



Wake Forest University School of Medicine
**Women's Health Center of Excellence for Research,
Leadership, Education**
Fact Sheet

Hot Flashes

Helping Your Symptoms

Menopausal symptoms are due to the sudden drop in estrogen levels. This can occur naturally when a woman's body stops producing hormones or after a woman stops taking hormone therapy.

For relief of hot flashes:

- ▶ Wear layered clothing.
- ▶ Avoid hot, spicy foods and beverages. Reduce caffeine and avoid alcohol.
- ▶ Estrogen is currently the most effective therapy for hot flashes for women without a uterus. Estrogen and progestin is the most effective therapy for hot flashes for women with a uterus. But each has risks, so discuss taking hormone therapy with your doctor.
- ▶ Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) (i.e. Venlafaxine and Paroxetine) have been shown to substantially reduce hot flashes in clinical trials. Discuss with your doctor whether SSRIs could benefit you.
- ▶ Antihypertensive drugs like Clonidine, Aldomet, and Verapamil are reported to reduce hot flashes. If you have hypertension, talk to your doctor about these medications to also reduce your hot flashes.
- ▶ There is no evidence that exercise will decrease symptoms.
- ▶ Phytoestrogens (Soya, Wild Yam) have not been shown to decrease symptoms in most clinical trials.
- ▶ Herbal products are offered as an alternative to hormone therapy, but, there is little scientific support for any herb in reducing hot flashes. Dong quai, Black Cohosh, and Evening Primrose Oil were not more effective than placebo (sugar-pill) in reducing hot flashes in one clinical trial.
- ▶ Selective Estrogen Receptor Modulators (SERMs) (i.e. Raloxifene) can increase hot flashes.

This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her instructions.

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For more information about women's health issues, stop by our Resource Center at 2000 West First Street, Piedmont Plaza II, 1st Floor, Winston Salem, NC 27104, visit our website at wfubmc.edu/whcoe or contact us at (336) 713-4220. Revised June 2004