

ANTI AGING PART 5: TREATING MENOPAUSE NATURALLY

By Gary Null Ph.D.

While current medical practice views menopause as if it were an age-related disease, in actuality, it is a natural and inevitable transition from one stage of life to another. While some women experience uncomfortable symptoms reflecting the body's changing hormonal balance, others experience few or none. In fact, in some societies, where aging is more readily accepted and lifestyles are more natural, menopausal symptoms are generally non-existent.

In our culture, where uncomfortable symptoms of menopause are common, indications can include mood changes, depression, insomnia, irritability, hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and a diminished sexual drive. Serious health concerns related to these hormonal changes include an increased susceptibility to cardiovascular disease, heart attack, osteoporosis, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

The Dangers of Pseudo-Hormone Replacement Therapies

In the United States, the number one medication given to women over 45 is estrogen-replacement therapy. These drugs are not natural forms of human estrogen, but rather substances harmful to the human body. Dr. Jonathan Wright, author of *Natural Hormone Replacement* and medical director of a Clinic in Kent, Washington explains the dangers: "The pharmaceutical Premarin gets its name from pregnant mares or estrogens that are incomplete. What's meant by incomplete is that the estrogen doesn't match the pattern that our bodies naturally make. Other estrogens have never been seen on our planet before; someone tweaked them around in a test tube to make a patentable molecule. These things are called estrogen replacement therapy when they're not."

"One danger with these so-called estrogens is an increased risk of cancer. In fact, official warnings in the Physician's Desk Reference include endometrial cancer and breast cancer. Studies show an association between duration of time on these pseudo estrogens or horse estrogens and a higher risk of breast cancer. There is also an increased risk of a disease called thrombosis or thromboembolism, a clotting that can sometimes be minor and sometimes, if it's in the wrong place, fatal.

"Doctors often believe that adding a pseudo version of the hormone progesterone, such as Provera or Medroxyprogesterone, will knock down the risk of cancer. Notice that word Medroxy? That means that some chemist hung a medroxy group on the progesterone molecule, so that it could be patented and sold for a large price. Researchers recently have discovered that Medroxyprogesterone, Provera, and other synthetic forms of progesterone are dangerous in that they increase the risk of heart and cardiovascular problems.

"In sum, folks are being given a phony form of estrogen and being told that it will protect their heart, but that it might give them cancer. They're then told to take a phony form of progesterone to protect against endometrial cancer. It doesn't protect against breast cancer, but they leave that out. And it takes away the protection that they were supposed to get from the phony estrogen. It's quite a situation."

A similar situation exists in the "male menopause" market where a fake form of testosterone, called Methyltestosterone, was developed in the 1940's, but taken off the market after its users were coming down with liver cancer. Recently, the idea for male hormone replacement therapy has been revived, and, unfortunately, so has Methyltestosterone.

Homeopathic physician Dr. Erica Price adds that any artificial substance is going to have negative repercussions on human organisms: "You cannot take the body and synthetically alter it. When you put an artificial version of something that is natural to the body into the body, to provoke it to act as if it's natural, something is going to go wrong. The body will not accept that kind of influence. And so, we're seeing a high risk of breast cancer from hormone replacement therapy, and a high risk of uterine cancer, and many other problems, including more depression and anxiety. Hormone replacement therapy is very dangerous, though very profitable to the drug companies. And it's a quick and easy answer for the doctors, who don't take a whole lot of time to try to figure out how to deal with the individual patient."

The Benefits of Natural Hormone Replacement Therapy

Rather than play Russian Roulette with pseudo estrogen therapy, most women would benefit from estrogen and other hormones in their natural form. The amount and type of hormones should be individually prescribed, and sometimes they are not needed at all, notes Dr. Wright: "There are areas of the world, some of the more rural areas of Africa and

Asia, where if were to you ask a woman, 'Did you have hot flashes, depression, insomnia, and so forth, as you went through your late 40's and early 50's?' you'd get a blank stare. People in those areas have been on a relatively natural diet all their lives, have gotten lots of exercise, and have not been exposed to many pollutants. And there aren't any medical missionaries telling these people that they have to take estrogen because they've reached a certain age.

According to Dr. Wright, in our culture, however, a natural form of hormone replacement therapy is often a good idea: "In our particular country, most of us haven't followed that kind of a lifestyle, and so most of us have the increased risk of heart attack, osteoporosis, senile dementia, Alzheimer's. Particularly if these things are in our families, we'd better be considering hormone replacement seriously. One doesn't absolutely have to use it, but one had better think about it seriously."

Dr. Elmer Cranton, a Harvard Medical School graduate and author of *Resetting the Clock: Five Anti-Aging Hormones That Are Revolutionizing the Quality and Length of Life* believes that everyone can benefit by replacing natural hormones to levels that exist in the prime of life. He explains, "The pituitary gland produces growth hormone, which is responsible for growth in children and cell maintenance and repair in adulthood. This protein hormone peaks in late adolescence and early adulthood and declines to almost zero by age 100 in a steady downward slope. The pineal gland, close to the pituitary on the back side of the brain, produces melatonin, which has many functions, some known, some unknown, to slow down the aging process. This also declines with age. The thyroid gland in the neck produces thyroid hormone, although the decline in thyroid hormone is not as predictable. About 20 percent of people beyond middle age will have declining thyroid, and some people in old age will have normal thyroid, but, nonetheless, it is something to look at. The adrenal glands produce DHEA and pregnenolone, along with a spectrum of other adrenal hormones. Both DHEA and pregnenolone are essential to life, and both decline with age. Then we get to the sex glands--the ovaries in women that produce estrogen and progesterone, and the testicles in men that produce testosterone. The sex hormones are important for the maintenance of tissues, for the maintenance of protein synthesis, for enzyme replacement, and for cell replacement. The brain will not function without estrogen. In fact, estrogen is so important to the brain that testosterone in men is converted to estrogen in the brain. These also decline with age.

"There are those in the medical and science professions that would say a deficiency is not present unless you're below average. But I would say that you're deficient if you're below what you had between age 20 and 40 because many of the symptoms of aging can be slowed or even partially reversed by replacing levels of these hormones that were present in young adulthood. There is no evidence that it can do any harm to restore people to normal, youthful levels, and there's a lot of evidence that it will slow down the aging process.

"As an example, human growth hormone (HGH)--it actually should be called the cell maintenance hormone--is necessary for the production of protein, for the replacement of enzymes in the body as they wear out, for tissue repair, and for cell replacement which continues throughout life. As this declines the skin gets thinner. Lean body mass decreases and fat increases....Protein in the skin becomes less strong, and skin stretches and wrinkles; bones lose their calcium; healing becomes slower; the immune system becomes weaker; brain function becomes less acute to the extremes of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease."

HGH has been found to reverse these conditions by improving the metabolism of all organ systems. People develop more muscle and bone mass, and their bodies effortlessly revert back to a more youthful physiology. People can lose as much as 15 percent of their total body fat. In addition, HGH has been shown to rebuild heart muscle and to improve cardiac function, especially in people prone to congestive heart failure. And experimental usage in Alzheimer's patients is also promising.

HGH should be taken as an injection, which is costly at this time. Fortunately, however, the inexpensive hormone, DHEA, will help to replace HGH by approximately 20 percent.

Dr. Cranton adds that hormones work in concert, not singly. Therefore, one should be sure to replace the full complement: "Estrogen requires progesterone to have its full benefit. Estrogen [alone] does not reverse osteoporosis or bone loss in women. It can slow or arrest the process, but it will not produce new bone. If progesterone is replaced with the estrogen, bones will actually regenerate, and osteoporosis will be, to some extent, reversible.

"In men there is just one hormone, testosterone, which has the same benefit in men as the estrogen/progesterone combination does in women. This hormone also declines with age,

and its decline is, to some extent, responsible for loss of virility, loss of muscle tone, loss of body lean mass, increase in fat, decrease in mental alertness. But no one hormone is responsible for any one thing. They cross over; they all work in combination to bring these benefits. And if you look at the functions of each hormone, you'll see that the same function can be related to another four or five or many more hormones that we haven't discovered yet."

Dr. Julian M. Whitaker, founder of the Whitaker Wellness Institute in Newport Beach, California, and the author of several books on health and healing including *Shed Ten Years in Ten Weeks*, adds that a reduction in hormone level accompanies a variety of symptoms associated with aging, including fatigue, loss of enthusiasm, reduced digestive power, slower cell replacement and diminished defenses against free radicals. Bringing hormones back to a normal, healthier level will alleviate these symptoms. In addition, eating unprocessed foods and supplementing the diet with digestive enzymes will improve digestion and overall health. And antioxidants will slow down free radical damage. Moreover, B12 injections will increase cellular energy and improve memory. In fact, Dr. Whitaker believes 1,000 mcg injections of B12 should be taken by almost all people over 60. He states, "I frankly believe that if you were to go into the nursing homes and give everybody 1,000 mcg (1 mg) of B12, three times a week for a couple of months, you could probably take a third of the people out of the nursing homes."

