“Menopause and Midlife Crisis”

Deaf Health Talks
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Supporters

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- Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf ("REAP")
Overview

- What is menopause?
- What are common symptoms of menopause?
- Is midlife crisis a real thing?
- What are testosterone and estrogen?
- How can we stay healthy when our testosterone and estrogen decrease?
What is menopause?

- Occurs when no menses (period) happens for 1 year
- Occurs when the ovaries stop producing eggs
- Fertility stops (not able to become pregnant)
- Estrogen (female hormone) level goes down
What is the average age when menopause starts in America?

- 51 years old
Anatomy of the Female Organs

- Ovaries make estrogen and distribute eggs

*Estrogens are female hormones
What are common symptoms of menopause?

- Periods become irregular then stop
- Fertility (ability to become pregnant) stops
- Vagina becomes dry
- Hot flashes
- Unable to sleep
- Mood changes
- Increased abdominal fat
- Thinning hair
- Loss of breast fullness

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/menopause/DS00119/DSECTION=symptoms
Perimenopause

- Period that leads to menopause
  - Still have irregular periods
  - Still can get pregnant but not easy
  - Menopausal symptoms still occur
  - Hormones including estrogen fluctuate

- Usually last 4-5 years before periods completely stop and menopause begins
Menopause means what to my health?

- Body estrogen levels decrease leading to:
  - Increased risk for heart attack and stroke
  - Bones become weaker (osteoporosis)
  - You may accidently leak urine from bladder (incontinence)
  - Weight gain
Menopausal Weight Gain

- Women on average eat about 1800 calories daily
  - Menopause may decrease “metabolism rate”
  
*To avoid weight gain, a woman should eat 200-400 less calories every day!

Subway 6” Steak and Cheese Sandwich~ 400 calories

Picture: http://www.roadfood.com/Forums/Subway39s-Philly-Cheesesteak-m435380.aspx
So what should I do to protect my health?

- What to do to protect against:
  - Increased risk for heart attack and stroke
  - Weight gain
- Increase exercise
- Avoid smoking
- Reduce high blood pressure
- Eat a healthy diet
So what should I do to protect my health?

What to do to protect against:
- Bones become weaker (osteoporosis)

- Increase calcium intake (1200-1500 mg daily)
- Increase Vitamin D intake (1000-2000 IU daily)
- Increase exercise (weight bearing)
- Bisphosphonates (Actonel, Fosamax, Boniva) - help reduce bone loss for those at high risk
So what should I do to protect my health?

- What to do to protect against:
  - Leaking urine from bladder (incontinence)
    - Kegel exercises may help
    - Strengthen pelvic muscles

Kegel Exercises:
Contract your pelvic floor muscles for three seconds, then relax the muscles for three seconds. Do this 10-15 times several times a day. Although shown here while lying down, these exercises can be done during a variety of daily activities, such as sitting in a meeting, while stopped in your car at a traffic light or when talking on the phone.
Do I need to be tested?

- For women younger than age 40, with no periods after 3 months
  - The doctor may want to evaluate the following:
    - Estrogen level (estradiol)-
    - Follicle stimulating hormone (FSH)-
    - Thyroid (TSH)
Treatments for Menopause

- Most women do not need anything
- If menopause symptoms are severe (very bad) then can consider these treatments:
  - Hormone replacement therapy
    - Works the best!
    - May be risky for heart and cancer reasons
    - Use smallest effective dose possible
    - Different ways of giving this to person (pill, cream, patch)
Other Treatments for Hot Flashes

- Antidepressants (Effexor, Prozac, Paxil, Celexa and Zoloft)
- Gabapentin (Neurontin)- a seizure medication
- Clonidine (Catapres)- a high blood pressure medication

Remember every medication has possible side effects! Talk with your doctor about what may be best for you.
May require to try different types of medications to see which works best for you!
Home Treatments

- Cool hot flashes by staying cool
- Walk regularly
- Avoid possible triggers such as hot beverages, spicy foods, alcohol and hot weather
- Do stress relaxation techniques such as yoga or deep breathing Relaxation techniques

For Vaginal Dryness ➔ Use water-based vaginal lubricants to help with vaginal dryness (Astroglide or KY Jelly)
Alternative Treatments

- Phytoestrogens - these are found in soybeans, chickpeas, beans, flaxseed
- Black cohosh - herb that may help reduce some hot flashes (used in Europe)
Midlife Crisis

Check List for Mid Life Crisis...

- Are you spending more time in the bathroom, checking for white hair? Yes No
- Are you thinking of doing a bungee jump? Yes No
- If you're a guy, are you thinking of getting a Harley Davidson style sports car? Yes No
- Are you brushing & flossing your teeth more diligently now? Yes No
- Are you spending more money on vitamins & supplements? Yes No
- Are you seriously thinking of getting a tattoo? Yes No
Midlife Crisis

- Not an official diagnosis
- Occurs for both men and women
- Usually occurs after a life changing event
  - Children leave home
  - Become older (become 40 or 50)
  - Parent dies
  - Loss of job
How many people have midlife crisis in America?

- 10%

Many parts of the world midlife crisis is unheard of. May be due to greater respect for older people there (opposite of focus on youth culture)
Men: Midlife Crisis or?

- Consider depression
  - Major life events and aging may make a person at risk for depression
- Low Testosterone
  - May also appear to have low energy or even depression

*http://www.thyroid.org/patients/faqs/iodine_deficiency.html
Low Testosterone

- Testosterone naturally declines after age 40 years old
- Decline is usually 1-2% per year
- Can be checked by blood work
Symptoms of Low Testosterone

- Low energy or tired
- Low interest in sex
- Unable to have erections
- Weight gain

If you have low testosterone levels, your doctor may provide testosterone replacement
Can obesity cause low testosterone?

- Yes! Fat cells make estrogen. This can affect ability to make testosterone.

- Weight Loss is Key to Staying Healthy and Keeping your Testosterone Levels at a Good Level!
Questions???

- Thank you!
- Next Deaf Health Talk in January 2010
- Possible topic: Physical Therapy
- Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf
References

- Mayo Clinic
  http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/menopause/DS00119