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# 3 Steps for Safely Escaping Hot Flash Hell

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# **3 Steps for Safely Escaping Hot Flash Hell**

**How to Manage Menopause Naturally**

The first and foremost symptom a woman in menopause complains to me about in my practice is hot flashes. Hot flashes can take over your life and make you feel really miserable- “hot flash hell”, as one of my clients described it.

In this report, I am going to discuss 3 steps to safely navigate menopause - related hot flashes. These are the three main alternatives to the conventional approach. They are herbal, plant-based hormones, and Neurotransmitter Balancing.

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Before we jump into the solutions, let us cover some basics about Menopause and hot flashes.

## **How often do you have Menopause symptoms?**

You may be having hot flashes every few days, every hour, or a few times a day, possibly waking in pools of sweat in the middle of the night, even in the dead of winter. Sleep usually suffers, and I have heard from a few thousand women that they typically wake up between 2-4am, throwing off the covers, try to cool off, attempting to get back to sleep.

## **Why do you have hot flashes, exactly?**

Hot flashes come on as estrogen and other hormones are declining when a woman stops ovulating. Estrogen plays a part in regulating body temperature. The average age of menopause is 50- 52, but menopause can happen from your 40's even until your mid to late 50's.

## **Controversy Regarding Conventional Therapy:**

There is controversy with the research and studies conducted on the medication typically prescribed for relieving hot flashes once your are entering menopause..

In the recent past, estrogen, in the form of Premarin, was the number one prescription to curb hot flashes, and to restore sleep, help vaginal dryness, improve mood, restore memory, improve bone density, and possibly reduce heart disease.

The problem is that in some women it can actually increase the risk for breast and uterine cancer and may contribute to blood clots and strokes! In fact, on April 1, 2012 (not an April Fool's joke, I assure you), a large study was presented at a cancer conference in Chicago showing potential serious outcomes of taking hormones over time. This is especially true with synthetic or horse-derived estrogens vs. bioidentical hormones.

## **The Research Findings**

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The research involved roughly 60,000 nurses who participated in The Nurses Health Study. Data was analyzed from 1980 through 2008.

Women who took both estrogen and progesterone (Prempro for example) had an 88 percent higher risk of breast cancer after 10 years on the treatment. Those who took estrogen alone for at least a decade had a 22 percent increased risk of developing breast cancer.

Those women who were exposed to just estrogen for more than 15 years had a 43 percent greater chance of being diagnosed with breast cancer. The lead author, Dr. Wendy Chen, is quoted as saying, "There's a continued increase in risk with longer durations of use and there does not appear to be a plateau."

So, more and more women are seeking natural alternatives that will stop hot flash hell and support mood, memory and sleep, without putting them at risk for potentially life-threatening illness.

### **Natural approaches v.s. risky medication:**

The good news is that we are living in a time that we have a number of safe, natural methods that can work very well with little risk. There are non-hormonal herbal and nutritional support products, as well as plant-based bio-identical hormones that work very quickly to bring relief – within days or a week of beginning the supplementation.

#### **1. Herbal Extracts that can Help!**

There are a number of herbal remedies - usually concentrated, standardized extracts of the plant- that can help you reduce hot flashes and menopausal issues with little risk, since they are not contributing actual hormones to your body..

Nonetheless, if you have breast or uterine cancer, or have a family history of those diseases, you should get professional guidance when taking herbal extracts. Every woman is different as to how they respond to herbal

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remedies, so you may have to safely try different remedies until you have the one that works for you.

**Black Cohosh:** One the best known herbs is Black Cohosh. (1) It has a lot of research on it for helping relieve symptoms of hot flashes, but with mixed outcomes.

I observe that it is useful for women with mild hot flashes, but doesn't seem to work well for women with severe hot flashes.

It is generally safe, but should not be used if you have liver disease. Quality and consistent dose is vital to get the best outcomes.

**Siberian Rhubarb Root:** A new, very promising remedy is, strangely enough, an extract derived from Siberian rhubarb root! It has been shown to relieve hot flashes and even anxiety and depression associated with menopause (2).

It has been shown to be very safe in animal studies, and is thought to not increase breast cancer risk. Many women only need 1 or 2 pills daily to get significant relief.

