

Understanding the Impact of **Menopause** on a Woman's Smile



Menopause can significantly impact oral health in women due to hormonal changes, particularly the decrease in estrogen levels. In the United States right now, roughly **75 million women are perimenopausal, menopausal, or post-menopausal** with 6,000 women entering menopause every day. Approximately **1.3 million** women, typically between the ages of 45 and 55, experience the menopause life change each year.

Here are a few ways menopause can affect oral health:

DRY MOUTH

Estrogen reduction during menopause can decrease saliva production, leading to a dry mouth. Saliva is critical for neutralizing acids and washing away food that protects the teeth from decay and gums from infection.

GUM DISEASE

Hormonal fluctuations can make gums more sensitive and prone to recession and inflammation, leading to a higher risk of gum disease. Women may experience swollen, red, or bleeding gums, which can progress to severe forms of gum disease if not managed.

BURNING MOUTH

Some women report a burning sensation in their mouth, tongue, or lips, known as Burning Mouth Syndrome (BMS). The exact cause is unclear, but it is thought to be related to hormonal changes, particularly decreased estrogen and changes in taste perception.

OSTEOPOROSIS

Estrogen helps maintain bone density. After menopause, women are at a higher risk of osteoporosis, which can also affect the bones that support the teeth and lead to tooth loss.

References: See source links above



To manage oral health effectively during menopause, women should:

Maintain good oral hygiene practices, including brushing twice a day and flossing daily.

Visit the dentist regularly for check-ups and cleanings.

Stay hydrated and consider saliva substitutes if experiencing dry mouth.

Discuss any oral discomfort or changes with a dentist, who may provide targeted treatments or recommendations.