

News Of Health

Facts From The Hormone Foundation



Managing Menopause Changes Before They Occur

(NAPSA)—The best time to manage the health risks associated with menopause may be before they happen.

It is essential for women to educate themselves about what's involved in managing their health **before** menopause, say experts at The Hormone Foundation, a non-profit public education organization.

Hormones are responsible for many of the body's normal everyday functions. Menopause, which is the time of life when ovaries stop making the female hormones, estrogen and progesterone, should be a concern to women because they are losing the beneficial effects that estrogen has on their body, particularly the bones and possibly the heart.

Symptoms of menopause can include hot flashes, problems with sex, problems with the bladder, itching or dryness in the vagina, and mood problems. Health risks of menopause include weak bones and a stronger likelihood for heart problems.

Opinion Research Corporation International recently conducted a survey on behalf of The Hormone Foundation, asking women whether they had any concerns about going through menopause. The concern most frequently mentioned was hot flashes (35 percent). In the same survey, 60 percent of the respondents expressed no health concerns about menopause.

According to Dr. Robert Jaffe, President of The Hormone Foundation and Director of The Center for Reproductive Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco, "the survey results suggest that most women are more concerned about the symptoms of menopause rather than the serious health problems that may affect a woman's body during and after menopause."

Medical experts stress that women must learn more about the physical changes that the body goes through during menopause and the associated health problems, such as osteoporosis and heart disease.

"While women may feel comfortable about raising the issue of menopause with their health care provider, they may not be



The loss of estrogen at menopause often leads to serious health risks.

fully aware of enough of the health issues to ask the right questions and have the most beneficial conversation with their doctor," said Dr. Jaffe. "However, there are many proactive steps women can take **before** the onset of menopause."

For example, to minimize the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis, which rises after menopause, medical experts suggest that women eat a low-fat diet, quit smoking, cut down on alcoholic drinks, take a low-dose aspirin every day, keep their cholesterol and body weight low, and take 1500 mg of calcium every day (a mix of dairy products and calcium).

In addition, many doctors recommend that women take hormone replacement therapy to help combat these health risks.

The Hormone Foundation produces free educational materials on menopause and other hormone-related health issues. The latest publication on menopause is *Menopause: Managing Your Body's Changes*.

To learn more about menopause and to order these publications, call 1-800-HORMONE or visit www.hormone.org.

Founded in 1997, The Hormone Foundation is the public education affiliate of the Endocrine Society.

Disclaimer: It is important to seek the advice of your family doctor or a specialist, such as a reproductive endocrinologist, to help you make informed decisions about your health.