

# Press Briefing

Attention:  
Company: Jean Hailes Foundation  
Date: 17/03/09

## 1. Jean Hailes Foundation

### 1.1 Managing menopause

New Idea, 21/03/2009, General News, Page 68

By: None

Keywords: **Jean (3), Hailes (4), Jean Hailes Foundation (2), Professor (1), Henry Burger (1), janet (3), michelmore (1), foundation (4), Hail\* (4), foundation\* (4), women (12), Sally (1), Mathrick (1)**

Clip Ref: **48647287**

1183 words

Type: Feature

Photo: Yes

One of the more challenging times many **women** face following the turbulent years of puberty is menopause. Medically speaking, menopause is when the ovaries are no longer able to produce eggs and the monthly menstrual cycle stops

---

This Press Briefing is published by Media Monitors Australia Pty Ltd ABN 11 002 533 851. Subscribers should refer to the original article before making any financial decisions or forming any opinions.

This information is for the use of Media Monitors' subscribers only and may not be provided to any third party for any purpose whatsoever without the express permission of Media Monitors Australia Pty Ltd.



**New Idea**  
**Saturday 21/3/2009**  
**Page: 68**  
**Section: General News**  
**Region: National**  
**Type: Magazines Lifestyle**  
**Size: 2,504.23 sq.cms.**  
**Published: -----S-**

**Index: 1.1**  
**Brief: JHF**  
**Page 1 of 2**

# Managing menopause

Dr John has the answers to help make this often difficult time a little easier

**One of the more challenging times many women face following the turbulent years of puberty is menopause.**

Medically speaking, menopause is when the ovaries are no longer able to produce eggs and the monthly menstrual cycle stops.

Thankfully, menopause has evolved from 'secret women's business' to being an open topic of conversation. However, there is still some confusion surrounding menopause, so here are the answers to some of the most commonly asked questions.

**Q What are some of the common symptoms that women going through menopause experience?**

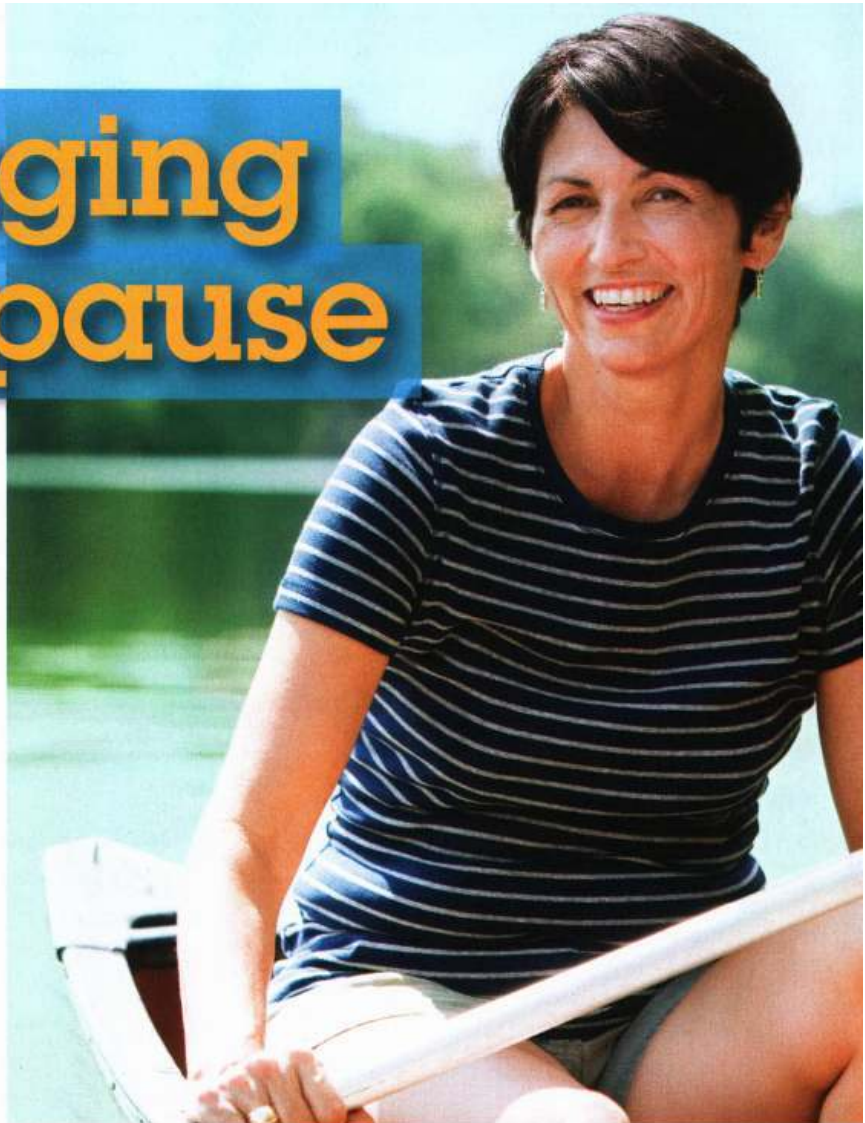
**A** Symptoms may include hot flushes, night sweats and insomnia. There are complex hormonal changes at work and you may feel anxious, fatigued, have poor concentration and no sex drive. Muscle aches and pains with no evidence of inflammation are another worry. Feeling 'down in the dumps' happens to us all. Don't be afraid to seek professional help. Remember, these symptoms are normal.

**Q Do all women experience symptoms at the time of menopause?**

**A** About 10 to 20 per cent of women have no symptoms of menopause at all, and for 60 per cent it isn't all that bad. But for an unfortunate 10 to 20 per cent it's a nightmare.

