

How To Make Up For Declining Hormones

DEAR DR. SCANTLING,
I'm a vibrant
(post-menopausal) 54-year-old
woman involved in a very loving and
most satisfying



DR. SANDRA
SCANTLING
INTIMACY, SEX
& RELATIONSHIP

relationship with a
man. He's not only
wonderful to me, but
he's by far the best
lover I've ever had ...
passionate and
patient. My problem
is that I can hardly
attain orgasm
anymore. When I do,
it's weak — like a
hiccup — certainly
not what I was used to during my
pre-menopausal days. I must admit
that I'm feeling a little blue about all
of this. My gynecologist tells me I
simply need more foreplay, but I can't
feasibly add an extra hour to foreplay
— it would prove to be exhausting for
both of us. Men have Viagra. Is there
anything comparable for a woman?
Can you recommend anything? I
certainly can't be the only
post-menopausal woman suffering
from this. Please help me.

— Jeannette, Farmington

DEAR JEANNETTE,

You are certainly not alone. Many
women tell me that their orgasms
don't have the same "zing" after
menopause.

Female orgasm is complex. Unlike
men, who have perfected an efficient
formula of friction and fantasy,
women need all systems to be "go"
before they experience "lift-off." As
we age, this becomes even more
challenging. More time or more
stimulation isn't a surefire
prescription. In fact, some women
just get dry, numb and bored long
before their partner gets exhausted.

To keep orgasms alive, we have to
do our best to stay healthy — in mind,
body and spirit. Middle-aged women
have come a long way since our
grandma's days, when she rolled her
stocking comfortably below her
knees and wore sensible tied shoes.
Have you tried to find a pair of
comfortable shoes recently? I dare
you to show me a pair in Vogue.

Boomers of today have over-40
Olympians as role models! The
downside, if there is one, is that this
50-is-the-new-40 view has increased
intolerance for bodily imperfection,
putting even more pressure on
today's women. Determined to
combat gravity and inflexibility, they
attend multiple spinning classes a
week, grueling sessions with
personal trainers and round it off
with some Bikram Yoga. But even if
your body and heart are in A-1 shape,
when our ovaries tick their last tock,
sex hormones go into free fall.
Declining hormones can lead to

diminished desire, change in erotic
sensitivity, decreased blood flow to
the genitals, vaginal dryness and (for
many women) less intense orgasmic
release.

There are several hormonal (and
non-hormonal) products on the
market that purport to alleviate these
problems, but proceed with caution
— just because something is labeled
"natural" or "herbal" doesn't
guarantee its safety.

Here are a few other hints:

▶ Stay as healthy as you can.

Correct any medical or hormonal
imbalances. Don't smoke, moderate
your caffeine intake, exercise, watch
your diet and make time for all kinds
of pleasure.

▶ Stop your distracting mind

chatter. Focus on whatever turns you
on. Practice thinking sexy thoughts
during the day — just for the fun of it.

▶ Don't "chase" your orgasm.

Follow your pleasure, and ride it like
a wave.

▶ Don't get stuck with one way to
orgasm. Just because your vibrator
has always worked doesn't mean it
has to be your only toy. And
remember to share your toys with
your lover.

▶ Lubrication is a good thing — so
experiment. Look carefully at
products that claim to increase heat
or tingle, however, as the ingredients
may irritate or numb both of you.

On the medical side, there are
finally more research dollars going
toward the investigation of drugs to
enhance female sexual response.
Women who have either gone
through menopause or had their
ovaries removed may be eligible for a
current research study for a topical
testosterone gel especially
formulated for women. If you're
interested in learning more, check
with your physician first, and then

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call 877-Bloom-81 to see if you meet
the criteria.

But the most challenging part of
sexuality, by far, is the mind.
Depression is reported to affect
between 8 percent and 15 percent of
all menopausal women and certain
antidepressants can impair sexual
desire, arousal and orgasm. But there
is some good news in this regard.
According to a new study in the
Journal of the American Medical
Association, pre-menopausal women
on antidepressant medication who
take Viagra report less difficulty

reaching orgasm when compared to
those taking placebo drugs.

Being a sexy fifty- or
sixtysomething takes a different
attitude. It requires we accentuate the
positive. If you have great legs —
flaunt them. Think about the
fantasies you wish you had the nerve
to tell your lover and finally say it. If
not now, when? Men understand how
important variety is to pleasure.
Women seem to think that the old
standards should always hit the spot.
How would you like a perfectly juicy
tender filet mignon — every single
night?

So don't despair, Jeannette, all is
not lost. What we tell ourselves (or
what we imagine) before, during or
after sex is the most potent
aphrodisiac. The key to more
satisfying orgasms is learning to
deepen your pleasure skills. This
doesn't take more time, it takes
know-how.

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