

女性更年期：絕不止潮熱流汗！

MENOPAUSE: MORE THAN JUST HOT FLUSHES

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無論男或女，終究也會有年紀漸長的時候，而醫學界漸漸發現，男女性在踏入更年期後的需要，有著明顯的差別。不少婦女也許覺得，人到中年，煩惱特別多：青春不再、生育功能逐漸減退之餘，還要面對一連串的煩惱，如子女成家立室離開自己、老邁的父母離世、伴侶的健康問題甚至經歷喪偶之痛，以及工作環境上的轉變等。至於身體上的徵狀，則包括潮熱、夜汗、失眠、情緒起伏以至陰道乾燥等。

Aging is gender specific: increasingly, the needs of women have been found to differ from those of men, particularly after menopause. Midlife and the onset of the menopause is a phase of considerable stress for women as they are confronted with the loss of their youth, reproductive function and familiar menstrual cycles. Additional concerns may include children leaving home, ill health and death of parents and partners and career changes. Bothersome physical symptoms of the menopause include hot flushes, night sweats, insomnia, mood swings and vaginal dryness.

更年期與潮熱

MENOPAUSE AND HOT FLUSHES

「女性更年期」的定義，是月經周期持續停止12個月或以上，令卵巢完全停止活動。至於「近停經期」，則是指當中的過渡期。

無論是醫生、婦女或社會大眾，都習慣將潮熱出現的密度及程度，與更年期拉上關係。另一方面，卵巢荷爾蒙逐漸減少，亦解釋了女士性欲減低、失眠，以至骨質疏鬆等種種生理問題的原因所在。

但隨著現今醫學技術水平先進，只需透過適當的治療及藥物，均可預防或延緩各種因更年期及身體機能衰退所引發的疾病。

有研究指出，適當使用荷爾蒙療法，可有效改善更年期婦女的生活質素。然而，雖然如雌激素療法，已幾乎被公認為是有效防止各類更年期症狀的治療；但仍有不少婦女憂慮療程所引起的各類副作用或風險，而未有接受相關治療。

Women, doctors and society associate the increasing frequency and severity of hot flushes with the onset of menopause. Additionally, the decline in ovarian hormones combined with declining ovarian reserve may be the mechanisms that can explain sexual dysfunction, disturbed sleep, enhanced bone turnover and low bone mineral density.

The treatment of gender-specific conditions such as climacteric symptoms holds the potential to provide a better aging experience for many women. With modern medicine it is possible to prevent or slow the progression of devastating degenerative conditions, particularly at the time of menopause.

Studies show that the use of hormone replacement therapy, even when initiated years after the onset of menopause, can improve health-related quality of life. Despite almost universal recognition that estrogen therapy is an effective approach to relieve symptoms resulting from natural or surgical menopause, the perceived and actual risks associated with hormonal therapies remain the main reason why women choose not to use them.

更年期與心臟病

MENOPAUSE AND HEART ATTACK

更年期婦女其中一個重大的健康威脅，便是心臟病。這威脅與衰老及婦女體內卵巢荷爾蒙指數低落有關。另外，更年期前後的婦女若進行卵巢切除，亦會增加患心血管疾病的風險；而這亦是導致女性死亡的其中一個主要原因。

其實荷爾蒙治療可有助減低心臟病的風險，雌激素能從各方面改善患者的心血管功能。不少研究均指出，接受荷爾蒙療程的婦女，她們在更年期後患上嚴重心血管疾病的風險明顯較少。但很多婦女及其醫生，仍然認為更年期最大的影響只不過是潮熱流汗，而抗拒接受荷爾蒙療程，延誤治療。

縱使有很多證據證明荷爾蒙療法的功效，目前仍有不少醫生認為其風險大於治療功效，故並未有以公正平衡及正確的態度為病人選擇最有效的治療方案。

Soon after menopause women face an increased risk of heart attack; this is attributed to the combined actions of aging and ovarian hormone depletion. Moreover, oophorectomy in both



premenopausal and postmenopausal women is linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and is the major cause of death for women.

