

Now, let's have a laugh with Disney's Seven Dwarves - this image always raises a giggle - laughter is good for you! I'll just set them out for you here so that you can commit them to memory 😊

*Itchy, Bitchy, Sweaty, Sleepy, Bloating, Forgetful and... Psycho!*

And, as I've said before, women recognise many of these symptoms on a regular or monthly basis but the closer you get to that magic age of 52, or twelve months without menstruation, the more intense the effects of the symptoms seem to be - I call it the *tsunami!* Everything coming together creates that feeling of being overwhelmed and unable to cope. It's also worth remembering that women could be totally unaware of all this stuff happening... that all these symptoms now bunching up together can also be classified as '*hormonal anarchy!*' In reality they come under the label of peri-menopause. But it's that lack of *awareness, understanding, recognition* that I'd like to highlight here and it's this '*ignorance*' that seems to create so many challenges in the workplace and at home.

I'd like you to spend a moment or two considering the implications of not knowing about the true extent of hormonal anarchy.

Women may well recognise the flushing and sweating, and those other symptoms highlighted in the Disney cartoon, but they have absolutely NO IDEA that 'the change' is having such a profound effect on them, biologically *and* emotionally. It came as a huge surprise to me, too and, now I've got to the bottom of all this, I know how easy it is for the wheels to fall off and not realise how low the stocks are on the WD40!

And now, I not only want to share this information with you but I also want to highlight the fact that women, as they age, will undoubtedly start making a trip or two to see their doctor to address individual ill-health problems that may crop up from time to time when they are post-menopause; like **Type 2 Diabetes**, for instance (very common for 50+ women - more about this later), **osteoporosis** (oestrogen deficiency at menopause is the cause here - 20% bone density lost during menopause and around 2% per annum after that) and, the classic, **cardio-vascular disease** (stroke and vascular problems, also caused by oestrogen deficiency). You see, these wretched hormones have a lot to answer for!

Just think of the *advantages* this knowledge gives women; knowing their hormones have something to do with degenerative disease, they can take preventative action sooner, rather than later, with opportunities all over the place, including taking a look at current lifestyle. I

T 01825 582010 | P PO Box 218, Uckfield TN22 3YT  
E enquiries@simplyhormones.com | W www.simplyhormones.com

SimplyHormones Limited

Company No: 06365456 Registered office: Chancery House, 3 Hatchlands Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 6AA VAT Registration No: 274 071 509

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cover **degenerative diseases** later in the course as well as lifestyle information, so, make a mental note of the importance of recognising this, to prepare you for that conversation. I think that most of them are now self-explanatory and we've covered some of the **Physical** symptoms, but I think it's worth mentioning **under and over-active thyroid**. This is a very common when it comes around to menopause. This condition shares many similar symptoms with peri-menopause and also takes about ten years to reach a stage where you take yourself off to the doctor for a diagnosis, so, I'm really just flagging this up as another consideration when talking about age-groups and peri-menopause.

What else - oh, yes, **headaches and migraine**. This condition often raises its ugly head at peri-menopause. The causes are many and varied. Two that I'm familiar with are hormones(!) and psychosomatic. What do I mean by the latter? Well, generally, it means that there is something going on in your life that you are not completely happy about - it may be a job, a relationship, where you live, the car you drive, anything but there's a trigger, a switch, that clicks on when one of these things is really bothering you and hey-presto! a headache or migraine.

It used to happen to me, and I could always rely on one of my 'bad head' situations lasting up to 72hrs, until I sussed out the cause. Once I knew my 'trigger', I was headache free for months. It still happens now and again but at least I now know the reason. I can't always control it, but I know I'm going to feel out of things for a couple of days and to act accordingly - lighter duties, for instance.

Many experts will tell you that headaches generally have an emotional source - the trick is working out what is the trigger or switch that causes your headache or those of your colleagues and staff.