

What has Dr. Shook Been Reading?

Before The Change, Taking Charge of Your Perimenopause.

By Ann Louise Gittleman, M.S., C.N.S.

Published by Harper Collins 1998

About 10 years ago I suggested to a doctor that my plethora of womanly annoyances was the beginning menopause. “No” I was told. I was far too young for menopause. What I had was “Stress” “Thank you,” said I. “I feel ever so enlightened, how shall I make out the check”.

About a year later when I first heard the word *Perimenopause* used to describe that period of a woman’s life that starts after her hormonal system is no longer in full reproductive mode and before she reaches menopause.

I started reading books, talking to colleagues and girlfriends. One girlfriend gave me a nutritional supplement that made a huge difference. And surprise of surprises (Doctor, heal thyself) exercise and diet made a positive and big impact on my life.

I was delighted to find that one of my favorite authors, Ann Louise Gittleman, M.S., C.N.S., a leading nutritionist and the former nutrition director at the renowned Pritikin Longevity Center, had drawn upon her substantial clinical experience and produced a handbook for “taking charge of your perimenopause”.

Without using excessive techno-jargon *Before the Change* explains the symptoms of perimenopause, how those symptoms differ from woman to woman and how perimenopausal symptoms are the result of a shifting hormone balance. Gittleman offers safe and natural (not synthetically manufactured) methods of bringing balance to the blood sugar, adrenal and ovarian hormones of the body. Diet and exercise are emphasized.

Gittleman’s “Changing Diet” balances blood sugar and hormones through a diet that includes vegetables and fruits, lean protein, whole grains and sufficient quantities of nutritious oils. Essential Fatty Acids are discussed in great detail. Nutritional strategies for alleviating specific perimenopausal symptoms are offered up as “Peri Zappers.” For skin conditions, depression and fatigue, try Zapper #1 flaxseed oil. Zapper #2, evening primrose oil, is for breast tenderness, irritability and anxiety Zapper # 5 involves using progesterone cream to reduce estrogen dominance and stabilize the menstrual cycle. Altogether there are 10 different Zappers.

In addition to stabilizing blood sugar, moderate exercise is recommended to reduce weight relieve aches and pains, improve sleep, reduce cholesterol, strengthen the heart and bones, boost the immune system and relieve a long list of symptoms.

The advice is practical, and requires women to pay attention to their bodies and their lives.

Now, think back to last summers widely publicized medical bombshell where, in the Woman’s Health Initiative research study, the conventional Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) caused an increase in heart attack, stroke, blood clots and high cholesterol. The entire study was brought to a screeching halt and word went out: The hazards of HRT may out weigh the benefits.

Fortunately there are alternatives. It is time that women –**and** their doctors – were introduced to the simpler, safer and more natural methods of keeping the body in a balance. Ann Louise Gittleman’s, well referenced, *Before the Change* is an excellent place to start.

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