

# 10

Things You MUST Know About



# *Menopause*

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## 10 Things You MUST Know About Menopause

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### 1. When Menopause Begins

Menopause begins when you no longer produce adequate amounts of the sex hormones estradiol and progesterone. The longstanding rule that you are not in menopause until you haven't had a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months, misunderstands what menopause is.

Menopause is a hormone deficiency state. It begins when the deficiency begins, that is, when you no longer consistently produce enough estradiol and progesterone to keep all of your hormone systems in balance.

Don't let the fact that you may still be having intermittent menstrual periods confuse or distract you. A few simple blood tests can confirm whether or not you are "in menopause."



### 2. When Menopause Ends

Menopause is a *permanent* hormone deficiency state. There is no such thing as "post-menopausal." Your body never regains its ability to produce estradiol and progesterone. Neither does it ever reach a point at which estradiol and progesterone are no longer important to your health.

### 3. It's Not Just About the Symptoms

Most women and doctors think menopause is just about symptoms – hot flashes, night sweats, irritability, sleep disruption, etc. You either have them or you don't. And if you don't, there's nothing you need to do; menopause just isn't an issue. Even the FDA says as much.

And, if you do have symptoms, and you can't just "tough it out," then, you do hormone therapy for a brief period until the symptoms go away, and then menopause is over. Menopause equals symptoms. No symptoms, no problem. This is what women have been taught to believe.

Well, here's the truth. Whether or not you have symptoms, menopause is a condition that must be treated correctly – *if you want to stay healthy*. By treated correctly, I mean treating the underlying problem – the loss of estradiol and progesterone.

## 10 Things You MUST Know About Menopause

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### 4. Menopause Undermines Your Health

It is important to understand that all of the hormone systems of the body are interrelated and interdependent. In your body, everything is connected. Nothing happens without a ripple effect. So any hormone deficiency state, such as menopause, is going to disrupt the normal functioning of every other hormone system, like the adrenal, insulin, and thyroid hormone systems. Menopause causes an imbalance within *all* of your hormone systems –not just your sex hormone system.

Since hormones are the chemical communicators that tell the cells of the body what to do, when your hormone systems are no longer in balance, things start to go wrong throughout your body – the ripple effect. This is why women in menopause ultimately experience problems with high cholesterol, bone loss, headaches, digestion, achy muscles and joints, low energy, irritability, depression, and the list goes on and on. If the cause of the underlying hormone imbalance, in this case menopause, is not properly treated, over time, these symptoms and conditions worsen, leading to the degenerative diseases of aging, including heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's dementia, osteoporosis, and stroke.

### 5. Treating the Symptoms Doesn't Treat the Problem (but treating the problem does treat the symptoms!)

No matter how you do it, whether with hormone drugs, supplements, diet, or any of the many remedies so often promoted in advertisements, treating the symptoms of menopause does not treat the cause of the symptoms. The symptoms are caused by a hormone imbalance.

Masking the symptoms with drugs or other “cures” does nothing to correct the imbalance. The symptoms of menopause are your body's way of telling you there is a problem. You have a hormone deficiency that must be properly addressed. If the room you are in filled with smoke, you wouldn't just turn off the smoke alarm, open a window, and plug in a fan, which is what hormone drugs and remedies do. You would deal with the source of the smoke and fix the problem. And when you treat the cause, you eliminate the symptoms.

### 6. You Should NEVER Use Hormone Drugs – Ever!

As I just explained, hormone drugs can only treat the *symptoms* of menopause. Hormone drugs are synthetic substances that do not have the same chemical structure as the hormones they are intended to replace. They do nothing to restore the hormone imbalance caused by the lack of estradiol and progesterone. Nothing. To make matters worse, like any drug, they have side effects. The use of hormone drugs over a sustained period of time has been proven to be harmful. You've

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## 10 Things You MUST Know About Menopause

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probably heard. That's why the prescribing guidelines for these drugs are to use the lowest possible dosage for the shortest period of time. Never use hormone drugs.

### 7. The Correct Way to Treat Menopause is With Bioidentical Hormones

Keep in mind that menopause is the permanent loss of the ability to produce estradiol and progesterone, resulting in hormone system imbalances. Remember that all of the hormones of the body interact, and that hormones regulate metabolism. So the loss or compromise of any hormone system, as in the case of menopause, ultimately causes metabolic imbalance and undermines your health. Therefore, the only viable way to manage menopause is to restore the missing hormones and rebalance all of the hormone systems of the body. And the only way to do that is to use prescription hormones that have the same chemical structure as natural estradiol and progesterone, in other words, bioidentical hormones, not hormone drugs.



### 8. Bioidentical Hormones Must Be Administered in a Bioequivalent Manner

Using bioidentical hormones is only part of the equation. The bioidentical hormones must be restored to the body in a manner that mimics, as closely as possible, the way in which the body produced estradiol and progesterone prior to menopause. This is what is meant by "bioequivalent manner." We are trying to replicate pre-menopausal physiology – using hormones with the same chemical structure as the hormones we are restoring, and delivering them in a way that is most like the way they were naturally produced. For instance, prior to menopause, your body produced estradiol all month long, but produced progesterone in only the second half of your menstrual cycle. Also, the hormones were secreted directly to your cells via the bloodstream. So, the correct way to administer bioidentical hormones is by replicating what the body used to do.

### 9. There Are Lots of Ways to Take Bioidentical Hormones *Incorrectly*

Simply using bioidentical hormones does not mean that what you are doing is either effective or safe. For example, taking estradiol and progesterone every day, what is called "continuous combined therapy," is both counter-productive and harmful. Progesterone blocks the effect of estradiol. Taking it every day does not replicate what your body used to

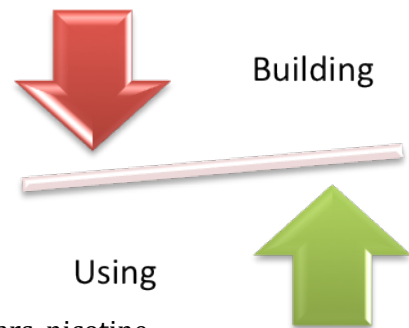
## 10 Things You MUST Know About Menopause

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do. Taking your hormones orally is also counter-productive and harmful. Prior to menopause, the estradiol and progesterone your body produced did not first pass through your liver, which is what happens with any hormone taken orally. Other examples of non-bioequivalent delivery methods are using creams you rub on your skin, taking hormone injections, or using pellets. These methods deliver a large dose initially, called a bolus, followed by much lower amounts of the hormone until the administration of the next bolus. Think how this rollercoaster approach impacts all of the other hormone systems of the body!

### 10. Your Nutrition and Lifestyle Habits Are an Essential Element of Hormone Rebalancing

The key to health and longevity is a balanced metabolism – being able to constantly rebuild and replace what your body “uses” throughout each day to function. Your hormones regulate your metabolism. What regulates your hormones? What hormones are produced, the amounts in which they are produced, and the effect they have are determined primarily by your nutrition and lifestyle habits. What you eat, when you eat, stress, sleep, exercise, and the chemicals you ingest, such as refined and artificial sugars, nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, over the counter and prescription drugs, all impact your body’s ability to build and use. They impact your metabolic function. You cannot rebalance a compromised hormone system such as the sex hormone system in the case of menopause, without also addressing your nutrition and lifestyle habits.



**Learn what you need to know to  
take an active, informed role in managing your menopause.**

#### Learn

- How menopause affects your immediate and long-term health
- The correct way to treat menopause with bioidentical hormones in a bioequivalent manner
- How to talk to your doctor about managing your menopause safely and effectively