When your body stops making the hormones you need for childbirth, your periods end. And that’s a reason to cheer menopause. But those hormones have far-reaching effects, and their decline can trigger unusual symptoms. Here are 8 symptoms your mom probably never warned you about, with 8 practical solutions.

**Symptom**

**Solutions**

**Hot flashes/night sweats**

- Breathe heat that spreads from your chest to your head and can make you perspire at night (chills may follow)
- Wear natural fibers like cotton, and dress in easily removable layers.
- Set your thermostat at 65°.
- Watch for and avoid triggers: Caffeine, alcohol, spicy foods, and cigarettes.
- If symptoms are too disruptive, talk to your doctor about hormone therapy (HT).

**Disturbed sleep**

- Follow smart tips for sleep: Create a bedtime routine, avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed, remove electronics from your bedroom, exercise earlier in the day, and exercise nearer to the day’s end.
- If sleep loss becomes an issue, talk to your doctor about HT.

**Heart palpitations**

- Always tell your doctor about heart palpitations to rule out any underlying cardiac problems.

**Vaginal changes**

- Increased dryness that can make intercourse uncomfortable and raise the risk of bladder infections
- Try an estrogen supplement (cream, tablet or ring).
- Or try a new daily non-estrogen pill (Osphena®), which thickens and strengthens vaginal tissues.

**Skin changes**

- Dryness, itchiness and loss of elasticity
- Drink enough water to stay well-hydrated.
- Be careful not to bathe too often.
- If symptoms become too bothersome, consider HT.

**Headaches**

- Migraine and other headaches worsened by hormone fluctuations
- Keep a diary of your headaches to make sure they’re linked to your cycle.
- If they are, talk with your doctor about preventive care and treatment options.

**Changes in hair**

- More facial hair (from testosterone sensitivity) & less scalp hair (from declining estrogen)
- See a menopause specialist for hormone assessment.
- Treatment with hormones, vitamins, electrolysis or a laser may help.

**Loss of memory and concentration**

- Difficulty remembering and focusing
- While hormone fluctuations may cause these symptoms, discuss them with your doctor.
- You may need treatment for an undiagnosed medical problem, vitamin deficiency, stress, sleep apnea or depression.

**A word about hormone therapy**

- Hormone therapy is imperative for hot flashes and night sweats.
- However, HT isn’t a cure-all; it only helps relieve symptoms. But that still protects your heart, bone density, and your overall health.
- For some women, HT may not work or may have too many side effects. Talk to your doctor about your options.

**P.S.**

- Hot flashes aren’t hot flushes. Night sweats aren’t sudden episodes of heat that spread over your face and scalp.
- Migraines vs. migraines later—Migraines are headaches. Menopause headaches are usually a sign of hormone changes.
- Mood swings may not be menopause.