

## Please remember:

- Hormones are highly effective medicines for targeted use in specific diseases.
- There are various options of hormonal treatment with different forms of applications (tablets, patches, cream) and composition of hormones (individual preparations after surgical removal of the uterus or combination preparations). Ask your doctor to explain which type of application is reasonable for you or medically required.
- Just like any other medicine, hormones can have no effect without side effects. No matter if you take or use hormones as tablets, patches or cream: The success of treatment or the increase of quality of life for you should always be balanced against the risks and undesired effects.
- The symptoms of menopause and Vitamin D and B 12 deficits are very similar. Ask for detailed consultation on this!

## Menopause is a natural phase

in the life of every woman. Every woman's individual experience of it will be determined, among others, by her society's attitude towards old age and the respective culture.

## Take time to make this decision. It must be your personal choice!

Menopause is a natural phase in every woman's life. How it is experienced is determined by the attitude of society to old age and by culture. Many positive aspects of the change will become clear if you draw a personal balance of „what am I losing – what do I gain?“.

How you experience this time, how limited you feel by it, what changes to your family and professional life occur, whether any treatment is needed – and if so: what kind -, which adverse effects you can tolerate, the chance of success: All of these are questions that must be answered based on your very specific situation in life.

Talk to your doctor and ask any questions you personally think are important. Use other information sources, such as your health insurance or your local Women's Health Centre as well.



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## Getting through Menopause

## Mindfully



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## Getting through Menopause Mindfully

Most women experience menopause around the age of 50. You may also have heard the term „climacteric period“ for it. The production of sex hormones reduces slowly and eventually ceases almost entirely.

The changed hormonal balance may lead to physical and psychological problems, such as sudden hot flushes, problems sleeping, mood fluctuations and impaired sexuality. The duration and intensity of such complaints can differ. Some women suffer a considerable reduction of their quality of life. Others are barely affected.

The number of products promising diverse relief is immense. Offers range from herbal medicines to physical therapy, wellness programs and alternative treatments, all the way to hormone preparations. Two international studies have given cause to criticise and debate treatment with female sex hormones recently.

Well-being, continuous readiness to perform and a youthful appearance are declared important targets in life today. The manner in which we handle menopause is closely linked to our cultural understanding and the social image of aging. Therefore, suitable measures, such as use of medicines, to counter menopause symptoms must be considered with care.

The following questions are to provide an orientation aid. You can use them in order to name your complaints more precisely and to develop your personal point of view. You can also use the questionnaire to prepare, for example, for your next appointment with your gynaecologist. The more specific the questions you ask, and the more precisely you can recognise and describe your own symptoms, the more easily will you be able to find the right strategy together.

## Do you feel impaired – how much? What is worst for you?

Check the applicable statements to discuss them the next time you see your doctor:

- Hot flushes, sweating (rising heat, extensive perspiration)
- Impaired sexuality (loss of sexual desire, dry vagina)
- Sleeping problems (new problems falling asleep or sleeping through the night)
- Mood swings (despondency, sadness, lack of drive, irritability, inner tension or unrest)
- Heart problems (palpitations, tachycardia, skipped heartbeats, anxiety caused by heart problems)
- Joint and muscle complaints (rheumatism-like and joint aches)
- Tension/pain in the breast
- Urinary tract problems (complaints when passing water, frequent need to urinate, involuntary urination, urinary tract infections)

## Are your symptoms so bad that you

- want to have the corresponding examinations performed? (by a gynaecologist/general practitioner/specialist for internal medicine)
- think that treatment is necessary?
- would consider hormonal therapy?
- are willing to accept a potentially increased risk of other diseases if you choose hormonal treatment? (According to current knowledge, this includes breast cancer, heart attack, stroke.)

## Have you tried if you can reduce your symptoms by

- moving more (bike instead of car, stairs instead of lift)
- conscious nutrition
- sparing use of coffee, alcohol and cigarettes, hot spices and sweets
- relaxation techniques (autogenic training, yoga, muscle relaxation)
- „deceleration“ of your daily life (planning on taking breaks, saying „No“, taking time for yourself, fewer appointments)
- taking time for your partnership (introducing or resuming traditions, resuming neglected interests)
- Creation of good sleeping conditions (regular times for getting up and going to bed, suitable sleeping environment)

## Did you know that

- regular exercise and healthy nutrition protect from osteoporosis more effectively than hormones do?
- lube, linseed or olive oil can help if your vagina is too dry?
- hormonal treatment will most probably only delay menopause?
- about 50% of the women treated with hormones will experience the same symptoms at a similar severity again when they discontinue the medicine?
- long-term application of hormones should be subject to regular critical assessment?
- slow reduction of hormonal therapy is better than sudden discontinuation?
- hormone levels are not determined before anti-aging treatments?
- food supplements should be taken with caution?

The more specific the questions you ask, and the more targetedly you can recognise and describe your own symptoms, the easier will it be to find the right strategy together.