

The seven ages of woman



Sometimes it's hard to be a woman. Years of painful PMT followed by a prolonged and difficult menopause are just two of the hurdles facing women in their lives. But how can they treat their symptoms and improve their well being naturally?

Nicola Wortelhock and Paul Newbon report

Statistics show great changes over the past century in terms of longevity for women. In 1900 the average life expectancy was 48, while girls born today can expect to live to just over 80, three or four years longer than their male counterparts. But for many, it's no easy ride. Women tend to face more health hurdles than men, generally speaking, the majority of which have one common root cause — hormones. Here we track the fluctuations through the ages and look at the resulting problems many women face.

Troublesome teens

For teenage girls in the 21st century, it's all about looking great. They dream of becoming a footballer's wife, a glamour model like Jordan, or, heaven forbid, a *Big Brother* winner. All this

means that the young girls of today pay constant vigilance to their appearance. A spot on a vital Saturday night can bring their whole world crashing down. Worse still, acne can cause misery, teasing, bullying and low self esteem. Approximately 75% of spots occur in the teens and early twenties due to the hormonal changes associated with puberty and periods. Although some media reports state that the onset of puberty is getting younger and younger, Dr Russell Viner at Great Ormond Street states that "the average age for the onset of puberty in girls is still between 10 and 11, when the first bodily changes start occurring, while menstruation begins at 13".

So what's a girl to do about those annoying spots? Freederm is a topical anti-inflammatory treatment targeting the inflammation responsible for spots and pimples. Used twice a day it can reduce the redness and inflammation as well as acting as a preventative to new spots forming.

Today's young girls, fastidious to the point of obsession about their weight and body image,

rightly or wrongly, want to achieve a waif-like appearance, and many follow a poor diet to achieve this. As a result, one of the most common mineral deficiencies found among teenage girls and young women is calcium. Calcium builds strong bones and teeth and is found in 99% of the whole body — more than any other mineral. It is also needed to metabolise iron, another important supplement for teenage girls beginning the life of the menstrual cycle set to last for 40 years or so. This does not cease after the teenage years.

Young women are particularly at risk of iron deficient anaemia and, in later life, osteoporosis as they tend to avoid the very dairy products that help to build bones, such as milk, cheese and eggs, which they perceive to be fattening. Interestingly, while girls are happy to avoid even tea and coffee, they are more than happy to indulge themselves in fizzy drinks which are disastrous for bone density. Carbonated drinks contain phosphoric acid which is detrimental to bones and the oxalic acid in chocolate can also reduce the absorption of calcium.

Geoff Collins, Vitabiotics marketing manager makes the point: "While a number of groups can benefit from safeguarding their bone health — including growing children, teenagers, pregnant women, women of menopausal age and the elderly — it is particularly important for teenagers to consider bone health as the bones are developing rapidly at that time."

Another threat to bone health is smoking. More teenage girls and young women smoke than their male counterparts. They do so to look older or more sophisticated and to suppress their appetite as the media relentlessly bombards them with waif-like role-models — Kate Moss being a case in point who compounds the problem by often being photographed with a cigarette in her hand. Smoking also helps to destroy healthy bones and, as your average young woman today is less active when compared with previous generations, weight bearing exercise, which also aids the fight against osteoporosis, is substantially decreased.

Research shows that there is a strong link between the peak bone mass women are likely to attain during their early twenties and bone health later in life. Osteocare is not a substitute for a healthy diet but as the UK's best selling bone health supplement it has been scientifically developed to help maintain strong bones. The formula contains the full RDA of calcium, magnesium and vitamin D3 as well as 4 additional supporting nutrients for bones and joints.

Calcium and iron deficiency in young life can

plague a woman all her life with problems.

Dr Hilary Jones has this advice: "In adults, iron deficiency is most commonly caused by losing blood faster than the body can remake it. Therefore women with heavy periods may find they become iron deficient at certain times of the month and consequently feel tired or run down. I recommend taking a liquid iron supplement because the body will absorb the iron most effectively."

An easy way to boost iron levels quickly and effectively is to take a sachet of Spatone every day throughout a period. Spatone claims to quickly replace the lost iron caused by heavy periods, helping to maintain your energy levels at this time of the month.

