

# **Patient Information - Managing the Menopause naturally**

**Managing the Menopause**

**naturally**

**Patient information leaflet**

**Gynaecology**

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# Managing the Menopause naturally -Patient Information

Although benefits of Hormone replacement therapy are well known but they can be associated with certain risks in some women. Also using HRT for long periods of time is not without risks and side effects. Therefore alternative approaches mainly lifestyle changes and diet become a very important part of managing menopausal symptoms. This leaflet aims to give an overview of what is available to you, along with advice about how diet and lifestyle can help ease your symptoms.

## Lifestyle changes

Regular aerobic exercise, such as running and swimming, may help, as may low-intensity exercise, such as yoga. Reducing your intake of caffeine and alcohol may also help to reduce hot flushes and night sweats.

## Diet

A healthy diet is extremely important for all women around the time of menopause as it helps to achieve a healthy body weight and reduce menopausal symptoms. A healthy diet can also reduce your risk of developing heart disease and osteoporosis. Spicy foods, caffeine (in tea, coffee, cola etc.) and alcohol may trigger hot flushes, hence avoiding these may help control your symptoms.

## Phytoestrogens

Phytoestrogens are substances, found in certain plants, which can produce a weak oestrogen-like effect on the body. There has been some evidence to suggest that women who traditionally have diets rich in phytoestrogens, (such as Asia), experience fewer menopausal symptoms and have a lower incidence of diseases such as heart disease, osteoporosis and cancers of the breast, womb and bowel. Although the evidence is encouraging and would suggest potential benefits but further research is needed. Foods that are good source of phytoestrogens are:

**Cereals:** oats, barley, rye, brown rice, couscous and bulgar wheat

**Seeds:** sunflower, sesame, pumpkin, poppy, flax and linseeds

**Pulses/Beans:** soya beans and all soya based products, chickpeas, kidney beans, haricot beans, broad beans and green split peas

**Vegetables:** red onions, green beans, celery, sweet peppers, garlic, broccoli, tomatoes and bean sprouts.

**\*\*Women with hormone dependent tumours or who have had breast cancer are advised not to take phytoestrogens supplements.**

## **Herbal Medicine**

There is very little evidence that herbal preparations help, and in some cases they can even be harmful. Some common herbal preparations include:

- Red Clover
- Black Cohosh
- St John's Wort

It is important to know that unlike conventional medicine, there is no legal obligation for herbal medicines to be licensed. They can react with other medicines that you may be taking for conditions such as breast cancer, epilepsy, heart disease or asthma. You should check with your healthcare professional before taking any herbal medicine.

## **Alternative therapy**

Alternative therapies such as acupressure, acupuncture or homeopathy may help some women. More research is, however, required on the benefits from these therapies and, if they are used, this should be done with advice from qualified professionals.

## **Complementary therapy**

You may wish to try a complementary such as aromatherapy, although the effects of these therapies specifically on your menopausal symptoms are not well known.

## **Bioidentical hormones**

Commercially available 'bioidentical' hormones are not regulated or licensed in the UK owing to lack of evidence that they are effective or safe to use.

**Useful Links** [www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk)  
[www.yorkshiremenopause.co.uk](http://www.yorkshiremenopause.co.uk) [www.thebms.org.uk](http://www.thebms.org.uk)  
[www.daisynetwork.org.uk](http://www.daisynetwork.org.uk) [www.nos.org.uk](http://www.nos.org.uk)

**This leaflet has been developed in partnership with the Patient Information Group and our DGT Patient Partners**

## **Patient Information**

Further patient leaflets are available from the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust website: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patient-information-leaflets> Please ask a member of staff if you require information in another language or format.

## **Complaints, Comments, Concerns and Compliments**

Please speak to the staff in the ward or department caring for you if you have any concerns or questions relating to your care or that of a loved one.

Compliments can be shared by visiting: <https://www.dgt.nhs.uk/contact-us/compliments>

Alternatively, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01322 428382 Email: [dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:dgn-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

## **Patient Property**

Please do not bring large sums of money or valuable items into the hospital. Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust accepts no responsibility for the loss or

damage to personal property unless it is handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust operate smoke-free hospitals. This means that smoking is not permitted anywhere on hospital grounds. For help to quit smoking please visit [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-smokefree/)

Use of alcohol or illicit drugs is not permitted anywhere on the hospital site. For drug and alcohol support please speak to your nurse or doctor or

Visit: [www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help](http://www.changegrowlive.org/westkent/help)

Call: 0330 128 1113

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