Perimenopause

Perimenopause is a transitional stage that can occur for 10 or more years before actual menopause begins. Women in their mid to late thirties and early forties can begin to experience PMS-like symptoms of irritability, depression, bloating, weight gain, and food cravings. Often, these symptoms are not recognized as being hormonally-based. Therefore, women are put through expensive diagnostic tests and being misdiagnosed. They are being told that they have chronic fatigue, an underactive thyroid, and even systemic candidiasis, when what they actually have are symptoms of a hormonal imbalance. Or they are told their problems are "all in their minds" and prescribed medications like Prozac.

Symptoms of perimenopause are real, and they can easily be differentiated from other conditions with a few simple tests. A saliva test, for example, will reveal hormonal levels.

And the follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) blood test will measure levels that tell whether or not a person has entered perimenopause.

Ann Louise Gittelman, author of *Before the Change: Take Charge of Your Perimenopause*, offers insight into perimenopausal changes. She explains, "The hormonal imbalance between two particular hormones, progesterone and estrogen, starts to seesaw during this time of life. The reason behind the hormonal imbalance is an exhaustion of the adrenal glands as well as a lack of regular ovulation because, for some reason, women in their mid 30's and early 40's stop ovulating regularly. They don't recognize that they're not ovulating because some of them are still having periods. When that occurs, a condition called estrogen dominance starts to take place. Symptoms of estrogen dominance, or lack of progesterone, include irritability, allergies, fatigue, depression, breast tenderness, terrible PMS, low sex drive, even thyroid dysfunction. I believe that many of the causes of perimenopausal symptoms have to do with this new condition that Dr. John Lee coined, which we are now calling estrogen dominance."

Gittelman adds that estrogen dominance is worsened by our 20th century diets: "Outside estrogens are getting into our food. We certainly get them from animal and dairy fats because we're using estrogen pellets to fatten up our animals. This remains in the fat content, which many of us are still taking in."

Supplements

A number of supplements can be taken to prevent, lessen, or even reverse the symptoms of peri and actual menopause. Many work to help the body increase its progesterone levels, thus diminishing the state of estrogen-dominance. Others contain plant estrogens, which do not appear to disturb the progesterone/estrogen balance. The most important of these are discussed below:

Flaxseed oil is at the top of the list for prostaglandin replenishment. It is an excellent remedy for depression and fatigue, and it is also good for the skin and the immune system. Additionally, flaxseed oil is known to lower cholesterol and to make insulin more effective.

Evening primrose oil can alleviate symptoms of perimenopause that surface around the time of the menstrual cycle, such as headaches, cramping, irritability, and water retention.

Vitamin B6 increases progesterone levels and enhances serotonin production to create a sense of calm.

Vitamin E is a mild form of hormone replacement therapy in a bottle.

Vitamin C, especially Ester C in large amounts (up to 5,000 mg a day taken in divided doses throughout the day) is a must for keeping the immune system in tip-top shape.

Calcium citrate with magnesium are important supplements during the Change, and should be taken in reasonable amounts.

Zinc also helps to increase progesterone levels and lower estrogen. Between 15 and 50 mg a day should be taken to optimize the immune system and build strong bones.

Other supplements which are beneficial during menopause are royal jelly and bee pollen.

Phytoestrogen-Rich Foods

Foods containing phytohormones, or plant hormones, help alleviate perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms. Soy is particularly good as it is high in estriol, a natural plant form of estrogen. In fact, studies suggest that eight ounces of soy foods daily, such as soybeans, tofu, tempeh, and soy milk, can reduce the amount and degree of hot flashes. Soy has also been shown to decrease the risk of breast cancer, to slow down bone loss after menopause, to prevent plaque buildup in the coronary arteries, and to lower bad cholesterol. Soy foods seem to address just about every health concern associated with aging.

Another natural source of phytohormones is the natural thickening agent kuzu. Several natural foods recipes incorporate kuzu in sauces in place of flour, making this a way to both enjoy healthy foods and alleviate symptoms.

Preventing Weight Gain

Weight gain is a common problem in perimenopausal and menopausal women, but one that can be helped with attention to the right kinds of foods. Gittelman talks about the best foods to eat, which she incorporate in her Changing diet plan: "Low-glycemic, or slow-acting carbohydrates will supply lots of energy for their calories. My favorites are those that are lower on the glycemic index, which is a list of carbohydrates in terms of how they

develop into blood sugar in your own system. I like yams rather than white potatoes, and I like whole rye meal rather than wheat. I choose unprocessed carbohydrates that are moderate to low on the index, that also provide high quality fiber to help eliminate excess estrogen from the system by lowering blood levels of this hormone.

"In addition, there are a number of fruits and vegetables particularly high in phytochemicals and phytohormones. These include apples, grapefruits, lemons, pears, peaches, and a wide variety of vegetables that are high in fiber and loaded with phytochemicals.

"What I have found is that a diet with the right amount of proteins, fats, and low glycemic carbohydrates not only helps regulate sexual hormone production, but also helps to balance the hormonal response to food, which I think is critical in keeping blood sugar levels stable. A level blood sugar helps to prevent perimenopausal symptoms like depression, mood swings, and hot flashes, and that it encourages weight loss without any effort.

"Fats are important on the changing diet plan. We need to add essential and beneficial fats, not take them away. These come in the form of the high-lignan flaxseed oil, olive oil, toasted nut seeds, and avocado. These fats stabilize blood sugar levels.

"So we're getting our blood sugar stable, we're assisting in long-term energy, and more importantly, we're providing the raw material for hormones, particularly progesterone, which is the key hormone in perimenopause."

Hormone-Balancing Herbs

There are a number of native-grown herbs on the market that can help restore progesterone/estrogen balance, and thus relieve perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms. Some of these include alfalfa, black cohosh, blue cohosh, Chinese ginseng, damiana, fennel, licorice root, motherwort, red clover, red raspberry leaves, sarsaparilla, and certain forms of wild yam. Flaxseed contains a phytohormone fiber known as lignans which removes excess estrogen from the system. This is particularly important since too much estrogen is believed to fuel breast cancer. Whole flaxseeds can be ground up or it can be taken as flaxseed oil.

In addition, Chinese medicine, with its 5,000 year old herbal history, can help be of great help. According to Roberta Certner, President of the New York State Association of Professional Acupuncturists, Chinese medicine has a philosophical way of looking at menopause: "They're saying that a woman is giving birth to herself now that the obligation to her children is gone. They look at cycles of seven, and at 49 years of age, when menopause often begins, they say one-half of her lifespan is complete. The next half of the lifespan is for self-growth."

Accepting the Change does not mean accepting discomfort. Certner adds, "Chinese medicine is adamant that women shouldn't be suffering from night sweats, insomnia, mood changes, and other symptoms, and herbal formulas are good for this purpose. They help to rebalance the energies of the body so that a woman doesn't feel at the mercy of these tremendous moods and powerless over bodily changes."

In Chinese medicine, herbs are classified into three categories: poisonous, medicinal, and tonic. Poisonous herbs harm the body and should never be taken; medicinal herbs can be taken short-term, when needed; and tonic herbs can be taken safely over long periods of time. Abigail Rist-Podrega, an acupuncturist knowledgeable in Chinese herbology subdivides the tonic category into yin and yang, opposite energies that are contained within all people: "The yin tonics will affect the yin organs--yin being the female, the recessive, the deeper organs. Yang is more of a male component; the organs are less deep, more active. The herbs that will be affecting the yang organs will be hotter, more yang in nature while yin herbs will be more cooling in nature."

Here are some of the more important tonic herbs:

Ginseng is called the king of the tonics for its ability to help every major organ. It has a broad reputation as a youth preserver, a regenerator and sexual tonic. Ginseng regulates the endocrine system, and acts as a natural steroid tonifying the pituitary and adrenal glands. When cooked to a soft consistency and cut into bite-sized pieces, ginseng can be used to alleviate hot flashes. There are different types of ginseng, and generally the stronger red types are more suitable for men than for women.

Dong quai is a female tonic that stimulates glands that produce female hormones. It helps to tonify the uterus, and also builds strong blood, making it good for overcoming anemia.

Dong quai can be used by men as well to help decrease blood pressure, and to relax cardiac muscle.

Licorice root contains phytoestrogens and is used to stimulate and regulate glands. It is a detoxifying herb, which means that it helps to expel toxins from the system. It's also very good for helping the stomach and can be used in combination with other herbs to relieve ulcers.

Her shou wu is known to darken hair and to promote hair growth in both men and women. Additionally, it helps the liver and kidneys, calms the nervous system and helps clear the eyes. Her shou wu is used as a longevity herb and is said to help develop the three vital treasures: radiant health, spiritual bliss and sexual energy. It provides an enormous amount of chi (pronounced chee), or life energy, yet it is not a stimulant. Rather, her shou wu has a slightly sedative quality to it. Her shou wu is sometimes cooked together with equal amounts of ginseng.

