



SPRING ■ 2007

Red Hot Mamas[®] Report

Sleepless in Menopause City

FOR INCREASING NUMBERS OF MENOPAUSAL WOMEN, NIGHTTIME CAN BE A CHALLENGE. SLEEPLESSNESS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM DURING THE MENOPAUSAL TRANSITION.

Women experience fragmented sleep in and around menopause. Sleeplessness is a major problem and affects women in different ways. Some report problems such as irritability, fatigue, memory loss, lack of concentration and even aches and pains.

On a personal note, I openly admit that many times I've longed to put my head on a pillow during the day. And, I have had trouble passing by a La-Z-Boy easy chair without wanting to dive into it. But through my involvement with Red Hot Mamas[®], I've found that I'm not the only one having troubles with my sleep.

The Red Hot Mamas "Sleepless in Menopause City" survey certainly awakened me to the world of menopausal sleep. It has lifted the shroud of darkness around this important topic.

Women, in particular tend to overlook their need for sleep. We tend to take care of others and our work, but feel like we're running out of gas at the end of the day. The amount of needed sleep varies from woman to woman, but studies indicate that most people need at least seven hours of sleep each night for optimum health.

Lack of sleep compromises your health, both physically and mentally. People who get too little sleep develop poor health and higher percentages of chronic diseases (i.e., heart disease).

So, stop yawning. Learn the facts about sleep and sleep disorders. Remember that you are not alone. Red Hot Mamas[®] offers guidance to you about what you can do to manage your sleep problems, get a good night's rest and the proper treatment, if necessary.

Good Health to You All,

Karen Giblin, Founder Red Hot Mamas[®]



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The Land of the Nod Menopause and Your Sleep



During menopause, many women lay their heads down at night and don't sleep. They toss and turn, rearranging the thoughts in their head, as well as the pillows and blankets. Some women have night sweats that drench their pajamas. They may need to get up to change, get a glass of water, or go the bathroom, and then they can't fall back asleep. As a result, the next morning they feel like they are running on empty and their battery is almost dead.

Problems associated with inadequate sleep include:

- ✦ Poor concentration
- ✦ Increased risk of accidents
- ✦ Irritability and mood swings
- ✦ Inability to deal with stress
- ✦ Increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and other diseases
- ✦ Depression

Lack of sleep is not always the most talked about topic when it comes to menopause, but it is one of the most common occurrences in women who experience frequent hot flashes and night sweats.

Night sweats are actually hot flashes that occur during sleep. They may be caused by decreased estrogen at menopause. They can also be due to stress, anxiety and/or physical illness.

Sleep Survey Results Are In: Menopausal Women are Battling the Midnight Blues

DURING THE FALL OF 2006, RED HOT MAMAS® CONDUCTED A WEB-BASED SURVEY OF 485 WOMEN TO FIND OUT JUST HOW BIG A PROBLEM SLEEP DISTURBANCES ARE FOR MENOPAUSAL WOMEN

In a survey of 485 women in all stages of menopause, 18% experience sleep disturbances (the highest of all menopausal symptoms); more than hot flashes (15%), night sweats (13%), memory problems (12%), mood swings (11%), or vaginal dryness (10%).

When comparing the different stages of menopause, the percentage of women with sleep disturbances rose from 19% in perimenopause to 28% in postmenopausal women. These

changes included difficulty falling asleep, waking up and restless sleep. For the menopausal women surveyed, 42% experience sleep disturbances every night and over a quarter of them experienced sleep disturbances several times per night.

Nonetheless, when asked if they had spoken with their healthcare provider about the problem, 55% said "No", and 47% reported their healthcare provider had not offered any prescribed treatment for their sleep disturbances. Only 25% of menopausal women were taking an over-the-counter sleep aid.

The survey went on to

disclose that 10% or less of perimenopausal to postmenopausal women felt their current course of treatment was working to alleviate their sleep disturbances; and 89% of perimenopausal and menopausal women and 100% of postmenopausal women reported that they did not feel their sleep concerns had been adequately addressed by their healthcare provider.

