

# Balancing Menopausal Years through Chinese Medicine

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This lecture will present an introduction to the basic principles how to balance Menopausal Years through Chinese Medicine in the context of both, the clinical setting and within our daily lives.

Over the past 500 years Chinese Medicine has developed a detailed understanding of how all the different aspects of our experience inter-relate. Health is not merely an absence of symptoms, but rather a balanced vitality of all facets of the individual, intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual. Chinese Medicine presents a detailed map, clearly explaining how all this pieces fit together. In short, how and why our lives work or don't work for us, on all levels.

Chinese Medicine is not a mechanical system used to fix broken parts: it offers not only treatment for disease, but also is a vehicle to greater understanding of our lives, serving to support and assist each individual in their journey of growth and personal transformation. Above all, it is a practical philosophy rooted in the understanding of the individual as part of a larger whole, with the goals of harmony and balance within the self, between the self and others and between self and environment.

This class will provide an explanation of Menopausal years in western understanding as well as explaining the different possibilities of balancing Menopausal years through Acupuncture and herbal Remedies.

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***Claudia Weitkemper, L.Ac., O.M.D., Naturopath, R.N.***

Claudia Weitkemper is a national and California licensed Acupuncturist with more than 20 years of experience as a Health Care provider. She began her career as a nurse in Germany before she earned her degree as a Naturopath.

For the past 8 years she has worked in private practice in Germany and in the Bay Area. After receiving a Master of Science degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine from the Academy of Chinese Culture and Health Sciences, Oakland, California, she opened her practice in El Cerrito.

She utilizes Acupuncture, Homeopathic Medicine, Western and Chinese Herbs and Bachflowers to treat and restore patients. Claudia Weitkemper received specialized training in Gynecological Diseases and in acute and chronic Pain Management.

Her services are very potent to restore and maintain balance and optimal health.



***The Big 6 Concerns of  
Women's Health***

- \*Breast Cancer
- \*Heart disease
- \*Alzheimer's disease
- \*Osteoporosis
- \*Bowel cancer
- \* Symptoms

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***Average Age of Menopause – 52***

\*Medical definition of menopause –  
Cessation of menstruation for one year.

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***• Peri – menopause***

**Average age 45 to 49 – before menopause-  
may still have regular cycles but,  
hormones are fluctuating wildly!**

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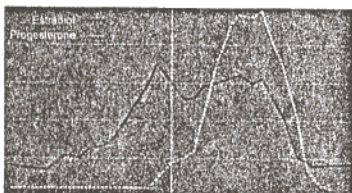
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*Hormone Changes During Normal Menstrual Cycle*



© *Natural Progesterone: The Multiple Roles of a Remarkable Hormone, John R. Lee, MD*

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***PMS and Perimenopause Symptoms***

- \*Breast tenderness-  
fibrocystic breasts
- \*Mood swings – irritability
- \*Abdominal pain/cramping
- \*Headaches and migraines
- \*Bloating (fluid retention)
- \*Depression or anxiety
- \*Insomnia
- \*Joint swelling and Pain
- \*Acne
- \*Fatigue
- \*facial hair growth
- \*Back Pain
- \*Bruising easily
- \*Exacerbation of  
preexisting conditions  
(arthritis, ulcers,  
lupus, etc.)
- \*Hot flashes
- \*Weight gain
- \*Hair loss
- \*Palpitations

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***Menopause Symptoms may be classified according to organ or tissue involved!!***

- \***Brain:** hot flushes, depression, anxiety  
insomnia, poor memory and concentration
- \***Heart:** coronary heart disease
- \***Blood vessels:** arteriosclerosis
- \***Bone:** Osteoporosis
- \***Skin:** thinning, slow healing, itching
- \***Vagina:** vaginal dryness and atrophy

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**Perimenopause- Can be PMS Symptoms too**

- \*Menstrual Changes (flooding or irregular cycles)
- \*Fibroids
- \*Vulvar itching or burning
- \*Involuntary loss of urine (incontinence)
- \*Change in sexual desire
- \*Vaginal dryness
- \*Pain or bleeding during sexual penetration

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**PMS-Symptoms = Estrogen Dominance**

**Estrogen dominance** is another way to think about PMS and perimenopausal symptoms.

Symptoms are an expression of **Hormone imbalances** that are affected by many factors

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**Causes of Estrogen Dominance**

- \*Poor diet – imbalance of fats, protein and carbs.
  - \*Poor food quality – fast food, bad fats, processed carbohydrates
  - \*Poor digestion
  - \*Stress
  - \*Environmental factors
  - \*Lack of exercise or too much exercise
- It's all about Balance!*

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**HRT –Hormone Replacement Therapy**

HRT implies something needs to be replaced –  
Who may need hormones replaced?