Wu-wei, also known as schisandra fruit, has long been favored by the emperors and royal women who use it to preserve youth and increase sexual potency. The fruit combines both yin and yang qualities to create a balance in the body. Wu-wei is also said to drive out tension in the neck and shoulder. In addition, it is used to beautify the skin and to protect it from sun and wind. Wu-wei drives out mucus and protects the lungs. When used long-term on a continuous basis, wu-wei is said to purify the blood, rejuvenate the kidneys, increase sexual energy, brighten the mind, and make the skin radiant. Wu-wei is sometimes used in combination with a pearl powder, and applied to the skin as a night cream.

Astragalus enhances the immune system and is called the poor man's ginseng.

Certner says that the advantage of Chinese medicine is that it is a gentle form of health: "People aren't forced to take medications which reduce libido function, which set up terrain for heart conditions. It really addresses the mechanism itself and not just the symptoms....The reason Chinese medicine works is that it goes to the root of the problem. If progesterone is low, you enhance the progesterone, using something like dioscorea or leonorus whose name itself means mother root. If you want to enhance ovulation, something like clove is a useful herb. There are quite a lot of herbs a practitioner could

use, and what is recommend depends, to a large degree, on the presentation of the person because Chinese medicine doesn't really treat conditions--it treats people."

Homeopathic Remedies

Homeopathy is medicine in a vibrational form. Completely safe, homeopathic remedies stimulate the body to restore its natural hormonal balance without the use of harmful drugs. Remedies are prescribed according to individual symptoms. Some of the most beneficial ones for menopause and perimenopause are discussed by homeopathic physician Dr. Erica Price:

Folliculinum is made from the natural estrogen produced by the ovaries. It balances most of the hormonal symptoms that are experienced during menopause and perimenopause--hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, menstrual cycle irregularities, the development of fibroids, recurrent cystitis, hair loss, cardiovascular problems, weight gain without even eating, water retention, and allergies, for example. For this reason, folliculinum is a tonic for almost all women during perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause.

Folliculinum stimulates the continuance of the natural production of estrogen by the ovaries and other organs, including the adrenal glands, the liver, the kidneys (which make small amounts of estrogen). In this way, the body is stimulated to produce higher-than-usual levels of estrogen even after menopause. Folliculinum must be taken in LM potencies, and should therefore be prepared by a knowledgeable homeopath.

Graphites in a 12C potency is a for women who gain an excessive amount of weight during menopause, and who generally feel awful during that time. Their hot flashes happen in the face, and they sweat on the front of their bodies from the slightest exertion. They also may have brittle fingernails, arthritic lumps on their hands, ovarian cysts, and tinnitus.

Lachesis is for women experiencing sudden hot flashes and clammy sweats during the day. Tight clothing becomes unbearable, and the stomach feels empty, even after eating. Migraine headaches occur on the left side of the head, and ovarian fibroids and cysts may develop. Emotional symptoms are depression, irritability, and insecurity, with a great deal of anxiety upon awakening.

Calcarea carbonica in a 12C potency is for women with an inclination toward being overweight. Their hot flashes move upwards, and they tend to perspire and break out in

hot sweats, particularly on the face and hands. During menopause, they feel tired and chilly without cause. This remedy is excellent for preventing osteoporosis and arthritis. It's good for women who have cramps in their legs during the night, dry skin, and backaches, especially in damp weather.

Women needing *calcarea carbonica* tend to be anxious and distressed just from thinking. They have feelings of inadequacy and often suffer from claustrophobia, agoraphobia, poor memory, confusion, and irritability.

Ignatia amara in a 30C potency is excellent for alleviating hot flashes during menopause. When hot flashes occur, the woman may have anxiety attacks. She also expects to perspire but does not. Women tend to feel better while eating.

Sepia in a 30C potency is a remedy for hot flashes that move upwards through the body and produce profuse perspiration. Weakness follows. Usually, hot flashes occur in the afternoon, but occasionally they happen in the evening or at night. Mental or physical exertion makes the woman feel weak. Menopause and its hot flashes may cause anxiety and withdrawal. The woman may even become agoraphobic and use alcohol or marijuana as an escape. Menopause will also cause other symptoms, including cervical erosion, vaginal yeast infections, and loss of sexual libido.

Phosphorus in a 12C potency is for women whose hot flashes make them feel as if they've been bashed with warm water. Hot flashes are brought on by emotions and occur in the evening or during sleep. They produce an upward flushing from the stomach or the back. There is a tendency toward hemorrhages, osteoporosis, left-sided headaches, migraines, weight gain, and fluid retention. There is a tendency to crave salts and sweets. Breathing may be difficult. A person needing phosphorus will also tend to lose interest quickly, often drifting with the current. Fearful when alone, company and sympathy are desired.

Pulsatilla in a 12C potency is a good remedy for women who are usually warm. Hot flashes leave them flushed in the face and feeling chilly throughout the rest of the body. Often there are vaginal yeast infections; cervical erosion; and asthma at the start of the menopausal cycle. Other symptoms can include palpitations, tinnitus, insomnia, and a tendency to bruise easily. Varicose veins are common, and these worsen as estrogen levels decline.

Women needing pulsatilla tend to be highly emotional, with a great fear of being neglected or slighted. They love sympathy and are usually mild-mannered. Additionally, they tend to lose their sense of purpose and go whichever way the wind is blowing. While they are usually sweet and gentle, when angry, they fly off the handle.

Staphysagria in a 12C potency is a wonderful remedy for vaginal dryness and thinning of the vaginal walls or atrophic vaginitis. The remedy in a 30C potency is excellent for alleviating chronic cystitis.

Aurum metallicum in a 30C potency is unsurpassed for eliminating mild heat flushes during perimenopause. It's also a formula for lifting depression when the person feels immersed in a black cloud. The woman feels hopeless, despairing, doomed, and hateful of the aging process.

Aconitum napellus in a 30C potency is an excellent remedy for women who tend to get anxious and overexcited, with panic attacks during menopause. It is also good for alleviating hot flashes that happen in the evening.

Male Menopause

Up until recently, menopause was thought to only happen to women, but it is now recognized as a male phenomenon as well. Once a man reaches his forties or fifties, biological changes trigger this significant life transition. "Manopause," as it is sometimes called, can cause a whole host of symptoms, including weight gain, waking up at night to urinate more often, radical appearance changes, loss of muscle strength, decreased energy level, less sexual desire, impotence, difficulty with sleep, and emotional changes, such as irritability and depression. Psychotherapist Jed Diamond, author of *Male Menopause*, comments, "These are the kinds of things that men are noticing, but didn't know what was causing them. Now we know that it's a combination of hormonal physiological changes that interact with a man's psychology--how he's doing emotionally, how he's feeling about himself, and how he's feeling at work. We know that most of these symptoms can be changed and prevented; non-traditional medicine can be very helpful at this stage of life."

Just as in female menopause, the changes a man experiences are mostly due to drops in hormonal levels that are a natural part of the aging process. Diamond comments, "A number of hormones start to drop as men get older. Dopamine, oxytocin, vasopressin, human growth hormone, melatonin, pregnenolone, testosterone all begin to decrease. Often

these have been targeted by longevity researchers. The body may be programmed to decrease at a certain level since as long as we can get to a place where we can reproduce and have children and get those children old enough to reproduce themselves, from an evolutionary point of view, we don't need to be around a whole lot longer. It's a reason that for about 99 percent of human history, by the age of 50 most of us were gone.

"Now we know that the life cycle potential is that we can live to be 120 or beyond that according to some of the newer research from longevity studies. What's needed is to put back the hormones that get lost, to add in the supplements that tend to decrease, some by natural processes of aging, and some by our lifestyle that tends to be unhealthy. Now, for the first time, with men, we have the opportunity to put back what was lost so that men don't have to face impotence in later life, don't have to face weight gain, don't have to face the loss of functioning. And we know now that there is a whole host of things that we can do."

An intense program of cleansing and rebuilding will lessen these symptoms or prevent them altogether.

Detoxification. First and most important is a program of detoxification. Begin by eliminating animal proteins other than fish. Avoid dairy, sugar, caffeine, smoking, alcohol, and wheat. Take in large amounts of nutrients to repair damaged DNA. This should include about a gallon a day of vegetables and juices, emphasizing vegetables from the cruciferous family, and a variety of fruits. Red fruits, such as watermelon, raspberries, pomegranates, cherries, and cranberries are especially good for DNA repair. Step one, detoxification, will stop the body's decline.

Diet. What we eat plays a tremendous role in how we feel. The traditional American diet is usually high in unhealthy fats, processed foods, butter and dairy, foods which are detrimental to our health. Eat more vegetarian foods, and if you must, eat only unprocessed meat.

