

HEALTH REALLY MATTERS

Menopause: A time for change

Quick Facts about Menopause

- Is officially the time when a woman has not had her period for 1 year.
- Happens around age 50 for most women.
- Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause. It can last anywhere from 2 – 8 years. Women have irregular periods during this time.
- Your risk for heart disease, osteoporosis and some types of cancer increases after menopause so it is important to see your doctor regularly.
- The most common symptoms include hot flashes, trouble sleeping, headaches, vaginal dryness, problems with memory and mood changes.
- 75% of women will have hot flashes that usually last 2 – 6 years.

Treatments

- Hormone (estrogen and/or progestin) therapy comes in pills, patches, gels, cream or vaginal products:
 - Can help with most symptoms of menopause, especially hot flashes and vaginal dryness.
 - Recommended to use the lowest dose for the shortest period of time.
 - Doses should be started low and gradually increased. When it is time to stop the medicine it should also be tapered down gradually.
 - The risks and benefits of using hormone medicines should be reviewed for each person.
- Non-hormone treatments:
 - Some medicines can help with hot flashes.
 - These include anti-depressants like venlafaxine or other medicines such as clonidine or gabapentin.
 - Talk to your pharmacist about alternatives.
- Natural health products:
 - Black cohosh and phytoestrogens (plant based) may have some benefit but studies show mixed results.



MEDICINE CENTRE
PHARMACY

You can help to manage symptoms of menopause with these healthy habits

- Keep active by walking, jogging, swimming, or dancing. Every little bit counts and can help to keep your bones strong, your heart healthy and lift your mood.
- Choose a heart-healthy and well-balanced diet.
- Quit smoking.
- Focus on nutrition including heart healthy and less salty foods.
- Limit alcohol to one or two drinks per day (maximum 9/week women).
- Reduce stress in your life to help your overall health and to help you sleep better.

Your Pharmacist can

- Review treatment options for menopausal symptoms.
- Discuss benefits and possible side effects of the different medicines and work with you and your doctor to help you get the most out of them.
- Support you with lifestyle changes to manage your symptoms.
- Suggest ways to make it easier to take your medications regularly.

Find more great information and tools here

- HealthLink BC: Managing Hot Flashes: <http://goo.gl/Oh92ZR>
- Menopause and u: <http://goo.gl/B5LZPw>
- Fact sheet on hormone therapy: <http://goo.gl/lOcCNt>
- Fact sheet on sexuality: <http://goo.gl/kGPX1k>
- MedBroadcast: <http://goo.gl/4kU00k>

Notes: