

Q; I am a woman in my early 40's and I'm beginning to notice some changes in my menstrual cycle. It can be late, miss a month and I notice some changes to my mood. Could I be menopausal? I seem quite young for this surely?!

Natural health advice from CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine)

A. Yes indeed reader, you are noticing the beginning of the change, but this is a good time to get on with supporting your body so it can sail through this time with little distress.

Peri-menopause is the time when a woman begins to see changes in her cycle and ovulation, with or without symptoms. Post menopause is when there is a cessation in menstruation. Technically, women are beginning to enter the Change in their thirties! This is when we begin to have the decline in the more powerful ovarian oestrogen, estradiol. Of course, the range and speed of this decline in oestrogen differs in each woman. Bearing this in mind, what we can do to prepare ourselves around this time, may set us up for an easier transition and one to embrace rather than dread.

One of the areas I focus on in my clinic are the Adrenals. The adrenal glands and our fat cells take over from the ovaries and produce a weaker oestrogen, estrone, which performs the role of estradiol, but less potent. Many of the symptoms of Menopause are due to this switch from one form of oestrogen to the other.

Stress and particularly chronic stress can take its toll on the adrenal glands. The health of this gland is an important factor in determining how well women respond to their changes, and how long and smooth that transition will be.

There is no one natural prescription for Menopause as each woman will present with different symptoms and have different requirements, however there are some common themes in naturopathic support. The use of

phytoestrogens (plant based oestrogen), can be useful in balancing the transition from the stronger ovarian oestrogen to the weaker adrenal type.

They can protect against mammary tumours and have a modulating effect on oestrogens. Phytoestrogens come from the likes of legumes, flaxseeds, fermented soya and various vegetables. Herbs in this category include Black cohosh and Red clover, but they are best used in part of a tailored formula that may also include adrenal, liver and nervous system support. Consult a Herbalist to get the professional support in using plant medicine.



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Your Expert



Your questions have been answered by Natural Health Practitioner Colleen Kennedy who graduated in Herbal Medicine and Naturopathic Nutrition from CNM and who also lectures in Herbal Medicine at CNM Galway and Dublin Campus. For Information on CNM courses in Natural Therapies available nationwide visit www.naturopathy.ie