



# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Menopause: Understanding Causes, Consequences

(NAPSA)—Nearly half of American women never or rarely discuss aging with their doctors, according to a recent survey. In addition, more than half of the 5,000 women who enter menopause every day don't understand that estrogen-loss causes the condition, or the serious health consequences associated with menopause—including osteoporosis.

These are particularly disturbing findings, say experts, considering that a healthy dose of information may help thousands of women more easily deal with menopause.

As a woman enters menopause (average age is 51), estrogen levels dramatically decline and can impact a woman's health. In fact, a woman can lose up to 20 percent of her bone mass in the five to seven years following menopause. Responding to symptoms of estrogen loss early can prevent that from happening.

A new educational campaign may help women do just that. Called *Baseline 50*, it is led by Cheryl Ladd—actress, menopausal woman and health advocate—and an advisory board of female health care providers. The program works to inform women about menopause, estrogen loss and treatment options, including hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

"When I began suffering symptoms of menopause, I didn't understand what was happening to me," says Ladd. "I tried herbs and alternative therapies, but nothing worked. By the time I finally spoke with my doctor, estrogen loss had already taken a toll on my body—I had lost bone mass in my hip."

According to Ladd, part of taking control of menopause is speak-



**A new campaign educates women about menopause.**

ing with a health care provider early and candidly about menopause and its treatments.

"Women are reluctant to talk with their doctors about changes in their body, but delaying this conversation can have serious health consequences," says Dr. Aliza Lifshitz, endocrinologist and *Baseline 50* advisory board member. "We encourage women to take note of their symptoms and changes in their body from skin and sex to hot flashes and night sweats. Women also need to make a list of their health concerns like heart disease, breast cancer and osteoporosis. This information will guide women's discussions with their doctors and help them make decisions about their menopausal treatment, including HRT, easier," she says.

To help, *Baseline 50* offers several assessment tools in a free, easy-to-use handbook, "Simply Menopause," available at the program's Web site. The campaign is funded through an educational grant from Wyeth to the Sapphire Women's Health Group.

For more information on menopause and hormone replacement therapy, visit [www.menopausehealth.com](http://www.menopausehealth.com).