

The MENOPAUSE *Club*



WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE MENOPAUSE

WELCOME

Firstly, welcome. I'm so pleased you've found us and I really hope you find this book useful in learning about the menopause, what it means for you and all the things you should know as you approach, move through and move beyond the menopause.

I've written this book to provide you with information on understanding what the menopause actually is and what this means for your body and your mind. Along the way I'll provide helpful hints and tips on actions to improve how you're feeling. We also encourage you to like our facebook page www.facebook.com/themenopauseclub which provides lots more free information, advice, videos and support with lots of other women just like you.

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What is the Menopause?

“Menopause is the permanent end of menstruation and fertility, defined as occurring 12 months after your last period”

This is the clinical definition of the Menopause but it really doesn't tell the whole story. Menopause is not a one-off event and changes can start occurring in your body many years before you reach this stage. Menopause is a normal, natural event signaling the end of fertility and the beginning of a new and potentially rewarding time in our life.

There is a huge amount of negativity surrounding the word menopause and we want to change this. Menopause is not a disease that has to have medical intervention, (there may be times when this is needed and we'll cover this later in the book). Although at times it may not feel like it, our bodies are perfectly designed for purpose and this transition is a completely natural phase we will all go through. There will be many signs and symptoms that changes are happening with our body and this is the time for us to sit up and listen to what is going on with our own bodies.

Menopause is not just about hormones (although they play a major part) and taking a pill to balance these hormones may not be needed in many cases. That is not to say that it is wrong to take HRT, for some women this is the right decision and we'll cover this later in the book. What we eat, how we move our body and managing our emotions can have an amazing impact on how we transition through this period of our lives.

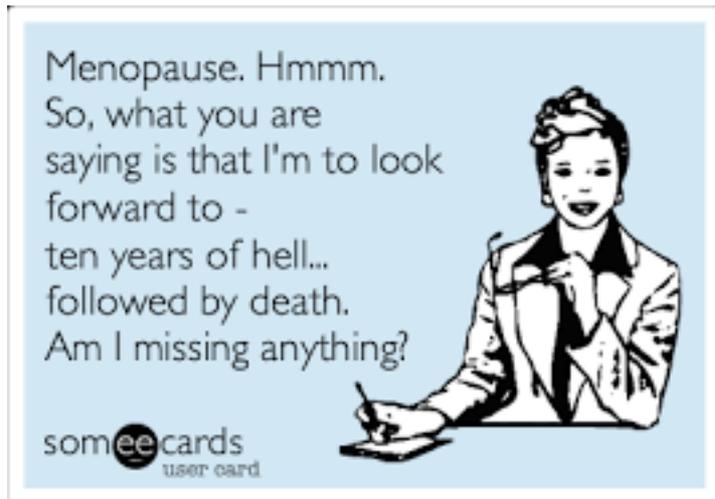
We want you to think about the Menopause as a chance to set yourself free, it's about the start of the rest of your life and the chance to put in place all the changes you should have made or wanted to make but not had the time. NOW is the time for action and we can help you.



When does the menopause start and how long does it last?

The average age in the UK for women reaching the natural menopause is 51 but it can occur much earlier or later. Menopause occurring before the age of 45 is called early menopause and before the age of 40 is premature menopause.

However, the hormonal shift that happens can take place over a 6-10-year period so many women will start experience some symptoms from the age 35/40 onwards.



“ Menopause. Hmmm. So, what you are saying is that I’m to look forward to ten years of hell ... followed by death. Am I missing anything?”

This is genuinely how a lot of us feel but yes, you are missing something – I know there will be days when you feel life is so unfair, why should the menopause be making you feel so rubbish. Or you may be fearful about what’s to come. I get it completely and I have good days and bad days but you’ll be amazed at how much you can increase the amount of good days. Just because you’re going through a particularly hard time at the moment, it doesn’t have to be this way for the next 10 years, we can help you.

What is Perimenopause?

This refers to the period of time in the run up to you reaching the menopause. This period of time can be different for every woman. If any woman ever says to you “oh yes, my menopause was a breeze, I barely noticed it” as you’re pouring in sweat even though the air-conditioning is on full. Firstly, try and resist the urge to slap her! The truth is this period of perimenopause can be so different for us all, just as pregnancy, puberty and our menstrual cycles.

Your perimenopause may last for 6-10 years but your symptoms and how you feel will vary dramatically throughout this time. The really awful parts generally pass and with the actions you can take you can really take hold of your own perimenopause journey and start to get excited about what’s to come.

What are the signs and symptoms of perimenopause?

