

6

MENOPAUSE QUESTIONS
YOU ARE EMBARRASSED
TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR



THE SIX QUESTIONS

1. Is vaginal dryness a normal issue for my age?
2. I've missed my period; have I started menopause?
3. Why is sex painful now?
4. Can menopause cause unprovoked anger?
5. Why am I experiencing hot flashes?
6. Why have I lost interest in sex?

IS VAGINAL DRYNESS A NORMAL ISSUE FOR MY AGE?

Vaginal dryness could occur at any stage of a woman's life, but if you are in your 40s or 50s, your vaginal dryness could be a symptom of menopause.

Like the majority of menopause symptoms, vaginal dryness is the result of diminished estrogen production. Estrogen helps maintain a thin layer of clear fluid on the walls of the vagina while also keeping the vaginal lining thick and elastic. During menopause, estrogen production slows before eventually stopping. The drop in estrogen contributes to the drop of moisture available within the vagina. Vaginal atrophy can also occur as the vagina becomes less thin and less elastic.

Vaginal dryness can cause itching, burning and painful intercourse. Diagnosing and treating vaginal dryness simply requires an assessment of your medical history and pelvic exam. During the pelvic exam, your doctor will look for thinning and redness associated with irritation.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is a common treatment for vaginal dryness due to low estrogen levels. HRT will help replenish the estrogen your body is no longer producing and relieve vaginal dryness.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Estrogen levels help maintain moisture in the vagina. Your estrogen levels can drop from menopause, childbirth, medications, removal of ovaries and other causes.
- 1 out of 3 women will experience vaginal dryness during menopause.

NATURAL REMEDIES

- Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy
- Fennel and fenugreek supplements
- Foods high in phytoestrogens such as soy, apples, nuts, flax seed, celery and alfalfa.

I'VE MISSED MY PERIOD; HAVE I STARTED MENOPAUSE?

Menopause is often celebrated as the end of your period, but how can you tell the difference between a missed period and the start of menopause? To answer this question, we need to explain the difference between menopause and perimenopause.

Menopause marks the end of childbearing for a woman and is realized when a woman does not have her period for an entire year.

Perimenopause is the physiological process that leads up to menopause. This stage can last from 2 to 8 years and can start as early as your late 30s. During perimenopause, you may experience irregular periods. As your body approaches menopause, you will ovulate less frequently causing longer cycles as long as 80 days.

In addition to perimenopause, missed periods can also be caused by anovulation. This occurs when your ovary does not properly release an egg so your body does not produce the necessary hormones to guide menstruation.

If you miss more than two periods or are experiencing menopause symptoms, visit your doctor for relief.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In the year leading up to menopause, menstrual cycles can last up to 80 days.
- Only 28% of women have consistently regular cycles.

NATURAL REMEDIES

- Mediate stress through exercise and relaxation
- Eliminate tobacco, caffeine and alcohol use
- Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy

WHY IS SEX PAINFUL NOW?

Menopause can cause dyspareunia. Dyspareunia is the medical condition pertaining to pain during or after vaginal penetration. For women experiencing menopause, the pain is most likely stemming from vaginal dryness and vaginal atrophy.

Estrogen and testosterone loss can be blamed for the vaginal dryness and atrophy. Low levels of estrogen result in less blood flow to the vagina, which affects vaginal lubrication and can lead to thinner vaginal tissue and less elasticity. In other words, dry sex is painful sex.

Don't worry, there are solutions to this problem. As discussed in question one, there are multiple remedies for vaginal dryness including hormone replacement therapy and water-soluble lubricants.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Dyspareunia is the medical condition pertaining to pain during or after vaginal penetration.
- As many as 45% of postmenopausal women find sex painful.

NATURAL REMEDIES

- Water-soluble Lubricants
- Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy

CAN MENOPAUSE CAUSE UNPROVOKED ANGER?

If you feel like you are in a constant state of PMS, your menopause could be to blame. Your estrogen decline can lead to emotional changes. Emotional changes are a natural part of menopause just like hot flashes, vaginal dryness and night sweats.

A short fuse is just one of the emotional changes you could experience. Menopause and perimenopause can contribute to emotions such as sadness, lack of motivation, anxiety and fatigue.

If you experience unusual mood swings, there is a good chance it could be related to your menopause, but irritability and depression could also be the symptoms of other medical conditions. Be sure to discuss these emotional changes with your doctor.

In addition to emotional changes, trouble concentrating is a common symptom of perimenopause. These concentration issues are most likely temporary.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Estrogen decline can cause emotional changes.
- 20% of women have depression at some point during menopause.

NATURAL REMEDIES

- Exercise and a healthy diet
- Self-calming techniques such as yoga
- Strong relationships with family and friends
- Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy

WHY AM I EXPERIENCING HOT FLASHES?

A quick rush of heat, flushed face and brief sweat is a familiar feeling for women experiencing menopause. A hot flash is the result of blood vessels near the surface of the skin dilating to cool. Sweating is another mechanism a woman's body may use to cool down.

Hot flashes are considered the most common symptom of menopause, and some women may experience the chills or rapid heart rate during a hot flash. The exact cause of hot flashes has not been pinpointed, but they are believed to be related to changes in circulation.

Aside from Hormone Replacement therapy, there are no known lifestyle adjustments that can completely eliminate hot flashes but there are ways to mitigate their frequency. Triggers such as stress, caffeine, alcohol and spicy foods should be avoided. Regular exercise and staying in a cool environment can also help. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is largely regarded as the most effective way to manage hot flashes, and in some women, HRT has prevented hot flashes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hot flashes occur in 2 out of 3 women during perimenopause and nearly all women with induced menopause.

NATURAL REMEDIES

- Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy
- Avoid triggers like stress, tight clothing and heat
- Vitamin B Complex Supplement

WHY HAVE I LOST INTEREST IN SEX?

Sexual dysfunction is a common consequence of menopause. While both men and women lose interest in sex as they age, women are 3 times more likely to lose interest in sex than men.

Unlike other symptoms of menopause, hormones aren't completely responsible here. A woman's sex drive is motivated by a variety of factors like stress – which is a big sex drive killer.

Painful intercourse, low libido and loss of sensation are common symptoms of menopause that can decrease sexual interest in women. These issues are the result of low estrogen levels, but the psychological affect of painful sex can discourage sex drive. It's important to remedy any pain during sex (see Question 3), so you do not associate intercourse with a painful experience.

Find ways to eliminate stress in your life and consider hormone replacement therapy to elevate to optimize your hormones for improved sexual experiences.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Women are 3 times more likely to lose interest in sex than men as they age.
- Low libido during menopause can be caused by more than hormone imbalance.

NATURAL REMEDIES

- Stress management techniques
- Stop painful intercourse with water-based lubricants
- Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

WE CAN HELP

At Live Well Medical Centers Orlando, we work closely with each patient to tailor a unique solution for their needs. If you're experiencing menopause symptoms, we can help you through balancing your hormones. Our proven approach to all-natural hormone replacement therapy has helped thousands of patients in Florida.

To learn more about our menopause management program, visit our website LiveWellOrlando.com or call **407-269-8886** to schedule an appointment.



Sources

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Note: None of the information in the book is intended to diagnose, treat or cure any medical conditions, symptoms or ailments.