Menopause and Relationships

by YVONNE BANKS

Explaining Menopause to Your Partner

Balancing menopause and relationships can be difficult. The subject of menopause can be difficult to approach, especially with the man in your life. You must discuss the subject because he may be confused about what you're going through. If he has been enlightened about the changes occurring in your body, he will be more understanding of your transition.

Navigating Menopause Together

Here are some things to talk about when discussing menopause with your partner:

- *"I'm going through a difficult time right now."* As women, we can handle a lot of what life sends our way, but menopause can be a difficult journey. You shouldn't be alone in dealing with the physical and emotional stresses you will encounter. Ask your man for support. Tell him that you will be coping with hot flashes, mood swings, and other bodily changes. You will be uncomfortable at times, but you need his patience as you go through the inevitable symptoms of menopause. If he understands what you're going through, it will be easier for him to empathize and offer the support you need.
- *"Don't take it personally."* Hormones can turn a gentle woman into a monster in an instant. Teens go through hormonal changes that make them irritable, so you can tell the special person in your life that you're experiencing something similar. Tell them to ignore you if you're on a rampage. Eventually, you will calm down and likely revert to sobbing; hormones are relentless. It is important to let your partner know that the hormones can cause you to do and say things that are not atypical. Tell him to be prepared for extreme mood swings. Ask him for his support. It is just a matter of telling them directly so that they can provide the support you need.
- *"I still desire you, but it's uncomfortable for me."* Let your partner know that you are still sexually attracted to them, but it has become uncomfortable to have sex at this time. Explain that because your estrogen levels are decreasing, your vagina is dry, and it can be painful to have intercourse. There are ways around this issue. You can purchase lubrication over the counter or ask your doctor about hormone replacement therapy. This will help relieve vaginal dryness; additionally, the HRT will help alleviate some of the other symptoms of menopause.

With menopause and relationships, you need open communication. Discussing issues about your health is vital for your partner's understanding and strong support.