There are lots of symptoms associated with the menopause. The most talked about are:

- Hot flashes/night sweats
- Irritability
- Highly emotional
- Struggling to sleep
- Irregular periods
- Weight gain – especially around the stomach



Some other key symptoms you may also experience include:

- Forgetfulness (especially word memory)
- Incontinence/bladder infections
- Mental fuzziness
- Vaginal dryness/painful sex
- Swollen/sore breasts
- Excessive bleeding
- PMS like symptoms
- Anxiety/nervousness
- Itchy/twitchy legs
- Depression
- Achy limbs
- Itchy/dry skin
- Low libido
- Facial hair
- Increased cravings for carbs and fat
- Headaches
- Low immune system
- Slower metabolism
- Relying on coffee/alcohol



Now this all sounds really scary and depressing but that is not the idea. The idea of understanding what your body may be telling you about what's going on, is the reassurance you should gain from understanding that these symptoms are normal. Also understanding that there is a lot you can do to curb or even eliminate some of these symptoms. One of my clients was so worried about her "word memory" where she'd forget simple words for something like a "chair" that she had convinced herself she was suffering from early signs of dementia. On speaking with her GP, she was reassured that this a normal symptom of perimenopause and this was a huge comfort to her.

Taking time to listen to what's going on with your body is so important at this time of your life. As part of the menopause club you can download a free booklet on listening to your body,

The Truth about HRT?

No wonder we are confused about the safety of hormone replacement therapy (HRT). For more than 50 years, women had been taking a synthetic hormone to replace oestrogen and ease them through the menopause. But in 2002, a major study announced that HRT increased the risk of cancer. Then, in 2015, another study claimed the dangers had been overstated, and that women should consider HRT again. More recently in 2016, the fears have been raised again, so who is right?

In actual fact both sides of the argument could be considered correct. HRT can have a hugely positive impact on the quality of life of a woman suffering severely with menopausal symptoms. There has also been a lot of evidence on the positive impact on bone quality and reducing the risks of osteoporosis. However, especially for women with other risk factors, there is evidence of increased risk of cancer and heart disease. The science is very confusing and often lead by economics.

In actual fact there is no right or wrong answer. You need to do what is right for you. We would recommend you look at the food you eat, the way you move and relax your body and the “life laundry” you need to attend to. These are all key components of restoring hormonal health and happiness. If you feel you have tackled these but symptoms aren’t improving, then seek advice from your GP. Read our blog for more guidance on speaking with your health professional

There are different types of HRT:

- Synthetic HRT – (combined or oestrogen only – derived from horse urine)
- Bioidentical hormones – still synthesized in a lab – they are designed to be identical to human hormones & their effects are thought to be more consistent with our biochemistry BUT there is little long term data on their safety

Who might benefit from Hormone therapy?

If you are really struggling with the following the HRT may be the right solution for you:

- Severe hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness
- Severe cognitive/mood changes
- High risk of fracture (family history of osteoporosis)
- Severe endometriosis
- Diminished quality of life

But Remember:

- Risk-benefit calculation is different for everyone: what are your goals?
- Exercise and food are the best remedies
- YOU are the best judge of what YOU need – HRT in any form may be the right solution for you but you need to understand the risks for you
- Most of all when it comes to your health, BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT NOT A PASSIVE RECIPIENT!

What is my body trying to tell me?



It's very easy as you're struggling with menopausal symptoms to describe how you're feeling as "Blurgh"! A general feeling of not feeling good, feeling tired, emotional, unable to sleep etc. But what are your specifics? Are you feeling the same all the time or do you have good and bad days? What drives these? How do different foods affect you? What's your digestive system like? What's happening to your monthly cycle?

Taking time to listen to what your body is trying to tell you can be really powerful in adapting your behaviour to improve your menopausal symptoms. Recording what your body is telling you can help you spot patterns, triggers and a huge amount of information to help you make good decisions to look after and help your body through this transition. How powerful would seeing on paper a reduction in symptoms as you reduce your sugar intake. If you're at the point where you would do anything to feel better and you see in your own recordings how changing your diet has helped, it will stop feeling like you're dieting but like your nourishing your body with the right things.

If symptoms persist or if you're unsure if they are symptoms of perimenopause, don't be embarrassed about talking to your doctor. Now, this is a big issue, because we know a lot of women don't want to bother their doctor. They are embarrassed about talking to the doctor about their menopausal symptoms. It's also very normal to get to the doctor's and the minute you get in there, because you're actually talking about things, you start to cry. A doctor may rightly be seeing symptoms that could signpost depression and take you down a path that isn't right for you. So when you go to the doctor – be prepared. At The Menopause Club, in our section on "Talking with your GP", we provide a useful tick list to take with you. Join us free now www.themenopauseclub.co.uk/join-our-club

Many of the symptoms listed above may indicate the menopause but they could also be identifying other issues such as iron deficiency, low or high blood pressure, vitamin B12 deficiency, thyroid imbalance or vitamin D deficiency. Your GP can help you understand what your body is telling you and help you choose the right course of action.

What actions can I take?

