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ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

MARCH 2011

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: MENOPAUSE



Most women experience natural menopause between the ages of 40 and 58. The average age is 51 years. During menopause a woman's hormone levels change. These hormones help with many processes within the body. A woman may experience menopausal changes up to 10 years. These can disrupt normal daily living during this time. It is important to know what changes may occur and to talk to your healthcare provider about them.

Stages of menopause

- **Pre-menopause** – The period of time before the last menstrual cycle.
- **Peri-menopause** – The time immediately prior to menopause and the first year after menopause. Many menopause symptoms are seen during this time.
- **Menopause** – The inability of the body to have a menstrual cycle. It can only be confirmed one year after last menstrual cycle.
- **Post menopause** – Time after the final menstrual cycle.

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Just 30 minutes of activity a day can help you feel better.

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Symptoms

It is important to note that not all women experience the same changes when going through menopause. For some women it can be quite frustrating and others may experience only a few uncomfortable days.

Menopausal symptoms that may occur:

- Hot flashes
- Sleep disruption
- Weight gain
- Short term memory problems
- Lack of focus
- Increased anxiety
- Fatigue
- Mood swings
- Irregular periods
- Dry eyes
- Osteoporosis
- Heart disease
- Headaches

About 75 percent of women will experience some menopausal symptoms.

Exercise may reduce many menopause-related symptoms.

Exercise can help:

- lessen anxiety
- ease depression
- make you feel good about yourself
- decrease fatigue
- improve sleep

Just 30 minutes of activity a day can go a long way toward making you feel better. Any activity such as walking, cycling, water aerobics, or even gardening can improve how you feel. For women who experience hot flashes, take time to relax during the day. Classes like yoga and pilates can help reduce hot flashes.

It is important to talk to your healthcare provider about how and what you are feeling. Work with him or her to understand fully the



changes in your body. Menopause is part of life for all women. By talking to your healthcare provider and understanding the body changes, you will be able to handle this stage of life!

REFERENCES:

- ACSM Fit Page, Fall 2009. Menopause. American College of Sports Medicine

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