

MANAGING



When a woman is cranky or moody, the blame is pointed at hormones or “her time of the month,” but what about when a man exhibits the same behavior? Is it as simple as he’s just having a bad day or is stressed about work/money/family? Turns out, the answer may be **no**.

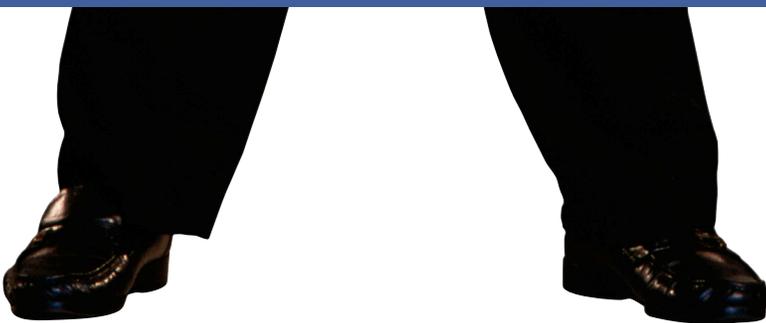
CH-CH-CH-CH-CHANGES

Hormone changes are a natural part of aging, but it’s not only women who suffer from their effects. Doctors are finding that men are reporting similar symptoms to those of a woman experiencing perimenopause or menopause, including moodiness, fatigue, weight gain, depression, decreased sex drive, decreased muscle mass and bone loss.

During the well-defined time of menopause, ovulation ends and a woman’s ovaries stop hormone production completely; however, for men, the testosterone, or androgen, decline is a much more gradual process that occurs over a period of many years. The production of testosterone takes place in the testes and is controlled by the hypothalamus and pituitary gland.

With the slow deceleration of the hormone, also integral in sperm production, a healthy male may be able to create sperm well into his eighties.

MANOPAUSE



Several terms have been given to the so-called male menopause, including androgen deficiency of the aging male, testosterone deficiency, late-onset hypogonadism, andropause and manopause.

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Understanding Low T

While testosterone levels vary greatly from man to man, older men tend to have lower testosterone levels than younger generations. The gradual decline in testosterone levels throughout adulthood, also known as Low T, is approximately 1% a year after age 30 on average. By around age 70, the decrease in a man's testosterone level can be as much as 50%.

DIAGNOSIS AND SYMPTOMS

It's equally as important for men as it is for the women in their lives who love them to understand the signs, symptoms and treatment options for manopause.

Talking to a doctor is the first step in diagnosing manopause. A man will receive a physical exam and a series of blood tests. The doctor will ask about any health issues that may be causing or contributing to his symptoms – from medication side effects to erectile dysfunction and other sexual issues. There may also be other diagnostic tests done to rule out other medical problems that could be a factor in his condition.

Because the hormone decline in men is so gradual, some symptoms may go unnoticed for years, while for others, lower levels may cause:

Changes in sexual functions – Including erectile dysfunction, reduced sexual desire, fewer spontaneous erections – such as during sleep – and infertility. Testes could also become smaller

Changes in sleep patterns – Possible sleep disturbances, such as insomnia, or increased sleepiness

Physical changes – Increased body fat, reduced muscle bulk with declines in strength and endurance, decreased bone density. Swollen or tender breasts and loss of body hair are possible; hot flashes and decreased energy are rare

Emotional changes – Decrease in motivation or self-confidence, feelings of sadness or depression, or trouble concentrating or remembering things

MAN UP TO MANOPAUSE

The goal is to get testosterone back up to a normal level, and although men can't boost their natural testosterone production, there are a few treatment options to discuss with a doctor that may help. Testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) is the male equivalent of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) in women. Just as HRT has been found to have serious side effects, like triggering certain types of breast cancer, TRT also has risks. The major risk is an increased chance of developing prostate cancer. It also turns off sperm production and has been associated with a higher occurrence of stroke. Because of these risks, TRT is not the first possible solution to the effects of andropause.

A few simple lifestyle changes – exercise, a healthier diet and the elimination of alcohol – may help men alleviate some of their symptoms. Better overall health can help alleviate the symptoms of low testosterone. There are also some herbal remedies that some experts believe can help. Vitamins C and E and zinc can help increase testosterone production, while L-arginine has been associated with increasing libido. Before taking any herbal treatments, talk to a doctor first.

Sources:

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