

Sharing Secrets and Solving Problems



Secrets to Surviving and Thriving through Menopause

SURVIVE – *sur-vive [ser-vaivy]* – verb:

1. to get along or remain healthy, happy, and unaffected in spite of some occurrence
2. to endure or live through (an affliction, adversity, misery, etc.)

THRIVE – *thrive [thraivy]* – verb:

1. to prosper; be fortunate or successful
2. to grow or develop vigorously; flourish

(REF: <http://dictionary.reference.com>)

As women enter their 40s and 50s there are a number of changes going on within their bodies. Each woman will experience a different menopause, but becoming knowledgeable about the signs, symptoms, and treatment options is the first step to ensure you manage your menopause – rather than it managing you.

Your “survival kit” is knowledge paired with action.

Knowledge: Some symptoms that may be a part of your menopause:

Hot flashes, rapid heartbeat, irritability, mood swings, sudden bouts of crying, trouble sleeping, loss of libido, crashing fatigue, incontinence, breast tenderness, depression, weight gain, hair loss – or thinning, and increased facial hair.

Knowledge: The Phases of Menopause:

1. **Perimenopause** – This is the time leading up to menopause when your body begins producing less of hormones like estrogen and progesterone. As a result women begin to lose their ability to become pregnant. Symptoms may begin as early as 35, but often begin between 45 and 55.
2. **Menopause** – Your period stops and perimenopause symptoms may increase. Menopause is defined as 12 consecutive months without a period (and there are no other causes)
3. **Post-menopause** – Most of the menopausal changes have faded. Hot flashes may seem milder or less frequent; energy and emotional levels may seem to have stabilized. Bone loss and estrogen loss are areas of concern.

Action:

- Relieve the symptoms by keeping a journal to record changes and anticipate changes watch for food triggers like spicy foods or heavier meals and dress in layers so you can easily cool down if a hot flash attacks.
- Focus on your health and improve where you can – stop smoking, start exercising.
- Some alternative therapies, such as acupuncture, may have results for some women.
- Counseling or support groups are an option for women struggling with the changes in their bodies and the associated life-style changes.
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can be discussed with your physician if more moderate changes in diet, exercise, and supplements do not offer the level of treatment desired.

Sourced: The Office on Women's Health at www.4woman.gov and The North American Menopause Society at www.menopause.org



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