

THE MENOPAUSE MYTH

FINDING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH AWARENESS, PRACTICES, AND SUBTLE ENERGY MEDICINE.

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Would you believe it if I told you that the transition toward menopause can be the most powerful time in a woman's life? Have you heard that the symptoms associated with this gradual change should be feared and can only be treated medically? If you've been misinformed, misunderstood, or simply have no idea about menopause at all, then read on.

After hearing many misconceptions from my clients about "the change," I've come to realize that there is very little spiritual understanding about the transformation toward menopause as a powerful rite of passage. Most of the women I meet with are between the ages of 40 and 55. They seek my help in balancing emotional challenges, and they often have questions and concerns about the fluctuation of hormones throughout these years.

So, what exactly is the in-between time, called perimenopause? It's about a 10-year period in a woman's life when her progesterone and estrogen levels fluctuate, leading up to the cessation of menstrual cycles. Within this decade-long change, there are many accompanying symptoms that each woman experiences somewhat differently and at varying times. Awareness of the shifting energy empowers you to know that there is nothing "wrong" with you and allows you to lead with self-compassion and even perhaps a bit of excitement. A holistic approach includes prioritizing time for abundant and lavish self-nurturance. As I endeavor to educate others on the potential of this passage, I recognize how you can reclaim what is rightfully yours, through increased awareness, committed practices, and the art of flower essence therapy.

Below are some of the challenges of perimenopause, along with the potential transformations and flower essences that can support you along the way.

COMMON CHALLENGES INCLUDE:

- Irregular menstrual cycles
- Sleep changes
- Mood swings
- Breast tenderness, headaches, and body aches
- Body heat and night sweats
- Food sensitivities and digestive disturbances
- Changes in libido and weight gain

COMMON TRANSFORMATIONS INCLUDE:

- Greater awareness of our unique inner rhythms
- Heightened intuition and dreaming
- Increased ability to harness our energy
- More time given to self-care practices
- Enhanced creativity
- Deeper sense of authenticity
- More self-love

IRREGULAR MENSTRUAL CYCLES

Likely, the first and most obvious sign of perimenopause is that of menstrual changes, which usually begins around the age of 40. At this time, cycles may become closer together (as often as every two weeks is normal during this phase), change in duration to either shorter or longer, and we might experience a heavier or lighter flow. Expect the new normal to be irregular! After several months or a few years, another shift will take place, where the cycles become further apart (going many months without bleeding, then bleeding again, is normal during this phase), until they cease altogether. It is understood that missing 13 consecutive moon cycles denotes the official crossover into menopause.

Transformation: Greater Awareness of Our Unique Inner Rhythms

As your blood wanes, there are fewer cyclical changes each month and new rhythms emerge. You may feel less weighed down by your monthly physical discomfort and more empowered to move your body in new ways. Explore spiritual embodiment practices such as Yoga, Qi Gong, and dance. Walk in nature often. Tend to gardens. Swim in rivers, oceans, and lakes. Anything that feels refreshing and new is medicine for the soul.

Flower Essence of Walnut (*Juglans regia*)

Change is the keynote throughout this journey, thereby walnut flower is called to usher you in with ease. This ally provides trust in a smooth transition and shields you from any unwanted energy that enters your sphere.

NEW AWARENESS FOR EMPOWERMENT OF AGE

The journey of perimenopause can be approached with curiosity and confidence in knowing that you are on your own unique path. There is no straight course to the other side, but a beautiful ripening over time of your life's deepest manifestations.

CHANGES IN LIBIDO AND WEIGHT GAIN

Throughout the journey, your body becomes softer, and gaining as much as 10 pounds over the years is considered healthy. As your physical presence is reshaped, your sexuality gets an overhaul as well, and you might struggle to navigate these changes with grace and ease. Lack of desire is common throughout parts of the journey, only to flow again with more fervor, at any given time. Getting used to the new normal takes patience and a sense of curiosity.

Transformation: More Self-Love

Learning to feel gratitude for your body is the first step in crafting deeper self-love. As you develop a greater sense of honor and love for your physical being, you become more able to recognize the ways in which your desire may be changing. Some women find sex with a partner less fulfilling and opt for solo sensual practices, while others might find a change of partner late in life (perhaps even of a different gender) feels right. While those in committed relationships may discover new ways to find fulfillment together. A benefit that many women report once they've reached menopause is that of stronger orgasms!

Flower Essence of Crab Apple (*Malus pumila*)

Known as the cleansing remedy, this flower is useful for those who carry a negative self-image and feel a continual need for perfection, in their surroundings as well as in themselves. A hair out of place, a tiny blemish, a crooked picture, all provoke feelings of uncleanness. The gift of crab apple is a sense of complete acceptance for things just as they are.

SLEEP CHANGES

A common disturbed sleep pattern I hear of from perimenopausal women is that of waking (perhaps several times a night) and not being able to quiet the mind. In the darkness of night, thoughts churning—trying to balance the checkbook, review the food shopping list, or remember to call sis on her birthday. Everything under the sun becomes a midnight snack—food for thought. Tossing and turning for what seems like hours, drifting off ever so lightly, only to be awakened again by the next trifle.