Pre-menstrual Syndrome

Women spend over two years of their lives — a staggering 18,480 hours, or 770 days — overwhelmed by the symptoms of PMS, according to a survey of more than 1,000 women by Magnesium-OK, the nutritional supplement for hormone balance. The survey revealed that almost 84% of women in the UK suffer from PMS, with two thirds of the female population claiming that monthly hormonal mood swings made them irritable or aggressive. An astonishing 42% said they had even started a fight or argument at that time of the month.

Almost half of those questioned said that feeling emotional and low was by far the worst PMS symptom, while worryingly eight per cent said they felt that anti-depressants were the only long-term solution. One in four had resorted to taking the contraceptive pill to balance hormones, while 20% relied on dietary supplements. Thirty per cent said that getting regular exercise also helped to lessen their symptoms.

Rita Stoffaneller from Magnesium-OK says: "PMS is often underestimated as a syndrome, but these results really go to show that it is a huge issue for many women, and one which interestingly involves emotional turmoil far more frequently than pain. Increased understanding of PMS is essential to help the thousands of women who are suffering in silence."

A magnesium supplement such as Magnesium-OK could help to boost levels of nutrients that have been shown in research to be of benefit for premenstrual mood changes and ease the symptoms of fluid retention (including weight gain and bloating) and premenstrual migraines. Magnesium concentrations are significantly lower in women with PMS than in the normal population. Fish oils have been proven to boost the immune system and assist even in extreme cases of PMT (Pre-Menstrual Tension).

Interior designer Caroline Smith, 23, from Wimbledon thought she had lost her boyfriend for good, before she was diagnosed by her doctor as suffering from PMDD (Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder), a severe form of PMS (premenstrual syndrome). After her boyfriend had left her, one of Caroline's work colleagues suggested she look at taking a fish oil supplement to help her body cope with and counteract the worst effects of severe PMT.

Caroline remembers: "A friend of mine directed me to the VegEPA website and I ordered some VegEPA capsules immediately. I would say it took about six weeks, two months at a maximum, for me to really notice the difference VegEPA had made."

essential lines



Freederderm Gel has already become the UK's best selling treatment in the spot/acne category. The majority of spot sufferers tend to be teenagers and young adults, as the increased hormonal activity associated with the onset of puberty can trigger this common skin condition. But it isn't just a 'teenage thing'. A fluctuation in hormones means acne can affect women around the time of their periods as well as during pregnancy or after giving birth. Freederderm Gel's unique formulation contains nicotinamide, a clinically proven anti-inflammatory that combats the redness, inflammation and tenderness associated with spots. Rrp is £8.95 for a 25g pack.

DENDRON 01923 229251



It's that time of the month; you are feeling low in energy and a little under the weather, but this is no surprise considering one in ten women become iron deficient due to heavy monthly periods.

Iron is an essential mineral for carrying oxygen around the body so consequently those who are iron deficient get tired very easily because their bodies are short of oxygen. An easy way to boost your iron levels quickly and effectively is to take a sachet of Spatone every day throughout a period. Spatone is a natural iron containing spa water found in the Welsh mountains of Snowdonia National Park. It quickly replaces the lost iron caused by heavy periods, helping to maintain your energy levels at this time of the month. The iron in Spatone can be easily absorbed by the body because it is in liquid rather than tablet form. This means that all the side effects commonly associated with iron supplements such as nausea, constipation and headaches can be avoided. Rrp is £6.49 for 28 sachets (four weeks supply).

NELSONS FREEPHONE TRADE ORDER LINE 0800 289 515

Omega 7 is a nutritional supplement derived from berries of the sea buckthorn plant (*Hippopae Rhamnoides*), a shrub originating in the Himalayas. The oil is a rich source of the essential polyunsaturated omega 7 fatty acids (PUFAs) – palmitoleic acid and cis-vaccenic acid. It also provides omega 3 (alpha linolenic acid), 6 (linoleic acid) and 9 (oleic acid), as well as containing high levels of antioxidants in the form of tocopherols, tocotrienols, carotenoids, plant sterols and vitamin C. Sea buckthorn oil may help to maintain healthy mucous membranes, such as those of the vaginal tract which may become dry through the menopause. Mucous membranes also line the surface of the digestive system and respiratory tract. Omega 7 may also help to maintain a healthy immune system and promote normal inflammatory responses.