Supplements. No matter how well we eat, we ought to be taking supplements as a way of life to combat the effects of living in a toxic environment and to make up for nutrient-depleted foods. It's wise to saturate the body with a full spectrum of antioxidants. The following recommendations can be taken in four divided doses throughout the day:

Alpha lipoic acid, 200 mg a day

Coenzyme Q10, 100–300 mg

Luteine 50 mg

Milk thistle, 25 to 50 mg

Green tea, 200–300 mg

Rutin, 100 mg

Quercitin, 2000 mg

Vitamin C, 1,000–10,000 mg

Vitamin E, 400–800 IU

Selenium, 200–800 mcg

Zinc, 30–50 mg

NAC, 500–2000 mg

Glutathione 500–1500 mg

Superoxide dismutase, 200mg

Glutamine, 1,000 mg

Mixed carotinoids 10,000 IU

lycotine 200mg

These prevent adverse effects of free radicals on hormones, which, in turn, keep cells from being destroyed.

Deep Cell Cleansing. Next, do a deep cell cleansing and rebalance the intestinal flora, by using fructo-olio-saccharides, and the omega 3, 6 and 9 fatty acids from flaxseed oil and oil of primrose. Oil of primrose will stop inflammatory processes, which slows down, reverses, and stops some of the process of aging.

Supplements for the brain. To help brain function, take between 500 and 2000 mg of acetyl l-carnitine and about 500 mg of phosphatidyl serine. The latter will help memory.

You also want DHEA, the most abundant steroid in the human bloodstream, and the hormone primarily involved in anti-aging. DHEA will increase the number of neurons and their ability to establish contact, and even help reverse nerve degeneration; this means more muscle usage and faster reflex time. And it will protect the brain against Alzheimer's disease and senility associated with degenerative disease, which accelerates with male menopause. About 25 mg are needed.

Next, take the remarkable brain-enhancing nutrient, DMAE. This will improve memory and learning, and increase intelligence. It can also combat depression by naturally elevating mood, and it may even increase your lifespan. DMAE is found in sardines. About 100 mg are recommended.

Herbal remedies. Wild yam will assist hormone building; small quantities of black cohosh will relax and normalize the system; and saw palmetto will help the prostate and reproductive system. Saw palmetto is safer, more effective, and less costly than Proscar, the pharmaceutical commonly prescribed for prostate problems. Damiana, another prostate remedy, is also an antidepressant and a tonic for sluggish sexual organs. And St. John's Wort has been recognized as a natural antidepressant in double-blind studies performed worldwide.

Homeopathic remedies. A homeopathic physician can recommend remedies tailored to an individual's needs, but there are some over-the-counter formulas to know about as well, as Dr. Erica Price tells us:

Although folliculinum is made from an ovarian estrogen, it can help men as well as women to stimulate hormone balance. This is because it is similar to follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), an anterior pituitary peptide that promotes the development of ovarian follicles in females and spermatazoa in males.

Orthitinum is made from the vibrational element of an extract from the testes. It should be taken in a 30C potency by men suffering from sexual weakness, atrophy of the penis, and premature senility.

Another excellent remedy for penis atrophy is the 30C potency of lycopodium, taken every four days. Lycopodium is also beneficial to men who feel a decrease in their sexual potency and a loss of interest in sex.

Prostatitis, the inflammation of the prostate, is widespread among menopausal men. Some remedies to consider are apis in a 9C potency, pulsatilla, or staphasagria. The latter is indicated when prostatitis is accompanied by urinary infections or bladder incontinence.

Cowperitis is an inflammation of the cowper's gland, which prevents a mucus substance from being secreted into the urethra during sexual excitement. To help alleviate cowperitis, try aconitum napolis in a 30C potency or the remedy silica in a 12c potency. Silica is also a good remedy for genital cysts.

Impotency can be due to multiple factors, and should therefore be treated by a homeopath. However, one can try agnuscastus in a 12c potency if there is a decline in sexual desire or the ability to have sexual intercourse.

Many doctors will tell men that their problems are all in their heads or just the result of aging. But as you can see, there's much men can do to prevent these discomforts and live healthfully and comfortably throughout their lifetime.

Enhancing Sexuality

Men and women commonly believe that menopause is the end of their life as a sexual being. But this is merely myth. Men and women can experience gratifying sex and feel wonderful about their lives, especially if natural methods are sought to balance the body and eliminate extreme hormonal changes.

Sex can even enhance health and prolong life, according to traditional Chinese medicine, which states that sexual energy is the core form of chi, or life force, in the body. The chi should flow freely; when it becomes stuck, too much goes to one part of the body, not enough goes to another, and we end up with disease. Dr. Felice Dunas, the author of *Passion Play: Ancient Secrets for a Lifetime of Health and Happiness through Sensual Sex* says that the ancients understood these concepts and have much to teach us: "When you think about how difficult it is to obtain a fully deep and enriching pleasurable experience, it is, in part, because of these blockages of chi in the system. We have overworked ourselves primarily because we're in such a high working society, and having overworked ourselves, we become hyperactive internally, and that creates too much movement. The result is that energy gets stuck.

"The ancient Chinese felt that the internal organs serve emotional as well as physical functions. Every emotion is linked to a particular organ. Therefore, if the health of an organ is weakened or damaged, you will have emotional symptoms that correspond. For example, sexuality is related to the kidney organ, and the emotional spectrum that is part of the kidney symptomatology runs from terror and fear all the way through to a deep inner sense of contentment and wisdom. People have a great deal of emotion pertaining to sexuality. At one end of the spectrum, they feel terror and fear regarding that subject. And yet, when they experience themselves sexually fulfilled, that deep inner contentment wraps them like a lovely blanket."

Dunas explains that becoming more sexually adept helps the chi to move efficiently throughout the body which can have improve total health: "We need to turn the act of sex from a pastime to an art form. The ancient Chinese studied the workings of the body in the sexual context for thousands of years....They came up with wonderful skills that could enhance pleasure and unblock energy, allowing it to flow most effectively....Their understanding was that by making love in a very specific way, using some of the techniques and skills that were developed, one could not only feel better emotionally, and enhance intimacy, but actually improve physical health, and, over an extended period of time, learn how to use making love as a tool to generate chi. The body could then store that chi as a battery stores electrical energy, and it could be used at a future time [for healing]."

"Let me start by telling you how chi or, as I said energy, is going to be used to do this. When we're sexually stimulated, a tremendous amount of energy is generated. You have the option to either allow that energy to leave the body or to learn how to hold on to it and manipulate it to bring it into other parts of the body that need healing or nourishment or to bring it into the heart to help open the heart or relax one's emotional state....The ancient Chinese would move the energy generated by intercourse up the spine and use it to stimulate the entire spinal cord. They would then move the energy out of the nervous system and into specific organs or into damaged tissue or into their lover."

Dunas gives examples of how making love can be used to heal: "The idea that women need to pay more attention to their own sexual experiences is very important in the ancient Chinese system. The orgasmic response in women was imperative. In fact, men were trained to create abundant, magnificent orgasms in women. When a woman has an orgasm,

she releases an enormous amount of sexual energy into her beloved. The energy from her body will leave through the genitals, and if her partner is sensitive, he can literally utilize that energy released from her body, pull it into his, and use it to strengthen himself. So, female orgasm was imperative, and men learned many creative and artistic ways to bring that about.

"According to the ancient Chinese system, women experience different levels of orgasmic response. And that which we consider orgasm in the west--contractions, a sense of release, perhaps the desire to rest or relax briefly following the experience--is level four. That which we traditionally consider the peak experience for women in the west is not even halfway to what's possible according to the ancient Chinese. Their idea was that you would help to create this type of orgasmic response in women before intercourse even begins. Then you would use the act of intercourse to bring about much higher levels of sexual experience and delight.

"A woman's orgasm level 5 through 9 involves, in essence, a loss of individuality, a loss of divided awareness, a loss of a sense of self, a merging, in a sense, with one's lover and with the divine. The Chinese felt that through making love one not only experienced physical health, but one could tap into the essence of life, and could feel the unity of all of life, the flow of life, if you will. And it was through these very highly ecstatic levels of sexual experience that one could come to know, in essence, divine love through sexual love.

"Men needed to learn to pay attention to the degree of their sexual response, meaning, men need to understand that control needs to come into the picture. They have to be able to intentionally work the level of sensation that they feel. They have to be able to lower their sensation level if need be or raise it if that is warranted. And by learning how to live on the edge, so to speak, live up at about 98 percent excitement, just prior to the orgasmic ejaculatory response, by learning to spend more time there, a man can create much deeper, richer experiences making love. The longer a man can have intercourse with a woman the more energy or chi he can absorb from her body. This does not harm her in any way and it benefits him dramatically because he can then take the energy that he absorbs from her and use it to strengthen himself sexually."

"That's the root of how we take the act of making love and using it to heal. It takes a bit of control and discipline to be involved in the actual healing through the use of sexual

energy, but the beginning steps are really quite simple, and anyone can begin working with some of these techniques without hindering their current sexual expression in any way."

