

Slim down for the health of it and possibly reduce your hot flashes in the process

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Now women have yet one more incentive to lose weight as a new study has shown evidence that behavioral weight loss can help manage menopausal hot flashes.

The [pilot study](#), which was published online last month in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS), consisted of 40 [overweight](#) or obese white and African-American women with [hot flashes](#), which are the most prevalent symptom of menopause. In fact, more than 70% of women report hot flashes during the menopausal transition, with many of these women reporting frequent or severe hot flashes. Since women with hot flashes are at greater risk for poor quality of life, sleep problems and a depressed mood, interest in identifying methods for managing hot flashes is growing. In addition, newer data indicate that hot flashes are typically persistent, lasting an average of nine years or more.

For purposes of the pilot clinical trial, hot flashes were assessed before and after intervention via physiologic monitoring, diary and questionnaire. The study confirmed a significant correlation between weight loss and hot flashes. Furthermore, the degree of weight loss correlated with the degree of reduction in hot flashes.

Although newer data has suggested a positive relationship between hot flashes and the percentage of fat in a woman's body, no studies, to date, had been specifically designed to test whether weight loss reduces hot flashes. The authors of this pilot study concluded that, while the results were encouraging in proving the benefits of weight reduction in the management of menopausal hot flashes, more than anything, the findings indicate the importance of conducting a larger study.

"This is encouraging news for women looking for relief for this bothersome midlife symptom," says

NAMS Executive Director Margery Gass, MD. "Not only might behavior [weight loss](#) provide a safe, effective remedy for many women, but it also encourages a health-promoting behavior. Since many of the women in this pilot study indicated their primary motivator for losing weight was hot flash reduction, we know that this could be a strong incentive for [women](#) to engage in a healthier lifestyle which provides numerous other health benefits beyond hot flash management."

More information: The article, "Behavioral weight loss for the management of menopausal hot flashes: a pilot study" will be published in the January 2015 print edition of *Menopause*.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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