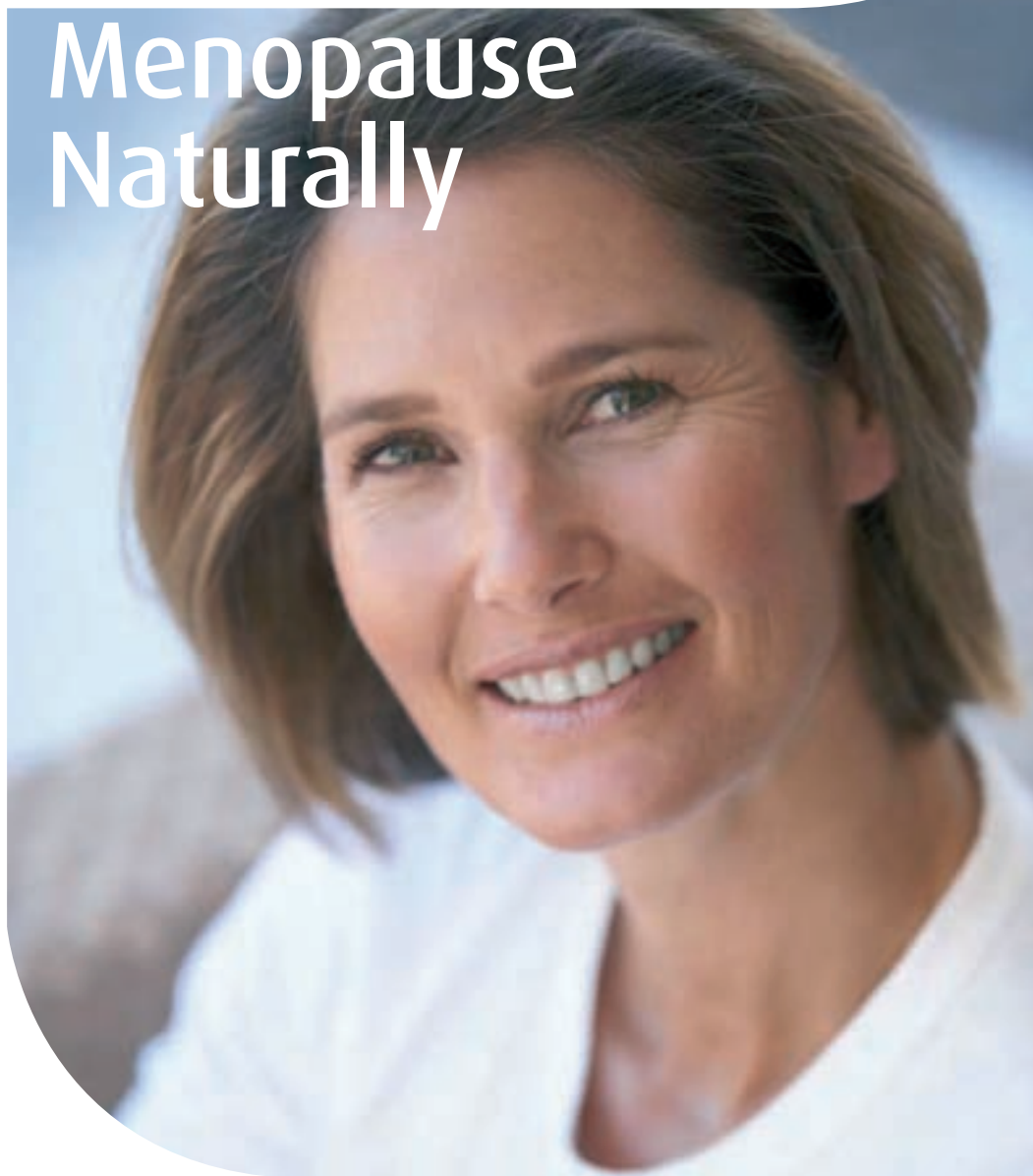


A Guide to Managing Your

Menopause Naturally



Including a Question & Answer section with Dr Rosemary Leonard, GP

Time for a Change

What is the menopause?

As a woman, the menopause is the stage in your life when your periods stop for good, signalling the end of your reproductive years. It happens when there are no more eggs in your ovaries. Because eggs stimulate your body to produce oestrogen, when they run out, the levels of oestrogen in the blood drop, resulting in menopausal changes in the body.

When does it happen?

A woman is said to have reached menopause when she has not had a period for a year and at this point is described as post-menopausal. Although every woman will experience the menopause differently, common symptoms include hot flushes, night sweats and temporary changes in mood. The whole process normally happens gradually and the time leading up to the menopause is known as the peri-menopause. The peri-menopausal stage lasts around four years and starts around the age of 47. During this peri-menopausal

phase, your periods may become irregular and it is now that the hormonal and biological changes that are associated with the menopause begin.

Other reasons for menopause occurring include: undergoing surgery that removes the ovaries or the womb (hysterectomy) and some types of radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

Did you know?

Women who smoke go through the menopause an average of two years earlier



Experiencing the Menopause

As a result of the hormonal changes surrounding the menopause, many women experience both physical and emotional symptoms. These include:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Insomnia/disrupted sleep
- Palpitations
- Weight gain (especially around the waist and abdomen)
- Headaches
- Skin changes such as thinner, drier skin and hair and brittle nails
- Aches and pains in your joints and muscles
- Lower libido
- Vaginal changes - dryness, pain during sexual intercourse and increased risk of vaginal infections
- Urinary changes - inability to control urination and increased risk of urinary infections
- Difficulty concentrating and memory lapses
- Fatigue/low energy levels
- Mood swings and irritability
- Depression

A major life change such as the menopause can also have psychological implications for a woman, and common emotional symptoms include:

- Loss of self-esteem
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Weepiness
- Depression



Did you know?

