

News flash about hot flashes: They can last longer than you think

31 May 2018, by Jim Mcveigh



Credit: Mayo Clinic

Menopause symptoms are not just for midlife anymore, according to a new Mayo Clinic study published this month in the *Journal of the North American Menopause Society*.

The study, conducted by researchers at Mayo Clinic gathered data from nearly 5,000 women. When asked whether they experienced any symptoms commonly associated with menopause, such as hot flashes and night sweats (vasomotor symptoms), a significant percentage reported having them well into their 60s, 70s and 80s.

"The number of women in the study who both reported and sought care for symptom management shines a light on what may be an unmet medical need for women over age 60," says Paru David, M.D., menopause specialist at Mayo Clinic in Arizona, who is a study author. "With increased awareness, clinicians can identify these distressing symptoms and review treatment options with women, which can lead to improved quality of life."

Women older than 60 who reported moderate to

severe vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes) were more likely to be married or in a committed relationship, and less likely to self-report their health as excellent. Those who experienced surgical menopause or induced menopause were also more likely to report vasomotor symptoms beyond 60. Caffeine appeared to increase the likelihood of [vasomotor symptoms](#) in women older than 70.

The study also found women using hormone therapy were less likely to report moderate to severe [hot flashes](#) and night sweats. Researchers expected this. The benefit of initiating menopausal hormone therapy in appropriately selected [women](#) generally outweighs the risk for those younger than 60 and within 10 years from menopause. However, it is unclear as to when the appropriate time is to stop hormones. The Northern American Menopause Society, the Endocrine Society, and The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommend against the arbitrary discontinuation of [menopausal hormone therapy](#) based on age alone. Women should discuss [hormone therapy](#) duration with their health care providers who can discuss individualized risks and benefits to make treatment decisions.

"Women in their 60s, 70s and 80s who are still experiencing [menopause symptoms](#) should talk with their doctors to find a treatment plan—and relief—that can improve their quality of life," says Juliana Kling, M.D., a menopause specialist at Mayo Clinic Arizona, who is a co-author.

More information: Paru S. David et al. Vasomotor symptoms in women over 60, *Menopause* (2018). DOI: [10.1097/GME.0000000000001126](https://doi.org/10.1097/GME.0000000000001126)

Provided by Mayo Clinic

APA citation: News flash about hot flashes: They can last longer than you think (2018, May 31) retrieved 4 November 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-news-hot-longer.html>

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