While current medical practice views menopause as if it were an age-related disease, in actuality, it is a natural and inevitable transition from one stage of life to another. While some women experience uncomfortable symptoms reflecting the body's changing hormonal balance, others experience few or none. In fact, in some societies, where aging is more readily accepted and lifestyles are more natural, menopausal symptoms are generally non-existent.

In our culture, where uncomfortable symptoms of menopause are common, indications can include mood changes, depression, insomnia, irritability, hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and a diminished sexual drive. Serious health concerns related to these hormonal changes include an increased susceptibility to cardiovascular disease, heart attack, osteoporosis, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease.

The Dangers of Pseudo-Hormone Replacement Therapies In the United States, the number one medication given to women over 45 is estrogen-replacement therapy. These drugs are not natural forms of human estrogen, but rather substances harmful to the human body. Dr. Jonathan Wright, author of *Natural Hormone Replacement* and medical director of a Clinic in Kent, Washington explains the dangers: "The pharmaceutical Premarin gets its name from pregnant mares or estrogens that are incomplete. What's meant by incomplete is that the estrogen doesn't match the pattern that our bodies naturally make. Other estrogens have never been seen on our planet before; someone tweaked them around in a test tube to make a patentable molecule. These things are called estrogen replacement therapy when they're not."

"One danger with these so-called estrogens is an increased risk of cancer. In fact, official warnings in the Physician's Desk Reference include endometrial cancer and breast cancer. Studies show an association between duration of time on these pseudo estrogens or horse estrogens and a higher risk of breast cancer. There is also an increased risk of a disease called thrombosis or thromboembolism, a clotting that can sometimes be minor and sometimes, if it's in the wrong place, fatal.

"Doctors often believe that adding a pseudo version of the hormone progesterone, such as Provera or Medroxyprogesterone, will knock down the risk of cancer. Notice that word Medroxy? That means that some chemist hung a medroxy group on the progesterone molecule, so that it could be patented and sold for a large price. Researchers recently have

discovered that Medroxyprogesterone, Provera, and other synthetic forms of progesterone are dangerous in that they increase the risk of heart and cardiovascular problems.

"In sum, folks are being given a phony form of estrogen and being told that it will protect their heart, but that it might give them cancer. They're then told to take a phony form of progesterone to protect against endometrial cancer. It doesn't protect against breast cancer, but they leave that out. And it takes away the protection that they were supposed to get from the phony estrogen. It's quite a situation."

A similar situation exists in the "male menopause" market where a fake form of testosterone, called Methyltestosterone, was developed in the 1940's, but taken off the market after its users were coming down with liver cancer. Recently, the idea for male hormone replacement therapy has been revived, and, unfortunately, so has Methyltestosterone.

Homeopathic physician Dr. Erica Price adds that any artificial substance is going to have negative repercussions on human organisms: "You cannot take the body and synthetically alter it. When you put an artificial version of something that is natural to the body into the body, to provoke it to act as if it's natural, something is going to go wrong. The body will not accept that kind of influence. And so, we're seeing a high risk of breast cancer from hormone replacement therapy, and a high risk of uterine cancer, and many other problems, including more depression and anxiety. Hormone replacement therapy is very dangerous, though very profitable to the drug companies. And it's a quick and easy answer for the doctors, who don't take a whole lot of time to try to figure out how to deal with the individual patient."

The Benefits of Natural Hormone Replacement Therapy Rather than play Russian Roulette with pseudo estrogen therapy, most women would benefit from estrogen and other hormones in their natural form. The amount and type of hormones should be individually prescribed, and sometimes they are not needed at all, notes Dr. Wright: "There are areas of the world, some of the more rural areas of Africa and Asia, where if were to you ask a woman, 'Did you have hot flashes, depression, insomnia, and so forth, as you went through your late 40's and early 50's?' you'd get a blank stare. People in those areas have been on a relatively natural diet all their lives, have gotten lots of exercise, and have not been exposed to many pollutants. And there aren't any medical missionaries telling these people that they have to take estrogen because they've reached a certain age.

According to Dr. Wright, in our culture, however, a natural form of hormone replacement therapy is often a good idea: "In our particular country, most of us haven't followed that

kind of a lifestyle, and so most of us have the increased risk of heart attack, osteoporosis, senile dementia, Alzheimer's. Particularly if these things are in our families, we'd better be considering hormone replacement seriously. One doesn't absolutely have to use it, but one had better think about it seriously."

Dr. Elmer Cranton, a Harvard Medical School graduate and author of *Resetting the Clock: Five Anti-Aging Hormones That Are Revolutionizing the Quality and Length of Life* believes that everyone can benefit by replacing natural hormones to levels that exist in the prime of life. He explains, "The pituitary gland produces growth hormone, which is responsible for growth in children and cell maintenance and repair in adulthood. This protein hormone peaks in late adolescence and early adulthood and declines to almost zero by age 100 in a steady downward slope. The pineal gland, close to the pituitary on the back side of the brain, produces melatonin, which has many functions, some known, some unknown, to slow down the aging process. This also declines with age. The thyroid gland in the neck produces thyroid hormone, although the decline in thyroid hormone is not as predictable. About 20 percent of people beyond middle age will have declining thyroid, and some people in old age will have normal thyroid, but, nonetheless, it is something to look at. The adrenal glands produce DHEA and pregnenolone, along with a spectrum of other adrenal hormones. Both DHEA and pregnenolone are essential to life, and both decline with age. Then we get to the sex glands--the ovaries in women that produce estrogen and progesterone, and the testicles in men that produce testosterone. The sex hormones are important for the maintenance of tissues, for the maintenance of protein synthesis, for enzyme replacement, and for cell replacement. The brain will not function without estrogen. In fact, estrogen is so important to the brain that testosterone in men is converted to estrogen in the brain. These also decline with age.

"There are those in the medical and science professions that would say a deficiency is not present unless you're below average. But I would say that you're deficient if you're below what you had between age 20 and 40 because many of the symptoms of aging can be slowed or even partially reversed by replacing levels of these hormones that were present in young adulthood. There is no evidence that it can do any harm to restore people to normal, youthful levels, and there's a lot of evidence that it will slow down the aging process.

"As an example, human growth hormone (HGH)--it actually should be called the cell maintenance hormone--is necessary for the production of protein, for the replacement of enzymes in the body as they wear out, for tissue repair, and for cell replacement which

continues throughout life. As this declines the skin gets thinner. Lean body mass decreases and fat increases....Protein in the skin becomes less strong, and skin stretches and wrinkles; bones lose their calcium; healing becomes slower; the immune system becomes weaker; brain function becomes less acute to the extremes of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease."

HGH has been found to reverse these conditions by improving the metabolism of all organ systems. People develop more muscle and bone mass, and their bodies effortlessly revert back to a more youthful physiology. People can lose as much as 15 percent of their total body fat. In addition, HGH has been shown to rebuild heart muscle and to improve cardiac function, especially in people prone to congestive heart failure. And experimental usage in Alzheimer's patients is also promising.

HGH should be taken as an injection, which is costly at this time. Fortunately, however, the inexpensive hormone, DHEA, will help to replace HGH by approximately 20 percent.

Dr. Cranton adds that hormones work in concert, not singly. Therefore, one should be sure to replace the full complement: "Estrogen requires progesterone to have its full benefit. Estrogen [alone] does not reverse osteoporosis or bone loss in women. It can slow or arrest the process, but it will not produce new bone. If progesterone is replaced with the estrogen, bones will actually regenerate, and osteoporosis will be, to some extent, reversible.

"In men there is just one hormone, testosterone, which has the same benefit in men as the estrogen/progesterone combination does in women. This hormone also declines with age, and its decline is, to some extent, responsible for loss of virility, loss of muscle tone, loss of body lean mass, increase in fat, decrease in mental alertness. But no one hormone is responsible for any one thing. They cross over; they all work in combination to bring these benefits. And if you look at the functions of each hormone, you'll see that the same function can be related to another four or five or many more hormones that we haven't discovered yet."

Dr. Julian M. Whitaker, founder of the Whitaker Wellness Institute in Newport Beach, California, and the author of several books on health and healing including *Shed Ten Years in Ten Weeks*, adds that a reduction in hormone level accompanies a variety of symptoms associated with aging, including fatigue, loss of enthusiasm, reduced digestive power, slower cell replacement and diminished defenses against free radicals. Bringing hormones back to a normal, healthier level will alleviate these symptoms. In addition, eating unprocessed foods and supplementing the diet with digestive enzymes will improve

digestion and overall health. And antioxidants will slow down free radical damage. Moreover, B12 injections will increase cellular energy and improve memory. In fact, Dr. Whitaker believes 1,000 mcg injections of B12 should be taken by almost all people over 60. He states, "I frankly believe that if you were to go into the nursing homes and give everybody 1,000 mcg (1 mg) of B12, three times a week for a couple of months, you could probably take a third of the people out of the nursing homes."

