A woman’s guide to natural solutions for menopause. Includes a comprehensive questionnaire and alternative recommendations.

Menopause Solutions

By Dr. Kimberly D. Balas, PhD, ND
Hormones have been a common concern for quite some time now. There is more knowledge evolving daily on the topic as there is more publicity and there are more books being written on the subject. It is important to understand hormones, their function and effect on your health. A whole new insight on hormones was revealed when the Women’s Health Initiative findings were released. The media sensationalized the information that synthetic estrogen caused breast cancer, pulmonary embolism, colon cancer, hip fractures, heart disease and blood clots, which created quite a scare in women. The side-effects of hormone replacement therapy have been and continue to be a major concern to all women.

Many women are surprised to learn that hormonal imbalances are the underlying cause of many physical, mental and emotional symptoms they have been experiencing. Even if you know that hormonal imbalances are the cause of these symptoms, do you really know what is going on in your body and why?

Do you know about each of the hormones that affect your

**Menopause Facts:**

- The normal age to go through menopause ranges from 35 to 55
- Cycling after the age of 55 increases a woman’s risk of breast cancer
- 90% of women have menopausal symptoms
- Osteoporosis affects more than 45% of women over age 50
- 40% of women who have had a hysterectomy have depression
health and their function? How do you bring your body into balance and create health if you suppress symptoms and don’t discover the actual root cause of what is going on in your body?

Hormones can make the difference between a good day and a bad day.

If your body has too much or too little of a particular hormone it can cause disease and disharmony in the body. Hormonal imbalance is associated with every major disease that plagues western society (cancer, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, etc.)

The more awareness each of us has about hormones and what is going on in our bodies, the more we can determine how to balance them again.

Hormone response is as unique to each person as their own fingerprint. You may be experiencing menopause symptoms even if your lab tests are normal. It is important to understand each symptom and how to create balance in the fluctuation of hormones.
Menopause Symptoms

- Hot flashes, flushes, night sweats and/or cold flashes, clammy feeling
- Irregular heart beat
- Irritability
- Mood swings, sudden tears
- Trouble sleeping through the night
- Irregular periods; shorter, lighter periods; heavier periods, flooding; phantom periods, shorter cycles, longer cycles
- Loss of libido
- Vaginal dryness
- Crashing fatigue
- Anxiety, feeling ill at ease
- Feelings of dread, apprehension, doom
- Difficulty concentrating, disorientation, mental confusion
- Disturbing memory lapses
- Incontinence, especially upon sneezing, laughing;
- Itchy, crawly skin
- Aching, sore joints, muscles and tendons
- Increased tension in muscles
- Breast tenderness
- Headache change: increase or decrease
- Gastrointestinal distress, indigestion, flatulence, gas pain, nausea
- Sudden bouts of bloating
- Depression
- Increase in allergies
- Weight gain
- Hair loss or thinning increase in facial hair
- Dizziness, light-headedness, episodes of loss of balance

3 Main Reasons Hormones Are Important

1. Tiny amounts can cause large changes in the cell that leads to multiple symptoms.
2. They send and receive messages critical for many body functions.
3. They are part of a regulatory system that plays a role in immune function.
• Changes in body odour
• Gum problems, increased bleeding
• Burning tongue, burning roof of mouth, bad taste in mouth, change in breath odour
• Changes in fingernails: softer, crack or break easier

Perimenopause symptoms:
• Symptoms such as irregular cycles
• Heavy cycles
• Low energy
• Food cravings
• Weight gain, bloating
• Fibrocystic changes
• Mood swings

