

HANDLING HOT FLASHES

Tips to cooling things down through living a balanced life!



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Let's dive right in because this is a "hot" topic for many women who are getting closer to menopause or perimenopause. The origin of a hot flash or night sweat can tend to be confusing. Many people, including doctors, do not understand what causes them. They believe it is related to sex hormone fluctuations and that is part of it, but not the whole story. My 33 years in the women's health field allowed me to use empirical evidence (observation) to learn the real cause and some easy solutions to this issue. Most women say to me that they want to avoid prescription medication for this symptom but also don't want to suffer in silence. So let's break it down the root cause and the actual "trigger" for this nasty menopausal symptom.

Hot Flashes defined: A sudden brief flushing and sensation of heat caused by dilatation of skin capillaries usually associated with a menopause endocrine imbalance—called also *hot flush*.

Source: Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary

1) Hot Flashes are actually caused by a hormonal imbalance between estrogen and progesterone, a common imbalance among women of all ages that gets worse closer to menopause.

In our modern society excess mental stress can cause the stress hormone, cortisol, to rise. This hormone buffers us from stress, however, if the demand for cortisol is high for days or weeks, the body runs out of the ability to make cortisol and will then steal a valuable female sex hormone called progesterone to make the needed cortisol. This is not beneficial long-term due to the fact that progesterone is the hormone that stabilizes blood sugar, aids in weight loss, is a diuretic, aids in mood, sleep and wards off almost all PMS/menopausal symptoms. The results is a condition called "estrogen dominance". With estrogen being dominate this hormone tends to cause blood sugar fluctuations, weight gain, excess hunger/appetite, fluid retention, poor mood (anxiety), insomnia and all PMS and menopausal symptoms



2.) Hot Flashes are "triggered" at certain times of the day due to blood sugar falling.

When women's hormones become imbalanced due to the reason stated above, blood sugar is very unsteady. *How does this happen?* Certain patterns of eating or specific foods/drinks will tend to cause the fluctuations in blood sugar, eventually leading to blood sugar falling. The result can be irritability, fatigue, and waking up several times per night, which can trigger hot flashes or night sweats.

Summing it up; Stop the rollercoaster!

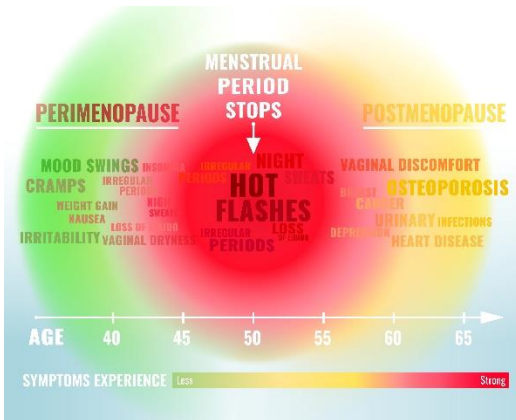
The high and low blood sugar "rollercoaster" that most American women are on, needs to stop! This blood sugar roller coaster is a result of two simple things:



1. The stress in our modern society causing an imbalance in estrogen and progesterone.
2. Our American diet which consists of the overconsumption of caffeine, alcohol, and carbohydrates which causes the overproduction of insulin causing blood sugar imbalances and blood sugar crashes.

What can be done to avoid hot flashes and night sweats?

You need to balance your sex and stress hormones by decreasing stress any way possible. With my clients I recommend they augment their progesterone by using a natural standardized progesterone cream daily. In my book, *The Hormone Shift*, I give a quiz to see if you are low in this valuable hormone. However if you deal with any PMS/Menopausal symptoms or issues with your weight, mood or sleep you are like over 90% of American women who are low in progesterone.



It is important to note that after menopause even though estrogen levels start to fall, progesterone levels become almost nonexistent. The main source of progesterone (before menopause) comes from the hole that the egg comes from during ovulation. So when you cease ovulating after menopause, progesterone drops dramatically and blood sugar is much more out of control. So increasing progesterone will stabilize blood sugar help with hormone balance and blood sugar balanced making hot flashes and night sweats a thing of the past.

Next is to work on your diet so you can be sure to stabilize blood sugar. The tips below will help.

Hot Flashes Triggers & Solutions:

1. Not eating enough fat, fiber or protein throughout the day or with your meals-**Blood sugar cannot stabilize without these macronutrients because they oppose sugar/carbohydrates and slow down their absorption stabilizing blood sugar.**

SOLUTION: Be sure meals consist of at least 4 - 5 ounces of protein, a tablespoon of fat along with green vegetables (very stabilizing on blood sugar) or a high-fiber carbohydrate such as oats, brown rice or sweet potatoes.

2. Eating too many simple sugars or refined carbohydrates. These foods are usually devoid of fiber, contain excess simple sugars or are white flour-based which tend to wreak havoc on blood sugar. Examples would be foods such as bread, crackers, muffins, cake cookies etc.)-**Blood sugar will fluctuate or rise/fall due to simple sugars breaking down quickly.**

SOLUTION: Be sure to pair simple sugars, if you must have them, with fat and protein such as a rice cake (simple sugar) with natural almond butter (fat and protein).

3. Consuming too much caffeine or alcohol-**This causes blood sugar to rise and fall quickly.**

SOLUTION: If you add heavy cream, coconut oil or other MTC oil (medium chain triglycerides) to your coffee it can stabilize blood sugar.

Try to stick with clear alcohols as these have less sugar especially when paired with diet soda/soda water or try a dry red wines. Drinks mixed with juices or sweet wines will tend to cause more blood sugar fluctuations.

4. Mental/Emotional stress and stressful thoughts-This will cause the body to go into a mini “fight or flight” mode and the body will release blood sugar for you to “run from the lion” and then the body will release insulin bringing down the blood sugar and possibly causing it to crash.

SOLUTION: Aim to do something daily for at least 20 minute that brings on a “relaxation response” such as soundwave therapy, meditation, yoga or deep breathing. This will have great effects on stabilizing command emotions as well as blood sugar.

5. Having refined sugar snacks, alcohol or caffeine close to bedtime-This will cause reactive hypoglycemia and the blood sugar will rise and fall quickly.

SOLUTION: It is essential to have a protein/fat combined snack before bed to stabilize blood sugar and allow it to be maintained throughout the night and only fall in the morning when your weight and are ready for breakfast. See above for protein shake idea.

The author, Dawn Cutillo, has been a guest on national daytime talk shows, such as CBS *The Doctors*, *The Meredith Vieira Show*, *Daytime*, *Fox*, & *Tribune* speaking on the topic of hormone health. Her message of “natural hormone balancing” via her book, *The Hormone Shift*, is empowering to women who have been frustrated with the lack of medical and holistic answers on issues of stubborn weight as well as PMS/menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats. Please feel free to contact her with any questions info@bebalancedcenters.com

