
The Truth About Mood Swings During Menopause

Contributed by Webmaster

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Menopause and mood swings go hand-in-hand for around 45% of woman, many of whom consider the emotional rollercoaster ride to be one of the most annoying symptoms of menopause. Whether youve been feeling depressed or anxious or youre sad one minute and happy the next, understand that there is a reason for your unpredictable moods and there are ways to get back to your old self.

The causes of mood swings: hormone imbalance

While theres no clear medical explanation for how hormones affect mood, its clear that they do have a profound impact on the way we feel from one day to the next and even one moment to the next. Whats known is that estrogen, testosterone, and androgen stimulate the nervous system, while cortisol and progesterone have a depressant effect.

When levels of stimulating hormones fall, youre left with a relative excess of calming hormones which can have an overall depressive effect on your mood. These hormones also control your level of serotonin, the chemical that directly controls you mood. When hormones alter your brains level of this chemical, youre mood is bound to get out of whack.

Menopause and depression

While a fall in estrogen and testosterone are partly to blame for feelings of depression, theyre not the whole story. Sometimes simple exhaustion can leave you with an usually low mood. Lets face it, going through menopause can wear you out. The hot flashes, the sleeping problems and even stress from physical changes like irregular periods, weight gain, and hair loss. Even on a good day, this kind of stress can leave you irritable, but combine that with hormone fluctuations and youve got a recipe for disaster.

How to control mood swings

If youre suffering from menopause insomnia, youre first step in alleviating mood swings should be to find ways to sleep better at night. Being exhausted naturally leads to anxiety, irritability, and depression.

If youre sleeping all right and suspect your mood swings may be coming more from stress and hormones, try to carve out a little you time to refresh your mind and spirit. It doesnt have to be a week-long get-away; even 15 minutes of meditation a day can help.

Your everyday activities also play a role. If youre feeling over-extended and stressed out, try to take some time to do something you enjoy, even if its just going for a walk in the park. Half an hour of exercise each day can also help stabilize your mood.

For serious mood swings, doctors sometimes recommend low-dose oral contraceptives because they keep your hormone levels stable, which in turn keeps your mood stable.

Natural treatments for menopause mood swings

There are also certain vitamins and herbs that can also help stabilize your mood. The B complex vitamins are particularly

important because they keep your nervous system healthy. They also affect levels of the neurotransmitters that control your mood. Vitamin B6, for example, is essential for converting tryptophan to serotonin. For herbal treatment for mood swings during menopause, look into St. Johns work, kava kava and hops.

Many women accept menopause mood swings as a natural part of going through the change of life, but in reality theres a lot you can do to keep your mood stable during this time. For some women the solution may be as simple as doing a little yoga every day, while others may benefit more from hormone replacement therapy.

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