Estrogen Hormone Functions

• Estrogen is one of the most powerful hormones in the body.
• Estrogen consists of three types of hormones.
• Males and females have estrogen.
• Estrogen is responsible for:
  Breasts development
  Curves of a woman
  Menstruation
  Babies
• Women need high levels of estrogen and low levels of testosterone.
• Men need high levels of testosterone and low levels of estrogen.
• There are over 300 tissues in the body with estrogen receptor sites
• Estrogen plays a role in 400 functions of the body.
• When one estrogen become imbalanced a cascade of health issues can appear
• Absorption of Minerals:
  Calcium
  Magnesium
  Potassium
  Zinc
• Decreases bad cholesterol (LDL)
• Increases good cholesterol (HDL)
• Balances triglycerides
• E2 is a powerful antioxidant. Destroys free radicals from toxins and xenoestrogens
**Body Functions Affected by Estrogen:**
- Metabolism
- Insulin
- Body Temperature
- Bone Density
- Mood
- Energy
- Eye Health
- Muscle Strength
- Artery Plaque
- Mineralization
- Nerve Growth
- Intestinal Lining
- Libido
- Brain Function

**How to Balance Estrogen Naturally:**
- Moderate exercise (normalizing weight)
- Cruciferous vegetables (Indole 3 Carbonol)
- Flaxseed hulls (plant lignans, phytoestrogens enterodiol and enterolactone)
- Evening Primrose Oil
- Non-GMO Soy
- High-protein diet (antibiotic/hormone free)
- FCS-II
- Women’s Formula
- F.E. Formula
- Wild Yam & Chaste Tree
- Omega 3 Essential Fatty Acids
- Super Oil
- Vitamins B6, B12, and B9 (folate)

**Progesterone Hormone**
- Progesterone’s main job is to insure the survival of the fetus in pregnancy.
- Progesterone is produced during the second half of the female cycle.
- Progesterone is made by the ovaries (pre-menopause) and adrenals (post-menopause)
After age 30 women begin to produce less progesterone.
“Estrogen Dominance” or high xenoestrogens cause the majority of low progesterone levels for both sexes.
Men produce a very small amount of progesterone
Progesterone is responsible for body fat storage & helps use fat for energy.
Excessive cortisol can block progesterone receptors, making them less responsive to progesterone.
In males progesterone is produced by the testes and adrenals

**Body Functions Affected by Progesterone:**
- Stimulating osteoclast bone building (Osteoporosis reversal)
- Diuretic support for kidneys
- Antidepressant action
- Restores sex drive (libido)
- Normalizing zinc and copper levels
- Supporting thyroid hormone action
- Preventing endometrial and breast cancer
- Protecting against fibrocystic breast
- Balancing blood sugar levels
- Preventing blood clotting
- Restoring proper oxygen cell levels
- Normalizing menstrual cycles

**How to Balance Progesterone Naturally:**
- Adrenal Support
- Wild Yam & Chaste Tree
- Complete, whole foods
- Mineral Chi Tonic
- Evening Primrose Oil

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**Natural Remedies for Menopause**

**Black Cohosh** (*cimicifuga racemosa*)
- Has a balancing effect on estrogen.
- Found to have a direct effect on the hypothalamas to decrease hot flashes
- Relaxant, sedative, anti-spasmodic, anti-inflammatory
**Dong Quai** (*Angelica archangelica*)
- Contains phytoestrogens
- Helps with breast tenderness
- Headaches
- Antispasmotic
- Interacts with anti-coagulants

*Women’s Formula:*
- Herbal formula to ease premenstrual and menopausal symptoms
- Balances estrogen/progesterone and androgens
- Calms nerves
- Contains black cohosh, raspberry leaf, and the Chinese herb dong quai, to name a few.

*F.E. Formula:*
- Relieves menopausal symptoms of hot flashes and sudden chills, emotional upset, and sleeping disturbances.
- Contains standardized black cohosh extract of 2.5% triterpene glycosides.
- Contains the Chinese herb dong quai.

*FCS-II:*
- A formula of traditional, time-honoured herbs for women during her pre- and post-menstrual cycle.
- Relieve menstrual symptoms of pain and cramping.
- Contains black cohosh, squaw vine, cramp bark, marshmallow root, blessed thistle, capsicum fruit, ginger, queen of the meadow, and red raspberry leaf.

