

Menopause: WTF is Going On?

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I knew sooner or later the symptoms of menopause would hit me; having reached the dreaded age of 50 a few years ago, my days were numbered, as menopausal symptoms typically wreak havoc on the lives of women between the age of 45 and 55 years.

Unfortunately, my mom passed away long before I was interested in discussing menopause and its effects on my body.

I do have two older sisters, but they live so far away that when we do talk (thank heavens for email and Facebook) there always seems to be more interesting things to chat about.

What is Menopause?

Menopause refers to the end of a woman's fertile stage in life with the cessation of her menstrual cycle. One year after your last period you are categorized as menopausal. The perimenopausal stage is before that when the annoying symptoms plague your mind and body, sometimes lasting for years.

Menopausal Symptoms

From what I have learned from the invaluable internet, menopause affects all women differently, although there are many common symptoms many of us experience. Common symptoms include fatigue, dry skin, poor concentration ability, erratic periods, weight gain, memory problems, anxiety, hot flashes, depression, decreased sex drive, insomnia, and more.

These symptoms are caused by changing hormone levels, so it makes sense that every woman will experience symptoms differently as their hormone levels will recede at different rates. Our ovaries stop producing estradiol and progesterone, the hormones that make reproduction possible. Testosterone

and estrogen levels decrease as well but fluctuate while decreasing causing mood swings and hot flashes. Skipped ovulations caused by depleted ovarian follicles result in erratic periods, excessive clotting, and long episodes of spotting.

Looking Forward to Post Menopause

Apparently, many of these horrid symptoms dissipate at the post-menopausal stage; something to look forward to as you struggle through the perimenopausal cycle. So far, the hot flashes I have experienced have been quite enjoyable as I am always cold. I am looking forward to the increased heat throughout the upcoming cold winter months here in Canada.