

*\*content written for a women's digital health platform to go live in winter '22*

## **Eleven Menopausal Symptoms that Might Surprise You**

The most commonly known symptoms associated with menopause, from peri to post, are widely known. Some of these symptoms include hot flashes, vaginal dryness, brain fog, sleep disturbance, and depression/mood changes.<sup>1</sup> There are approximately 34 symptoms of menopause,<sup>2</sup> all due to changing and decreasing levels of hormones (mainly estrogen),<sup>3,4</sup> during the menopausal transition. Following, are some of the lesser-known symptoms. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, there is hope! We offer personalized management strategies and resources to help you take control of your symptoms and find some relief.

### **Skin and Body:**

#### **1. Tingling or Electric Shock Sensation**

Some women experience tingling in their hands, feet, arms, and legs, with others reporting sensations that feel like electric shocks. Typically only lasting a few minutes at a time, these are likely caused by changing hormone levels in the nervous system.<sup>5,6</sup>

#### **2. Itchy and/or Dry Skin**

Both skin hydration and the production of collagen, a protein that maintains the strength and elasticity of the skin, are associated with estrogen. Therefore, as estrogen declines, it can lead to increased itchiness or dryness anywhere on the body.<sup>7</sup> Further, because estrogen and the sex hormone androgen affect tear production, when they decrease, this can also lead to **Dry Eyes**.<sup>8</sup>

#### **3. Body Odor/ Excessive Sweating**

The hypothalamus is the part of the brain that controls body temperature, and estrogen helps to regulate it. As such, when estrogen levels drop, it sends a false message to the hypothalamus that the body is overheated, causing excessive sweat that possibly results in body odor.<sup>9</sup>

#### **4. Digestive Issues**

Hormones play a major role in the body's digestive functioning, and decreasing or fluctuating levels of estrogen, progesterone, and cortisol (a stress hormone affected by estrogen) can therefore cause potential digestive dysregulation.<sup>10,11</sup>

### **Health Concerns:**

## **5. Migraines**

For those who already experience migraines, the changes in estrogen levels during perimenopause and menopause may cause migraines to worsen or increase, and many experience them for the first time. The good news is studies show that migraines may improve once a woman becomes postmenopausal.<sup>12,13,14</sup>

## **6. Allergies**

During menopause, histamine, the chemical that causes allergic reactions, can spike, causing new or worsening allergy symptoms.<sup>15</sup>

## **7. Heart Palpitations**

A decline in estrogen may lead to heart palpitations or an irregular heartbeat in some women.<sup>16</sup>

## **8. Increased Cholesterol**

When estrogen drops, overall cholesterol levels can increase due to higher levels of low-density lipoprotein, (LDL) also known as “the bad cholesterol,” and the blood lipids known as triglycerides.<sup>17</sup>

## **Mouth/Dental:**

### **9. Burning Mouth**

A decrease in estrogen may cause a sense of burning or tingling in the mouth.<sup>18</sup>

### **10. Dry Mouth**

Just as decreased estrogen levels cause dry skin, it can also cause a dry mouth, which may lead to gum recession, disease, or bleeding, or tooth decay.<sup>19,20</sup>

### **11. Taste Change**

Hormone fluctuations can affect the taste buds and alter the way things taste or cause a metallic or bitter taste in the mouth.<sup>16,21</sup>

While menopausal symptoms are caused by changes in hormones,<sup>22</sup> they can also be affected by factors such as diet<sup>23</sup> and lifestyle.<sup>24</sup> That’s why we take a holistic approach to menopause.

*The contents of this article are for informational purposes only and not intended to provide medical advice, treat, diagnose, or replace the advice of a licensed medical professional. Please consult with your healthcare provider before making any treatment, dietary, exercise, or lifestyle changes to ensure that these changes are appropriate for you.*

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