

MANAGING MENOPAUSE

What is menopause and what is the usual age for menopause? What are the pre-menopause symptoms and how do I deal with it?

Mdm Lim, Bedok

The last menstrual period in a woman's lifetime is "Menopause". The average age of reaching menopause is 50 years and it is normal to reach menopause anytime between 45 and 55 years. It is also common to start experiencing menopause symptoms as early as 2-5 years before menopause. If you have reached your last menses before 45 years, it is considered early and if menopause is reached before 40 years, it is considered premature.

In Singapore, 20% of women will experience moderate to severe peri-menopause symptoms including hot flushes, night sweats, mood changes and sleep disturbance. These symptoms may persist for 2-3 years on average but are rarely lifelong! When estrogen reduces following menopause, the skin and vagina will demonstrate some dryness issues which make these areas sensitive and itchy. Applying usual antifungal creams on the vagina on such occasion will not help. Vaginal dryness and thinning can result in painful sexual activities as well as increased risk of vaginal and urinary infection.

It is important to recognize these menopause related symptoms and understand them so that you are not frightened by them or overwhelmed by them.

To clarify, the increased total number of years of hormonal exposure is the main reason for increased risk of breast cancer following hormone replacement therapy (HRT). That means that instead of reduced hormonal stimulation to the breasts as one reaches menopause naturally at 50, if she continues to take HRT for 5 years, she would be exposed to hormones for an extra 5 years. These increased years of stimulation will increase her risk of breast cancer. In the same way, women who naturally reach menopause late (beyond 55 years) have also increased risks.

On the other hand, if a woman reaches menopause prematurely at 40, it is highly recommended for her to continue

hormonal support to prevent problems like osteoporosis and hyperlipidaemia. If this woman takes HRT till the "normal" age of menopause at 50, she has not increased her risks of breast cancer.

Phytoestrogens are plant products that simulate some small effects of hormones in our body thereby reducing menopausal symptoms. They are not associated with increased breast cancer risks.

If we are looking for a treatment option that targets all of your symptoms and concerns, some version of hormonal therapy may still be considered especially if you are at a young age. An alternative will be phytoestrogen although this option does not typically improve vaginal health. If the main concern is to improve vaginal health so as not to compromise the sexual relationship, there are very effective topical medication that can be considered. These also come in hormonal and non-hormonal options.

The most effective course of action would be to consult your gynae directly to assess the need as well as the risk-benefit profile of any possible treatment option before deciding the best way forward. *PRIME*



Dr Chua Yang

Obstetrician & Gynaecologist
MBBS (S'Pore), MRCOG (UK), FAMS
Graduate Diploma (Acupuncture)
Graduate Diploma (Mental Health)

MANAGING MENOPAUSE WITH

Sérélys Vaginal Gel

A specially formulated lubricant for women that moisturises as well as maintains the balance of vaginal flora.



Available at:

MEDIC DRUGSTORE (Blk 1, Tanjong Pagar Plaza, #01-26/27)
NISHINO PHARMACY (Isetan Shaw Centre Basement, Orchard Road)

www.creatixpharma.sg

Sérélys®

Sérélys Tablets - manages Menopause symptoms including:

- Mood swings
- Day and Night sweats
- Shallow sleep
- Hot flushes



Imported by:

CREATIX
Creatix Pharma Pte. Ltd.



For the launch of Sérélys tablets please see us at our Booth C25
28 - 30 March 2014
Suntec Hall 401 - 404

NEW!

100%
non-hormonal

NO
PHYTO-
ESTROGEN
ACTIVITY