The impact of hormone therapy (HT) on cardiovascular disease remains an area of major interest. It is an accepted fact that estrogens improve blood vessel function and many studies have shown a significant decrease in major coronary events in postmenopausal women receiving HT. However, if most women and doctors believe that the most profound impact of menopause is a sensation of extreme heat and cold, it will not be treated as a critical health concern. Consequently, there exists a widespread notion that there is little need for HT treatment.

Despite considerable evidence to the contrary, the prevailing belief that the risks of hormone therapy outweigh the benefits dissuade many doctors from counselling their patients on the most effective treatment in a fair, balanced and accurate manner.

荷爾蒙療法能有效減低心臟病的風險

HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY MAY REDUCE RISK OF HEART ATTACK

其實荷爾蒙治療已被證實可舒緩、治療及預防包括心血管疾病及骨質疏鬆症等更年期相當嚴重的疾病。只要婦女認為自己有需要，便可隨時與醫生商討開始有關療程。大前提是婦女本人已有心理準備開始療程，醫生便可為每一位婦女訂立個人的療程方案及藥物。

對婦女來說，對荷爾蒙療程最大的憂慮，是它引起乳癌的風險。但最近美國食品及藥物管理局(FDA)已

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批准使用Raloxifene類藥物，讓更年期婦女減低乳癌風險。

而且不少研究亦集中於各類補充劑對改善更年期徵狀的效用，如「紅車軸草提取物」是一種強力的β類雌激素受體激動劑，有效減低骨質疏鬆及心血管疾病風險；亦對高血壓、超重、血糖或血脂過高的病人有幫助。營養補充劑如維他命D加鈣，或含多種維他命的補充劑等，亦對更年期婦女有益。

此外，各類輔助性療程，也可配合荷爾蒙療程使用，獲取額外功效；例如瑜伽及健康舞等，均有助改善健康狀況。

北美更年期醫學會(NAMS)每年亦在網站發表聲明，分析荷爾蒙補充劑的定位。婦女可視之為接受荷爾蒙補充治療的指引，在正式會見醫生前，此聲明有助婦女們先獲得相關的基本資料，是對荷爾蒙治療有興趣的婦女們一個不俗的「入門指南」。

更年期是人生必經階段，是一個讓女性在身心方面重新自我評價的新起點。這個階段的女性，比起年青時人生閱歷更豐富，待人處事亦更成熟，只要好好把握，當然可以繼續活得健康快樂！

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is intended to alleviate, treat and prevent conditions such as cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis. It can be started whenever the woman feels ready. The most important issue is that the woman is ready

for the therapy; her doctor will be able to tailor the therapy specifically to her and the regimen and the route of administration can be explored.

Developing breast cancer is the major concern of many women when considering hormone therapy. Recently, the FDA approved the prescription of Raloxifene for decreasing the breast cancer risk in postmenopausal women.

Supplements have been studied for their effect on the symptoms of menopause; red clover extract reduces osteoporosis and cardiovascular risk and is also beneficial to patients suffering from hyperglycemia, hypertension, dyslipidemia and obesity. Diet supplements like calcium with vitamin D, multivitamin formula for postmenopause and



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antioxidants can also be considered.

Complimentary Alternative Methods can be used together with hormone therapy: yoga and aerobic physical exercise have been shown to have positive benefits on health.

The NAMS (North American Menopause Society) issues a positional statement on hormone replacement therapy every year and this can be obtained from their website. It acts a guideline for women requiring HRT and doctors dispensing it and is a good starting point for any women interested in hormone therapy. With this information, one can make an informed decision on hormone therapy before seeking a doctor's help in finding the right combination of hormones and regimen.

Women should feel that they can lead a healthy life even if their ovarian function has ceased. It is only through informed and expert guidance that they can attain the healthiest condition possible at this time in their life. Menopause is a natural event;

a time when a woman has to re-evaluate herself, both physically and mentally, and consider how best to enjoy the benefits that she has built up in her youth. **A**

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