Transformation: Heightened Intuition & Dreaming

Intermittent sleep can be experienced as an opportunity to strengthen your intuition. When you are in a sleepy state, you can more easily access your unconscious mind and attune to the quiet inner voice that guides you. As you drift in and out of slumber, dreams become reality—a soul consciousness arises that leads you into deeper parts of self. Keep a journal next to the bed and use the waking times to record thoughts, dreams, and inspirations any time of night.

Flower Essence of White Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

Restless minds beware! This powerful flower alleviates mental chatter as it promotes a calm peace of mind. Worry and sleeplessness become trust in the universe and inner peace. You experience an ability to live in the present moment and relax into the perfection of the here and now.

MOOD SWINGS

Some describe the mood swings associated with perimenopause as like having PMS for months at a time. Irritability flares up at any given moment, while tears flow unexpectedly and often. The energy is volatile and shifting—an emotional roller coaster that keeps you in flux.

Transformation: Increased Ability to Harness Our Energy

As you become more aware of the movement of your dynamic energy, you can set intentions to renew your inner balance each day. Shifting emotions greatly benefit from spiritual practices such as meditation, visualization, and mindfulness exercises. As you engage these practices wholly and consistently, you develop a more harmonious flow.

Flower Essence of Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

When you experience irritability and annoyance, it feels like an itchy rash on the inside. In this state, small things may set you off and you undergo an overall sense of peevisness. Soothing and calming—a gentle balm for the soul, beech provides a deep sense of inner peace.

FOOD SENSITIVITIES AND DIGESTIVE DISTURBANCES

With a decline in digestive enzymes as you age, it is common to be gassy, bloated, and crampy. Foods that were once tolerable now contribute to discomfort. This time of life calls for a revisioning of everything you ingest, including your ideas and stories. Indeed, the health of your body is founded on the health of your emotions. In this way, you can see a deep connection with your internal dialogue and how you process nourishment.

Transformation: Deeper Sense of Authenticity

Many women report a stronger sense of self as they move towards menopause. As if they were living their lives for the first time, based on who they truly are. An authenticity comes to the fore and leads you down a path of self-realization. To develop greater emotional honesty with yourself, practice inner dialogue to discover the deeper wisdom within. Use a journal to reflect on your innermost knowing each day.

Flower Essence of Agrimony (*Agrimony eupatoria*)

Those who shrink at the thought of confrontation and avoid it by putting on a happy face are in need of this flower ally. Conflict is a part of life, and as you learn how to speak your inner truth with courage and confidence, you enliven an ability to reflect who you truly are and be safe within this process.

BODY HEAT & NIGHT SWEATS

Perhaps the most uncomfortable symptom of perimenopause is that of increased body heat. Flashes and sweats can happen at any time of the day or night and without warning. The frequency increases gradually over the journey and energy surges are known to continue for some time after menopause has been reached.

Transformation: Enhanced Creativity

As you feel into this energy, you can embrace the fire within by connecting with your creative inspirations. You can reflect on what is calling to be expressed and utilize the fuel that emanates from your core to bring your work to fruition. To stay cool while creating, dress beautifully in loose-fitting layers of natural fabrics such as silk, cotton, and hemp. Use bed linens of bamboo and eucalyptus.

Flower Essence of Larch (*Larix decidua*)

For many of us, sharing our creations with others is a vulnerable feat. As you move forward to display your skill, you might shrink back and feel a sense of "not good enough." The essence of this tree flower imbues you with a radiant confidence and a knowing that you do indeed have what it takes to live your highest potential.

BREAST TENDERNESS, HEADACHES & BODY ACHES

During the perimenopausal years, your joints and muscles become less lubricated, which creates inflammation and you experience more aches. Sometimes even regular activities such as hiking or gardening may feel intense for aging bodies. Keep in mind that pain alerts you to slow down and take it easy so you don't push yourself too far. This can be difficult for those who are the caregivers of the family and are used to neglecting their needs. During this time of life, it is typical to want to spend more time alone, so as to honor cycles of rest and renewal.

Transformation: More Time Given to Self-Care Practices

This transitional time provides you with opportunities to develop consistent self-care practices that perhaps you haven't allowed yourself in the past. As you heed the call of your body, you can choose to give yourself the nourishment you deserve. Cherish the "me time" and create rituals that feed body, mind, spirit, and soul. Engage in regular gentle exercise, take long walks in nature, eat foods that support a dynamic physical presence. Do whatever feels completely satisfying for the soul!

Flower Essence of Centaury (*Centaureum umbellatum*)

This tiny pink wildflower is useful for those who have trouble putting their own needs first. Women are often challenged in this area, as cultural norms place expectations on mothers and wives to provide care for the family. Centaury essence helps you to recognize your needs, perhaps for the first time in your life. From this place of awareness, you become able to care for yourself unapologetically and give care without resentment.