A Guide to Explaining Menopause to Your Children

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Explaining Menopause to Children

The first time my children noticed that something was wrong with mom was on a chilly winter's day. I suddenly felt compelled to roll down all of the windows in the car and turn on the air conditioner because I was in full hot flash mode while driving.

A lot of protesting, and weird looks and shivering occurred, and just before the icicles had a chance to form on their noses, the heat went away almost as suddenly as it had appeared.

I can just imagine the conversation that they had when I wasn't around to hear. They most likely talked about, "What's wrong with Mom? Is she sick? Should she go to the doctor? Is she losing her mind?"

By the time I started having full blown hot flashes, my kids were both over 18 years old, and they could understand and even do their research on the symptoms of menopause.

However, many women are waiting until they are older to have their children, so it is highly possible to start going through the change of life while your kids are still small or in their tweens and teens.

How to Talk to Your Children About Your Menopausal Symptoms

Explaining menopause to children does come with its challenges.

How do you explain that mommy has her private summers? Or how do you make younger kids understand something like a night sweat or the fact that you are growing a beard? What about something as serious as not being able to have children anymore?

Keep reading below and learn how to approach explaining menopause to children.

1. Make It Age Appropriate

Be mindful to consider the age of the child that you are communicating with and filter any information that may be inappropriate or too personal.

Although menopause is a normal progression in life and perfectly okay to discuss with children, certain aspects of it may fall into the"too much information" category.

For instance, vaginal dryness is a huge problem during menopause, but you're probably not going to want to tell your 5th grader about it. Unless you want to disgust your teens and even young adult children, I would probably let them discover that little tidbit of information on their own, as well.

2. Keep It Simple

Limit the amount of information and stick to the most basic points that you want to convey.

Staying with the theme of the age-appropriate, you may be tempted to be technical with your kids, but it is best to speak to them in ways that they understand.

An excellent way to do this, especially with teens is to add humor and use your experiences to explain what's happening. Kids love stories, and a bit of added humor will put them at ease and lessen anxiety.

Also, using visual aids, such as a doll or teddy bear to show where things are occurring in the body may be helpful to make both you and them more comfortable with sharing something so intimate.

While talking to your children about menopause, you may be tempted to give them as much information as possible to help them thoroughly understand. But too much information, coupled with the limited attention spans, and kids could end up being more confused than when they started.

3. Reassure Them That You Are Okay

It can be very frightening when a child learns that their parent may be ill. Although you may be experiencing some uncertainty when it comes to the symptoms of menopause, it is still imperative to comfort them and let them know that what you're experiencing is very normal and that you will be alright.

You may also want to take steps to preempt any mood swings or outbursts that you may have, by warning them that this may happen ahead of time and that you are not angry with them.

Also, assure them that they have done nothing wrong and that there is a chemical reaction going on inside your body. If you have an outburst or blow up, be sure to address it once you're calmer and let them know that they are not to blame.

4. Show Them How They Can Help

When a parent is going through something that causes upheaval or trauma in the home, children may feel helpless. Be sure to show them how they can assist you in getting through this time.

Be honest about how you are feeling and establish code words and signals that they can use to be more helpful. Let them know that something as small as quiet time goes a long way in making you feel better.

Be sure to reward them for being helpful and show your appreciation for how mature they are becoming.

5. Assure Them That You Have Things Under Control, Even When You're Not Sure You Do

While you want to empower your kids with knowledge, and you want to make them aware of what's going on, you don't want them to feel burdened or overwhelmed. Because they are still children, they should not feel as if it is their duty to "cure" you or take on the roles of counselor or primary caregiver.

It is important to assure them that you and your medical professionals have the situation under control and that you are doing everything to get through this time with optimism and positivity.

It may be a good idea to incorporate fun outings, trips or activities to show that while you may have some bad days, you are still capable of enjoying life and having fun with them.

In Conclusion...

It can be challenging dealing with the changes that come with Menopause, but being able to speak openly,

appropriately, and intelligently about it to children doesn’t have to be. Armed with a few simple tips and a bit of creativity, your kids will be mini-menopause experts in no time.