

[IMAGE]

Hot-Flash Treatments Lukewarm

To combat the symptoms of menopause, many women have used hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for decades. These hormones were recently linked to chronic health problems, though, prompting women to seek alternatives to HRT. Alternative therapies like herbs, soy products and meditation are now being used to prevent the hot flashes, sleep problems, joint pain, fatigue and forgetfulness of menopause. But which ones actually work?

In a review of 29 studies of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies for menopausal symptoms, the authors of this study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* compared the effectiveness of various alternative treatments for menopause symptoms.

Black cohosh, an herb traditionally used by Native Americans to treat gynecological conditions, won out as the most beneficial treatment for mitigating hot flashes in three out of four studies. Black cohosh appears to effectively treat menopausal symptoms, but there is a lack of long-term safety research, so caution is in order if considering long-term use. Also, soy or isoflavone supplementation appeared moderately beneficial for treating hot flashes, but evidence was less conclusive - only three of eight studies involving treatment of at least six weeks resulted in significant improvements.

Disappointingly, nearly all the other alternative menopause treatments in the study - acupuncture; vitamin E; evening primrose oil; wild yams; ginseng; dong quai; and red clover - do not appear to offer any benefits for treating hot flashes, based on existing clinical studies. Now is a good time to talk with a doctor of chiropractic about where you can turn for the best, and safest, options for dealing with the frustrating effects of menopause.

Reference:

Kronenberg F, Fugh-Berman A. Complementary and alternative medicine for menopausal symptoms: A review of randomized, controlled trials. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 2002;137(10), pp. 805-813.

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