

## Weight and Menopause

Menopause is a normal part of aging most women begin to experience between the ages of forty-seven and fifty-two. Menopause is brought on by reduction of hormones like estrogen and progesterone. As the process progresses, a woman will eventually completely cease producing these hormones completely. Menopause brings with it many changes. Most women find they have difficulty concentrating on tasks they previously enjoyed. Many suffer terrible mood swings. Most endure potentially debilitating hot flashes and night sweats. Others endure regular joint pain and headaches. Many women complain of sleeping difficulties. However, one of the most dreaded menopause-related problems is weight gain. In recent years, there have been many scientific studies examining the link between menopause and weight gain in an attempt to understand how women can prevent this problem.

One interesting study suggested that as a woman loses two very important hormones, estrogen and progesterone, she will be predisposed to gain more weight she no longer burns the calories necessary to manufacture the hormones. Moreover, because most women experience fatigue and feel generally unwell during this time, they do not tend to retain their motivation to stick with their normal exercise routine. Couple this with the fact that her condition brings on a sudden craving for standard comfort foods and desserts, which are usually high in calories, and you have a recipe for certain weight gain. Menopause also brings with it a decrease in metabolism rate, which leads to even more retained calories.

All of these factors combined can also make it very difficult for a menopausal woman to lose any weight she has gained. Losing weight during menopause is certainly possible, but is a daunting challenge. The most important adjustment a woman can make is to work with her resting metabolic rate or resting energy expenditure. To retain a healthy weight, the resting metabolic rate should account for more than seventy percent of the energy use on a daily basis. Because this rate is related to an individual's muscle mass, the resting metabolic rate will decrease as a woman ages and loses muscle mass.

In order to lose weight during menopause, it is wise to begin by making dietary changes. Refrain from turning to high calorie comfort foods during this challenging time. A sensible diet should consist primarily of fruits and vegetables, lean meats, brown rice, whole grain bread, and whole wheat flour. It is also wise to change one's eating habits. Consider four to five small meals each day, rather than the customary three big meals per day. Each small meal should be healthy and balanced. This will help weight disappear and stay away. Proper exercise can also assist in the fight against weight gain. Moreover, proper exercise can give you a better feeling of well-being during this difficult time.

For the most part, losing weight during menopause is as basic as losing weight at any other point in your life. The bottom line is that you must consume fewer calories than you burn during the course of your normal routine. It might help to avoid fast food and start by walking for thirty minutes daily. These two simple things alone can strengthen your heart muscle and help you feel better about your life. If you are concerned about weight gain, consult your physician and the two of you can set up a suitable program.