Over 90% of all the women surveyed ranked sleep disturbances as "somewhat of an issue" or "a major issue" in their lives (suggesting that sleep disturbances have a substantial negative impact). Forty-six percent of women reported that

talking with their doctors about their sleep disturbances would be valuable to them, while the remainder of women surveyed expressed an interest in more information being provided from other sources ranging from pamphlets to news/media coverage, magazines, education/support groups, the internet and other locations.



A RED HOT PERSPECTIVE: I Couldn't Sleep At All Last Night

PAULA EXERCISES REGULARLY, DRINKS DECAFFEINATED BEVERAGES AND DOESN'T SMOKE. WHY CAN'T SHE STAY ASLEEP?

Paula is a healthy, 47 year old *Red Hot Mama* with a great job, lovely home and wonderful husband. Like many women, sleep problems started when she began feeling the effects of perimenopause. For about a year, hot flashes, night sweats and difficulty staying asleep has left her feeling sleep-deprived, annoyed and frustrated. "I mostly feel like I am always a bit sleep deprived," she says. On a typical weeknight, you can find Paula asleep at about 10PM.

She practices healthy sleep habits and sticks to a regular sleep schedule.

Bathroom trips and hot flashes interrupt her sleep and wake her up 4-5 times a night. "It can be very difficult getting back to sleep," she explains, "Many nights I feel like I am watching the clock move".

In addition, Paula often finds herself "beating the alarm clock" by waking up much earlier than necessary. Her lack of a good night's sleep makes working and functioning in the daytime a challenge. Napping helps compensate for her sleep debt, but she still never really feels well-rested. As Paula's perimenopausal symptoms become more frequent, so do her restless nights.

What is a woman to do?

Although Paula's doctor didn't inquire about her sleep, she mentioned her concerns to him.

He suggested exercising more and eliminating caffeine to get a better night's sleep. Now, Paula works out 4-6 times per week and doesn't drink any caffeine after 11AM.

She still has problems staying asleep. "It bothers me that doctors see this as simply something that lifestyle changes can fix," she states.

Paula will inevitably need to search for other answers to her

problem such as HT, other prescription medications or a healthcare provider familiar with

treating sleep disorders. In the meantime she says, "I try to stay in bed and kick off all the covers making sure no fabric touches me, and think sleepy thoughts."

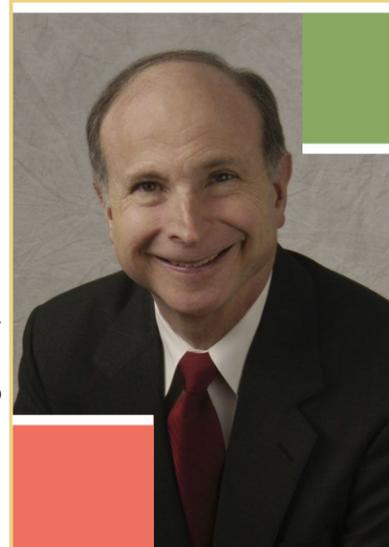
If you are like Paula, make it a point to tell your doctor how sleep deprived you are. You do not have to be robbed of your sleep for the rest of your life. When insomnia is diagnosed and properly treated, women's quality of life can be restored.



PAULA

Sleep: An Under-Recognized and Under-Treated Symptom of Menopause

**THE EXPERT'S ANGLE
DR. MACHELLE M. SEIBEL**



The Red Hot Mamas Sleep Survey data clearly reveal that sleep is a major issue for women throughout their peri-postmenopausal years. However, even though sleep disturbances rank highest of all menopausal symptoms, women are often not asked about it by healthcare providers and patients themselves often fail to bring it to their healthcare providers' attention.

