

**Homeopathic Healthcare**  
George Guess, MD

**A Natural Approach to Menopause**

Regrettably, these are hard times for women suffering from menopausal symptoms. The quandary precipitated by the recent research study which demonstrated that synthetic female hormone supplementation has serious harmful side-effects has left women in the lurch. Women having menopausal symptoms are being advised for the time being to continue their hormone supplementation, a no-doubt rather daunting prospect for them. Given this situation, I feel compelled to advise readers that there are several quite viable alternatives for the management of menopausal symptoms.

The first measures should be simple ones — nutritional, botanical and lifestyle. Below are some suggestions.

Frequent and regular exercise lowers the frequency and severity of hot flashes. Those who do best exercise at least three and one-half hours per week.

Diet: Soy is rich in phytoestrogens (plant estrogen); one cup of soybeans equals .45 mg of conjugated estrogen or almost the equivalent of one Premarin tablet. Also helpful are fennel, celery, parsley, high-lignan flaxseed oil, and nuts and seeds. Fennel is rich in phytoestrogenic properties. Lignan in flaxseed oil can ameliorate hot flashes and has anticancer properties (especially breast cancer). Flax oil dose: 1 tablespoon per day. Also important is the avoidance of sugar, fat, alcohol, caffeine, and chocolate. In some women hot flashes can be precipitated by spicy food, hot foods and drinks, dairy products and meat.

A number of supplements can also be useful. Please be aware, though, that the effects of supplements can take time to have an effect, sometimes a few months. Among the useful supplements are:

- Vitamin E: 800 IU/day, down to 400 IU once symptoms have improved. Vitamin E has improved hot flashes and vaginal complaints.
- Hesperidin and vitamin C: Hesperidin is a flavinoid in citrus which improves vascular integrity and capillary permeability. It can improve hot flushes (also, nocturnal leg cramps, nose bleeds, and bruising). Dose: 900 mg hesperidin, 1200 mg vitamin C. (Vitamin C and bioflavonoids can also help heavy bleeding associated with menopause.)
- Gamma-oryzanol (from rice bran oil): This substance promotes endorphin release by the hypothalamus. It improves hot flashes, and lowers cholesterol and triglycerides. It is totally safe. Dose: 300 mg per day.

Botanical agents (herbs) are also very helpful. Some herbs useful for menopause are Angelica or Dong quai, licorice root, chaste berries (*Agnus castus*), black cohosh, wild yam, burdock, motherwort, etc. Refer to bottle labels for dosages.

The next step for those women needing prompt relief of menopausal symptoms, in my opinion, should be homeopathy. Homeopathic medicine has proven extremely effective in rapidly and permanently relieving menopausal symptoms. Because menopausal symptoms are a chronic condition, best results are obtained when a homeopathic professional is consulted. Here is a short case from my practice to illustrate this method's efficacy.

A 52 year-old woman, an investment counselor, consulted me for hot flashes of eight months duration. They affected primarily her face and upper chest, which would become hot, bright red and sweaty. She also suffered from insomnia, worse with menopause, and long-standing indigestion with abdominal bloating. She was very thirsty at night. She was a recovered alcoholic. She was aggravated by cold air, yet she loved to be outside in the open air. She loved motion and exercise. She was a dutiful, even-tempered person, who admitted some fear of authority

figures. She detested wearing tight clothing around her abdomen, especially when bloated. She was prescribed one dose of the remedy *Lycopodium 200C*, after which she noted rapid and marked relief of her flushing and indigestion. The effect of the remedy persisted for many months; subsequently a few repetitions of the remedy were required, each effective in relieving her symptoms.

Some of the more common homeopathic remedies effective for menopausal complaints are:

**Lachesis:** heat intolerant, averse tight clothing (especially about the throat), loquacious, passionate and aggressive, worse at night and during or after sleep.

**Sepia:** exhausted, sad or indifferent, especially to loved ones, low sexual drive, uterine prolapse; better from vigorous physical activity.

**Sulphur:** heat of the face and head, especially the top of the head; uncovers the feet at night; flushes beginning in the chest and extending upward to the head.

**Pulsatilla:** sensitive, lonely, and weepy; better in a cool, outdoor environment.

There are many other effective remedies. As in all things homeopathic, treatment is individually based upon the striking and characteristic symptoms of each patient.

Lastly, I should mention natural hormone replacement. The study mentioned above pertained to synthetic female hormones. Physicians who have employed natural female hormone replacement have long observed that it is both effective and safe — the incidence of side-effects is far lower with natural hormones, which are prepared from wild yam and exactly duplicate hormones produced by the human body. Unlike synthetic hormones, natural hormones, prescribed in the correct proportions, almost exactly parallel hormonal ratios found in premenopausal women. Also, a few admittedly small studies suggest that natural hormonal therapy may provide protective effects against some of the very ailments that synthetic hormonal therapy has recently been demonstrated to promote — some cancers, cardiovascular disease and strokes, etc.. At present, however, these studies must be deemed inconclusive, and consequently, from a scientific perspective the benefits and safety of natural hormone replacement must be deemed unproven. I hope a large research study of natural hormones will someday be conducted, but since these products can not be patented, pharmaceutical companies will have little financial incentive to pay for such research. Were such to happen, though, it is my belief that the results would be encouraging.

*Dr. Guess is a family physician and has practiced classical homeopathic medicine since 1978. He maintains a private family practice in Crozet, Virginia, near Charlottesville. He is the past editor of the American Journal of Homeopathic Medicine (a professional homeopathic medical journal) and Vice-President of the American Board of Homeotherapeutics (a national homeopathic specialty board). [www.drgeorgeguess.com](http://www.drgeorgeguess.com)*