Men-o-pause

By Dr. Carol Ann Fischer, D.C., N.D.

Most people think that menopause only applies to women, but men experience a change of life just as women do. Their change of life is called andropause.

The name menopause comes from the cessation of menses. Andropause is the decreased production of the male hormones, known as androgens. The production of hormones that are released by the reproductive system slows down during the change of life for both men and women. The back-up system for the production of hormones then takes over, and produces any needed hormones.

The back-up system for hormone production in both sexes is the adrenal gland, located on top of each kidney. The primary job of the adrenals is to make stress-handling hormones. The stress handling hormones are produced by the adrenals any time that the brain perceives that the body is stressed.

There are many types of stress besides emotional and mental stress. These include environmental toxins and chemicals, such as air and water pollution, chemicals in the food supply, clothing materials and heavy metal toxins. Other stressors to the body are hidden food allergies, hidden immune challenges and physical trauma to the body that causes scar tissue. Scar tissue can occur from accidents, injuries and surgical intervention. The brain reacts in the same way to stress, regardless of the type. The stress response is to signal the adrenals to release stress-handling hormones. When the brain and body are in a prolonged stress response the adrenals are continuously producing stress-handling hormones.

As the adrenals continue to respond to chronic stress they become fatigued. Exhausted adrenals cannot produce needed hormones when the hormone production in the reproductive area decreases. That is when menopause or andropause become symptomatic.

Women and men share similar change of life symptoms due to adrenal fatigue. Both sexes can experience loss of energy, strength and stamina, irritability and depression, brain fog, sweet cravings, unwanted weight gain, loss of libido, increasing fatigue and sleep difficulties. Men also experience prostate and urinary problems, erectile dysfunction and a decrease in body hair with the need to shave less frequently

Diet and lifestyle changes can help to reduce the adrenal stress response, helping ease andropause and menopausal symptoms. Decreasing dietary sugars, increasing dietary intake of filtered water, good fats and hormone free meats and dairy can improve decreasing hormone levels in both men and women.

Drinking water is one of the easiest lifestyle changes to make. Water is the most essential ingredient to human life. While people can live a full month without food, provided there is water to drink, without water people can only survive for 10 days. Water makes up 75 percent of the body, 90 percent of the blood, and 85 percent of the brain. The correct amount of water is one half the body weight in ounces, according to The Body's Many Cries for Water, by Dr. Fereydoon Batmanghelidj.

Diet changes from commercial corn fed meat to organic free range meat are also helpful. Animals that are allowed to roam freely and to eat their native diet of grass. They are also free of the antibiotics and hormones that are heavily used in conventionally raised animals.

Humans do not need the additional hormones that are fed to commercially raised animals. In fact, these hormone rich meats and dairy products increase stress on the adrenals and the entire hormonal system.

The Standard American Diet (S.A.D.) restricts the intake of good fats. According to Mary G. Enig, Ph.D. author of Know Your Fats, there are good fats and essential fats that are needed by the body for overall health and to make hormones.

Andropause and menopausal symptoms are also influenced by an imbalance in the hormonal system. Most holistic wellness doctors are trained to evaluate hormonal imbalance, and to provide natural solutions that rebalance the adrenals and the overall hormonal system.

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