PHARMA NORD 01670 519989



Prelox is a patented combination of L-arginine aspartate and pycnogenol. Together these two substances may help to maintain healthy blood vessels and sustain blood flow to the genital area, which is important in the body's sexual response, ability to maintain erections and ultimate sexual satisfaction. L-arginine is an essential amino acid found in many foods and is used by the body to form a substance called nitric oxide which plays an important role in controlling blood vessel diameter, and hence blood circulatory flow.

Pycnogenol is obtained only from an extract of the bark of the French Maritime pine tree. It contains substances which activate enzymes within the body necessary for converting L-arginine into nitric oxide. In addition, pycnogenol contains powerful antioxidants, which may help to maintain healthy blood vessels by protecting against damaging free radicals continuously produced by the body.

PHARMA NORD 01670 519989

CherryActive is a new UK-based company that promotes and sells its own brand of Montmorency Cherry Juice Concentrate. It could be described as a new 'wonder' juice, as it is proven to have significant anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, and is used by gout and arthritis sufferers in particular. Montmorency cherries have been discovered to be a rich source of potent, natural antioxidants and flavonoids. Ongoing scientific research is unveiling the powerful, health-promoting qualities of Montmorency cherry compounds. Results of these studies suggest that regular consumption of Montmorency cherry products can help to maintain healthy joint function, normal uric acid levels, a healthy cardiovascular system, regular sleep patterns and muscle strength and recovery. Each 946ml bottle contains over 3,000 cherries, (half a tree's worth) which have been pitted, pressed and warmed to produce the deep concentrate. CherryActive Capsules are another way to enjoy the healthy rewards of this daily regime. Each 60-capsule tub contains a one to two month supply. For further information and mail order visit www.cherryactive.co.uk

CHERRYACTIVE 08451 705 705



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LIPObind is a new product that helps naturally reduce the amount of fat the body absorbs

from food. It is a certified medical product made from dried cactus extract, which in clinical trials has been proven to remove 27% of undigested fats and up to 150 calories from a standard meal. It is ideal for helping people achieve a healthy body weight, preventing future weight gain and for those who cannot always find healthy eating options while on the move or who worry about the amount of fat they consume. It has also been shown to decrease food cravings and reduce blood cholesterol. Taken after food, LIPObind immediately attaches to dietary fats in the stomach creating a fat-fibre complex that is too large to be absorbed in the small intestine. Two LIPObind tablets have been proven to bind with up to 17g of fat, which is then passed naturally through the body. LIPObind has a rrp of £24.95 for 60 tablets. Visit www.lipobind.com for more information. **CEUTA HEALTHCARE 01202 780558**

Pharma Nord has launched Bio-CLA+Green Tea in the UK to offer a new product giving a combination of proven ingredients to help with weight and body management. CLA and green tea extract work together to maintain a healthy muscle/fat tissue balance within the body. Bio-CLA+Green Tea is to be used in conjunction with exercise and a healthy diet for maximum effect, to help customers to achieve the body shape they want. CLA is an essential fatty acid, one of a group of substances, which are an indispensable part of a healthy balanced diet, and is found mainly in beef, veal, turkey, and certain dairy products. Green tea is known to increase fat metabolism. Scientific studies have shown that the fat metabolism is increased by as much as 12% with help from green tea, so it is an effective way of helping the body get rid of excess fat.

PHARMA NORD 01670 519989



"VegEPA has helped me to manage my mood swings and I feel so much more stable now. I've gone from being at my wit's end to actually getting my boyfriend back in my life. We are living together and last month he proposed to me and we are now engaged."

In several studies by Professor Basant Buri at Hammersmith Hospital, high supplementation of EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) has been found to have a highly beneficial effect on the symptoms of extreme PMT. This is because the body metabolises EFAs (essential fatty acids) into hormone-like substances called prostaglandins that can help to regulate the menstrual cycle. To find out more visit www.vegepa.com.

Weight management

Broadly the thirties and forties can be divided into mothers juggling busy jobs and homes and the footloose and fancy free stay-out-late, eating on-the-hoof, Bridget Jones set. But both groups can suffer stress, vitamin and mineral deficiencies, tiredness, depression and self image

issues, albeit for wildly different reasons.

