

Menopause: Passage Into a Time of Power

Just like the coming of adolescence, menopause marks the beginning of a new era in the life of a woman. Maturity, a natural part of a woman's development.

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The word menopause has its roots in the Greek language meaning "monthly stop," our menstrual cycle ends along with the ability to conceive babies. It happens to all women, usually around the late 40s to early 50s. This transition, a gradual process, happens over several years, not a static instance in time.

Our experience of this time in our lives is as individual and distinct as we are. It is important to understand what is happening to our bodies. It is not a disease.



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Our society places value on a woman's contribution of physical beauty, intellect, and her ability as a mother. The stereotype of a woman after menopause is typically someone who is unattractive and inconsequential. A foolish old woman, that is not to be taken seriously.

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A LOVING APPROACH to MENOPAUSE

Many cultures honor a woman who has met this time of life as filling a new role in society. Revered for her wisdom, she has lived a full life—bearing and rearing children, tending to her family.

Menopause means she is no longer burdened by these duties, free to spend her time in ways she has not been able to before... a woman's time of power. She is wise and self-defined.

This time in a women's life deserves loving consideration. I will be writing a several articles about the process of menopause, what women experience, and how homeopathy can help women facilitate the transition naturally.

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(see reverse)

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WHAT HAPPENS DURING MENOPAUSE?

One of the first things we notice is that our monthly cycle changes. What used to be routine is not. It may be less frequent, shorter or longer, heavier or lighter. The medical word for this time is peri-menopause meaning the interval in which a woman's body makes a natural shift from more-or-less regular cycles of ovulation and menstruation to menopause.

A variety of hormones naturally wax and wane with our growth and menstrual cycle: estrogen, testosterone, progesterone, follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), and cortisol are some of the hormones involved. FSH drives the ovaries to produce estrogen. As estrogen diminishes, the body shuts off the production of FSH.

When we approach menopause the ability of the ovaries to make estrogen diminishes. FSH remains high for a time and can be measured in the blood. Doctors measure the FSH level in the blood to gauge where we are at in menopause. Other doctors use saliva tests taken over a period of time to measure several hormones.

Fluctuations in the balance of hormones bring about symptoms: hot flashes, hair growth/loss, insomnia, forgetfulness, depression, libido, excessive bleeding, and weight gain/loss. Next month I will discuss a natural approach to manage symptoms.

TWO BOOKS I RECOMMEND to SUPPORT YOUR MENOPAUSE JOURNEY

- *Beauty in Bloom: Homeopathy to Support Menopause* by Eileen Nauman, DHM(UK)
- *Menopause & Homeopathy: A Guide for Women in Midlife* by Ifeoma Ikenze, MD, DHom

Available at http://www.myranissen.com/resources_books.html.

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