

## Growing Together Through Connections



### Orchestrating Your Body's Hormonal Symphony

Are you often stressed and tired? Is insomnia your norm? Are you challenged by mood changes, fuzzy memory, or foggy thinking? Has your previously "hot" relationship lost its excitement?

At some point in our life, usually during the mid-life years, your body isn't able to produce the levels of hormones it once did, and parts of your body begin to get out of tune while others can lose the beat. This may be due to aging, stress, genetics, poor nutrition, vitamin/mineral imbalances, toxins, or inflammatory, metabolic and other changes.

Hormones are the chemical messengers between the different parts of your body. There are major and minor hormones that, when in balance, create a well functioning physiology, a real world-class symphony.

Symptoms of hormonal changes can bring your attention to what body systems may need support. If you have been conscious of preventive health practices, now is the time to refocus them. Or, if you have put these on the back burner, like so many women because of family and work, you may be waking up to the fact that your body needs attention, too, and must become a leading theme for you now.

So how does this transition unfold?

For many mid-life women, the symptoms of menopause are gradual. They think something may be off key, but are not sure what it is. That's understandable, for how many of us were introduced to the "menopause" concerto by our mothers or teachers? For some women, the symptoms may be so severe that their lives grind to a halt—or at least become so discordant that a totally new symphony must be written!

Common notes in this process are difficulty focusing, memory lapses, insomnia, fatigue, low libido, moodiness, depres-

sion and many others. Then there is the menstrual cycle; for decades it was regular in rhythm, but now goes syncopated, or off on its own eclectic rhythm. Weight can change, and foods you used to love just don't resonate well any more.

The whole orchestration of your body is changing. Here are the hormone sectionals of the orchestra that are most responsible for the discord:

1. Sex hormones decline. Progesterone leads the decrescendo, which creates a dominant estrogen effect. Then estrogen falls, and the hot flashes and night sweats play their strange sonatas accompanying an extremely low libido;

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2. The thyroid gland, due to stage fright, can be hiding on the sidelines, unable to perform at full capacity. This causes changes in metabolism that effect weight and energy;

3. Stress management is the function of our first pair adrenal glands, which after years of overwork can be fatigued or exhausted. This can lead to lack of energy and a depressed immune system;

4. Metabolism shifts, and we are more sensitive to certain carbohydrates. This can be a factor in weight gain, a common tune played in mid-life, and can also set us up for diabetes, hypertension, and other disease processes;

5. Some sectionals have a poor showing for the performance, such as different neurotransmitters affecting sleep, mood and other incidentals that create sour notes;

6. The composition loses its cadence when nutrition doesn't provide the supporting notes to the hormones in their leading roles; and

7. The conductor, exercise, brings all of these instruments together to produce the best performance possible.

There are many approaches to creating this beautiful, harmonious, and well-orchestrated symphony during your mid-life. Attend a class; talk with other well-informed women; read authoritative sources on treatments, benefits and risks; know your options; and seek professional help to re-establish the natural physiologic harmony of your whole body system.

Ladies, resist the temptation to put off doing something to support your body and its needs at this crucial time in your life. YOU deserve the time and energy it takes to become fully attuned to your needs and to take steps to meet them.

Happy composing and conducting to all you wise women!

by Jane Kennedy

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*Reading Resources:*

*The Hormone Survival Guide for Perimenopause* by Nisha Jackson, Ph.D.

*Thyroid Power* by Richard Shames, MD and Karilee Shames, RN, Ph.D.

*Adrenal Fatigue* by James Wilson, ND

*The Wisdom of Menopause* by Christiane Northrup, MD