The essential ingredients of wellness as you approach the menopause are:

- Drink plenty of water (at least 2 litres per day)
- Eat plenty of well-sourced protein (lentils, chickpeas, fish, grass fed beef, free range chicken)
- Eat more vegetables – especially cooked cruciferous veggies like broccoli, cauliflower and kale
- Eat healthy fats every day – avocados, olive oil, nuts, seeds, oily fish
- Reduce intake from sugar, alcohol and caffeine – I know this sounds depressing but your body will thank you for it
- Movement – move your body every day – daily walks can be so powerful in improving your mental and physical well-being
- Exercise – mixture of cardio-vascular, strength and balance exercises – find things you enjoy, exercise should be a pleasure not a punishment
- Relaxation – think about how you can reduce your stress levels – this can have the biggest impact on your well-being
- Sleep – (I hear some of you laughing at this) think about your sleep routine, how do you prepare yourself for sleep? What's your sleep environment like?
- Find joy in your life – feed your passions/make time for things that feed your soul

There are lots of free resources to help with all of these actions at The Menopause Club www.themenopauseclub.com

If you feel you need further help and support find out more joining our Menopause Club and receive free goodies to help you take the first steps in feeling great www.themenopauseclub.com/membership



What Next ...

- Like our facebook page and receive access to lots of free information.
- Check out our Menopause Uncovered series where you receive a weekly email with a link to this week's menopause topic which includes useful tips and actions
- Join our VIP waitlist to become a member of the Menopause Club
www.themenopauseclub.com.membership

Why join The Menopause Club?

- We tell it like it is - we will talk openly about symptoms/causes/fears not dressing things up to say everything will be perfect or offering you a miracle quick fix but we show you how to make the best of your journey through the menopause.
- We want to re-own the word menopause and all its negative connotations - we want to change the way people talk about and react to the word menopause - it shouldn't be negative but it is everywhere and we want to change this.
- We will help you take responsibility for your own health and well-being now and for the future.
- We help prepare your body and mind and overcome fears about getting older.
- We understand how you're feeling, we understand how hard it can be, we understand the challenges women face balancing everything, we understand the fears and embarrassment associated with the menopause, we understand feeling lonely and isolated and we offer information/practical solutions and support from other women as well as experts. We are women.
- We are not medical - our information isn't medicalised, a lot of online information about the menopause is described in very medical language which doesn't tackle how you feel or what it means to you just a physical description of what happens.
- We aren't scared of talking about real issues - nothing is taboo
- We care - we don't want to just provide information we care about making your life better by showing you how to feed and move your body and how to approach this stage in your life with a positive mindset and embrace the changes
- We will help change your mindset on what the menopause means for you



- We will encourage you to be selfish - putting you first
- We help you identify how the menopause is affecting you providing personalised advice on actions you can take
- We advise you on testing and how to discuss the menopause with your GP or other health practitioners – understanding when a medical approach the right thing for you
- We show you how to - fuel your body/move your body/be mindful and find joy in your life
- We provide a social network of other women who get it - we want to enable women to feel like they've got a crowd of support behind them every step of the way, where they can share their progress, their fears, their frustrations, their successes, their story with other women who care and support offering advice/shared experiences/ a virtual shoulder to cry on
- We help you overcome health concerns from family history/previous issues, understanding your risk factors and what you can do to minimise those factors and focus on the positive steps you can take to lead a long healthy life



What other women say about the menopause club:

When I Met Sally

"I've always been someone who just gets on and does. I work long hours and travel lots in a job I love. I have 2 children at high school and a husband who works like me. I've always worked at a 1000 miles an hour and never sit still. I generally ate quiet well, although lots of coffee and wine were impossible to live without and I exercised full on 2-3 times a week. My attitude was life's too short and I wanted to get as much out of every minute as possible. Then the menopause hit and what a hit. I didn't know what was happening to me, I knew about the hot sweats and although they weren't pleasant I found ways to manage but I wasn't expecting the rest. I couldn't sleep, had no energy, felt bloated all the time, gained so much weight even though I was still exercising and I felt like I couldn't function at work. I sat in the pub with my friend in tears (I never cry like that) saying I thought I was broken and couldn't see a way out. She introduced me to Sally and the Menopause Club and life has got a whole lot better. Firstly, I now understand this is normal, which although doesn't sound much, it is a real reassurance that I'm not going insane. I've adjusted my diet and exercise programme and I sleep better, have more energy and feel like I'm getting stronger all the time. The biggest shift for me was the Project Me workbook as I realised how much stuff I was holding onto that I needed to let go and where I needed to focus my time. I feel so much more positive about the future and even getting a bit excited about no more periods and the freedom of having grown-up kids. Thank you for everything. Janet x" Janet 48

Thank you for making me feel like me again!

"I can't believe how different I feel after working with Sally and the Menopause Club. Sally is lovely, she really listened and helped me understand where I'd been going wrong. I was that person on a new diet every week, never sticking to anything and making myself miserable. When the menopause hit, my health was really low and I felt like I'd been run over most days. Everything hurt, my brain stopped working, I was horrible to be around (not sure how I still have a husband and kids) and I just wanted to hide myself away from the world. 6 months on I feel like me again. I'm not saying I don't have bad days, trust me I do, but they're less often and I feel able to cope. Thank you for making me feel like me again x" – Carole 49



www.themenopauseclub.com