

Making Life More Enjoyable

Secrets To Keeping Relationships Happy And Healthy

(NAPSA)—New research with men and women over the age of 45, conducted by anthropologists at Michigan State University, shows that both sexes believe menopausal symptoms negatively affect intimacy. Menopause can interrupt sexual relationships, they claim.

“Menopause causes a drop in hormone levels, which impacts mood, the vascular system, sexual desire and vaginal tissues. These can all influence sex,” says sex therapist and author Dr. Barbara Keesling. “The good news is that these symptoms are easily treated. Menopause presents couples with an opportunity to experience greater sexual freedom and spontaneity.”

Here are some helpful hints for couples:

1. **Communicate.** About thirty percent of the women surveyed said their partner knows little or nothing about their menopausal symptoms. On the other hand, many men said that they feel shut out from what their partners are experiencing.

“Open communication is vital. If a woman is avoiding sex because it’s painful, she should discuss it with her partner. He needs to know he’s not the cause,” says Dr. Keesling. “When couples let silence or fear fill in the blanks, misunderstanding, anger and resentment often result.”

2. **Educate.** Women in the study, sponsored by Pharmacia Corporation, said that menopause is either better or worse than expected, revealing a need for better education. This ignorance about menopause sometimes is a barrier to seeking medical treatment for uncomfortable, yet treatable symptoms like hot flashes or vaginal dryness.

3. **Treat.** Women reported that the top five menopausal symptoms that affect sexual relationships are: moodiness, weight gain, vaginal dryness, hot flashes and painful intercourse.

“Vaginal dryness along with uncomfortable or even painful intercourse can be one of the first signs of menopause,” says Dr. Keesling. “This is a chronic condition that can be remedied with local estrogen replacement therapy.”



With treatment and communication, older couples can continue to experience intimacy.

Dr. Keesling says many women with this condition use VAGIFEM® (estradiol vaginal tablet), a tiny estrogen tablet inserted into the vagina, because it is less messy than a cream.

4. **It’s about quality, not quantity.** More than 80 percent of women surveyed said that intimacy is more important than sex. Yet men surveyed said that intimacy is challenging without good sex.

“Women and men need to understand that sex strengthens health and intimacy in and out of the bedroom,” says Dr. Keesling. “Older couples don’t need to re-enact their honeymoon. They should take that passion and rekindle it with the warmth and stability of a long relationship.”

For more information about the study results, vaginal dryness and painful intercourse associated with menopause, or important product information about VAGIFEM, visit www.vagifem.com.

VAGIFEM is not right for every woman. Pregnant women, women who’ve just had a baby or are breast feeding, women with a history of breast or endometrial cancer, unexplained vaginal bleeding, blood clots or a history of blood clots shouldn’t use VAGIFEM. Estrogens have been reported to increase the risk of endometrial carcinoma, a form of uterine cancer. While they are generally mild, side effects experienced by some women using VAGIFEM include headache, abdominal pain, back pain, upper respiratory infection, vaginal itching and vaginal yeast infection.