

## What *IS* the Change?

The Change (**menopause**) is experienced by **ALL** women.

- ❖ It occurs naturally at the end of fertility - a woman's sex hormone levels (eg estrogen) become erratic.
- ❖ Usually happens between the ages of 45 to 55 (start and end are both unpredictable).
- ❖ A year or more after the start, the hormones decrease to a lower level than when she was fertile.
- ❖ After the Change, a woman will no longer have moon days, but hot flashes can last 5 years or even longer.
- ❖ **Every woman is different** – symptoms can vary from mild to severe, one symptom or many.

(If a woman has surgery to remove her ovaries, symptoms of the Change start almost immediately.)

## Symptoms of the Change

**During the change, women can experience . . .**

- ❖ Being bad tempered and unpredictable?
- ❖ Moody and emotional?
- ❖ Having difficulty sleeping?
- ❖ Suffering from hot flashes/sweats?
- ❖ Always needing the bedroom window open, even in winter?
- ❖ Having trouble concentrating?
- ❖ No longer interested in physical relations?
- ❖ Having irregular moon times?

***If you know someone having these symptoms, she may be in the Change, even though she may not have talked about it***

## If you are in the Change, these may help you:

- ❖ Healthy lifestyle (diet, exercise, regular bedtime, spiritual health).
- ❖ Elder counselling.
- ❖ Sympathetic listener (family member, friend or professional).
- ❖ Hormone treatment (from a doctor) to reduce hot flashes and improve mood.
- ❖ Traditional medicines.

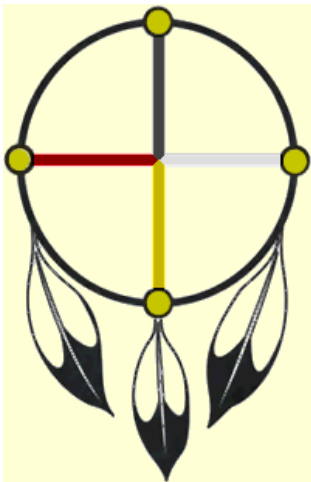
## How can you help your friend/relative through the Change?

- ❖ Talk about what's happening to her.
- ❖ Ask her what she is experiencing, how she feels.
- ❖ Be sympathetic and understanding.
- ❖ Reassure her of your support and love.

## What happens after the Change?

- Once the hormones have settled down and she no longer has moon days, a woman can become more even-tempered and have fewer troublesome physical symptoms.
- Hot flashes sometimes continue. Dry skin will develop and persist. Memory problems may also continue.

**KANEWO ASKAMKAHK**  
**(Four Directions)**



**Note:** Men's testosterone also decreases as they get older, known as "andropause". The decrease is more gradual than for women, so men don't suffer such extreme changes. Men's changes can also be emotional and physical.

**For further details, please contact**  
**Maskwacis Health Services,**  
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This information is provided by:  
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## "The Change of Life" Menopause information for women and families



**SOHKI TEYHEW (Strong Heart)**