DINNER WITH A DOC:
Menopause & Mood Swings

Presented by
Dr. Rachel Mejia
I do not have any financial ties or interests in the medications mentioned in this talk.
Menopause Bringing You Down?

- Menopause causes many hormonal changes which may make you feel inexplicably:
  - Anxious
  - Angry
  - Moody
  - Depressed

- You don’t have to let menopause turn your mood around!
You Are Not Alone

• Mood changes have been observed in up to 23% of peri- and postmenopausal women

• Studies suggest that clinical depression occurs more frequently in perimenopausal women than in premenopausal women
Why Do I Feel Like This?

- Every woman experiences menopause differently

- Symptoms can last for a few months or for several years

- Changes in hormones are a result of aging, or are medically induced through medication or an operation
Why Do I Feel Like This?

- Mood swings are related to fluctuating levels of ovarian hormones during the transition to menopause

- Difficulty with sleeping and hot flashes also can affect your mood
Are You At Risk?

- Vulnerable to depression symptoms if history of premenstrual syndrome (PMS), and women who report significant stress, sexual dysfunction, physical inactivity, or hot flashes.

- Increased risk of depression if history of:
  - Mood swings during menstrual cycles (PMS)
  - Clinical depression
Symptoms Related to Menopause

- Irregular periods
- Hot flashes
- Vaginal and urinary problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Change in sex drive
- Mood changes
- Weight gain or slowed metabolism

*During this time, you will also be at a higher risk for osteoporosis and heart disease.*
Symptoms Related to Mood

- Depressed mood
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Decreased sense of well-being
- Irritability
- Tearfulness
- Insomnia and/or fatigue
- Depression
“Depressed” and “Depression”

- Determining the cause and extent of your “menopause blues” is very important

- 3 types of Depression
  - Depressed Mood
  - Depression as a symptom
  - Clinical Depression
Don’t Worry!

Some women feel irritable or depressed during menopause and are worried about the changes they are experiencing, but there are many treatment options that can help keep you active, strong, and happy as your body changes.
How can I control these mood swings?

- If you experience symptoms of menopause that make you uncomfortable, there are medications and lifestyle changes you can try.
  - Start by keeping a diary of your symptoms, including their frequency and intensity.
  - Share these with your doctor so that together, you can come up with a treatment plan that works for you.
Keep Fit!

- Maintain a healthy weight through:
  - Proper diet
    - As you age, you will need vitamins and nutrients, but generally not as many calories.
    - Make sure that you are eating a balanced diet that is low in fat, high in fiber, and includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
  - Staying Active
    - Participate in a weight-bearing exercise such as walking or dancing at least three days per week to keep up heart and bone strength and boost your mood.
Get Your ZZZs

- Get into a routine sleeping schedule.
  - Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day.

- Keep your bedroom cool and dark.

- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, physical activity, eating or watching TV just before bed.
De-Stress

• Lessen stress by giving yourself limits and not taking on too many tasks.

• Try relaxation techniques such as yoga or breathing exercises or do something you enjoy like walking outdoors, crafting, or reading a book.
Methods for Coping With Stress

- Deep breathing and muscle relaxation training
- Daily exercise
- Healthy Diet (low-fat, low caffeine, low-alcohol)
- Sufficient self-care and enjoyable self nurturing activities
- Support group/therapy
- Creative outlets that enhance quality of life
Talk About It

• Join a support group.

• Talk to friends who are experiencing similar symptoms.

• Talking through the changes you are experiencing can help you understand them better and feel more comfortable.
Remember…

• Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately.

• Lifestyle changes to enhance your mood take time.

• Treat other symptoms that may be contributing to the low mood.

• If no relief with stress reduction and lifestyle changes, seek further help from a physician.
Remember…

Menopause ➔ Mood swings and low mood

Menopause ➔ Clinical Depression
Talk to Your Physician

• Review your medical history and medications

• Understand your symptoms

• Develop a treatment plan to help you feel better
  – Lifestyle changes
  – Counseling
  – Medication
    • Antidepressants
    • Hormonal therapies
Medications

- St. John’s wort – Over The Counter
  - Mixed results on effectiveness

- Antidepressants – can be used to treat both mood symptoms and hot flashes
  - Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI)
    - Paroxetine (Paxil)
    - Venlafaxine (Effexor)
Hormone Therapy (HT)

- Estrogen has a positive impact on brain functions that regulate mood and behavior

- Effective in relieving depression symptoms

- Low doses of HT often reduce or eliminate mood swings, tearfulness, irritability and feelings of sadness

- Particularly effective if you have symptoms of depression and hot flashes
Hormone Therapy

- Most effect during perimenopause

- Not as effective once hormonal levels have stabilized during post-menopause

- Goal: Use the smallest dose for the shortest amount of time
National Certified Menopause Practitioners

University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics
Women’s Health Clinic
(319) 356-2294

Veronika Kolder, MD, NCMP
Medical Director

Eugenia Mazur, MD, NCMP

Elizabeth Graf, PA-C, NCMP

Marygrace Elson, MD, MME, NCMP

Rachel Mejia, DO, NCMP
Thank You!

Questions??