This survey illustrates that there should be more awareness of sleep disturbances as a major health concern in women in and around menopause and that both healthcare providers and the menopausal women they treat should open lines of dialogue that lead to treatment both to improve quality of life and as a form of disease prevention.

If you are missing a few nights' sleep, it doesn't automatically qualify you as having a sleeping disorder. But, if your sleep difficulties are consistent, you can benefit from the help of your doctor. Your doctor may discuss a variety of treatments depending upon the underlying cause.

Hot flashes and night sweats are common reasons for menopausal women to have poor quality sleep.

Discuss hormone therapy (HT) as it has been shown to improve REM sleep and sleep quality. If HT is something that you either cannot or do not want to take, there are other prescription medications available which are specifically designed to help you get to sleep and stay asleep. There are over-the-counter sleep aids available as well.

If you or your partner snores, it could be a sign of sleep apnea and should be investigated. Depression and anxiety can also affect sleep. Your doctor can work with you to determine if this is a problem and recommend a course of treatment.

If getting up to go to the bathroom during sleep is a common problem for you, discuss this concern with your doctor. There are exercises, medications and procedures to make it better.

Of course, lifestyle modifications like diet and exercise can play a role in your quality of sleep. So, include that in your discussion with your doctor.

Finally, realize that a lack of sleep can make anyone's mood or memory worsen. So don't toss and turn. You can have a peaceful slumber.

One, Two, Zzzzz... Savvy Tips to Promote Good Sleep

ESTABLISH HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

Create a sleep schedule and stick to that schedule faithfully. Develop a soothing bedtime ritual, pleasant thoughts, a good book, a glass of milk, put on a comfortable pair of pajamas, make sure your bedding is clean and turned down nicely, and consider drinking a soothing cup of decaffeinated tea. Relax in a warm bubble bath, light an aromatherapy candle and relax your body and mind, perhaps with a soothing CD. Some people find prayer, chanting or meditation helpful.

MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY

If you get into bed and discover you can't fall asleep after 30 minutes and you are twitching like a jumping bean, do something relaxing, like reading a good book. Avoid watching the news before you go to bed. It is seldom relaxing and doesn't set you up for calmness.

KEEP A SLEEP DIARY

Track your sleep patterns. Record how difficult it was to fall asleep the night before along with how sleepy you are during the day. Other helpful information includes what you eat and drink before bed, times of the day you get tired and any naps you take. Share this information with your doctor. It will help them see the intensity and frequency of your sleep patterns.

CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR

Be prepared and remember to take along your sleep diary and bring up-to-date information about your medical information and any medications you are taking. Your doctor may ask you a lot of questions about the duration and frequency of your sleep problems and how the lack of sleep is impacting your life.

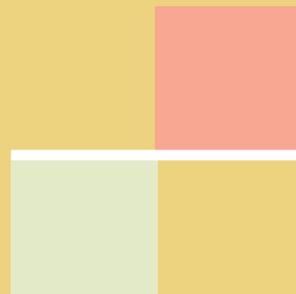
CONTROL HOT FLASHES AND NIGHT SWEATS

Many things can help you control hot flashes and night sweats, including exercise, avoiding trigger situations (hot spicy foods, alcohol, overdressing, stress), replacing estrogen, other prescribed medications and/or using alternative remedies.

- Keep your room cool - use a fan!
- Use cotton sheets and blankets
- Wear lighter clothes to bed
- Keep your feet out of the covers



GET TO SLEEP.
STAY ASLEEP.



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MEMBERS NATIONWIDE WHO
ARE INTELLECTUALLY
INQUISITIVE AND WANT TO
EMPOWER THEMSELVES WITH
KNOWLEDGE, AND PROVIDE
SUPPORT TO ONE ANOTHER
ALONG THE WAY



Educating Women

The Red Hot Mamas® is the leading national menopause education program offered in hospitals and physician group practices across the USA. Thousands of women attend these events each month. Topics address important areas of concern, including medical issues, quality of life issues, and treatment options.



**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.REDHOTMAMAS.ORG**