Perimenopause Perimenopause is a transitional stage that can occur for 10 or more years before actual menopause begins. Women in their mid to late thirties and early forties can begin to experience PMS-like symptoms of irritability, depression, bloating, weight gain, and food cravings. Often, these symptoms are not recognized as being hormonally-based. Therefore, women are put through expensive diagnostic tests and being misdiagnosed. They are being told that they have chronic fatigue, an underactive thyroid, and even systemic candidiasis, when what they actually have are symptoms of a hormonal imbalance. Or they are told their problems are "all in their minds" and prescribed medications like Prozac.

Symptoms of perimenopause are real, and they can easily be differentiated from other conditions with a few simple tests. A saliva test, for example, will reveal hormonal levels. And the follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) blood test will measure levels that tell whether or not a person has entered perimenopause.

Ann Louise Gittelman, author of *Before the Change: Take Charge of Your Perimenopause*, offers insight into perimenopausal changes. She explains, "The hormonal imbalance between two particular hormones, progesterone and estrogen, starts to seesaw during this time of life. The reason behind the hormonal imbalance is an exhaustion of the adrenal glands as well as a lack of regular ovulation because, for some reason, women in their mid 30's and early 40's stop ovulating regularly. They don't recognize that they're not ovulating because some of them are still having periods. When that occurs, a condition called estrogen dominance starts to take place. Symptoms of estrogen dominance, or lack of progesterone, include irritability, allergies, fatigue, depression, breast tenderness, terrible PMS, low sex drive, even thyroid dysfunction. I believe that many of the causes of perimenopausal symptoms have to do with this new condition that Dr. John Lee coined, which we are now calling estrogen dominance."

Gittelman adds that estrogen dominance is worsened by our 20th century diets: "Outside estrogens are getting into our food. We certainly get them from animal and dairy fats because we're using estrogen pellets to fatten up our animals. This remains in the fat

content, which many of us are still taking in."

Supplements A number of supplements can be taken to prevent, lessen, or even reverse the symptoms of peri and actual menopause. Many work to help the body increase its progesterone levels, thus diminishing the state of estrogen-dominance. Others contain plant estrogens, which do not appear to disturb the progesterone/estrogen balance. The most important of these are discussed below: Flaxseed oil is at the top of the list for prostaglandin replenishment. It is an excellent remedy for depression and fatigue, and it is also good for the skin and the immune system. Additionally, flaxseed oil is known to lower cholesterol and to make insulin more effective.

Evening primrose oil can alleviate symptoms of perimenopause that surface around the time of the menstrual cycle, such as headaches, cramping, irritability, and water retention.

Vitamin B6 increases progesterone levels and enhances serotonin production to create a sense of calm.

Vitamin E is a mild form of hormone replacement therapy in a bottle.

Vitamin C, especially Ester C in large amounts (up to 5,000 mg a day taken in divided doses throughout the day) is a must for keeping the immune system in tip-top shape.

Calcium citrate with magnesium are important supplements during the Change, and should be taken in reasonable amounts.

Zinc also helps to increase progesterone levels and lower estrogen. Between 15 and 50 mg a day should be taken to optimize the immune system and build strong bones.

Other supplements which are beneficial during menopause are royal jelly and bee pollen. Phytoestrogen-Rich Foods Foods containing phytohormones, or plant hormones, help alleviate perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms. Soy is particularly good as it is high in estriol, a natural plant form of estrogen. In fact, studies suggest that eight ounces of soy foods daily, such as soybeans, tofu, tempeh, and soy milk, can reduce the amount and degree of hot flashes. Soy has also been shown to decrease the risk of breast cancer, to slow down bone loss after menopause, to prevent plaque buildup in the coronary arteries, and to lower bad cholesterol. Soy foods seem to address just about every health concern associated with aging.

Another natural source of phytohormones is the natural thickening agent kuzu. Several natural foods recipes incorporate kuzu in sauces in place of flour, making this a way to both enjoy healthy foods and alleviate symptoms.

Preventing Weight Gain Weight gain is a common problem in perimenopausal and menopausal women, but one that can be helped with attention to the right kinds of foods.

Gittelman talks about the best foods to eat, which she incorporate in her Changing diet plan: "Low-glycemic, or slow-acting carbohydrates will supply lots of energy for their calories. My favorites are those that are lower on the glycemic index, which is a list of carbohydrates in terms of how they develop into blood sugar in your own system. I like yams rather than white potatoes, and I like whole rye meal rather than wheat. I choose unprocessed carbohydrates that are moderate to low on the index, that also provide high quality fiber to help eliminate excess estrogen from the system by lowering blood levels of this hormone.

"In addition, there are a number of fruits and vegetables particularly high in phytochemicals and phytohormones. These include apples, grapefruits, lemons, pears, peaches, and a wide variety of vegetables that are high in fiber and loaded with phytochemicals.

"What I have found is that a diet with the right amount of proteins, fats, and low glycemic carbohydrates not only helps regulate sexual hormone production, but also helps to balance the hormonal response to food, which I think is critical in keeping blood sugar levels stable. A level blood sugar helps to prevent perimenopausal symptoms like depression, mood swings, and hot flashes, and that it encourages weight loss without any effort.

"Fats are important on the changing diet plan. We need to add essential and beneficial fats, not take them away. These come in the form of the high-lignan flaxseed oil, olive oil, toasted nut seeds, and avocado. These fats stabilize blood sugar levels.

"So we're getting our blood sugar stable, we're assisting in long-term energy, and more importantly, we're providing the raw material for hormones, particularly progesterone, which is the key hormone in perimenopause."

Hormone-Balancing Herbs There are a number of native-grown herbs on the market that can help restore progesterone/estrogen balance, and thus relieve perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms. Some of these include alfalfa, black cohosh, blue cohosh, Chinese ginseng, damiana, fennel, licorice root, motherwort, red clover, red raspberry leaves, sarsaparilla, and certain forms of wild yam. Flaxseed contains a phytohormone fiber known as lignans which removes excess estrogen from the system. This is particularly important since too much estrogen is believed to fuel breast cancer. Whole flaxseeds can be ground up or it can be taken as flaxseed oil.

In addition, Chinese medicine, with its 5,000 year old herbal history, can help be of great help. According to Roberta Certner, President of the New York State Association of

Professional Acupuncturists, Chinese medicine has a philosophical way of looking at menopause: "They're saying that a woman is giving birth to herself now that the obligation to her children is gone. They look at cycles of seven, and at 49 years of age, when menopause often begins, they say one-half of her lifespan is complete. The next half of the lifespan is for self-growth."

Accepting the Change does not mean accepting discomfort. Certner adds, "Chinese medicine is adamant that women shouldn't be suffering from night sweats, insomnia, mood changes, and other symptoms, and herbal formulas are good for this purpose. They help to rebalance the energies of the body so that a woman doesn't feel at the mercy of these tremendous moods and powerless over bodily changes."

In Chinese medicine, herbs are classified into three categories: poisonous, medicinal, and tonic. Poisonous herbs harm the body and should never be taken; medicinal herbs can be taken short-term, when needed; and tonic herbs can be taken safely over long periods of time. Abigail Rist-Podrega, an acupuncturist knowledgeable in Chinese herbology subdivides the tonic category into yin and yang, opposite energies that are contained within all people: "The yin tonics will affect the yin organs--yin being the female, the recessive, the deeper organs. Yang is more of a male component; the organs are less deep, more active. The herbs that will be affecting the yang organs will be hotter, more yang in nature while yin herbs will be more cooling in nature."

Here are some of the more important tonic herbs: Ginseng is called the king of the tonics for its ability to help every major organ. It has a broad reputation as a youth preserver, a regenerator and sexual tonic. Ginseng regulates the endocrine system, and acts as a natural steroid tonifying the pituitary and adrenal glands. When cooked to a soft consistency and cut into bite-sized pieces, ginseng can be used to alleviate hot flashes. There are different types of ginseng, and generally the stronger red types are more suitable for men than for women.

Dong quai is a female tonic that stimulates glands that produce female hormones. It helps to tonify the uterus, and also builds strong blood, making it good for overcoming anemia. Dong quai can be used by men as well to help decrease blood pressure, and to relax cardiac muscle.

Licorice root contains phytoestrogens and is used to stimulate and regulate glands. It is a detoxifying herb, which means that it helps to expel toxins from the system. It's also very good for helping the stomach and can be used in combination with other herbs to relieve ulcers.

Her shou wu is known to darken hair and to promote hair growth in both men and women. Additionally, it helps the liver and kidneys, calms the nervous system and helps clear the eyes. her shou wu is used as a longevity herb and is said to help develop the three vital treasures: radiant health, spiritual bliss and sexual energy. It provides an enormous amount of chi (pronounced chee), or life energy, yet it is not a stimulant. Rather, her shou wu has a slightly sedative quality to it. her shou wu is sometimes cooked together with equal amounts of ginseng.

