

Menopausal Symptoms: Referral

Diagnosis/Definition

- Symptoms occurring prior to or concurrent with menopause that include hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and/or irregular menses occurring in women in the later reproductive years.
- Menopause is defined as cessation of menstrual bleeding caused by ovarian failure in the face of adequate gonadotropin (FSH).

Initial Diagnosis and Management

- Diagnosis should be based on patient's complaint of symptoms of hot flashes, vaginal dryness, urinary incontinence, and/or irregular/absent menses.
- Management: TSH to rule out thyroid disease. FSH to document menopause.
- Endometrial sampling to rule out malignancy in women with irregular bleeding (will be done in GYN clinic for those not experienced at performing this procedure).
- Current Pap smear.

Ongoing Management and Objectives

- Daily hormone replacement therapy (if no contraindication) to relieve symptoms if FSH levels are menopausal.
- NB: Hormone replacement therapy should be given at the lowest dose for the shortest duration
- OCP's if FSH levels are not menopausal (as perimenopausal symptoms can last up to 8 years) up to age 55 yo.

Indications for Specialty Care Referral

- Patients with persistent irregular bleeding.
- Patients with endometrial hyperplasia or malignancy on sampling.
- Persistent symptoms despite estrogen therapy.
- Patient request.

Criteria for Return to Primary Care

- Completion of specialty care evaluation or resolution of symptoms.
- Periodic follow-up in OB/GYN may be required.

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