

MENOPAUSE

Menopause is the natural change of hormone status in a woman when the ovarian function is reduced. It is a metabolic change that occurs as the levels of estrogen and progesterone are reduced.

I. KOSHAS

A. PHYSICAL body

Systems: endocrine, skeletal, circulatory

Symptoms: decrease in estrogen and progesterone levels in the bloodstream, hot flashes, night sweats, menses cease, increased risk of heart disease and osteoporosis; post menopausal—weight gain

Ayurvedic perspective: Illness is an imbalance in the 3 doshas. Ayurveda considers menopause to be a time when reflection is needed. The direction of life and its goals should be reflected upon. External changes may or may not be needed or conflicts may arise. Internal changes are certain.

It is a Vata-Pitta aggravation. The endocrine system works very closely with the nervous system. The nervous system is primarily related to the Vata dosha, the principle of movement. Much of the hormonal function relates to Pitta-Vata. Pitta is related to metabolic change and control in the body. The endocrine glands and hormones which directly control metabolism (pituitary, thyroid) relate to Pitta.

During perimenopause Vatas are more likely to become irritable and impatient. Hot flashes are most likely to occur in Pitta. Kapha types will become withdrawn, emotional and needy. Depression can happen at all three doshas.

B. ENERGY body:

Systems: Nervous

Symptoms: Fatigue, lack of awareness in pranavayus, separation at 1st and 2nd chakra levels leading to imbalance in all other chakras.

C. PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL body:

Symptoms: mood swings, depression, fear, anxiety, “me against them” attitude, separation from family, social stigmatization, “old and in the way” attitude (mostly a western phenomenon).

D. WISDOM body:

Symptoms: Loss of identity, separation from who we are (lifestyle roles), negative self-concepts and images, deep rooted beliefs, cultural, societal, social archetypal myths of menopause

E. SPIRITUAL body:

Symptoms: Not being able to accept changes happening, fighting the natural process, no sense of life’s purpose, not seeing the “big picture” of menopause as part of the cycle of life and death, abinevesha (fear of death), fear of aging.

II. WELLNESS PRINCIPLES FOR MENOPAUSE

A. PHYSICAL

Postures that increase circulatory system (tadasana, standing warrior, legs up the wall)

Postures that decrease hot flashes (forward bends, legs up the wall)

Posture that increase bone strength and decrease weight gain (standing and weight bearing postures)

Postures that decrease risk of heart disease (increase circulatory system)

Postures to balance nervous system (twists, cooling postures and forward bends)

Postures to stimulate and balance endocrine system (twists)

Ayurvedic perspective: Vata pacifying program, which includes meditation, yoga, diet change and herbs to increase agni (digestive fire) such as ginger, hing, pepper, turmeric. Certain herbs to balance hormones such as ashwaganda, shitavari, arjuna and ashooka. Oil massage with sesame oil on a daily basis to reduce Vata.

B. ENERGETIC

Pranayamas such as kapalbhati (slow, easy) and shitali (good to prevent hot flashes)
Imagery of healing through the chakras
Stimulate prana vayus
Five finger mudra to balance the endocrine system

C. PSYCHO EMOTIONAL

Relaxation techniques to reduce stress, fear, and anxiety
Yoga Nidra

D. WITNESS/WISDOM

Yoga Nidra and Jnana yoga—the knowledge based practice to remove Avidya (ignorance)
The social, cultural and archetypal core beliefs about menopause

E. SPIRITUAL BODY

Self reflection to being Unity consciousness through chitakasha dharma (concentration)
To meditate on the absolute – Unity consciousness
Mantra Meditation: “Om Eim Hrim Klim Chamundayii”
Om and Salutations to she who is radiant with power and wisdom.

III. YOGA FOR MENOPAUSE

Before start of the eight week session, everyone will have completed the Personal Information Sheet and completed the waivers. This will give us a good idea of everyone's symptoms and if they are currently taking hormones or any medications.

Check in: Introductions around the room. Class energy level

Education: Class structure will be introduced and discussed. Benefits of yoga, brief question and answer

Body Awareness Exercise: Breath and chakra awareness; one word sharing

Warm ups: Neck, shoulders, seated dog and cat

Postures: Tadasana, Ardha Chandrasana series, Hero I, Hero II, Modified Trikonasana, Stork, Child Pose, Seated Forward Bend, Wide Leg Forward Bends, Spinal Twist, Child Pose, Half Locust, Restorative Bridge, Restorative Butterfly, Savasana

Guided Imagery: Guided Imagery through the chakras

Shitali Pranayama: For hot flashes

Seated Meditation with Mudra: Finger relaxation to each chakra

End with Mantra: Om Eim Hrim Klim Chamundayei Vichei Namaha

Pronunciation: Om eem hreem kleem chamndie Vee Chai Namaha

Translation: Om and Salutations to she who is radiant with power and wisdom

Final Sharing

NOTES: Poses may need to be modified for women in the different stages of menopause. Seated forward bends can increase blood pressure which is a side effect of taking hormone replacement therapy. If someone is past menopause they may have to be careful of weak bones. Forward bends are useful for hot flashes. Postures strengthen the skeletal system. This is the first class and we may not get to all the postures.