Wu-wei, also known as schisandra fruit, has long been favored by the emperors and royal women who use it to preserve youth and increase sexual potency. The fruit combines both yin and yang qualities to create a balance in the body. Wu-wei is also said to drive out tension in the neck and shoulder. In addition, it is used to beautify the skin and to protect it from sun and wind. Wu-wei drives out mucus and protects the lungs. When used long-term on a continuous basis, wu-wei is said to purify the blood, rejuvenate the kidneys, increase sexual energy, brighten the mind, and make the skin radiant. Wu-wei is sometimes used in combination with a pearl powder, and applied to the skin as a night cream.

Astragalus enhances the immune system and is called the poor man's ginseng. Certner says that the advantage of Chinese medicine is that it is a gentle form of health: "People aren't forced to take medications which reduce libido function, which set up terrain for heart conditions. It really addresses the mechanism itself and not just the symptoms....The reason Chinese medicine works is that it goes to the root of the problem. If progesterone is low, you enhance the progesterone, using something like dioscorea or leonorus whose name itself means mother root. If you want to enhance ovulation, something like clove is a useful herb. There are quite a lot of herbs a practitioner could use, and what is recommend depends, to a large degree, on the presentation of the person because Chinese medicine doesn't really treat conditions--it treats people."

Homeopathic Remedies Homeopathy is medicine in a vibrational form. Completely safe, homeopathic remedies stimulate the body to restore its natural hormonal balance without the use of harmful drugs. Remedies are prescribed according to individual symptoms. Some of the most beneficial ones for menopause and perimenopause are discussed by homeopathic physician Dr. Erica Price: Folliculinum is made from the natural estrogen produced by the ovaries. It balances most of the hormonal symptoms that are experienced during menopause and perimenopause--hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, menstrual cycle irregularities, the development of fibroids, recurrent cystitis, hair loss,

cardiovascular problems, weight gain without even eating, water retention, and allergies, for example. For this reason, folliculinum is a tonic for almost all women during perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause.

Folliculinum stimulates the continuance of the natural production of estrogen by the ovaries and other organs, including the adrenal glands, the liver, the kidneys (which make small amounts of estrogen). In this way, the body is stimulated to produce higher-than-usual levels of estrogen even after menopause. Folliculinum must be taken in LM potencies, and should therefore be prepared by a knowledgeable homeopath.

Graphites in a 12C potency is a for women who gain an excessive amount of weight during menopause, and who generally feel awful during that time. Their hot flashes happen in the face, and they sweat on the front of their bodies from the slightest exertion. They also may have brittle fingernails, arthritic lumps on their hands, ovarian cysts, and tinnitus.

Lachesis is for women experiencing sudden hot flashes and clammy sweats during the day. Tight clothing becomes unbearable, and the stomach feels empty, even after eating.

Migraine headaches occur on the left side of the head, and ovarian fibroids and cysts may develop. Emotional symptoms are depression, irritability, and insecurity, with a great deal of anxiety upon awakening.

Calcarea carbonica in a 12C potency is for women with an inclination toward being overweight. Their hot flashes move upwards, and they tend to perspire and break out in hot sweats, particularly on the face and hands. During menopause, they feel tired and chilly without cause. This remedy is excellent for preventing osteoporosis and arthritis. It's good for women who have cramps in their legs during the night, dry skin, and backaches, especially in damp weather.

Women needing calcarea carbonica tend to be anxious and distressed just from thinking. They have feelings of inadequacy and often suffer from claustrophobia, agoraphobia, poor memory, confusion, and irritability.

Ignatia amara in a 30C potency is excellent for alleviating hot flashes during menopause. When hot flashes occur, the woman may have anxiety attacks. She also expects to perspire but does not. Women tend to feel better while eating.

Sepia in a 30C potency is a remedy for hot flashes that move upwards through the body and produce profuse perspiration. Weakness follows. Usually, hot flashes occur in the afternoon, but occasionally they happen in the evening or at night. Mental or physical exertion makes the woman feel weak. Menopause and its hot flashes may cause anxiety and withdrawal. The woman may even become agoraphobic and use alcohol or marijuana

as an escape. Menopause will also cause other symptoms, including cervical erosion, vaginal yeast infections, and loss of sexual libido.

Phosphorus in a 12C potency is for women whose hot flashes make them feel as if they've been bashed with warm water. Hot flashes are brought on by emotions and occur in the evening or during sleep. They produce an upward flushing from the stomach or the back. There is a tendency toward hemorrhages, osteoporosis, left-sided headaches, migraines, weight gain, and fluid retention. There is a tendency to crave salts and sweets. Breathing may be difficult. A person needing phosphorus will also tend to lose interest quickly, often drifting with the current. Fearful when alone, company and sympathy are desired.

Pulsatilla in a 12C potency is a good remedy for women who are usually warm. Hot flashes leave them flushed in the face and feeling chilly throughout the rest of the body. Often there are vaginal yeast infections; cervical erosion; and asthma at the start of the menopausal cycle. Other symptoms can include palpitations, tinnitus, insomnia, and a tendency to bruise easily. Varicose veins are common, and these worsen as estrogen levels decline.

Women needing pulsatilla tend to be highly emotional, with a great fear of being neglected or slighted. They love sympathy and are usually mild-mannered. Additionally, they tend to lose their sense of purpose and go whichever way the wind is blowing. While they are usually sweet and gentle, when angry, they fly off the handle.

Staphysagria in a 12C potency is a wonderful remedy for vaginal dryness and thinning of the vaginal walls or atrophic vaginitis. The remedy in a 30C potency is excellent for alleviating chronic cystitis.

Aurum metallicum in a 30C potency is unsurpassed for eliminating mild heat flushes during perimenopause. It's also a formula for lifting depression when the person feels immersed in a black cloud. The woman feels hopeless, despairing, doomed, and hateful of the aging process.

Aconitum napellus in a 30C potency is an excellent remedy for women who tend to get anxious and overexcited, with panic attacks during menopause. It is also good for alleviating hot flashes that happen in the evening. Male Menopause Up until recently, menopause was thought to only happen to women, but it is now recognized as a male phenomenon as well. Once a man reaches his forties or fifties, biological changes trigger this significant life transition. "Manopause," as it is sometimes called, can cause a whole host of symptoms, including weight gain, waking up at night to urinate more often, radical appearance changes, loss of muscle strength, decreased energy level, less sexual desire,

impotence, difficulty with sleep, and emotional changes, such as irritability and depression. Psychotherapist Jed Diamond, author of *Male Menopause*, comments, "These are the kinds of things that men are noticing, but didn't know what was causing them. Now we know that it's a combination of hormonal physiological changes that interact with a man's psychology--how he's doing emotionally, how he's feeling about himself, and how he's feeling at work. We know that most of these symptoms can be changed and prevented; non-traditional medicine can be very helpful at this stage of life."

Just as in female menopause, the changes a man experiences are mostly due to drops in hormonal levels that are a natural part of the aging process. Diamond comments, "A number of hormones start to drop as men get older. Dopamine, oxytocin, vasopressin, human growth hormone, melatonin, pregnenolone, testosterone all begin to decrease. Often these have been targeted by longevity researchers. The body may be programmed to decrease at a certain level since as long as we can get to a place where we can reproduce and have children and get those children old enough to reproduce themselves, from an evolutionary point of view, we don't need to be around a whole lot longer. It's a reason that for about 99 percent of human history, by the age of 50 most of us were gone.

"Now we know that the life cycle potential is that we can live to be 120 or beyond that according to some of the newer research from longevity studies. What's needed is to put back the hormones that get lost, to add in the supplements that tend to decrease, some by natural processes of aging, and some by our lifestyle that tends to be unhealthy. Now, for the first time, with men, we have the opportunity to put back what was lost so that men don't have to face impotence in later life, don't have to face weight gain, don't have to face the loss of functioning. And we know now that there is a whole host of things that we can do."

An intense program of cleansing and rebuilding will lessen these symptoms or prevent them altogether.

Detoxification. First and most important is a program of detoxification. Begin by eliminating animal proteins other than fish. Avoid dairy, sugar, caffeine, smoking, alcohol, and wheat. Take in large amounts of nutrients to repair damaged DNA. This should include about a gallon a day of vegetables and juices, emphasizing vegetables from the cruciferous family, and a variety of fruits. Red fruits, such as watermelon, raspberries, pomegranates, cherries, and cranberries are especially good for DNA repair. Step one, detoxification, will stop the body's decline.

Diet. What we eat plays a tremendous role in how we feel. The traditional American diet is

usually high in unhealthy fats, processed foods, butter and dairy, foods which are detrimental to our health. Eat more vegetarian foods, and if you must, eat only unprocessed meat.

