

❖ **MENOPAUSE**

Menopause is defined as the ‘end of menstruating in women’ and occurs when the ovaries no longer produce sex hormones. It can occur gradually and usually occurs between the ages of 45-55.

**What are the symptoms of menopause?**

Your periods may gradually become less frequent until they completely stop and you may also have one or all of the following symptoms;

- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Weight gain
- ✓ Urinary leakage
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Reduced libido
- ✓ Dry skin
- ✓ Aches and pains
- ✓ Vaginal dryness
- ✓ Night sweats/hot flushes
- ✓ Painful breasts.

Without scaring you; long term you are more likely to have heart disease and osteoporosis as female sex hormones normally protect against this.

**How do you treat Menopause over-the-counter?**

There are many natural supplements that are marketed for menopause symptoms that may help you. There are some formulations that ‘behaves’ like oestrogen that you need to check with your doctor first before taking if you have had any history of cancer (particularly breast or ovarian cancer).

Some ingredients that are available include;

- ✓ Plant oestrogens; soy products (mimic the effects of female hormones in the body to reduce hot flashes)
- ✓ Foods rich in vitamin B (to help with endurance and mood).
- ✓ Foods rich in Vitamin E (to help prevent oxidative damage to the heart and improve skin)
- ✓ Red Clover (contains high amounts of isoflavones which are changed in the body to become like oestrogen)
- ✓ Black cohosh (has similar effects to oestrogen to reduce hot flashes)
- ✓ Oats and sage (can reduce hot flashes)
- ✓ Hops (acts as a phytoestrogen and can reduce hot flashes)
- ✓ Zinc (acts as an antioxidant to protect against damage to cells)
- ✓ Evening primrose oil (can help reduce hot flashes)
- ✓ Magnesium (acts as a muscle relaxant and can help improve moods and cramping)
- ✓ St Johns Wort (can improve the mood, anxiety and depression)
- ✓ Calcium and vitamin D supplementation (to assist in preventing osteoporosis since there is less protection without oestrogen)
- ✓ Wild Yam (this regulates the production of oestrogen)
- ✓ Dong Quai (affects oestrogen and other hormones)

There are certain foods that you can incorporate into your diet to provide relief of menopause symptoms;

- ✓ Legumes, soybeans, chickpeas, lentils, green beans, flaxseed oil, sunflower seeds, cherries garlic and alfalfa.

**What products are available?**

<b><u>PRODUCT</u></b>	<b><u>INGREDIENTS</u></b>	<b><u>DIRECTIONS</u></b>
<b><u>Remifemin</u></b>	20mg black cohosh	Take 1 twice daily. It can take up to 4 weeks, best effects in 4-12 weeks.
<b><u>Promensil</u></b>	Red clover extract, calcium, isoflavones, soybean oil, magnesium, mixed tocopherols plus more	1-2 daily.

<b><u>Ethical nutrients hot flush fix</u></b>	Black cohosh 520mg and soya bean 16 g	Take 1 tablet daily
<b><u>Nature's own meno care</u></b>	Vitamin B1, B2,B3,B6, folic acid, schizandra and Hops	Take 1 tablet daily
<b><u>Nature's way menopause day/night</u></b>	Soya bean, black cohosh, dong quai, red clover, wild yam, soya bean, chaste tree magnesium and valerian.	Take 1 daily
<b><u>Naturopathica menoEze forte</u></b>	Red clover, black cohosh, dong quai, panax ginseng, liquorice, wild yam, soya bean, chaste tree and sage.	Take 1 tablet daily

**Where else can I go to get help?**

There are a few resources that may be helpful;

- ✓ Australian Menopause Society [www.menopause.org.au](http://www.menopause.org.au)
- ✓ Menopause Centre of Australia [www.menopausecentre.com.au](http://www.menopausecentre.com.au)

If you have tried some of these products and they are not helping then chat to your naturopath who may be able to make up a special formulation specific to your needs.

As well as this, chat to your doctor about hormone replacement therapy (HRT) on prescription as they may provide excellent respite for your symptoms. Although many people don't like the idea of having to take external hormones or are afraid from media reports of cancers or side effects, they also have a protective benefit for your bones and heart health. They can tailor the treatments to suit your needs and you may only need to use them every now and then...not forever! You can use tablets, pessaries, creams, patches or gel and because your doctor will know your full medical history they will suggest the most appropriate one for you...you don't need to suffer in silence anymore!