*Wild Yam & Chaste Tree:*
- Balances hormones
- Calms hot flashes
- Helps with anxiety, insomnia and mood swings

*MACA:*
- Balances mood during menopause
- Contains alkaloids thought act on the body’s hypothalamus and pituitary glands and on the adrenal glands

*Evening Primrose Oil:*
- An omega 6 essential fatty acid supplement. Provides preformed gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) which helps the body manufacture prost glandins—hormone-like substance which reduces inflammation and discomfort.
• A source of omega 6 essential fatty acid.
• A long history of traditional use for symptoms of monthly female discomfort due to hormone fluctuation.

Skeletal Strength:
• Supports bone density
• Support the structural system
• Nourishes hair, skin and nails
• Magnesium helps ease PMS symptoms

Stress Formula:
• Vitamin B-complex with herbs supporting the nervous system
• Supports the adrenal glands
• Contains the herbs schisandra, hops, passion flower and valerian
• Reduces anxiety
• Reduces stress hormone levels
• Helps to adapt to hormonal fluctuations
• Reduces insomnia

All of the hormones in the body are designed to work together. If one is altered or deficient, it will affect the actions of all of the other hormones in the body. Of particular consideration is a balanced progesterone-to-estrogen ratio. Nurturing the hormones can have a regulating effect on menstrual cycles and prepare her body for the changes that occur with menopause. Common menstrual problems, such as cramping, sore breasts, bloating, and PMS respond well to herbal treatments. Herbs have always played a role in easing a woman through the perimenopausal and menopausal life changes, successfully lessening the emotional and physical transitions throughout the various hormonal stages of life.
Importance Of Monitoring Hormone Levels

It is crucial to monitor hormone levels due to the fact that we now live in a world full of toxic chemicals, synthetic hormones and medications. These toxins disrupt the normal flow of hormones and create imbalance in the body leading to health issues. Your grandmother did not have to deal with the complexity and confusion of hormone therapy and hormone tests. In third world countries and Eastern countries such as Japan, there is no word for PMS or hot flashes. These syndromes tend to plague people who live in the western hemisphere of the world. While being the leaders in technology, unfortunately the West is not number one in good health. We are fortunate though to have the tools to help assess hormone levels and the freedom to use natural therapies to bring the hormones into harmony as our grandmothers and great grandmothers enjoyed.

Female Hormone Questionnaire Instructions

Read through the symptoms. If you are experiencing that symptom, rate the symptom according to the following scale:

• 1 = Mild — occasional minor problem
• 2 = Moderate — regular and moderate problem
• 3 = Severe — frequent and serious problem

Take that rating number and fill in the white boxes across the row with the number that matches the severity of your symptoms. Leave grey boxes blank as in the following example:

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<th>Symptoms</th>
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In the example above the woman is experiencing severe hot flashes, mild foggy thinking and moderate aches and pains. Heart palpitations are not a problem so the boxes on that line are left blank.

Instructions for totaling the columns and interpreting the results are found on page 13.
The Female Hormone Questionnaire

Note: This questionnaire is for education purposes and is not intended to replace medical advice.

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</table>

1. Estrogen/Progesterone Low
2. Estrogen High/ Progesterone Low
3. Low Androgens (DHEA/Testosterone)
4. High Androgens (DHEA/Testosterone)
5. Low Cortisol
6. High Cortisol
7. Low Thyroid
8. High Insulin
9. Thyroid Function
10. Adrenal Imbalance
Adding Up the Columns

After you have filled in all the symptom boxes that pertain to you, total each column on each page. On page three you can put your totals for page one and page two and combine them with the totals from page three to create a grand total as shown in the example below:

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</table>

Interpreting Your Results

Each column corresponds to a different hormonal imbalance. Use the highest total column to help you determine your possible hormonal imbalance. The type of hormone imbalance represented by that column is found at the bottom of the column. For example, column one is for low estrogen and low progesterone. Column two is for high estrogen (estrogen dominance) and low progesterone.

Focus on the hormonal issue with the highest score first. So, if column 8 is your highest number, then reducing high insulin is your number one goal. If column 5 is your highest number, then raising your low cortisol would be your number one goal.
“The most creative force in the world is the menopausal woman with zest.”

—Margaret Mead