



# The Magic of Midlife



Julie Silver  
 Columnist

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**M**ore and more women are searching beyond modern medicine to an older, more holistic solution to managing their lifecycles. Many women instinctively sense that changes in midlife are not a failure of our body but a significant event that should be honored and valued. Many of the older traditions respect the changes our bodies experience throughout different lifecycles.

Synthetic hormones (such as premarin and prempo) as well as bio-identical hormones are controversial. Both are "unnatural" in that they are given to the body at a time when the body would not naturally have such high levels or hormones. Both have long-term implications on other areas of our

body's health and well-being.

There are many holistic modalities that can assist a woman in naturally working with symptoms that may be uncomfortable. Phytoestrogens are natural hormones that are found in more than 300 plants. Lingans, such as flax seed, have a significant impact in providing menopause symptom relief and menopause help as well, according to ongoing studies. Weaker than human estrogens, phytoestrogens





are beneficial in more ways as they attach themselves to the body's estrogen receptors. If a woman's estrogen level is low, phytoestrogens increase the body's level; if it is high, phytoestrogens replace the stronger human estrogen, which may have harmful effects.

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Both traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and Ayurvedic medicine offer a whole body approach to supporting women in their midlife years. Traditional Chinese medicine views the body and health as a balance between two states — yin and yang. When yin and yang are not in balance, we can see hot symptoms (such as hot flashes and night sweats) or cold symptoms (such as lowered sexual drive, frequent urination). TCM uses acupuncture, herbs and diet to alleviate symptoms and bring our body to its natural state of balance.

Much like TCM, Ayurvedic medicine looks at the body from a viewpoint of balance. There are three *doshas* that keep our body functions balanced and healthy. Each dosha is present throughout our body and governs activities of our body, mind and emotions. Each dosha — and each aspect of the dosha — can be seen to apply across the board to all our organs, tissues and cells, giving us a view of the body as a whole rather than as disconnected parts. Again, working with symptoms, Ayurvedic uses herbs, diet and other lifestyle changes to

bring our body back to wholeness.

Finally, ongoing exercise, using such modalities as cardiovascular exercise, yoga, tai chi, swimming, biking and weight-bearing exercise can be very helpful in managing symptoms and improving the well being of our body, mind and spirit. Whatever path you take, be sure to honor the natural progression our body takes and appreciate the wholeness of our being.

*Julie Silver, MSW, Dipl. Ac., is a National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine board-certified acupuncturist and owner of Acupuncture Healthcare Associates of Michigan, Inc., a West Bloomfield holistic health clinic featuring acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine and naturopathic medicine. Her e-mail address is [acuhealer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:acuhealer@sbcglobal.net).*

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