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ON BEAUTY

# How to Manage MENOPAUSE

By Fiona Wright M.D.

**M**any women going through menopause find that it brings on a number of unwanted changes and for many it is no vacation! Hot flashes, night sweats, weight gain, mood swings, dry skin, vaginal dryness, and unwanted hair growth can all come on with a vengeance when menopause hits! During this time, estrogen levels drop. This decrease in estrogen can affect every organ of the body, including skin. The result- dry, sagging skin, wrinkles, and other problems. Whether you choose to upgrade to a new anti-aging product or opt for a more dramatic change with cosmetic procedures, here's a selection of effective alternatives.

**Menopause is a natural cycle of life for women. At about age 45, the body begins decreasing its production of estrogen. This phase is known as perimenopause. Menopause occurs when the body completely stops producing estrogen. Whether going through perimenopause or menopause, now is a good time to start managing some of the visible signs by seeking professional medical advice.**

## Weight Gain

No matter how much you work out, no matter how many abdominal crunches you do, it gets harder to keep that tiny waistline as you go through menopause. Menopause is associated with a natural decline in estrogen, causing muscle mass and strength to typically diminish while fat increases. The loss of muscle mass decreases the rate at which your body uses calories, which can make it more challenging to maintain a healthy weight. If you continue to eat as you always have and don't increase your physical activity, you're likely to gain weight. But, for many, we face the challenge of finding more time in our hectic schedules to increase our exercise routine. Then, once you have been able to ramp up the exercise, a very common concern that my patients have when losing weight is that they start to lose fat in their face and start to look too old! Many of us



have experienced our friends saying to us "Don't lose any more weight as you are starting to look old!" To solve this problem, we have introduced the *HCG Diet to Skin MD and Beyond*—where it only removes fat in your troubled areas—not your face!

## How Does the HCG Diet Work?

Your body produces 3 types of fat-structural, normal reserve, and abnormal (deep) fat that is locked away, usually in the abdomen or hips. The HCG (Human Chorionic Gonadotropin) hormone is effective in removing the stubborn deeper fat that we all get frustrated with. This hormone injection diet allows the body to fuel us with our needed energy by pulling out calories stored in the deep fat layers. The most effective weight reduction comes when you follow a 500 calorie diet. I know what you are thinking; there is no way that I can survive on so few calories. Let me ease your mind. Since the HCG is pulling the abnormal fat and making it readily available for the body to use as fuel, you do not need as many calories to satisfy you. I feel that the HCG Diet is a great kick start to a healthy lifestyle change. You can obtain the results you are looking for in a safe and professional medical environment.

## Hot Flashes/Night Sweats

Hot flashes are the most common bothersome symptom of menopause. They can occur during the day or at night (also known as night sweats). Researchers find that women with hot flashes have more sensitive thermostats in their brain, so are comfortable only in a



and reducing stress are the principal lifestyle changes to treat your hot flashes.

Some helpful nutritional guidelines are:

- Soy foods have isoflavones which can help balance hormone levels and have some estrogenic activity. Natural soy foods rather than supplements work best. Choose from tofu, soy milk and roasted soy nuts.
- Flaxseed Oil contains lignins which are important for hormone metabolism. Grind flaxseed in a coffee grinder at home and use 1 to 2 tablespoons a day.
- Evening Primrose Oil is a good source of gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), an essential fatty acid that can help influence prostaglandin synthesis and help reduce menopausal symptoms.

As noted by the Mayo Clinic, the most effective treatment for hot flashes is estrogen, but taking this hormone can increase your risk of developing other health problems. Medications such as antidepressants and anti-seizure drugs also may help reduce hot flashes. Discuss the pros and cons of various treatments with your doctor. If hot flashes are minimal, you may not need treatment and for most women, hot flashes fade gradually within a few years.

## Wrinkles

As estrogen levels decrease, your collagen level (the key protein in your skin) drops, making skin more prone to wrinkling during and after menopause. **Vitamin A** (retinoids) and **Vitamin C**

are the most researched, most proven antioxidants to help with aging as they build collagen.

**Antioxidants** can also help by disabling Free Radicals, which are damaging particles generated by sun, pollution and aging that attack the DNA of healthy skin cells, leading to wrinkles, discoloration and possibly cancer. Studies have also shown that topical **Coenzyme Q10, Vitamin E, and Green Tea** offer great anti-aging benefits and a "mix of antioxidants" creates the best results!

**Peptides** are another skin care ingredient helpful to aging skin. They help minimize fine lines and wrinkles by increasing the thickness of the skin. While many women have seen the benefits of **Botox/Dysport and Facial Fillers** to remove the lines and wrinkles, **Resurfacing Lasers** can also improve skin texture, stimulate collagen, and reduce fine lines and pigmentation.

## Dryness

Dryness is a common menopause symptom as the lack of estrogen affects our ability to hold moisture in both our skin and vaginal lining.

**For Facial Care** use a good hydrator and moisturizer to help with water loss and seal the skin. Your skincare should include two steps:

- 1) Twice daily use of topical **Hyaluronic Acid**, which is an extremely effective humectant to rehydrate, smooth and firm your skin.
- 2) Twice daily use of an **Anti-Oxidant Moisturizer** to provide an occlusive barrier to preserve the water you have in your skin and prevent water loss. Therefore, you should hydrate your skin first, then apply your moisturizer.

**Vaginal Dryness** in menopause often can lead to pain with intercourse and can be associated with arousal difficulties as well. To address these concerns, I recommend **ThermiVa Vaginal Rejuvenation** which has been found to be effective in helping to reduce vaginal dryness and urinary leakage, and help improve symptoms of orgasmic dysfunction.

ThermiVA involves a non-surgical procedure which uses an "S" shape handheld wand to deliver controlled comfortable radiofrequency thermal energy to the desired treatment areas.



Fiona Wright MD is the founder of Skin MD and Beyond. She has lived and practiced in Collin County for 20 years and has earned a reputation as one of the premier physicians in Cosmetic Dermatology in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Dr. Wright has been featured in several NBC News Health Reports and is well known for her expertise and honest opinions.

To learn more logon to:  
[www.SkinMDandBeyond.com](http://www.SkinMDandBeyond.com)  
[www.RxBeautyBar.com](http://www.RxBeautyBar.com)

When the tissues are gently heated to a therapeutic level, it will provide effective vaginal rejuvenation.

## Sagging Skin

In addition to skin problems caused by accumulated sun damage, lifestyle choices, and your genetics, menopause just makes matters worse. Seemingly overnight, many women find that their skin tone has taken a nosedive down toward looking older. The treatment plan for this is a one-two punch to address the volume loss and laxity.

For volume loss, **Facial Fillers** like Juvéderm, Restylane-Lyft, and Voluma can lift the cheeks, eyelids and jowls to restore natural curves and fullness to the face. These in-office procedures have minimal recovery time and outstanding results.

For facial laxity **ThermiSMOOTH** is an excellent procedure to tighten facial skin where wrinkles and sagging have begun—with no pain or downtime. It is the perfect choice for skin tightening around the eyes, cheeks and mouth.

For the body, **ThermiSHAPE** is a great solution to address skin laxity, as well as cellulite and unwanted inches. This revolutionary non-surgical, no downtime sculpting procedure is simple and gives you measurable improvements!

The truth is that menopause does have its challenges, but hopefully with a few of these remedies managing your menopause just got easier!