This extract is only available through qualified health professionals. And only one doctors' line of supplements makes it. (They offer a 90-day money-back guarantee!).

I have witnessed good results in about 60% of the women who use the product.

**Soy isoflavones:** There seems to be a lot of controversy about eating soy, or taking concentrated isoflavone supplements from soy, to reduce menopausal symptoms.

Because isoflavones – a naturally occurring chemical in soy and other plants- have mild estrogenic affects, it's been thought that it may contribute to breast cancer.

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This has never been proven - in fact the majority of studies show benefit in reducing menopausal symptoms, and some studies show that they possibly have protective effects against cancer. (3)

Just by eating 30-80mg of isoflavones in soy foods help balance hormone levels and have some estrogenic activity. There is ongoing research about the safety and efficacy of isolated soy isoflavone supplements.

While the initial results look promising, I currently recommend using natural foods made from whole soybeans rather than supplements. Choose from tofu, soymilk, edamame, roasted soy nuts or tempeh, a few times a week.

Again, this should be evaluated with a health professional, especially if you have cancer risk or suspect you are allergic to soy products. Always use non-GMO soy products.

There are a number of other herbal extracts that may be helpful as well. Consult your natural health professional to find out which one may be right for you.

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## **2. Plant Based hormones:**

If herbal extracts are not working well enough, you may want to consider either a non-prescriptive plant-based hormonal support, or prescriptive plant-based, bio-identical hormones from a compounding pharmacy.

There is a new plant-based remedy that contains estriol- the weakest and safest estrogen, combined with natural progesterone.

It is in a base of essential oils and works by applying it topically on the skin. This remedy usually works very quickly. It is only available through health professionals and is non-prescriptive.

The dose varies greatly depending on your response to it, as well as how low your hormones have dropped. The risk of side effects appears to be lower with these natural hormones, but there still may be some risk involved in certain cases.

### **3. Neurotransmitter Balancing: An Overlooked Problem**

Neurotransmitters are the chemicals of mood, energy, and sleep. You have probably heard of serotonin, a major neurotransmitter that is essential for good sleep, good mood, and even reducing hot flashes.

Serotonin, and another chemical called GABA, can be very low in menopausal women. This is highly overlooked. I test these on a regular basis with a simple urine test you can do at home. Sometimes a woman needs both natural hormone support as well as fortifying neurotransmitter balance to get the best outcome.

If these chemicals are imbalanced it becomes much more difficult to tolerate stress, get good sleep, and maintain positive mood. Some doctors prescribe anti-depressant medication for women in menopause. I truly think most women do not need anti-depressants – they need to balance their neurotransmitters, naturally.

There are safe, natural remedies that increase serotonin and GABA. For example, 5HTP is a precursor to serotonin. It is very safe, well studied, and is typically very effective. There are professional supplements that contain amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and herbal extracts that are very targeted for either increasing or decreasing neurotransmitter levels, depending on what the test results are showing.

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I use a lab called ZRT to measure neurotransmitter levels. I recommend the sophisticated professional supplements to balance your neurotransmitters. It is usually very effective.

#### **4. Bonus: Lifestyle Factors:**

**Keep cool:** Slight increases in your body's core temperature can trigger hot flashes. Dress in layers so that you can remove outer clothing when you feel too warm. Open a window or use a fan or air conditioner to keep air flowing. Lower the room temperature, if you can. If you feel a hot flash coming on, sip a cold drink.

Watch what you eat and drink. Hot and spicy foods, caffeinated beverages and alcohol can trigger hot flashes. Learn to recognize your own triggers and avoid foods or drinks that bring on hot flashes.

**Relax:** Some women find relief from mild hot flashes through yoga, meditation, relaxation or other stress-reducing techniques. Even if these approaches don't quell your hot flashes, they may provide other benefits, such as easing the sleep disturbances that tend to occur with menopause. Don't smoke. Smoking is linked to increased hot flashes. By not smoking, you may reduce hot flashes, as well as your risk of many serious health conditions such as heart disease, stroke and cancer.

You don't have to keep suffering through hot flash hell any longer! There is a safe, natural alternative for you that can work very quickly.

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