
MENOPAUSE COMPLEX

Between the ages of 40 and 55, women experience menopause: a time in their lives when their bodies stop their monthly production of eggs and preparation for fertilization. It's also a time when the ovaries decrease their production of the reproductive hormones – estrogen and progesterone – by about 75%, which can trigger in some women a number of uncomfortable symptoms.

These symptoms can include “hot flashes” (called “night sweats” when they occur at night), irregular menstrual cycles, fuzzy vision, forgetfulness, concentration difficulties, mood swings, dizziness, insomnia, vaginal dryness, urinary tract infections, incontinence, extra body hair, or thinning of scalp hair. Statistics also show that women are more susceptible to both osteoporosis and heart disease after menopause.

The most common current medical treatment for menopause is hormone replacement therapy (HRT). This replaces a woman's declining levels of estrogen and progesterone, and reverses many of the symptoms mentioned above. However, as with all drug therapies, some women may experience side effects such as drowsiness, nausea, and breast tenderness from estrogen therapy; some may experience side effects similar to premenstrual syndrome (depression, mood swings, headaches, bloating, weight gain, etc.) from progesterone therapy.

For women who are concerned about taking HRT, with its attendant side effects, there are a number of phytochemicals (natural chemicals derived from plants) that may assist in regulating a woman's hormonal balance during menopause. We recommend that any woman interested in these alternatives discuss them fully with her doctor when deciding on her own approach to dealing with the challenges of menopause.

First of all, soybeans contain a group of phytoestrogens called isoflavonoids or **isoflavones** that are similar to the estrogen in a woman's body but not as potent. Two isoflavones found in soy, called genistein and daidzein, can actually take the place of regular estrogen in the body at certain estrogen receptor sites on the surface of cells. This can help minimize the negative effects of regular estrogen, such as hot flashes. Soybeans have also been investigated for their overall benefit to bone, heart, and breast health, and for maintaining healthy cholesterol levels.

Black cohosh is a herbal ingredient that also contains compounds that will bind to estrogen receptors, giving relief to symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, menstrual cramps, and menopause. Complex phytochemicals in black cohosh are believed to suppress the secretion of luteinizing hormone (the hormone stimulating ovulation and the production of progesterone), which fluctuates during menopause.

Dong quai is another herb that eases the symptoms of menopause, especially hot flashes. It also appears to have the ability to relax the uterus, making it helpful in combatting menstrual cramps.

Flax seed is the richest whole-grain source of a second class of phytoestrogens called lignans. These compounds, which provide fibre, can also bind to estrogen receptors in the body, minimizing the negative effects of estrogen. Lignans may also have antioxidant properties that reduce the activity of free radicals and may play a role in lowering cholesterol and maintaining bone density.

Red clover and **licorice** also both contain phytoestrogens similar to those found in soybeans.

Supplements that contain effective levels of one or more of these plant compounds will definitely help ease a woman's transition to menopause, providing many benefits without harmful side effects. Shaklee Canada's **Menopause Complex** is one of these.

Two Shaklee **Menopause Complex** capsules per day supply:

- 80 mg of black cohosh extract (standardized to contain 2.5% total triterpene glycosides)
- 30 mg of soy isoflavones
- 333 mg flax seed extract
- 600 mg of flax seed oil
- 50 mg dong quai extract
- 25 mg licorice root extract
- 25 mg red clover extract