

EMBRACING A
MENOPAUSE
MINDSET

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Every single day, millions of women all around the world are experiencing a natural mid-life progression called menopause. In China, women view this time of 'change' as a time of rebirth. In Japan, the term *konenki* actually represents renewal and energy for menopausal women. Many cultures across the globe embrace the process as one of liberation and 'being set free' to enjoy a new stage of life.

Health professionals are taking a positive slant on menopause too. Dr. Cynthia Stuenkel, MD, endocrinologist and professor at San Diego's University of California School of Medicine, encourages women to focus on the excitement of change and to maintain a positive attitude by reminding them that they still have nearly half of their life to live well. She says there is no better time to taste what life has to offer and tells women to "Stop holding back because the party starts now."¹

KONENKI:
JAPANESE WORD FOR
RENEWAL OF LIFE & ENERGY
FOR MENOPAUSAL WOMEN.



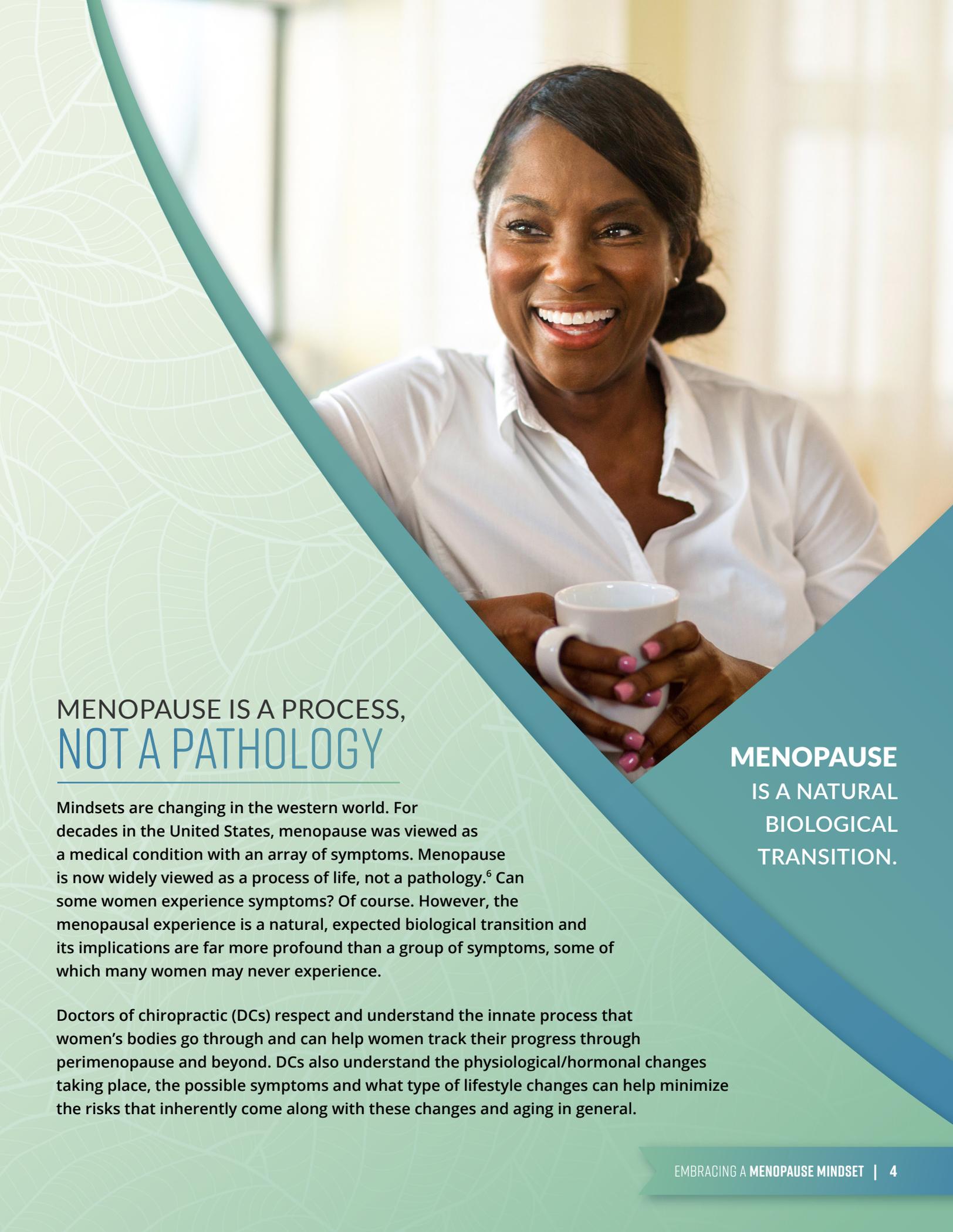
**“MENOPAUSAL
ZEST” THE RUSH
OF PHYSICAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ENERGY THAT
MANY WOMEN
EXPERIENCE!**

PAUSE TO ADMIRE THE PERKS

One specific singular perk to menopause is a cause for grand celebration, no more periods. However, other physical perks are plentiful too:

- No more cycles also means no expense of buying tampons or pads or worrying about the calendar for activities such as swimming or travel.
- Diminished PMS symptoms.²
- More enjoyable sex/no more pregnancy worries or the need for protective devices to prevent pregnancy.
- Hormonal headaches, like migraines, improve.³
- Uterine fibroids shrink.⁴
- Many women have also cited that they enjoy the lack of worry about leakage or wearing light-colored/white trousers!