- Premature menopause – before the age of 45
- Surgically induced early menopause –  
Hysterectomy with ovary removal
- Chemically induced early menopause – drug  
treatments
- Women with significant low bone density
- Women with severe symptoms – temporary use

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**Estrogen Effects**

- Growth hormone for breast, uterine and ovarian  
tissue
- Prevents vaginal wall thinning and drying
- Enhances collagen layer of skin
- Increases HDL's and decreases total cholesterol
- Beneficial effect on blood vessel walls
- Inhibits bone loss

Premarin = #1 estrogen sold  
(comes from urine of pregnant mares)

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**Progesterone Effects**

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| -protects endometrium           | -restores libido                        |
| -helps with fibrocystic breasts | -prevents endometrial<br>cancer         |
| -balances estrogen              | -may be protective<br>for breast cancer |
| -natural anti-depressant        | -stimulates bone<br>growth              |
| -stimulates thyroid             |   |
| -normalizes blood sugar         |   |

#1 = Provera  
(transdermal or oral)

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***Progesterone's role***

in HRT is to neutralize estrogens potentially carcinogenic effect on endometrium and breasts!!

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**Osteoporosis**

*Estrogen* is required for calcium assimilation – Osteoporosis (weak and brittle bones) can Become a problem.

- 800 mg Calcium
  - 400 I.U. Vitamin D
- should be taken daily!!!

Smoking, alcohol and caffeine inhibits the Absorption of calcium

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***Hot flashes***

Are for many women the worst symptoms. Some doctors say, that only hot flashes and vaginal dryness are estrogen deficiency related, most of the other symptoms are due to increased stress at this time of life.

Seen from Chinese perspective, it does not really matter which symptoms are due to estrogen deficiency and which are not, as the underlying pattern is *mostly Kidney deficiency*

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### **Chinese Medicine view**

- Menopause begins because of weak and declining Kidney Energy.
- This leads to emptiness of Heart and Spleen
- Menopause symptoms result from classic imbalances of Spleen, Kidneys and Heart.

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By keeping Kidneys, Heart and Spleen flow Healthy and *free from emotional stress*, Nourished with *wholesome nutrition* – Menopause will come later in life.

*Lifestyle and dietary* habits from childhood Onwards determine what kind of Menopause you will have

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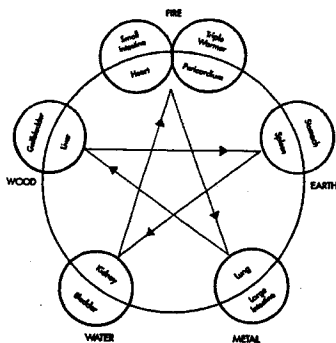
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### ***Menopause Etiology***

- **Kidney Essence Deficiency (Yin and Yang Aspect)**  
combined with:
- Dampness
- Qi Stagnation
- Blood stasis
- Empty Heat
- Liver Yang rising

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### ***What depletes Kidney Essence?***

- 1) ***Emotional stress*** is an extremely important cause of menopausal problems.  
*(Worry, Anxiety and Fear)*
- 2) ***Overwork***
- 3) ***Too many children too close together***
- 4) ***Irregular diet***

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### ***Symptoms of Kidney Imbalance***

- bone problems (knees, lower back, teeth)
- hearing loss and ear problems
- head-hair problems (hair loss, split ends, premature graying)
- urinary, sexual and reproductive imbalances)
- excessive fear and insecurity
- premature aging

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***Kidneys*** are seen as the ***root and foundation*** of the body.

- adrenal gland activity
- energy, warmth, sexuality

Kidneys are the foundation of all Yin and Yang Qualities in the body!

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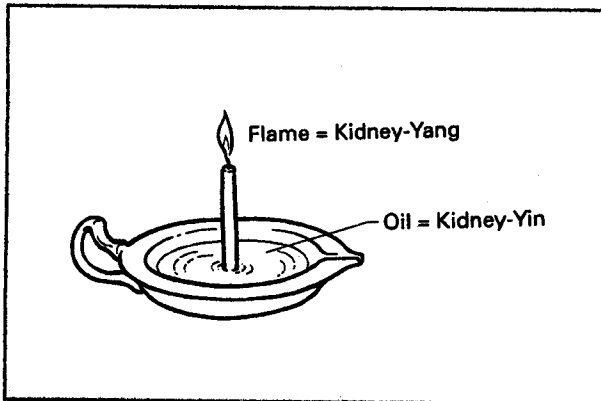
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***Kidney Yin Deficiency signs:***

All areas of the body are affected, but particularly liver, heart and lungs.

