



WOMEN'S HEALTH

What You Should Know About Menopause

(NAPSA)—According to a new survey of female executives, menopause is moving out of the shadows and into the boardroom.

The survey, conducted among members of the National Association for Female Executives (NAFE), found that half of the respondents currently in menopause (45 percent) said it was worse than expected, over one-fifth (22 percent) said it was much worse than expected and three-quarters (75 percent) are concerned their menopausal symptoms will occur at inconvenient times.

Menopause is the natural stage in a woman's aging process when her ovaries stop producing estrogens. Menopause can occur naturally or may be induced by surgery, chemotherapy or radiation. Since estrogens are largely responsible for developing and maintaining the female reproductive system, reduced levels can cause uncomfortable symptoms.

The survey revealed that 88 percent of NAFE members surveyed have had some experience with menopause and two thirds (67 percent) of this group have experienced menopausal symptoms once a week or more.

- 95 percent of this group experience physical symptoms—most commonly, hot flashes (80 percent) and night sweats (74 percent);

- 79 percent of this group experience symptoms that are emotional or affect their mental functioning, such as forgetfulness or diminished concentration (57 percent), irritability (53 percent) and mood changes (53 percent).

According to the American Col-



Plant based hormone therapy is becoming a popular treatment for menopausal symptoms.

lege of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the first wave of baby boomer women (born 1945-1960) are now entering menopause and another 20 million will reach menopause in the next decade. These women must weigh the risks and benefits of treating their menopausal symptoms with hormone therapy.

A Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, found that there was potentially increased health risk associated with use of estrogens with progestin at higher doses or for extended periods of time.

According to Diane DiLalla, age 56, "When I turned 50 I started having hot flashes and they were very uncomfortable, especially at work. At first, my doctor suggested I try some herbal remedies but they didn't work for me. I was concerned about taking hormone therapy but my doctor told me I could take Cenestin®, which is a plant based estrogen therapy, to treat my menopausal symptoms."

Her doctor's viewpoint is echoed by several professional organizations, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and North American Menopause Society (NAMS), which recommend hormone therapy for the treatment of menopausal symptoms at the lowest doses for the shortest duration.

According to James A. Simon, MD, clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology, George Washington University, Washington D.C., Medical Director, The Women's Health Research Center® in Laurel, Maryland, and immediate past president of NAMS, whether or not to use hormone therapy is a personal decision. "A woman needs to weigh the impact of her menopausal symptoms on her personal and work life with her individual health status and history."

What Women Can Do

- Keep a diary of menopausal symptoms over time and discuss them with a health professional
- Discuss the benefits and risks of hormone therapy with a health professional
- Understand individual risk factors and health history
- Consider meeting with a physician who specializes in menopause
- Explore differences between hormone therapy delivery options (patches, lotions, gels and pills) and products (such as those derived from pregnant mares' urine and those made from plant sources such as Cenestin®)

