

## INTRODUCTION

Though the words "pre menopausal" and "menopausal" are often used, their meanings aren't always well defined. So let's start with definition "pre" is a prefix meaning around or near, and pre menopause is the transitional time a woman goes through before menopause. Its length is variable and its most common symptoms are irregular menstrual cycles. This can mean periods that are closer together, further apart, heavier, or lighter. An increasing number of periods are missed, usually in an unpredictable fashion. Generally, it takes for women four years to go through this transition, but that may vary. A woman is in menopause when she has not had a period for a full year (*Vaughn, 2008*).

Menopause is an emotionally-charged words. There is a wide range of emotional responses that can have, based on physiology; her general health, her past mental health and familial and cultural factors. No two women will bring the same set of contributing factors, let alone the same attitudes, fears, and fantasies, to this watershed life event (*Moher, 2003*).

Every year, million of women begin the menopause transition. By year 2030, the World Health Organization estimates 1.2 billion women will be age 50 or over (*Hitchcock & Thomas, 2003*). An estimated 31.2 million women experienced menopause in the year 2000, compared with 28.7 million in 1990 Experts project that will be as high as 45.9 million in 2020 (*Nakajima, 2001*).

The late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the life expectancy of women has increased to an average age of 81 years. This means that most women can expect to live another third of their lives after menopause (*Choi, 2001*). With

prolonged life expectancy, there is an increasing need for a better quality of life, in particular for physical and psychological wellbeing focus on strategies for women's health preservation, illness prevention, health life styles, and psychological support (*Al-Azzawi, 2001; and Abdalla, 1999*).

However, menopausal women inevitably become depressed, irritable and/or forgetful at this time. The reality is that some women may experience all or some of these symptoms, but others may experience none of them. Certainly, women who have experienced episodes of depression earlier in life may be at risk for developing depression with menopause, but not necessarily. This is especially true for women entering menopause. Increase risk of heart disease and fractures due to osteoporosis, as well as, weight gain, depressed mood, and hot flushes are among the many concerns that women face and often fear as they enter menopause. So, attention is needed to her eating and making this stage positive and enjoyable (*Olds et al., 2004*).

While menopause is used to mean withdrawal from active life for many women, this is not true today. Yet, women still worry about what will happen and what they should do when menopause arrives. During menopause women may experience wide range of feelings, from anxiety and discomfort, to release and relief. Most adapt to the changes and continue to live well and remain healthy through these transitions (*Nancy et al., 2008*).

Most of today's women will live 25 to 30 years - one third of their lives - after menopause. An understanding of the body's changes during this phase of life can ease the transition, and is equally important, better prepare her to safeguard her health during the later years. There are many different considerations a woman needs to take into account as she

approaches menopause. Specific treatment for menopausal symptoms will be determined by healthcare providers based on woman's age, overall health, and medical history; current symptoms; her tolerance for specific medication, procedures, or therapies; and her opinion or preference (*Matthews et al. 2002*).

However, the majority of menopausal women, need to take care of themselves in terms of basic healthy life style – diet, sleep, exercise etc. and keep their minds challenged, with paid careers, volunteer work, active social lives etc. The decades of menopause can be a challenging fulfilling part of life. A well balanced diet, as well as exercise, has always been the basis for good health and wellbeing (*Olds et al., 2004*).

So, every menopausal woman should enhance her quality of life to live in a healthy way to protect herself from disease. A healthy lifestyle can reduce the severity of menopausal symptoms of some women reaching menopause and make the transition easier.