

The Menopause

The menopause or any other name for it is: the permanent cessation of menstruation and **fertility**. Some start at age 45, others at age 55, but the onset age for most women is approximately 50.

Although it may sound as if one „hits“ the menopause at 50 or so, it is not a **sudden** development. The menopause is defined as beginning one year after the final menstrual period. And one of the first signs is irregular periods, but it is not the only one. Others are **hot flushes**, thinning hair, **mood swings** and sleeping disorders, which, to the **casual observer**, seems to be a horror scenario. While the menopause is a fact of life, it doesn't mean that a woman who experiences all or some of these symptoms has **to resign** to that fact. There is a plethora of traditional and alternative pharmaceuticals to help **alleviate** various symptoms. Es-

pecially phytopharmaceuticals are a gentle means of dealing with hot flushes, **night sweats** etc.

Pharmacy customer: Hello.

PTA: Good evening.

I visited my gynaecologist yesterday and she has confirmed what I have suspected for a while now. She said that I have started the menopause.

Oh, I see. Did she recommend any medication?

She recommended something called black cohosh. I googled it and found the scientific name, actaea racemosa, also known as cimicifuga racemosa.

Here we call it „Traubensilberkerze“ and it has been used effectively for many years to treat the **discomforts** associated with the menopause.

Which forms are available?

We have it here in drop form and as tablets. If you are not used to taking drops, I would recommend the tablets.

Is there anything I should be careful about when taking it?

Well, it shouldn't be taken in cases of breast cancer or **cervical cancer**, or if menstrual bleeding starts again.

I see. Are there any side-effects?

About five or six percent of users get **stomach** problems. It helps against hot flushes, mood swings and has also shown to have a positive effect on **bone density**, against osteo-

porosis that is. Another side-effect that I should inform you about is possible **weight gain**.

Oh! I don't want that! What steps can I take against that?

Moderate exercise not only helps to **counteract** weight gain at any age, it also improves bone density. You see exercise helps in all areas of the metabolism and slowing down bone loss is probably one of the most important. Aside from that it helps to counteract mood swings!

That's good to hear. What about calcium supplements? Don't they also help against osteoporosis?

Yes, of course, but a well-balanced, healthy diet with lots of fruit and vegetables, **dairy products** such as milk and yoghurt, sea fish and high-quality olive oil and **canola oil** is also to be recommended.

Well, we all know that but tend to forget it, don't we!

Before I forget, it takes a few weeks for the tablets start to show any effect, and they shouldn't be taken longer than six months. You should make regular visits to your gynaecologist or GP, as the risk for diabetes, and heart problems increases during the menopause.

Thanks for your advice.

Goodbye.

Bye! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

fertility	Fruchtbarkeit
sudden	plötzlich
hot flushes	
(AE: flashes)	Hitzewallungen
mood swings	Stimmungsschwankungen
casual observer	oberflächlicher Betrachter
to resign	sich in etwas fügen, im Sinne
to something	von Schicksalsergebenheit
plethora	Fülle
alleviate	lindern, mildern
night sweats	Nachtschweiß
discomforts	Beschwerden
cervical cancer	Gebärmutterkrebs
side-effects	Nebenwirkungen
stomach	Magen
bone density	Knochendichte
weight gain	Gewichtszunahme
counteract	gegenwirken
supplements	(hier) Nahrungsergänzungsmittel
dairy products	Milch und Milcherzeugnisse
canola oil	Rapsöl