Supplements. No matter how well we eat, we ought to be taking supplements as a way of life to combat the effects of living in a toxic environment and to make up for nutrient-depleted foods. It's wise to saturate the body with a full spectrum of antioxidants. The following recommendations can be taken in four divided doses throughout the day: Alpha lipoic acid, 200 mg a day Coenzyme Q10, 100–300 mg Luteine 50 mg Milk thistle, 25 to 50 mg Green tea, 200–300 mg Rutin, 100 mg Quercetin, 2000 mg Vitamin C, 1,000–10,000 mg Vitamin E, 400–800 IU Selenium, 200–800 mcg Zinc, 30–50 mg NAC, 500–2000 mg Glutathione 500–1500 mg Superoxide dismutase, 200mg Glutamine, 1,000 mg Mixed carotinoids 10,000 IU Lycotine 200mg These prevent adverse effects of free radicals on hormones, which, in turn, keep cells from being destroyed.

Deep Cell Cleansing. Next, do a deep cell cleansing and rebalance the intestinal flora, by using fructo-olio-saccharides, and the omega 3, 6 and 9 fatty acids from flaxseed oil and oil of primrose. Oil of primrose will stop inflammatory processes, which slows down, reverses, and stops some of the process of aging.

Supplements for the brain. To help brain function, take between 500 and 2000 mg of acetyl l-carnitine and about 500 mg of phosphatidyl serine. The latter will help memory. You also want DHEA, the most abundant steroid in the human bloodstream, and the hormone primarily involved in anti-aging. DHEA will increase the number of neurons and their ability to establish contact, and even help reverse nerve degeneration; this means more muscle usage and faster reflex time. And it will protect the brain against Alzheimer's disease and senility associated with degenerative disease, which accelerates with male menopause. About 25 mg are needed.

Next, take the remarkable brain-enhancing nutrient, DMAE. This will improve memory and learning, and increase intelligence. It can also combat depression by naturally elevating mood, and it may even increase your lifespan. DMAE is found in sardines. About 100 mg are recommended.

Herbal remedies. Wild yam will assist hormone building; small quantities of black cohosh will relax and normalize the system; and saw palmetto will help the prostate and reproductive system. Saw palmetto is safer, more effective, and less costly than Proscar, the pharmaceutical commonly prescribed for prostate problems. Damiana, another prostate remedy, is also an antidepressant and a tonic for sluggish sexual organs. And St.

John's Wort has been recognized as a natural antidepressant in double-blind studies performed worldwide.

Homeopathic remedies. A homeopathic physician can recommend remedies tailored to an individual's needs, but there are some over-the-counter formulas to know about as well, as Dr. Erica Price tells us: Although folliculinum is made from an ovarian estrogen, it can help men as well as women to stimulate hormone balance. This is because it is similar to follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), an anterior pituitary peptide that promotes the development of graphian follicles in females and spermatazoa in males. Orthitinum is made from the vibrational element of an extract from the testes. It should be taken in a 30C potency by men suffering from sexual weakness, atrophy of the penis, and premature senility.

Another excellent remedy for penis atrophy is the 30C potency of lycopodium, taken every four days. Lycopodium is also beneficial to men who feel a decrease in their sexual potency and a loss of interest in sex.

Prostatitis, the inflammation of the prostate, is widespread among menopausal men. Some remedies to consider are apis in a 9C potency, pulsatilla, or staphasagria. The latter is indicated when prostatitis is accompanied by urinary infections or bladder incontinence. Cowperitis is an inflammation of the cowper's gland, which prevents a mucus substance from being secreted into the urethra during sexual excitement. To help alleviate cowperitis, try aconitum napolis in a 30C potency or the remedy silica in a 12c potency. Silica is also a good remedy for genital cysts.

Impotency can be due to multiple factors, and should therefore be treated by a homeopath. However, one can try agnuscastus in a 12c potency if there is a decline in sexual desire or the ability to have sexual intercourse.

Many doctors will tell men that their problems are all in their heads or just the result of aging. But as you can see, there's much men can do to prevent these discomforts and live healthfully and comfortably throughout their lifetime.

Enhancing Sexuality Men and women commonly believe that menopause is the end of their life as a sexual being. But this is merely myth. Men and women can experience gratifying sex and feel wonderful about their lives, especially if natural methods are sought to balance the body and eliminate extreme hormonal changes.

Sex can even enhance health and prolong life, according to traditional Chinese medicine, which states that sexual energy is the core form of chi, or life force, in the body. The chi should flow freely; when it becomes stuck, too much goes to one part of the body, not

enough goes to another, and we end up with disease. Dr. Felice Dumas, the author of *Passion Play: Ancient Secrets for a Lifetime of Health and Happiness through Sensual Sex* says that the ancients understood these concepts and have much to teach us: "When you think about how difficult it is to obtain a fully deep and enriching pleasurable experience, it is, in part, because of these blockages of chi in the system. We have overworked ourselves primarily because we're in such a high working society, and having overworked ourselves, we become hyperactive internally, and that creates too much movement. The result is that energy gets stuck.

"The ancient Chinese felt that the internal organs serve emotional as well as physical functions. Every emotion is linked to a particular organ. Therefore, if the health of an organ is weakened or damaged, you will have emotional symptoms that correspond. For example, sexuality is related to the kidney organ, and the emotional spectrum that is part of the kidney symptomatology runs from terror and fear all the way through to a deep inner sense of contentment and wisdom. People have a great deal of emotion pertaining to sexuality. At one end of the spectrum, they feel terror and fear regarding that subject. And yet, when they experience themselves sexually fulfilled, that deep inner contentment wraps them like a lovely blanket."

Dumas explains that becoming more sexually adept helps the chi to move efficiently throughout the body which can have improve total health: "We need to turn the act of sex from a pastime to an art form. The ancient Chinese studied the workings of the body in the sexual context for thousands of years....They came up with wonderful skills that could enhance pleasure and unblock energy, allowing it to flow most effectively....Their understanding was that by making love in a very specific way, using some of the techniques and skills that were developed, one could not only feel better emotionally, and enhance intimacy, but actually improve physical health, and, over an extended period of time, learn how to use making love as a tool to generate chi. The body could then store that chi as a battery stores electrical energy, and it could be used at a future time [for healing].

"Let me start by telling you how chi or, as I said energy, is going to be used to do this. When we're sexually stimulated, a tremendous amount of energy is generated. You have the option to either allow that energy to leave the body or to learn how to hold on to it and manipulate it to bring it into other parts of the body that need healing or nourishment or to bring it into the heart to help open the heart or relax one's emotional state....The ancient Chinese would move the energy generated by intercourse up the spine and use it to

stimulate the entire spinal cord. They would then move the energy out of the nervous system and into specific organs or into damaged tissue or into their lover.

Dunas gives examples of how making love can be used to heal: "The idea that women need to pay more attention to their own sexual experiences is very important in the ancient Chinese system. The orgasmic response in women was imperative. In fact, men were trained to create abundant, magnificent orgasms in women. When a woman has an orgasm, she releases an enormous amount of sexual energy into her beloved. The energy from her body will leave through the genitals, and if her partner is sensitive, he can literally utilize that energy released from her body, pull it into his, and use it to strengthen himself. So, female orgasm was imperative, and men learned many creative and artistic ways to bring that about.

"According to the ancient Chinese system, women experience different levels of orgasmic response. And that which we consider orgasm in the west--contractions, a sense of release, perhaps the desire to rest or relax briefly following the experience--is level four. That which we traditionally consider the peak experience for women in the west is not even halfway to what's possible according to the ancient Chinese. Their idea was that you would help to create this type of orgasmic response in women before intercourse even begins. Then you would use the act of intercourse to bring about much higher levels of sexual experience and delight.

"A woman's orgasm level 5 through 9 involves, in essence, a loss of individuality, a loss of divided awareness, a loss of a sense of self, a merging, in a sense, with one's lover and with the divine. The Chinese felt that through making love one not only experienced physical health, but one could tap into the essence of life, and could feel the unity of all of life, the flow of life, if you will. And it was through these very highly ecstatic levels of sexual experience that one could come to know, in essence, divine love through sexual love.

"Men needed to learn to pay attention to the degree of their sexual response, meaning, men need to understand that control needs to come into the picture. They have to be able to intentionally work the level of sensation that they feel. They have to be able to lower their sensation level if need be or raise it if that is warranted. And by learning how to live on the edge, so to speak, live up at about 98 percent excitement, just prior to the orgasmic ejaculatory response, by learning to spend more time there, a man can create much deeper, richer experiences making love. The longer a man can have intercourse with a woman the more energy or chi he can absorb from her body. This does not harm her in any

way and it benefits him dramatically because he can then take the energy that he absorbs from her and use it to strengthen himself sexually."

"That's the root of how we take the act of making love and using it to heal. It takes a bit of control and discipline to be involved in the actual healing through the use of sexual energy, but the beginning steps are really quite simple, and anyone can begin working with some of these techniques without hindering their current sexual expression in any way."