**Q My periods are regular, but I've been feeling down and can't seem to remember things. Has this got anything to do with menopause?**

**A** This sounds like you're going through perimenopause. It's the time leading up to the menopause and might last anywhere between four and six years. It happens because



your oestrogen levels are all over the place, but there's still enough hormone in your system to cause a regular bleed. Also, it's unlikely, but you could still fall pregnant.

**Q Will having my hormone levels checked diagnose menopause?**

**A** No. Hormone levels change rapidly from day to day in the years before the menopause and aren't helpful in diagnosis.

**Q How long are my menopause symptoms likely to last?**

**A** For 75 per cent of women, symptoms will last up to five years, and in 10 per cent, symptoms may last longer than 10 years.



**Q What is the best way to cope with the symptoms I'm experiencing?**

**A** Exercise (especially in the morning) will make you feel good, reduce your weight and promote better sleep during the night. To cope with hot flushes, drink cool drinks, use

**Q IS A LACK OF SEXUAL INTEREST CAUSED BY MENOPAUSE?**

**A** Sexual interest or libido depends on many factors: poor physical health, day-to-day stress, relationship conflict, medication or psychological problems. So before menopause is blamed for a lack of libido, all factors need to be assessed. If, however, your lack of libido is a result of vaginal dryness and discomfort during sex, oestrogen levels may be to blame. This can be eased with appropriate lubrication or oestrogen therapy.



**New Idea**  
**Saturday 21/3/2009**  
**Page: 68**  
**Section: General News**  
**Region: National**  
**Type: Magazines Lifestyle**  
**Size: 2,504.23 sq.cms.**  
**Published: -----S-**

**Index: 1.1**  
**Brief: JHF**  
**Page 2 of 2**



a small fan, dress in layers and wear light clothes. Make sure you eat two pieces of fruit and five serves of vegetables daily, especially those containing phytoestrogens (plant oestrogens) such as soy products or linseed.

You can speak with your pharmacist, doctor or naturopath about herbal or plant therapies if you have moderate symptoms. If you have severe symptoms, a course of hormone therapy may be required.

**Q** I've heard about HT or HRT. Could you please explain how it works?

**A** Hormone replacement therapy (HRT), also known as hormone therapy (HT), is used to ease symptoms of menopause by replacing important female hormones that the ovaries stop producing after menopause.

HT medication has different combinations of these hormones depending on the specific needs of the individual patient. They can be administered in the following ways:

**Q DOES HORMONE THERAPY CAUSE BREAST CANCER?**

**A** A 2002 study from the American Women's Health Initiative reported that women taking combined oral HT continuously for five years had an increased risk of breast cancer. While it can't be ruled out, new research says the risk is very small. Professor Henry Burger, from the Jean Hailes Foundation, explains: 'HT is the gold-standard treatment for severe menopausal symptoms and is safe over a three-year period. My advice is HT should be taken early, in the lowest effective dose, for a short time. Women will also need to have a biannual mammogram.'

- Patches, gels or creams, which allow medication to sink into the skin.
- Tablets taken by mouth.
- Implants where the medication slowly flows from a removable pellet.
- Creams and pessaries for the vagina.

**Q** If I'm undergoing HT, am I likely to put on weight as a result?

**A** Weight gain caused by HT is uncommon, but it may occur temporarily when you are starting and is usually caused by fluid retention as your body is readjusting to new hormone levels. Follow these tips:

- Establish a 'food/mood and action' diary, buy a pedometer and get active. Eat heart-healthy foods that are low in saturated fat, and low-fat dairy, which is high in calcium, to lower the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis.
- Eat plenty of seeds, soy products, legumes, fruit and vegetables. Doing so may help treat mild to moderate menopausal symptoms.

**Q** What alternative therapies are available for menopause symptoms?

**A** Black cohosh, soy extracts, red clover, licorice root and wild yam root are just a few. Although there's little scientific backing, some women swear by the effectiveness of these treatments at relieving symptoms.

Sally Mathrick, naturopathic consultant for the Jean Hailes Foundation, says: 'Whatever therapy a woman chooses, it's important she's open with all the health professionals she sees to ensure safe and effective treatment.'

**ASK DR JOHN FOR ADVICE**

Write to *What's Up Doc?*, New Idea, Private Bag 9960, North Sydney, NSW 2059, or email [newidea@pacificmags.com.au](mailto:newidea@pacificmags.com.au). This advice is general, without the benefit of a consultation. Always consult a doctor or healthcare professional. Listen to Dr John's Health Matters on Sundays from 7am to 8am - visit [www.theradio.com.au](http://www.theradio.com.au) to find your local station.



**Janet's story**

With the right treatment, women can get relief from even severe symptoms

**M**enopause hasn't been easy for Janet Michelmore, director of the Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health, set up in 1992. 'I thought menopause wasn't going to trouble me, but I was wrong,' she says.

Now regarded as a leader in the field of Australian women's healthcare, the foundation was set up in memory of Janet's mum, Dr Jean Hailes.

'When menopause hit me I had hot flushes and sleepless nights. I remember I had to give a speech and I was red in the face, with sweat dripping off me, and I started to cry. I wondered how I could possibly give a talk when I was like this.'

'I was sleeping only three hours a night and I actually thought I was weak because it was happening to me.'

'So, deciding to do something about it. I made some lifestyle modifications, such as cutting out too much caffeine and reducing alcohol. I also started to get fit again, which worked to an extent, but not well enough. So now I'm on a HT patch and I feel so much better.'