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Podcast Episode # 8

TBTFS - 008 - 5 tips to reduce your hot flashes



the
BEYOND THE FOOD
Show

WITH STEPHANIE DODIER

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Stephanie: Louise asked, “I’m 49 years old and I’ve been experimenting what I believe to be hot flashes for the flashes for the last three months. At most inconvenient time, the rush of heat to my upper body will completely pull me away from what I’m doing. I can’t concentrate; I feel like it’s 150 degrees in the room and get really frustrated with myself and my body. What can I do to stop this madness?”

Well, first thing, thank you very much Louise for your question because this is a very frequent question. And let me tell you, it is confirmed you’re having what we call a hot flash, they joy of overheating. Now we’re going to get into the how we can help you with what I call “The hot tips” right? No pun intended.

However before we get there as we do all the time, we’re going to set the context of hot flashes into what is really happening both from a body and mind perspective. The first thing we need to know is that 70 to 80 percent of the women, going through menopause in Western culture— So North America and part of Europe—have what is known as hot flashes.

However when we look at other cultures such as India, Asia and under depth of country, only 10 percent of the women report having flashes. Why would this be? That’s a very good question. To understand that, we need to first step back and understand what is menopause, right? That’s the big question.

So, most of you will know menopause is a period of transition. But what we are being educated with in media, and social media, and for certain of our doctor, is that menopause is only a physical transition. We’re not looking at the other side which is the mind, spiritual, emotional aspect of menopause; we’re only strictly looking at physical.

So, what I’m here to tell you today is that it’s a period of transition, both physically, and spiritually and emotionally. It’s a time in a woman’s life where she is no longer able to procreate, to create another life. And that’s the whole goal to my physical perspective of menopause is that the body nature wants to prevent you, us, me from having another pregnancy. So the body through perimenopause.

Perimenopause is the period preceding menopause, and this can be long from a year to seven years. So an average of three to five years of the body going through perimenopause which is preparation, resetting of the hormone so you can no longer be a procreating woman or no longer

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experimenting pregnancy.

So, menopause is the end result where you no longer have your period for more than a year. That's the medical definition of menopause. So, in Western culture, because we are separated, because we are in a "culture of separation mind and body", we only see the physical aspect of menopause which is the hormonal changes that a woman is going through to prepare for body to know longer be able to procreate.

And this complete ignorance, this complete avoidance of the emotional spiritual aspect of this period of change, that is menopause, is creating more issues that if we were aware of the emotional spiritual components. So we talked about the physical aspect which is the hormonal change. We're going to reduce our estrogen so we are no longer able to procreate, and other hormones of the body are going to change.

But from emotional and spiritual perspective, it's also time has changed. Because we're no longer are needed as mother, we no longer can procreate, we are switching from a position of caring for others, caring for our children, for our baby to caring for ourselves of us, we, becoming an individual, a woman, no longer a mother but being a woman.

So that period of transition that is called "menopause" is about recreating who you are, without this mother or procreator status. And it's bringing forth this whole question of who you are as a woman. And for many women, menopause has hormonal changes but it's also an identity crisis. Your identity for the last 20, 25, 30 years, has been wrapped up around the fact that you were a mother, or you had care for other people.

And that's where you're drive, your intention, your time went. And now that the children are grown up and they're leaving the house, or they left the house and you're no longer able to procreate, you have this hormonal changes who are you.

Did you know that 50 percent of the divorce, occur between the age of 45 and 55 for women?—50 percent of the divorce. Because all of a sudden we wake up and we realize that we really don't get along or like the person that we've been with, but it's been hidden behind the children, and the children are no longer there. And now we are going through this identity crisis, this recreation of who we are, and a lot of relationships are not holding through that.

So, to address hot flashes like Louise is asking, we first must understand that it's not only a physical change, but it is a spiritual/emotional change

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as well. And as I've been talking about in these shows since the beginning and the title of the show comes in "Beyond The Food", but our symptoms are also body messages, right?

