

Ayurveda - Health notes

Menopause II

Vital Health Topic: Prepare for a Healthy Menopause

Many women suffer from hot flashes associated with menopause. Memory loss, mood swings, and vaginal dryness have become so common that women today consider them to be a normal part of menopause.

But it doesn't have to be that way according to Maharishi Ayurveda. If you start taking care of the early symptoms of menopause when they first appear, you can delay the onset of menopause and even avoid major discomfort.

EARLY SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

Because menopause occurs during the last half of the Pitta time of life (30-60), many women experience an imbalance in Pitta dosha. Imbalanced Pitta can cause mood swings, anger, breakouts, brown spots and increased sensitivity to the sun. Waking up between 2:00 and 4:00 a.m. with lots of energy and not being able to fall asleep again is also due to an imbalance in Pitta dosha.

Apana Vata, the subdosha of Vata that governs elimination and menstrual flow, also plays a role in menopausal discomfort, when out of balance, it causes symptoms of constipation and irregularity or discomfort during the menstrual cycle.

EMOTIONS AND DIGESTION

Sadhaka Pitta, the subdosha of Pitta that governs the emotions, is usually the first to be affected. If a woman in midlife experiences sudden mood swings, or finds herself suddenly critical of her husband, this could be a sign of imbalanced Sadhaka Pitta.

To avoid problems in relationships, Ayurveda recommends that if you feel suddenly critical of a loved one, eat a sweet, juicy pear or take a teaspoon of Amrit Kalish. Emotional imbalance can cause major problems and even lead to early menopause. So it's necessary to keep Sadhaka Pitta balanced at all times.

Another subdosha of Pitta that impacts menopause is Ranjaka Pitta, which governs liver function. When out of balance, it can cause skin breakouts and anger.

An imbalance in Pachaka Pitta, which governs the digestion of food, results in the formation of ama (digestive impurities). When ama clogs the channels of the body, it can lead to hot flashes and other menopausal problems later on.

PREVENTING PROBLEMS THROUGH DIET

To bring all three subdoshas of Pitta back into balance, be sure to follow a Pitta-pacifying diet. Avoid foods that are spicy, such as hot peppers, cayenne and black mustard; foods that are too salty; and foods that are very sour, such as vinegar, yogurt, and sour fruits. To balance Pitta, favor bitter, astringent and sweet foods. For a detailed chart of foods that balance Pitta, visit <http://www.mapi.com/catalog/indexrecipes.html> and click on the Pitta guidelines link.

Cooking with Pitta-reducing spices, including cinnamon, coriander, cardamom, and fennel, and small amounts of cumin seed, is also recommended. Pitta Churna is a good balance of Pitta pacifying spices.

While balancing Pitta, you'll also want to attend to Apana Vata. A good breakfast for both Vata and Pitta is a cooked apple with cooked prunes and figs. Include more cooked leafy greens in your diet, and drink plenty of warm liquids throughout the day. These will help regulate bowel movements.

BALANCE THROUGH LIFESTYLE

For both Pitta and Vata dosha, it's important not to skip meals, and to eat your main meal at noon, when digestion is the strongest. Going to bed early (before 10:00 p.m.) is essential, as you'll gain more rest and give the body a chance to cleanse itself during the night. Arise before 6:00 a.m.

The morning massage is very important for preventing menopausal problems, says. Use Ripened Sesame Oil. This will increase circulation, calm Vata dosha, and provide needed moisture to the skin.

And be sure to get lots of rest during your menstrual cycle in this transitional time of your life, to help balance Apana Vata and facilitate a smooth menopause.

PRODUCTS FOR PREVENTION

From age 35, or whenever early symptoms of menopause begin, take the Midlife for Women I herbal supplement to eliminate digestive impurities, strengthen the digestion, promote strong bones, and help promote even emotions.

Alma Berry is also a special rasayana for women that is very helpful in preventing menopausal discomfort. Take one tablet with lunch and dinner to pacify Ranjaka Pitta, Sadhaka Pitta and to provide overall nourishment to the female physiology."

Other herbal formulas to relieve the early signs of menopause:

- * For mood swings (Sadhaka Pitta) take Blissful Joy tablets and aroma oil.
- * For anger and detoxification (Ranjaka Pitta) take Liver Care tablets or syrup.
- * To aid digestion and prevent the formation of ama and amavisha (Pachaka Pitta) take Herbal Aci-Balance or Herbal Digest
- * To help prevent constipation (Apana Vata), take Herbal Cleanse before bed.
- * If you are waking up in the night between 2 and 4 a.m., take Blissful Sleep-Pitta.

When should you begin these recommendations? "The time of menopause differs according to a woman's heredity, culture and lifestyle," says Dr Brennan. "For the most ease and comfort in menopause, it's best to start a prevention program as early as possible, in your mid to late thirties, but definitely when the first signs begin."