

[Menopause and Women: Part 1](#)

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Healing

Menopause and Women: Part 1

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During the years between age 40 and 50, many changes occur in our bodies and minds as the bodily doshic cycle turns into the vata period. This cyclic vata phase brings on a change in our life and its purpose.

In women it is the beginning of the end of the childbearing period and cessation of the menstrual periods. This is called menopause. There is a gradual withdrawal of energy from the function of the ovaries so that they no longer produce the ovum and slowly decrease the formation of the hormones that prepare the uterus to receive the egg (ovum) for fertilization and its further development into a fetus. This is a natural condition and is not to be considered a disease.

However, it is accompanied by some physical symptoms that vary greatly according to the physical condition of the women. There are also mental and psychological changes that are a result of the menopause.

It is now time for the woman to have more concern about herself and her spiritual center than before. She is free from the biological necessity of producing children and the constant concern for their welfare. She now has more time to think of herself and her husband and their well being, physically and spiritually.

The most common symptom of this period of life is the experiencing of "hot flashes," the sudden spontaneous surging of heat throughout the body, with the skin flushing and often sweating. The liberated woman has called these episodes "power surges." It is a time-limited experience but may be shocking and troublesome when it does occur. Women who practice hatha yogapostures as a routine seldom, if ever, have these vasomotor experiences. A good hatha yogaroutine emphasizing the inverted and forward bending postures can assure great relief from these episodes.

Sometimes women will ask for doses of estrogen, usually given as a synthetic drug, to get them through this phase. This is not recommended because these drugs cause the body to not recover naturally from the "hot flashes"and these episodes will continue as long as the drugs are taken. The taking of these drugs has been connected to increased risk of breast cancer as well as uterine cancer and other adverse effects.

Dietary changes to a grain-based diet and giving special attention to foods rich in calcium, vitamin E, and elimination of smoking, drinking coffee, hot spices and alcohol are indicated, as these aggravate the pitta doshawhich controls the heat production within the body. The diet should be a vatapacifying

diet. Herbs such as valerian and passion flower are calming. There are homeopathic remedies compounded for helping one overcome these symptoms. They are highly recommended and are readily available in health food stores and homeopathic pharmacies.

To aid in the mood swings, meditation and yogapostures are suggested. The postures that work on the adrenals and kidneys such as the twisting postures will help these organs to furnish the hormones that are no longer being produced by the ovaries.

A good diet, adequate aerobic exercise, hathayoga, meditation and even dietary supplements will make the menopause a favorable experience as far as the short-term effects are concerned. There are long-term symptoms also associated with the menopause, such as thinning and dryness of the vaginal mucosa, muscle loss, water retention, osteoporosis and cardiovascular diseases. These will be considered in October.

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