For those who have been on my website and read some of my article, you will see that I talk about food craving as being a body message. Well, any symptoms in our body that it is food craving, and we talked about in previous show the adrenal fatigue, it is a message from our body that something is not right, that something is unbalanced.

So when we talk about hot flashes, it is a message from our body that we are going through menopause. And when we have hot flash, it's a body message to let us know to pay attention to what is going on around us. Start observing.

So what are you doing when you are experiencing hot flashes? What are you eating? What are you thinking about? Is it with a certain person? Is it at a certain time of the day? Is it a certain activity? Use your hot flashes as a mean of observing what's going on in your environment that, that your body has not well-responded to it in a very balanced weight, responded to it by creating this rush of heat, this hot flashes.

So, your relationship with your hot flashes will change when you understand that it's a message from your body that your body is trying to teach you something in the moment where you are.

Now from a technical perspective, from a strictly physical perspective, what you have to know about hot flashes is it's literally a physical mechanism. So, it's from your neck up to your head, the blood vessel are expanding, and there's a rush of blood to those area of your body through your neck to your head, that's why you become all red, and with that comes an overheating sensation. So that's what's going on when you have hot flashes.

You're not just dreaming, your face become red, and you're hot because there's an overexpansion of the blood vessel. Now what triggers that? Well, we have not yet figured it out. Science has not a define pathway that we know this is what's happening, step one, two, three and four. Unfortunately it has not. There's a lot of assumption, there's a lot of belief but there's nothing firm.

What we know is, when there is presence of a hot flash, the hormone called "adrenaline" is higher than normal in a body of a woman. So, adrenaline is a stress hormone. In show number four, refer to that, we

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talked about stress and when it overpowers us, when it can create. We talked about the different hormones of stress. And that particular case in show number four, we talked about cortisol. But let it be known that there are two other hormones of stress, cortisol adrenaline and norepinephrine.

What the research has demonstrated is that adrenaline is present and higher than normal level in a woman that has hot flashes. Combine that with low level of estrogen and progesterone, and then it triggers a chain reaction that provokes the hot flash.

So what we know from this piece there is that stress is present—adrenaline, stress hormone—in the creation, in the reaction, in the chain reaction of hot flash.

So if we want to, to Louise point, start reducing and controlling our hot flashes... And one of the elements that we need to get under control is our stress, both from a physical and a spiritual perspective.

So we need to listen to our body messages, in this case are hot flashes, to understand, “Oh when I do this, I have an adrenaline rush. I’m feeling stressed and I produce hot flashes.” So what is it in this environment, in this situation that creates stress for me?” And it can be physical, emotional and spiritual. The longer we refuse to see that it is both physical/mental/emotional/spiritual, the more we’re going to struggle because we’re not going to address both side of the element and the body messages will persist.

Yes that maybe there is a physical stress in the situation, you create adrenaline and you create a hot flash, but it could also be that the situation that creates your stress is a relationship issue. It’s a need for new identity that you’re refusing to let go of your motherhood identity, and moving on to being an independent woman in the next phase of your life, and you’re refusing to make that transition that the body will create hot flashes. And those are just examples.

Every woman has a different story and a different situation, I’m just getting example here. So now that we know the backstory here, we’re going to go back to Louise’s story or Louise’s question and say what Louise can do to reduce her hot flashes. So, number one, we need to reduce stress, but stress comes in many different forms.

As the title of the show says “Beyond The Food”, it assume that your

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diet is in line, yet you have a healthy diet. So my tip number one will be, get your food cleaned up. Get the diet in place so you can nourish your body and not produce stress inside of your body that will trigger hot flashes.

So for an example, blood sugar dysregulation, having too much sugar which creates a high level of blood sugar, which trigger insulin and trigger stress reaction as we explained in show number four, will be provoking hot flashes.