That is just to name a few. Another big perk stems from a term called ‘menopausal zest.’ This term, coined by anthropologist Margaret Mead, is used to describe the rush of both physical and psychological energy that many women experience after menopause.⁵ It’s a perfect time for women to mindfully take inventory of their lives, relationships and the ways they are caring for their own health and well-being. With most being empty-nesters, menopause is also an optimal time to shift focus. Mid-life is actually a time when many women are more inclined to take chances, switch careers, pursue a hobby/new activity or even turn a hobby into a business. For many individuals, time is more plentiful and the sky’s the limit to spend time on activities that are truly meaningful on a personal level.



MENOPAUSE IS A PROCESS, NOT A PATHOLOGY

Mindsets are changing in the western world. For decades in the United States, menopause was viewed as a medical condition with an array of symptoms. Menopause is now widely viewed as a process of life, not a pathology.⁶ Can some women experience symptoms? Of course. However, the menopausal experience is a natural, expected biological transition and its implications are far more profound than a group of symptoms, some of which many women may never experience.

Doctors of chiropractic (DCs) respect and understand the innate process that women's bodies go through and can help women track their progress through perimenopause and beyond. DCs also understand the physiological/hormonal changes taking place, the possible symptoms and what type of lifestyle changes can help minimize the risks that inherently come along with these changes and aging in general.

**MENOPAUSE
IS A NATURAL
BIOLOGICAL
TRANSITION.**

STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTH

Exercise and proper nutrition is important for everyone. The process of menopause, however, brings with it a few specific strategies to maintain endurance and keep bones strong after hormonal changes modify our metabolism.

Muscle mass decreases up to 8% per decade after age 30. After age 60, the rate of decline is even higher.⁶ Since some women can enter the stage of perimenopause as early as their 30s (perimenopause can begin years before the complete cessation of menses), building endurance and keeping ample muscle strength is highly important as a preventative measure to maintain bone strength as women go through the final stop of their cycles. A decrease in muscle mass is correlative to an increase in fat mass

which contributes to changes in body composition and physiology. This can affect bone density, joint stiffness and have implications for conditions such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease and osteoporosis.⁷

As an adjunct to optimizing joint function to combat stiffness, your DC can help you address perimenopausal symptoms, and recommend an exercise plan to maintain your strength, resilience and balance. With a combination of weight-bearing exercise, strength/resistance training and activities to help maintain bone integrity and support cardiovascular health, your DC can guide you with a plan to stay strong for decades to come.





In addition to exercise, focused nutrition is highly important as women travel the path toward menopause and many chiropractors offer nutritional recommendations as part of their scope of practice.

Basic nutritional tips would include but not be limited to:

- Reducing inflammation with the reduction of simple sugars (sweet treats, alcohol, pasta, etc.) is a great place to start.
- Increasing complex carbohydrates, such as salads or vegetables, especially cruciferous vegetables like broccoli.
- Consuming good fats (omega fatty acids). Fish oils, avocados and using olive oil vs. canola are all easy to incorporate into daily living.
- Ensuring ample protein. Eggs, fatty fish like salmon and lean meats are the most highly encouraged and protein is needed as foundational nutrition for maintaining bone strength.
- Certain dietary supplements may also benefit some women with hormonal balance. Black cohosh, Flaxseed, Ginseng, St. John's Wort, DHEA, Dong Quai and Wild Yam are a few examples.⁸
- Supplements may also be recommended to supply core nutrients to build healthy bones and include examples such as: Calcium, Magnesium, Vitamin D3, Phosphorus and Potassium. Bone health also requires protein.⁹ Along with a healthy diet with lots of vegetables, lean proteins, some fruit and snacks like legumes, nuts and seeds, a supplement for bone building and health may be beneficial.

Lastly, look to your DC for information about stress reduction. In our hectic modern world, multiple studies have shown that stress is a core contributor for increased menopausal symptoms.¹⁰ Chiropractic care helps reduce stress through hands-on care to maximize joint function for optimal motion, release endorphins in the area of adjustment and diminish pain. Massage or physiotherapy may supplement care to aid in muscle relaxation. DCs can also recommend stress reduction techniques

such as mindfulness meditation or yoga that can be implemented into your daily routine to help diminish the effects of stress on the body.

Talk to your DC today about the stages of perimenopause or menopause to help you track a positive path of care and prevention as you naturally progress through this empowering phase of life.



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