

Coping Up With Depression During Menopause

If there were one disease caused by biological factors that is very hard to deal with, it would be depression. Depression or the condition of feeling sad or despondent?characterized by an inability to concentrate, insomnia, and feelings of extreme sadness, dejection, melancholy, and hopelessness?is one of the visible symptoms of menopause especially for women.

Caused by the dropping of serotonin?a hormone in the brain that regulates a person?s mood?levels, depression has been linked to menopause because it has been observed that women who are on the verge of this phase experience intense mood fluctuations and severe episodes of sadness and confusion.

Experts say that depression is normal for menopausal women but it should be addressed properly so it wouldn?t lead to more serious health, emotional, and behavioral problems.

UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION DURING MENOPAUSE

Studies show that 8 to 15 percent of menopausal women experience depression. Experts say that the end of menstruation or menopause triggers episodes of depression and sadness in most women because of drastic hormonal changes that are left unsettled or not addressed.

Various researches prove that women who have a history of mood disorders, those who have been depressed before?especially during 20s, those who have underwent surgical or operational procedures, those who are smoking, dealing with so many children, or those who have work that causes a lot of stress are more likely to develop depression during menopause.

Symptoms of depression during menopause include sleeping disorders, hot flushes, loss of energy or fatigue, irritability, anxiety, excessive feeling of guilt or worthlessness, difficulty in concentrating or confusion, decreased interest or pleasure in activities, drastic change in appetite, and two or more weeks of depressed mood that may lead to extreme restlessness and suicidal tendencies.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Although depression is a natural occurrence during menopausal years, experts say that this should not be neglected because it can lead to more episodes of fluctuating moods and physical implications.

Although it is hard to deal with because it involves emotional and hormonal factors, medical authorities agree that depression is treatable when addressed properly. Here are some suggestions and treatment options that can help you cope up with depression during menopause:

1. Consider depression treatments and medications. Seeking help if you are suffering from depression during menopausal years is the first step in curing the ?disease.? Today, there are actually many effective and well-tolerated medications available depending on your need. Being an essential part of treating depression, antidepressant medications such as Selected Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) help to increase the amount of serotonin in the brain.

Aside from antidepressants, therapies such as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and Estrogen Therapy can help in especially in early menopausal stages. Before taking in any of these, make sure that you have consulted your physician first so you can discuss the risks and benefits of such treatments and medications. Psychotherapy is also one effective way to combat menopausal depression.

With the help of trained social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists, you can learn how to cope up with the negative feelings over menopausal years. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT that teaches better ways of thinking and behaving and Interpersonal Therapy or IPT that helps the person communicate more effectively are available for you.

2. Schedule for a physical examination. As women grown older, physical changes emerge that lead to physical health problems. Getting a thorough physical examination is one way to know if you are about to experience any physical ailments caused by depressive symptoms.

3. Try out alternative medicines, herbal therapies or remedies, and dietary supplements. Organic and herbal medications have grown popular the years for its healing properties. Today, the most popular herb used to cure depression is St John?s Wort because it can help reduce effects of estrogen fluctuations.

Although many people attest to its effects, there have been no scientific studies that support the effectivity and safety of this alternative medicine. Before trying any of these herbal or organic products, make sure you inform your physician so further damage can be avoided especially if you are under any monitored medication.

4. Engage in physical activities or regular exercise. Experts agree that exercise helps treat depression by releasing your body?s mood-elevating hormones that leads to a feeling of accomplishment and enhanced self-esteem.

5. Start changing your diet. Dietary changes like eating a well balanced diet and regularly scheduled meals are known to help a lot in managing depression.

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