

Hot Flashes

Hot flashes are one of the most common symptoms of menopause and perimenopause. They can be caused by a deficiency of hormones. They can also be caused by a fluctuation of hormones and not necessarily by a deficiency of estrogen or testosterone. Often women with symptoms of *estrogen excess* can experience hot flashes. Hot flashes may be caused by other hormone imbalances including thyroid deficiency or excess, elevated cortisol (stress), or high insulin levels. Hot flashes can be mild or debilitating.

Diet and lifestyle play a role in the onset and severity of hot flashes. Stress is one of the most important contributing factors to hot flashes. Meditation and stress reduction can dramatically relieve hot flashes. Tension and anxiety can increase hot flashes. A regular exercise program is key to health, stress reduction, and hormone balance (including reduction of frequency and severity of hot flashes).

Diet is also critical to hormone balance. Lowering the refined carbohydrates in your diet will improve hormone balance and hot flashes. Flaxseed and whole soy foods can provide relief from hot flashes along with phytoestrogen products like Remifemin, Promensil, black cohosh, dong quai, and chaste berry. A high fiber diet can also help prevent hot flashes. Spicy foods can cause hot flashes.

Testosterone pellet implants relieve hot flashes in the majority of women and men.

Occasionally, high levels of stored progesterone or estrogen can accumulate with application to the skin. This can desensitize estrogen receptors and cause hot flashes. In this situation, one should reduce the dose of hormones and consider changing the application site to the mucous membranes where there will be no accumulation in fatty tissue. Estradiol applied vaginally can also *fluctuate* contributing to hot flashes. Estrogen applied vaginally can also alleviate hot flashes!

Recommendations for Hot Flashes

1. **Testosterone pellet implant**
2. **Diet:** Get the refined carbohydrates (sugar) out of your diet. Eat whole foods, fruits, and vegetables. Add flaxseed and whole soy foods to your diet.
3. **Exercise**
4. **Reduce Stress:** Meditate, avoid stressful situations, and pay attention to how you react to stress. Practice deep breathing exercises throughout the day.
5. **Herbal Products** as mentioned above. **Vitamin E** 800 IU / day. **B vitamin** complex.
6. **Low Dose Transdermal Progesterone Cream:** Apply ½-1 gm daily or twice daily as directed. Consider application to the mucous membranes of the labia and vagina. You may want to apply a small amount behind the ears.
7. **Sublingual Progesterone Drops:** These are applied under the tongue and may provide relief. Hold under the tongue 3-5 minutes.
8. **Estrogen Gel, Vaginal cream or Patch:** An estrogen cream (Estriol with or without Estradiol) with progesterone may be applied to the mucous membranes of the labia and vagina or the skin (a small amount behind the ears will be absorbed rapidly). The estrogen patch provides consistent delivery of estradiol.
9. **Avoid spicy foods, limit alcohol.**
10. **Ice water:** Sipping on a cold beverage can alleviate or reduce the severity of hot flashes.