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| - dizziness           | -ringing in ears |
| -dry throat, mouth    | -fear            |
| -fever                | -low backache    |
| -weak legs            | -insecurity      |
| -spontaneous sweating | -nervousness     |
| -thin, fast pulse     | -red tongue      |
| -agitation            | -irritation      |

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***Food, which nurtures kidney Yin:***

- |  |              |             |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| -millet  | -barley      | -tofu       |
| -string beans                                  | -black beans | -watermelon |
| -blackberry                                    | -mulberry    | -blueberry  |
| -huckleberry                                   | -wheat germ  | -potato     |
| -seaweeds                                      | -spirulina   | -chlorella  |
| -black sesame                                  | -sardine     | -crab       |
| -clam  | -eggs        | -pork       |
| -aloe vera gel                                 |              |             |
| and Chinese herbs (shu di, tian men dong, ...) |              |             |

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***Kidney Yang Deficiency signs***

The Kidney Yang is often compared to a fire that enkindles the spirit and all other life processes.

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| - aversion to cold      | - cold extremities   |
| - pale complexion       | - weak knees         |
| - weak lower back       | - mental lethargy    |
| - poor spirit           | - irregular menses   |
| - lack of sexual desire | - clear discharge    |
| - sterility             | - frequent urination |
| - edema                 | - asthma             |
| - lack of willpower     | - inactive           |
| - indecisive            | - unproductive       |

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***Food, which nurtures Kidney Yang***

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| -cloves           | -fenugreek seeds |
| -fennel seeds     | -anis seeds      |
| -black peppercorn | -ginger          |
| -cinnamon bark    | -walnuts         |
| -black beans      | -onion family    |
| -quinoa           | -chicken         |
| -lamb             | -trout           |
| -salmon           |                  |

When warming Kidney Yang it is good to add Yin Tonic like seaweed to protect the Yin

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***Kidney Essence***  
***The Source of Kidney Vitality***

By improving the Yin and Yang of the kidneys one also improves the Essence. The kidneys store Essence, which determines one's vitality, resistance to disease, and longevity.

The Essence is irreplaceable and meant to serve one throughout life; once it is used up, life ceases.

Essence can be obtained from food, herbal supplements and through Acupuncture and life style!!

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***Kidney Essence Deficiency signs***

- retarded physical and mental growth
- weak legs and bones
- impotence and other reproductive problems
- early senility
- dizziness
- loose teeth
- loss of head hair
- ringing in ears
- weak knees and lower back

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***Factors, which deplete Essence***

- 1) Stress, fear, insecurity, and overwork
- 2) Too much semen loss in men
- 3) Women bearing "too many" children
- 4) Toxins in food and water
- 5) Alcohol, Drugs, coffee, tobacco
- 6) Excessive sweet flavored food
- 7) Too much dietary protein

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**Kidney Essence Nourishment**

- 1) Acupuncture
- 2) Herbal Supplements
- 3) Micro-algae
- 4) Almonds
- 5) Nettles
- 6) Royal jelly and bee pollen
- 7) Dodder seeds ( Tu si zi)
- 8) Spiritual practices

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***Choosing the appropriate Essence Tonic***

**Heat signs:**

*Avoid* warming remedies such as chicken, liver and Kidney from beef or lamb, walnuts, mussel, trout, salmon or other warming fish.

*Eat* chlorella, spirulina, black beans, seaweeds, wheat grass

**Cold signs:**

*Avoid* cooling remedies such as watermelon, cucumber, Bananas, seaweeds, cereal-grass products....

*Eat* warming seafood, chicken, liver, cinnamon,

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***Essence and Hormones are  
Virtual synonyms!!!***

Essence replenishing herbs can be used in the same manner as Hormones.

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***A combined deficiency of both  
Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang***

Is very common in women over 40!!

The Yin-nourishing remedy can be given  
in the evening, and the Yang-tonifying  
one in the morning.

It has to be adjusted to the predominant  
deficiency!!!

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***Examples to nourish Kidney Yin & Yang  
with herbal Formulas***

- 1) Qi Ju Di Huang Wan *Lycium Chrysanthemum  
Rhemanina Pill* and Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan
- 2) Zuo Gui Wan *Restoring the left (Kidney) Pill*  
and You Gui Wan *Restoring the right (Kidney)  
Pill*
- 3) Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan if there is Heat

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- 4) Three Immortals (hot flashes, lowered sex drive,  
Depression, lower Back pain, vaginal Dryness)  
-ton. Liver & Heart Blood, Spleen Qi and  
Kidney Yin & Yang
- 5) Great Yin (severe hot flashes, hot palms and  
soles, severe night sweats)
- 6) Woman's Balance (Dan Zhi Shao Yao San)  
(Uterine cramping, irritability, irregular period)
- 7) Osteoherbal  
( Bone support, Osteoporosis)
- 8) Astra Essence (frequent urination, Hair loss,  
low libido with no cold signs)

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***Kidney Essence Deficiency as root of Menopausal problems!***

**Often accompanied with:**

- Phlegm
  - Dampness
  - Qi Stagnation
  - Blood stasis
- Decide what is pronounced root or branch!*

Therefore it is important to **modify** the above Formulas!!

