Parenting With Menopause

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When Menopause and Adolescence Clash

Being a parent while going through menopause can be a challenge, particularly because your child is most likely a teenager. Menopause and adolescence are two of life's phases when hormones fluctuate and mood swings are inevitable. Many women establish their careers before having children, meaning many teenagers have mothers aged 45-55, when menopausal changes are occurring.

This can certainly lead to conflict, but there are a few things you can do to avoid problems and connect better with your children.

Consider the Similarities

When you butt horns with your teen, consider this: you understand better than most what your child is going through because similar symptoms occur during puberty as do during menopause. For example, on the physical level, teens and menopausal women both may experience appetite changes, weight gain, breast tenderness (in teen girls) and various pains. On the mental/emotional levels, both teenagers and menopausal women may suffer from depression, mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and a lack of motivation.

Next time you have an argument with your child, try to look at the problem from their point of view, and understand that they may overreact because hormonal changes are affect their mood the same way they do yours.

Avoid Arguing When Possible

A teenager will tend to argue more, because they are testing their power and seeking freedom. An argument involves assertiveness, which is needed to better deal with teenage peers as well.

Pick your battles, and avoid arguments when you can. Teenagers have more energy for these debates, whereas you are more likely to become exhausted, and need more time to recover. A few different techniques work for side-stepping a screaming match. Try the following:

- Ask you teen to do what you need them to clearly, without pleading or defending, and leave no room for argument. Keep in mind you can explain a request without defending it, for example: "I need you to clean your room before our guests are arrive at 6pm because we will be giving them a tour of the house."
- If your teenager disagrees with you on a subject, you may say something like, "I hear what you're saying, and I am happy to know what you think," or "I am no trying to change your mind, but here is my point of view."
- Be honest and admit you don't have the energy to debate a certain subject

Spend Time Apart

Set aside some time to be apart from your child on a regular basis. It may be a walk alone by the lake, or a yoga class. Allow your child to also have some time for him/herself. This time alone is perfect clear the mind and cool down if tensions are high.

Spend Time Together

Set apart some time to be together, communicate and bond. It can be over dinner or watching a movie on a Sunday afternoon. You may also want to seek some psychotherapy/counseling together with your teenager, to better understand each other’s emotions and learn how to deal with them. Whether you choose therapy sessions or have a talk at home, communication is the key. Tell your child what you feel, and encourage him or her to do the same.

Parenting with menopause isn't easy, but you can still have a healthy, positive relationship with your teen despite the struggles you're both facing. Good luck!