There seems to be very few women who are entirely happy with their bodies. Dieting and weight control is high on the agenda. Poor diets, lack of exercise, lack of time and poor dietary education seem all to be leading to more obesity.

In 1993 the proportion of women classed as obese was 16.4%. In 2005 this had risen to 24.8%. In 2003, ex-cigarette smokers were more likely to be obese than current smokers and those who had never smoked. This statistic bodes badly with regard to recent legislation on smoking. Whereas it is a good thing to cease smoking, to then become obese is another factor which has a negative impact on long term health. Obese women are almost 13 times more likely to develop Type 2 Diabetes. In 1999 just over 127,000 prescription items were dispensed for the treatment of obesity, this increased by nearly 600% to 871,000 in 2005 (Statistic on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet, England 2006, NHS, The Information Centre).

A new survey has found that two thirds of people worry about the amount of fat they consume. (Survey by 72 Point of 4,000 adults conducted in July 2007). The recommended intake of fat is 40g daily for women. LIPObind is a new product that naturally helps to reduce the amount of fat the body absorbs from food. It is a certified medical product made from dried cactus extract, which in clinical trials has been proven to remove 27% of undigested fats and up to 150 calories from a standard meal. (Pilot Clinical Study on Fat Binding).

Nutritionist Dr Chris Fenn says: "Excessive fat intake not only causes people to be overweight but has more serious health implications such as coronary artery disease and strokes. Products that reduce the amount of fat the body absorbs can be effective, especially if people follow a healthy diet and get regular exercise."

Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) is a naturally occurring fatty acid found in meat and dairy products that works by blocking the uptake of fat in fat cells. The blocked fat cells are forwarded to the muscle cells and converted into energy. Green tea (GT), meanwhile, contains active substances called catechins that are known to increase fat metabolism and the conversion of fat to energy. 'Fatbusting' is the term used when the body gets rid of by boosting the fat metabolism. Two fat busters that have proved to be particularly effective are CLA and GT, especially when combined.

A new product, Bio-CLA+ Green Tea from Pharma Nord may help to maintain a healthy weight when taken with exercise and a healthy diet. The constituents work together to maintain a healthy muscle to fat ratio. The green tea inhibits the fat absorption in the intestine along with powerful antioxidant properties.

Midlife and the menopause

As women reach for natural remedies to get themselves through the menopause, falling numbers of women using HRT has led to a fall in incidence of breast cancer, researchers are claiming. Scientists at the University of California looked at breast cancer rates among women who had received screening between 1997 and 2003. They collected data on more than 600,000 mammograms performed on those aged 50 to 69, according to a recent report in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. As a result of the

HRT scares five years ago, researchers found that HRT went from a decline in use of seven per cent a year between 2001 and 2002 to a dramatic drop of 34% between 2002 and 2003.

During the same period, breast cancer rates declined annually by five per cent, with forms of the disease sensitive to hormones dropping by 13% a year from 2001 to 2003. The report says: "Our results suggest that a decline in postmenopausal hormone therapy use has contributed to the decline in breast cancer incidence in the US."

The menopause can be a difficult time, with many women suffering adverse effects such as hot flushes and night sweats. Isoflavones, containing soya isoflavones, can help to control and combat these conditions, naturally and holistically. Soya isoflavones, derived from soya beans, are phytoestrogens and thereby work by boosting the levels of oestrogen in the body, lessening the menopausal effect.

The benefits of soya isoflavones have long been recognised in Japan where menopausal women typically experience significantly fewer symptoms during the menopause than western women, which has been linked to their consumption of soy products which help to keep oestrogen at more normal levels.

Onsy Morris, consultant gynaecologist from the New Victoria Hospital, says: "I see many menopausal patients who would prefer for whatever reason not to go the HRT route. Many tell me they have experienced considerable success with Isoflavones. They find that they can now go through menopause more easily."

