopause such as hot sweats, vaginal dryness and helps to reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a disease in which the density and quality of bones is reduced and they become more porous and fragile. This can lead to an increased risk of fractures.

HRT can also have side-effects which **your GP will discuss** with you and depends on the type of treatment you would be placed on..



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## Menopause Fact Sheet 6

### Hot Flushes

#### Getting to grips with hot flushes

1. Hot flushes are one of the most common complaints of menopause, as the periods of intense heat, warm skin, and sweating are uncomfortable.
1. They can be triggered by wearing tight clothing, feeling stressed, or consuming alcohol, caffeine, and spicy foods.

If you are having hot flushes related to your menopause, it is best to talk with your doctor before starting any treatments.



#### What is a hot flush?

A hot flush is a feeling of intense heat, not caused by external sources. Hot flushes can appear suddenly, or you may feel them coming on. You may experience:

- tingling in your fingers
- your heart beating faster than usual
- your skin feeling warm, suddenly
- your face getting red or flushed
- sweating, especially in the upper body

#### What causes hot flushes?

It's not exactly clear what causes hot flushes. However, they're most likely due to hormonal changes in the body. Some women barely notice hot flushes or consider them a minor annoyance. For others, the intensity may affect their quality of life in a rather negative way.

#### Start simple

Some women are able to manage their hot flushes with some simple tools or techniques. Here are some simple ways to find relief:

- dressing in layers, even on the coldest days, so you can adjust your clothing
- sipping ice water at the start of a hot flush
- wearing cotton night clothes and using cotton bed linens
- keeping an ice pack on your bedside table

#### Nature's medicine cabinet

Many women are turning to natural products to help with managing hot flashes and night sweats. If you take natural products or supplements, it's important that you mention this to your doctor and pharmacist whenever you discuss your health and medications. Some products can interfere with over-the-counter and prescription medications

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## Menopause Fact Sheet 7 Mood Swings

Feeling  
low

me

Cross &  
irritated

me

Irrational  
angry

me

Upbeat  
then  
low

me

me

Rage  
emotional

These types of symptoms are experienced by more than 50% of women as they approach menopause.



Mood changes can be frustrating not only for you but for all those around you. When exploring treatments, you might want to begin with methods that are likely to have the least side effects.

Alternative therapies such as yoga, meditation, massage and acupuncture can provide relief from stress and help lift your mood.

You may wish to speak to others about your mood changes, perhaps friends or join a support group or consult your doctor. Gaining support to deal with the mood changes. Spending time with loved ones can also boost levels of oxytocin, a feel-good hormone, that counteracts mood imbalance.

Lifestyle changes combined with alternative therapies may be a good combination to help manage mood changes. However, for some women if the symptoms are more severe, different treatment may be necessary such as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). Speak to your doctor for guidance.

Staying connected: social support is important to help us share experiences and have others to go to in times of need

Thinking positively about the experience: e.g. keeping a diary of things that happen each day that bring a sense of enjoyment

Laughing often: taking part in activities that make us laugh can help us feel closer to others and stimulate the immune system

Being mindful of what you are doing at each point in time can often help us feel relaxed and better able to manage mood changes

Not all women report feeling negative effects of the menopause, instead seeing it as a transitional phase centering around reflection, inspiration and a phase of personal growth.

Living in the moment: when we live in the moment this can reduce anxiety levels worrying about past or future events.

Taking time out for yourself: even if this is for fifteen minutes each day it may help you feel less stressed

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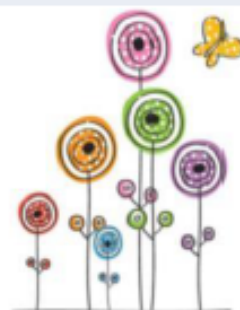


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## Menopause Lesson Plan

Element - Action	Aims/Objectives	Outcomes
Introduction - Everyone in the room to introduce themselves and where they work.	Create comfort and ease with group members	Understand each other has the same issues and be comfortable expressing concerns in the safety of the session
Why are you here? – Each individual to say why they are attending the session and what they are hoping to gain from it.	To determine what each person expects or wants to get out of the session	Realisation of purpose for each person of the session
Group Working - Split into 2 groups of 5 and hand out the cards.	Discuss the card content between themselves and compile paper of discussion elements	Discuss with the whole group each element to see where the common ground is
Group discussion - Group discussion and exercise about the menopause, symptoms they are having and how it effects them.	Create freedom to discuss between colleagues each of the topics and how they deal with the symptoms	Gain different perspective and some new advice on managing symptoms from others
Swapping ideas – Swap ideas about how to cope with the menopause.	General discussion to utilise another person's idea to help manage a specific symptoms	Go away with new ideas and a sense of there is something else I can do and its normal to feel this way.
Fact Sheets – As a group discuss all the fact sheets.	Ensure factual evidence, support and advice used in the session is available for home use	Build a fact file for future use



“the greatest  
Wealth is  
Health”

Virgil