The average age for British women to experience the menopause is 51, but it can occur much earlier or later. Menopause occurring before the age of 45 is called early menopause and before the age of 40 is premature menopause. You should see your GP for advice if you are under 40 and you begin to get menopause symptoms

Managing the Me

HRT (hormone replacement therapy) provides an effective treatment for menopausal symptoms for many women, however, there are also a number of ways to help manage the menopause naturally, including diet, exercise and supplements.



Eat well

1. Eat a balanced diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables and avoid processed, refined foods.
2. Calcium can help to keep bones strong, so make sure your diet is rich in dairy products, fish with bones such as sardines and leafy green vegetables.
3. Vitamin D and magnesium also help maintain bone health. Our skin produces most of the vitamin D we need when it

is exposed to sunlight, but you can also find it in oily fish, eggs and some fortified breakfast cereals. Magnesium, which aids the absorption of calcium, can be found in nuts and pulses.

4. Omega-3 fatty acids can be really beneficial for many women during menopause, as they can help to maintain a healthy heart and healthy joints. You can increase your dietary intake by eating oily fish such as mackerel, salmon and herring.



nopause

Get Moving

- 1.** Regular exercise can help to alleviate some symptoms of the menopause such as hot flushes, night sweats, difficulty in sleeping and mood changes.
- 2.** Physical activity that stresses the bones such as skipping, can slow down the loss of bone density associated with menopause.
- 3.** Exercise can also protect from heart disease and strokes, of which women are at an increased risk after the menopause.
- 4.** Activity such as brisk walking or aerobics release endorphins, the feelgood hormones in the body which can help alleviate feelings of depression and anxiety.

Did you know?

Women who have taken the contraceptive pill or given birth are likely to experience the menopause later



Q&A with Dr Rosemary Leonard



Dr Rosemary Leonard is a GP and one of the UK's leading experts in women's health.

Q I am 52 and have started to suffer really badly from night sweats. It's driving me mad as it has been going on for some months now. What can I do?

Hot flushes and night sweats are some of the most common manifestations of the menopause and are caused by a sudden drop in oestrogen levels. Night sweats can be more annoying than hot flushes as they disrupt sleep. Avoid tea or coffee in the evening as they can bring on night sweats or make them worse. Wear lightweight cotton or silk in bed to help keep you cool, make sure your bed linen is polyester free and keep spare cotton sheets close to your bed in case you need to change them in the night.

Q Since experiencing my first menopausal symptoms last year, I've become depressed and lethargic. Can you suggest anything?

Research has linked declining oestrogen levels with depression in menopause. Other contributing factors can include disturbed sleeping patterns, hot flushes, anxiety and even role changes in midlife. Depression shouldn't be dismissed as a 'normal' part of the menopause though and there are numerous ways to combat it. Begin by trying to exercise a bit more – walking and swimming are a good start. Make sure you are eating a balanced diet

and cut down on alcohol and caffeine as these can exacerbate hot flushes and mood changes.

Q I am 55 and although I sailed through the menopause relatively symptom-free, in the last six months sex has become painful and a bit of a chore – what can I do?

Relative oestrogen deficiency can sometimes produce vaginal dryness and thinning of the vaginal lining, which reduces arousal during sex and can make penetration painful. But the menopause needn't mean an end to your sex life and many women experience a better sex life post menopause. I suggest trying a lubricating cream such as KY-jelly to help any vaginal dryness you may have. And don't forget that 50 is the new 30, so go enjoy yourself!



Menopausal Facts and Figures

Did you know?

There is still debate as to whether the equivalent of the male menopause (Andropause) actually exists, but some scientists believe it is due to falling testosterone levels in middle aged men.



Did you know?

UK women's top five older female role models are:

1. Judi Dench
2. Twiggy
3. Joanna Lumley
4. Fern Britten
5. Helen Mirren



The Menopause It's vital for the survival of the human race!

Recent research by the Institute for Ageing and Health at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne has suggested that the menopause exists in human females so that grandmother's have time free to look after their grandchildren. They studied two African villages stretching back to 1950 and discovered that children who have a maternal grandmother with no infants of her own have a distinct survival advantage as their grandmother can help their mother with the childcare. This suggests that the menopause emerged as a means of ensuring that young mothers have extra help while bringing up their children!



Case study: Karen (50) from Sussex

My menopause came on rather gradually, and at first I didn't really realise that was why my moods were changing so dramatically. I became irrational and anxious and couldn't understand why, until a friend suggested it was most likely the beginning of the menopause.

Gradually other symptoms began to appear such as hot flushes and lethargy – they got quite severe and I became desperate to find something to ease my symptoms. By this point the hot flushes I was experiencing were making it hard for me to sleep at night too.

This affected the relationships I had with my work colleagues and family as the lack of sleep left me irritable and lethargic. I was shopping locally and mentioned my symptoms to the shop assistant. She suggested I try something which contains Black Cohosh, so I chose MenoHerb®.

After a few weeks I noticed such a difference and now recommend to friends who are experiencing similar menopausal symptoms that they try MenoHerb®.

This is Karen's personal experience; the benefits of this product have not been scientifically proven.

MenoHerb®

Helps you cope...naturally

MenoHerb® is a traditional herbal medicinal product used for the relief of symptoms of the menopause, such as hot flushes, night sweats, and temporary changes in mood (such as nervous irritability and restlessness), exclusively based upon long-standing use as a traditional remedy. Always read the label

MenoHerb is one of the first herbal medicines in the UK to be granted registration by the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which ensures that all UK medicines are of an acceptable standard in terms of safety and quality.

MenoHerb® is available from leading pharmacies and health food stores nationwide.