So your diet should be lower carbohydrates so you can balance your blood sugar. So in the show note, I have put two links. Number one, I've put the links to the keto connector which is my entry-level program, which will give you step-by-step what to do with your diet so you can have a low carbohydrate blood sugar stabilizing diet. And I also put a blog post on menopause and insulin, and the effect of high insulin level on menopause. So I recommend that you read that.

The next on that is caffeine. So we know that caffeine is a stressor, and that's the whole goal of caffeine, right? You wake up in the morning feeling tired, you drink coffee. You feel energized; you're ready to tackle your day. If you are stress already, you live a stressful life; do you really need that kick in the butt in the morning of the caffeine? So being caffeine-free, maybe a step for you to reduce your stress environment. That's step number one. Start with your diet and remove the stress that food can have on your body.

Tip number two is about stress. Do you manage stress, or does it manage you? Do you have a stress management practice in your life, or do you just let stress take over you?

Now ultimately we would want to remove the root causes of stress, but we have to first start by managing it so we can then work on the root cause on a longer term.

So I recommend that most of us have this stress management technique in our life. That can be meditating, that can be yoga, that can be deep breathing exercise, that can be visualization, that can be walk in nature. But we have to have a tool in our individual life that going to manage our stress level, that's going to help relieve the body from the stress while we are working on preventing stress from even coming into our life.

And we talked about that in show number seven, refer to that with Dr. Patel, where he was talking about switching our body from the sympa-

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thetic system to parasympathetic. And the best way to do that is deep breathing exercises.

As soon as we do deep breathing exercise, the nervous systems switch from one mode to the other, relieving stress and anxiety. So I recommend that you go back to show number seven.

Tip number three is about movement, because yes we need to move. Movement will help balance your hormones, it will help reduce your stress, it will help stabilize your mood. There's no one negative things with movement that I know of. Be respectful of your own body in your journey, and don't adopt a movement that will actually create more stress for you.

By that, I mean if you've not been exercising, don't go doing crossfit tomorrow morning, or don't go attempt to run marathon. Simply start by walking in nature for 20 minutes every day or almost every day, it would be a great place to start. So movement is step three.

Tip number four is supplementation. So once you've done the food and you stabilize your diet, and then you have introduced stress management technique and you're moving, then you may need to look at, filling up the deficiency that you have created with time. Because it goes, having a nutritional deficiency within your body, it will create stress for your body. So, a few of those element could be B vitamin. B vitamin are most in demand when we are stressed, by the different organs in our body, require a ton of B vitamin.

So if your stressed, although you're managing it, and you're changing your diet but you still have a lot of stress in your life, taking a B vitamin maybe is essential to prevent deficiency. C Vitamin is probably one of the most potent anti-oxidant there is.

So if you have, again, a high stressful life, or you are needing a lot of antioxidant in your life, taking vitamin C can be a game changer for you.

So I've put in an article about preventing hot flashes in the show note, and I go through it in the article, all the vitamins... And I have some recommendation and some dosage as well. I recommend that you go there. And another supplementation to help you deal with stress could be herbal therapy.

So in the prior show, we talked about Ashwagandha as a great herb to help you manage stress, refer again to show #4, but licorice and rhodiola are great for reducing stress as well.

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So putting in into your daily life an herbal therapy to help you release stress may be a great add-on.

Last but not least is tip number 5. Nurturing your mind-body connections so you can learn what your body is trying to tell you when you have a hot flash, right?

And the goal of learning what your body is trying to tell you when you're flashing, it's actually to remove this obstacle in your life and change your perception.

Connecting your mind and your bod will get you to a place of not perceiving your body as the enemy more as your teacher. In the show note, I've put a link to another article about mind-body connection that I highly recommend that you go and read.

So Louise, I hope with those five hot tips—again no pun intended—I have helped you or will help you by implementing those five things in your life to reduce your flashes, and move forward to your period of perimenopause. So thank you very much, Louise, for your question.