

# Homeopathy for the menopause

Most women will start to experience the menopause in their late 40s. Some women sail through this time in their lives with no problems but others can experience symptoms that have a big impact on day-to-day living. These can include hot flushes, mood swings, profuse sweating, irritability, forgetfulness, lack of concentration, bladder problems, reduced sex drive and problems sleeping. It is important to visit your GP to eliminate other causes of these symptoms – an under-active thyroid can mimic the menopause, for example.

Many women use Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) to help keep symptoms under control. There is no homeopathic 'equivalent' to HRT but a homeopathic medicine tailored to your particular symptoms could help. The medicine prescribed is based on your unique profile – it takes into account not only your symptoms but you as a whole person.



## What is homeopathy?

Homeopathy works on the principle of using like to cure like. In other words the medicines are made, in minuscule amounts, of the same substance that would cause the symptoms.

For example, in homeopathy a medicine derived from onions can be used to alleviate watery eyes and a runny nose, which are symptoms that an onion might cause.

The medicines are derived mainly from plants and minerals. The active ingredient is diluted many times (making it completely safe) and succussed (shaken vigorously) to produce the medicine.

## The HRT score

A US study in 2002 conducted by the Women's Health Initiative found an increased risk of stroke/heart attack in women taking HRT. More recently a study by Cancer Research UK found an increased risk of cancers linked to taking HRT, especially cancer of the womb. It's thought that around 340,000 women have stopped taking HRT as a result of these studies and many are now looking towards complementary medicine to offer relief from symptoms. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) currently recommends HRT for women over 50 for a period of two to three years only, with an annual review of symptoms.

## Treatment on the NHS

You can ask your GP to refer you to one of a number of NHS homeopathic services in the UK.

There are hospitals, clinics and GPs taking referrals. To find out if there is an NHS service near you and for a free information pack, call the British Homeopathic Association: 0870 444 3950.

## What about the evidence?

At Bristol Homeopathic Hospital, a six-year study of 6,500 patients found that 77% of patients reported an improvement in their menopausal symptoms. These results echo two other patient outcome surveys at the Department of Homeopathic Medicine in Liverpool (86% improvement) and Tunbridge Wells Homeopathic Hospital (78% improvement).

## Where to find a regulated homeopathic practitioner

Members of the Faculty of Homeopathy are conventional doctors trained in homeopathy and are therefore regulated by the state. They hold the qualifications LFHom, MFHom or FFHom.

A full list of practitioners is available at [www.britishhomeopathic.org](http://www.britishhomeopathic.org) or by calling 0870 444 3950.