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***HRT and Chinese Herbs***

Are **not in contradiction**, because they work in different ways.  
**HRT can be stopped** if desired, without dangerous reactions.  
Now, that Chinese herbs **need time** to be effective. (about 2 month)

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***Effects of Acupuncture in the treatment of menopausal symptoms***

- clears Heat
- supports Energy (Immunsystem, Spleen)
- helps Hot flashes
- strengthen bones
- relieves anxiety
- helps insomnia
- relieves headaches
- tonifies Kidneys
- moves blood
- clears phlegm
- relieves irritability
- relieves pain (lower back, knees)
- helps palpitations
- drains dampness

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***The combination of Herbal Remedies and Acupuncture is very effective!!!***

**-Herbs are better in nourishing Essence  
-Acupuncture is important if there are mixed Excess Pattern.**

***TOGETHER THEY HELP IN A SLOW GRADUAL WAY AND BALANCE YOUR OVERALL HEALTH!!!***

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***Chinese Medicine*** can offer a safe, effective and logical **alternative to HRT** in this transitional time of life.

Even so its effects will never be as rapid as those of HRT.

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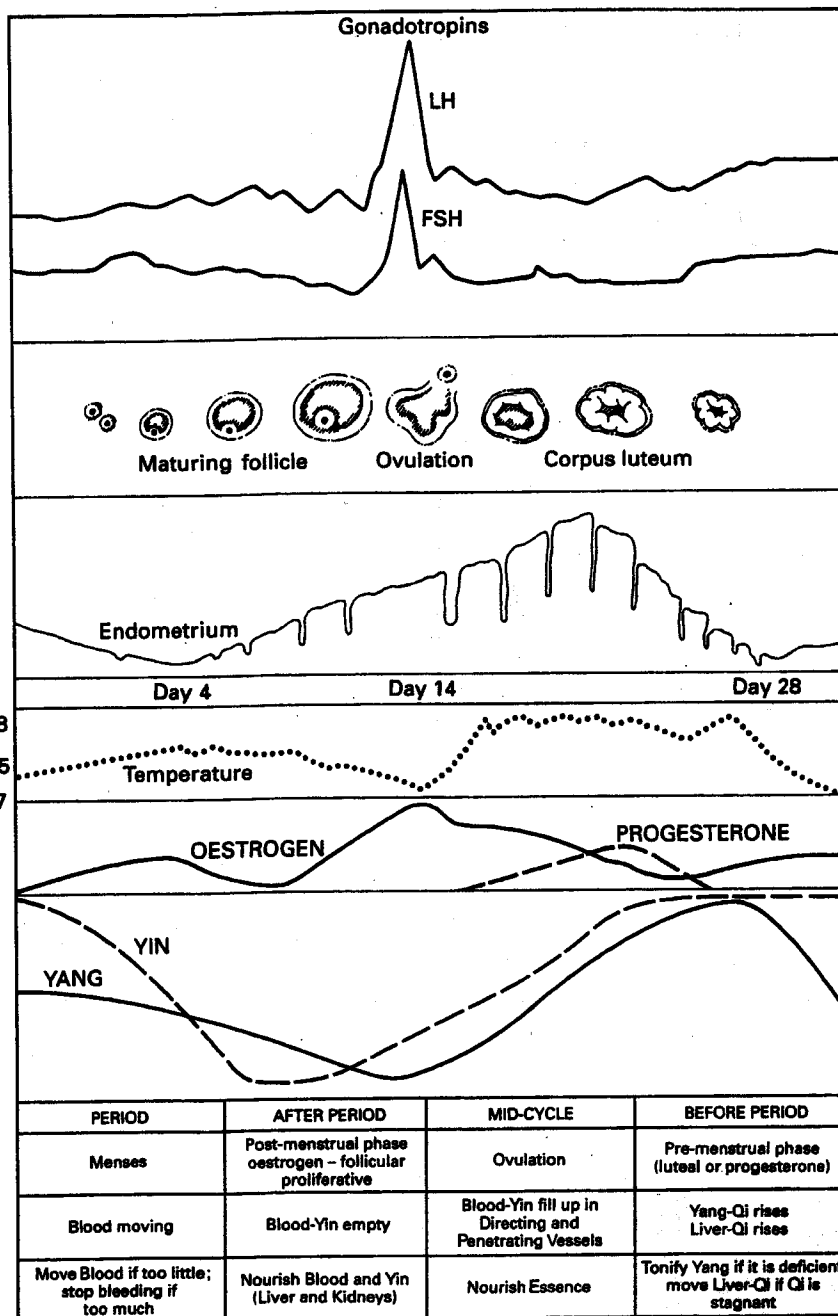
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