



Episode 2

Hot Flashes & Sweaty Nights: Experiencing Menopause with SCI



The most common menopause symptoms are **Hot Flashes and Night Sweats**, called Vasomotor Symptoms (VMS).

VMS happen when estrogen levels go down and confuse the part of your brain that controls body temperature.



Did you know?

4 of 5 women get VMS during perimenopause and menopause



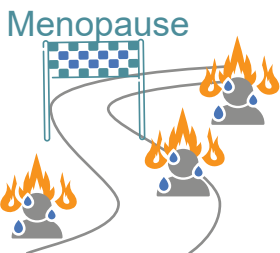
What are VMS?



- Hot flashes: Sudden warmth, flushing, and sweating.
- Night sweats: Hot flashes that occur during sleep and disrupt sleep.
- They can be associated with anxiety, palpitations, and mood change.
- Symptoms can be different in some people with SCI, for example, you can have hot flashes without sweating.

When do VMS start and how long do they last?

- Can begin up to 10 years before menopause (perimenopause).
- May occur while periods are still regular or irregular.
- Episodes typically last seconds to minutes.
- Frequency varies widely from a few times a week to 20+ times a day.
- For some, VMS may persist for several years.



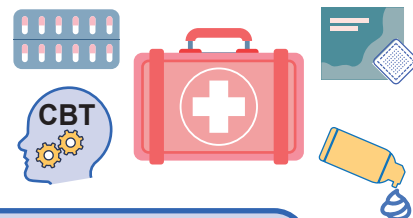
Is it menopause or SCI causing my symptoms?



For people with SCI, symptoms like night sweats or hot flashes might have other causes such as infections, autonomic dysreflexia - a sudden, dangerous spike in blood pressure caused by irritation below your injury. Talk to your healthcare provider to help figure out what may be contributing to VMS.

Are there treatments for VMS?

There are many ways to manage symptoms. Talk with your doctor to find what works best for you considering the benefits, your health risks, concerns, and budget.



Hormone Therapy (HT)

Works well for hot flashes.
Comes as pills, patches, or gels.

Non-Hormonal Medications

Antidepressants, gabapentin, and a newer drug called fezolinetant.

Other Options

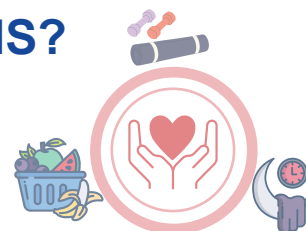
Acupuncture, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and hypnosis.



Supplements like fish oil don't have strong proof they work.

Will healthy diets or exercise help to reduce VMS?

Healthy habits like exercise, good sleep, and balanced eating won't stop hot flashes, but they still help your overall health!



Health Tips

- ✓ **Notice early signs** - Hot flashes can start before menopause, so keep an eye out and talk to your doctor about it.
- ✓ **Track your symptoms** - Writing your symptoms down can help your doctor see what's going on.
- ✓ **Ask about treatment** - There are different options that may help, so don't hesitate to ask.
- ✓ **Watch for other causes** - Night sweats or hot flashes might mean infection or autonomic dysreflexia.

Reminder



Have your doctor check the underlying cause of VMS. VMS are common in women with SCI who are in perimenopause and menopause transition - treatment options are available!

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The information in these handouts are not intended to replace medical advice. Readers are advised to discuss their individual circumstances with their doctor & rehab care team.



To learn more visit www.scifragments.ca

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