Natural Estrogen Replacement Therapies

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Natural Alternatives to Help Women Through Menopause

For older women, menopause is lurking on the horizon, waiting to wreak havoc in their lives. There will be an unprecedented number of women who will be entering menopause in the coming years, as a result of the baby boomer generation coming to age.

Menopause is the process of a woman's period ceasing for at least twelve months and occurs after the age of fifty-one, on average. The duration of per-menopause can be between two and ten years, usually ending a year after the cessation of menstruation. The ovaries begin to shut down and estrogen levels decrease. Symptoms such as irregular periods, night sweats, vaginal dryness and hot flashes crop up. Though the symptoms are unpleasant, the decline in estrogen can predispose a woman to cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and possibly Alzheimer's disease.

Natural estrogen replacement is the main focus for many practitioners when addressing the problems associated with menopause. The following therapies may be options for you in curbing menopausal symptoms:

Soy

Phytoestrogens found in soy products are promising alternatives to estrogen. You can find these in flaxseed oil as well. An 8-ounce glass of soy milk a day may ease the symptoms of hot flashes and may help protect the heart. The extra calcium in soy milk is good for bones as well. Products like tofu and tempeh are great sources of phytoestrogens.

Black Cohosh

This herb is excellent for hot flashes, according to research studies. It does not behave like estrogen, and so reduces the concerns about any effects to hormone-sensitive tissue in the body, like the uterus. Black cohosh is safe to use for most women.

Red Clover

Red clover works in the same way as black cohosh and studies report few side effects.

Dong Quai

Dong quai has existed for ages in Traditional Chinese medicine to treat women-related conditions. It should not be taken if you have fibroids or blood clotting issues, or if you take warfarin.

Ginseng

Ginseng is used for mood issues and sleep problems, as well as improving one's sense of well-being. Though it does not help hot flashes, it may improve your mood and lessen sleep disturbances that are associated with menopause.

Kava

Kava is an herb known to help decrease anxiety. It needs to be used with care because too much can damage the liver.

Evening Primrose Oil

This oil can be useful in relieving hot flashes. Do not take if you are on any anticoagulants or phenothiazine.

The best thing you can do for menopause is to exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet. Both of these protect the heart and bones and can help alleviate menopausal symptoms. Other things you can do include:

- Avoiding caffeine.
- Avoiding alcohol.
- Getting bone density scans.
- Taking 1,500 mg of calcium daily.