

# Menopause – Stress – Depression

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Clearly many studies have been done that expose the significant influence that stress can have on our health. Now the association between stress and depression that occurs during menopause is being recognized.

Two such studies published in the April issue of the journal, Archives of General Psychiatry, suggest that; “There is a tendency to dismiss symptoms of depression as part and parcel of this transition, but they shouldn't be discounted,” Massachusetts General Hospital researcher Lee S. Cohen, MD, tells WebMD, indicating that depression should not be treated as part of the “menopause symptom package” but as a separate entity. Separating depression out from amongst the other menopausal symptoms has the effect of asking if there are causes of menopausal depression other than menopausal metabolic imbalances.

And the answer to this is clearly yes. In a study reported in the Journal of Nursing Research: June 2009 - Volume 17 - Issue 2 - pp 128-135, the prevalence of depression among participants was 31.2%; indicating that depression was positively associated with life-event stresses.

All of this and consideration of other studies suggest that we need to look at depression caused by stress during menopause as a separate entity and treat it as we would any stress related depression. Certainly, we know that hormonal modification through natural hormone replacement therapy significantly controls depression in the menopausal woman. However, findings indicate that if we treat common stress conditions at this difficult time in a woman's maturity we can significantly reduce the occurrences of depression.

So then, there are some things menopausal women can do to actively fight the onset and progression of depression. The main thing to do is to reduce stress. And how can we accomplish this? Following are 13 positive steps that can be taken to live a more stress free life.

1. Involvement in Natural Hormone Replacement Therapy will reduce the menopausal symptoms and thereby reduce the stress associated with those symptoms.
2. Try not to focus on those things outside your control such as global events or even the weather.
3. Take on the little problems in life and solve them. This will give you a feeling of control.
4. Prepare ahead of time for events such as a job interview. The better you are prepared the less stress the event will have.
5. Try to see the positive in everything you do and experience.
6. Reduce conflicts with others such as family members and coworkers, if possible.
7. Do not be afraid to consult a family member or friend or counselor in order to seek aid in personal matters.
8. Do not over book or over work yourself.
9. Exercise on a regular basis.

10. Eat regularly.
11. Get sufficient sleep.
12. Meditate and/or pray if this brings you inner peace.
13. Participate in something you don't find stressful, such as sports, social events or hobbies.

Reducing depression during menopause may be as easy as living a stress free life. However, clinical depression may not succumb to common practices as just noted and you may have to consult your provider for other options such as therapy and/or medications that directly treat severe depression. Regardless, less stress is good for us and those around us.

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