



Diane Skehan wrote to us suffering from symptoms of the menopause saying: "I feel tired and irritable most of the time. Please help me to get my life back!" So Champneys employed its team of experts to get to work

"I need a midlife makeover"

DIANE, 51, FROM Slough, has been married for 28 years. Diane has a 25-year-old son, a 22-year-old daughter, Gillian, and a four-year-old granddaughter. Diane works part-time as a secretary and enjoys her job.

"I feel that after all these years of caring for my family I am not wanted in the same way anymore," said Diane. "I am going through the menopause and have been feeling really down lately.

"I would love to spend some quality time with my daughter, Gillian, who is also my best friend. I feel I have less time to do the things I used to. I also feel very tired and do not sleep well. I wake up several times during the night to go to the toilet and suffer from hot flushes and night sweats. I feel so inadequate at this present time of my life."

Diane drinks five or six cups of tea a day, often late at night, but hardly ever drinks water. Champneys advised Diane to limit tea and increase her fluid intake to two litres a day.

It is very important for Diane to drink enough water, not only for her general health, but she needs to replace the fluids lost from her hot flushes and sweats. Tea and coffee are also diuretics, which means they take fluid from the body instead of replacing it.

"My aims while I am at Champneys are to find out about healthy eating and any natural remedies to my symptoms," continued Diane.

"I would also like to tone up because I feel bloated and have less confidence in my body. I would like to learn more about fitness and to understand how the menopause is affecting my body."

WOULD YOU LIKE A CHAMPNEYS MAKEOVER?

Do you have problems with your back? We are looking for one person who has been suffering from back problems to take part in our new Backcare Break.

Write to us describing why you need this break, enclosing a photo, to: Champneys Magazine, Marketing, Champneys Henlow, Henlow, Beds SG16 6DB.



DR CES COLAGRANDE

Cosmetic Surgeon Dr Ces Colagrande is internationally renowned for his work in anti-ageing and is one of the few elite doctors who have completed a fellowship in cosmetic surgery, his expertise has been established by working alongside pioneers in this field.

Dr Ces Colagrande says:

I began with a short medical questionnaire to assess Diane's current lifestyle and she reiterated her symptoms.

Diane is a non-smoker, drinks red wine occasionally but has a low water intake.

This lack of fluids will be making Diane dehydrated which could explain the loss of energy. She also has some soreness on her hip which I think should be investigated with a bone-density test.

My most important concern was that I found Diane's blood pressure, which she hadn't had checked for many years, was raised. This is a potentially life-threatening condition if left undiagnosed.

I would recommend that Diane goes to her GP for a full medical check up and suggest she is tested for anaemia, diabetes, urinary-tract infections and has a kidney and liver-function test. These basic medical checks are vital, you must know exactly what you are treating.

I also explained the ageing process of the skin. I explained the range of anti-ageing options on offer to her – from dietary and lifestyle tips to non-surgical procedures.

My biggest recommendation to Diane is to ensure that she makes some time for herself every week. She needs to have some time where she does something she really enjoys.

NORMA GOLDMAN

Norma is the founder and director of The Menopause Exchange, a pharmacist and a qualified health-promotion specialist. Norma has many years' experience in presenting talks and seminars on helping people to understand the menopause.

Norma Goldman says:

My talk with Diane covered the main topics relating to the menopause.

These were: hormones and what happens to the body during the menopause; menopausal symptoms; osteoporosis (a possible long-term effect of the menopause); HRT – the types, benefits and risks; the HRT decision-making process, complementary therapies and tips on coping with symptoms without HRT.

Diane is 51, the average age for when the menopause occurs, and is experiencing hot flushes, night sweats,

irritability and mood swings.

Diane does not have osteoporosis but her hip has been giving her problems and, as a result of this consultation, decided to ask her GP for a bone-density scan.

She has not tried HRT and listened with interest as it is an option for her if no other treatment works for her symptoms. Her doctor had suggested a drug for hot flushes and she was reassured when I told her that some women have found this useful.

Diane is taking a menopausal multi-vitamin product and drinking soya milk. I suggested that she try other soya-based products such as tofu.

I also recommended trying black cohosh and phytoestrogen products as an alternative to HRT. Although these are not suitable for all women, there did not seem to be any reason why Diane could not try them.

VERDICT

At the end of her stay, Diane was visibly calmer and more radiant.

"For the first time in ages, I managed to sleep right through the night. I definitely feel more relaxed," said Diane. "I have been drinking lots of water and this is definitely something I will keep up now I

know how important is.

"I really enjoyed doing yoga and Pilates during my stay at Champneys and I have decided to join a local yoga class, but the first thing I will do is book an appointment with my GP.

"I found Liz Tucker a real inspiration and full of useful tips. I really think that I

LIZ TUCKER

Liz has worked extensively with stress management, life coaching and dealing with the emotional issues behind weight problems. Liz works regularly with the media, most notably as GMTV's Stress Doctor, and has written several books.

Liz Tucker says:

There are two key areas associated with health and wellbeing problems at this age, which were both evident in Diane's situation.

Emotionally, this is often a difficult time as it dawns on us that there is a timescale to life, we have done just over half of it and what have we achieved?

Diane had become typically past-focused and saw the future as a negative thing. She felt redundant from her role in the family as the children had become independent.

After many years considering other people, she had lost her own identity and felt that there was no purpose in her life.

I encouraged her to look at her future as a time that was new and exciting, when she could at last consider her own needs. We built a plan of action to give her control over her life, make her focus on her priorities and direct her in a more positive, future-focused way.

The second aspect we needed to address was her physical health because this age range is usually when years of living begin to catch up with us.

Stress, diet and lifestyle can all have a negative effect on our health but it often takes years for our body's resilience to break down.

Combine this with a slowing down of metabolism and hormonal changes, and this can result in fatigue and a general feeling of "unwellness." Therefore, it was also important to look at a revitalizing health programme that incorporated a healthy diet and lifestyle changes for Diane.

Combined negative physical and emotional states are always the key factors behind midlife health problems.

However, as everyone has led different lifestyles, the factors that have generated their problems are all unique.

have learnt a lot from this experience and I feel much better already!"

Happy with her Mum's changes, Gillian, added: "Mum has been a lot more cheerful and relaxed these last few days. She even got up at 8.30am to do the Wake-up Workout! This is something she would never normally consider."

MIDLIFE BREAKS The Midlife Makeover with Liz Tucker and Norma Goldman will be held on 4 October at Henlow and Living Younger, with Dr Ces Colagrande, is on 12 July, also at Henlow. Dr Colagrande also holds an anti-ageing clinic called AestheticA at Champneys Tring. Contact reservations on 08703 300 300 for details of these breaks and 01442 291226 for a consultation with Dr Colagrande.