Isoflavones cost £14.95 for one month's supply. For more information call 020 8965 6753 or log on to www.isoformforwomen.co.uk

A study to be published in a forthcoming edition of the Scandinavian Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology reveals that pycnogenol (pinenol-ol), pine bark extract from the French maritime pine tree, reduces "climacteric symptoms" such as hot flushes, depression, panic attacks, cholesterol and other common symptoms associated with women entering the perimenopause. The results suggest pycnogenol may serve as an alternative treatment to oestrogen replacement therapy, which is the most common remedy of pre-menopause ("perimenopausal") symptoms.

Post menopause, the hormonal issues can be a thing of the past. Other problems can present themselves, however. The non-production of progesterone can speed up the onset of osteoporosis. It thins and weakens the bones making breaking bones much more likely through a fall. In the Health Survey for England 2006: Health of Older People, published in March this year, 29% of women over the age of 65 reported a fall within the last year as opposed to 23% of the male counterparts. Furthermore the survey reported that 65% of women had difficulty walking up a flight of stairs without resting as opposed to 48% of men.

But by far the commonest chronic disease reported by women, 47%, was arthritis.

Therefore it is evident that mobility is a major issue and the key to the independent life that older people wish to extend for as long as possible, often not wanting to be "a burden" on others. Geographic mobility means that families are often not within calling distance and often the only alternative when independence is lost



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This formula from the renowned Californian herbalist and clinician, Dr Michael Tierra provides together specific traditional Chinese and North American botanicals to support the glandular system and may support women through hormonal transitions associated with the menopause. Its key constituent herbs, wild yam and black cohosh, are rich sources of compounds known as phytoestrogens. The Chinese herb dong quai is renowned among herbalists for being a respected female tonifier and has been held so there for over a thousand years. Wild Yam/Black Cohosh Complex also includes

American ginseng, sarsaparilla, licorice root, saw palmetto extract, saw palmetto berry, ginger root and goldenseal root. As the supplement contains black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*) which may be associated, if rarely, with liver toxicity, it should not be taken without the advice of a physician or health care professional.

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Many women find going through the menopause a difficult time, suffering adverse symptoms such as hot flushes and night sweats. Isovon, containing soya isoflavones, can help to control these symptoms, naturally and holistically. Soya isoflavones, derived from soya beans, are phytoestrogens, compounds of plant origin that are similar to the female hormone oestrogen. Isoflavones work by regulating the activity of oestrogen – reducing or activating it as necessary. This means that many of the unpleasant effects of the menopause can be lessened.

ISOVON 020 8965 6753



Among the many phytoestrogens in the human diet are isoflavones, which are found primarily in legume plants such as soya and red clover. Kudzu root is also a rich source of different isoflavone compounds, so Power Health has incorporated high quality standardised extracts from all three of these plants in its tablets. Phytoestrogens can be consumed by purely increasing dietary intake, but this involves eating large amounts of legume plants such as peas and beans, with variable phytoestrogen content. Supplements such as Power Health's Soya Isoflavones with Kudzu Root & Red Clover Tablets provide a convenient alternative. Rrp is £5.99 for 30 tablets.

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the residential home. Glucosamine is a building block of many constituents of cartilage including the increased production of hyaluronic acid. Glucosamine aids in the elasticity and strength and can improve joint function. Furthermore it can increase the resilience of joints and therefore reducing pain.

hondroitin can be taken in conjunction with glucosamine as it adds thickness and elasticity of the cartilage further increasing the resilience and will help to absorb impact.

These two components can also be taken with omega-3 fatty acids (EPA and DHA) which have been shown to slow down or even halt the enzymes that destroy the cartilage in arthritis.

Additionally the omega-3 seem to act as preventative for coronary heart disease and stroke. They can reduce cholesterol and triglycerides, both of which are active in heart disease.

To help women as they get older, Pharma Nord's Omega-7 supplement is derived from the sea buckthorn plant originating from the Himalayas. The oil is rich in omega-7 fatty acids which can enhance general health but especially may aid the healthy mucus membranes – the linings of the genital, respiratory and digestive tracts. It may also promote a healthy immune system and maintain a healthy skin.

What is evident is that firm building blocks must be laid in each age of a woman's life to do the utmost to promote a healthy, mobile and ultimately happy life one. Young girls cannot reject bone health as a problem to be dealt with in later life. Prevention is always better than cure. And remember the seventies are the new sixties, the sixties the new fifties and so on. Women are living longer, and still longer than men. Let's really make the best of it!