Menopause and Cramps

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Dealing With Menstrual Cramps During Perimenopause

During perimenopause your hormones wreak havoc on your body. If you are lucky, you may experience only mild symptoms of your body working to shut down your ovaries. It may take as long as ten years for your periods to stop completely, and during this time, your fluctuating estrogen and progesterone levels will cause unpleasant symptoms, including menstrual pain.

You can treat perimenopausal pain at home; however, if it lasts for more than two days, you may want to make an appointment with the doctor.

Easing the Pain

Here are some suggestions for alleviating the pain when dealing with menopause and cramps:

- **Put the heat on:** In other words, invest in a hot water bottle or heating pad to place on your lower abdomen or any place where you are having pain. It will help relax the muscles in the affected area and reduce the cramping. Heat brings extra blood flow to the area and provides relief from the pain. Be careful that you do not make the hot water too hot; you may want to place a towel around it to prevent burns from it. Keep the heating pad at a temperature that is warm, not hot.
- **Take a shower or warm bath:** If you are miserable with menstrual pain or cramping, a warm bath or shower can be heavenly. It will provide stress-relief and relax your muscles.
- **Supplements for menstrual pain:** A great supplement you may want to try is magnesium. It acts as a muscle relaxant, and it is part of many medical therapies to address muscle contractions. A good dosage is around 300 mg. Calcium is another natural supplement that may alleviate menstrual pain. It is responsible for regulation of muscle contractions, and a lack of this essential mineral can cause muscle cramps. Take up to 1000 milligrams a day to benefit.

- **Work it out:** Exercise? Yes, physical activity will benefit your situation by stretching and relaxing your muscles. Exercise produces natural endorphins in your body; they are nature’s pain killer.
- **Take a pill:** You can try taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug like ibuprofen to see if it helps. Possibly, some other type of pain medication may help, such as Tylenol or Aleve. You can take a combination of ibuprofen and acetaminophen by alternating the medications. For instance, you would take ibuprofen at 8 a.m. then take Tylenol at 11 a.m. You will need to be sure to space ibuprofen out every 6 hours and Tylenol every 4 hours.

If you cannot find relief from natural means or with over-the-counter analgesics, your doctor may prescribe an oral contraceptive to help regulate the hormones and help alleviate the pain you are experiencing. A big plus is that this will also address other perimenopausal symptoms like hot flashes.