Ayurvedic Secrets For A Smooth Menopause Transcript

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Introduction to Ayurveda and Menopause

Hello, ladies. Welcome back to Mastering the Menopause transition 3.0 our third year. I am still your host, Dr. Sharon Stills, as always. I'm so excited, honored, thrilled to be here with you all, having these very important conversations to help you master and rock your sacred and second act.

And as you know by now, if you've hung around with me, you know I am all about terrain based medicine and all about obviously, you know, I'm the bioidentical hormone queen, but there is so much more in our body that when we put hormones into our body, we want to make sure that our body is balanced because then the hormones have a happy place to live.

And so ayurveda is something near and dear to my heart. I've spent a lot of time studying it. I have been in India studying it, and I love all the ancient wisdom.

And so I wanted to make sure we did. I needed it to do justice on our summit. And so I brought to you an expert in ayurveda and we are going to talk all things menopause through looking at it through the doses, through the Ayurvedic lens.

So my special guest today is Dr. Monisha Bhanote and she is an M. D. with like 85 million certification and she is very well educated and she's a pathologist.

She sees things from all, from all different lenses and all different views. She's a personal friend and a colleague. She wrote a bestselling book called The Anatomy of Wellbeing, and she is very food based.

And so we're going to talk about lots of things that you can do right now right here that are easy to implement to help you have hormonal harmony. So welcome to the summit.

It's wonderful to have you here. Thank you so much. Sharon. nice to talk to you again here today. and to talk about menopause through an Ayurvedic lens.

Yes. So, I mean, I'm pretty sure most people, especially, we have a very educated audience that hangs out with us here. DrTalks nowhere to ayurveda is.

But I'd love for you to explain ayurveda and what it is, because I think it's important for people to hear your perspective. Yeah, absolutely. Soayurveda is a ancient whole body system, about 5000 years old, originating from India.

And it's really looking at, the human as a whole from a mind, body and spirit perspective. And then also looking at different aspects of that individual.

Understanding the Three Doshas

you know, the elements like earth, water, fire, these kinds of things, but then also an individual's constitution or as some people may know, they might have heard, people talking about what's your dosha?

And, you know, like what's what's what. You. Right. So, everybody has a specific, dosha. And when we think about, disease in the perspective of ayurveda there's certain imbalances that happen in our natural constitution, our natural doses.

And that's what we're going to talk about today. Yeah. So let let's just put it right to the right to the test. So how how does how did the doses show up.

Because that is one of the things that I love. Is that where I think functional medicine really misses the beat, is that they don't really take into perspective that people have constitutions and that people have different responses and different needs.

So when we're talking about menopause, how would you relate each dose then what would you like the women to know? Oh, absolutely. Great question. And and I do do functional medicine.

So I, I just naturally incorporate the doses into my practice. And I can see an individual and like, you know, after talking to them for five minutes and their symptoms know what dosha they are.

so you definitely want to, understand that and incorporate that because that's going to take your functional medicine to the next level too, right? So the three doses that people need to be familiar with is pitta, vata and kapha.

Those are the three words for for the doses. But even before we get into the doses, I do want to mention that the difference between conventional medicine and seeing menopause and say ayurveda is that we don't view menopause as a disease state.

Right. And that's very important because there's a little bit of stigma around like, oh, I have menopause, I have this disease and menopause is is not a disease.

It's not a medical condition, even though we have ICD ten codes for it. Right. So it is the, the natural, transition that a woman goes through. It's a period of transition.

And, and I would like you to see it as a period of, opportunities for growth and self-care. and, and in my world, I actually see it as an opportunity for self-care, you know, taking care of your your health, your cells.

But when it comes to those, three doses that I, that I mentioned, we all have some aspect of these doses, and, we can look at it from the stages of our lives to, like, for example, in childhood, till puberty, we have a cough, a predominant, stage because that's, surrounded by growth.

Right? So as our body is growing, it's it's kind of like the stability of our body coming into place then from puberty until menopause, when, you know, we're we're reproducing, we're having our jobs, we're doing all this activity that's the pit stage of our lifetime.

So if we're dividing the female into three stages and, that's when, you know, we're having reproductive health, hormonal balance or having energy. Now, what happens in the post-menopausal, or Vasa stage is that the dosha becomes more prominent.

So if you are an individual who already had a predominant vata dosha, you might find menopause a little bit more challenging than somebody else did. depending on if your doses are balanced.

So there's key things to think about. and I've used the word imbalance a couple times. So when we are looking at doses we're looking at are you balanced or imbalanced.

So maybe that's where you, you can take that conventional approach and think of symptoms. Right. Do you have symptoms or you not have symptoms. We see it as imbalance and so like I said, Vata is associated with the air element.

And when an individual is going through menopause and has a vata imbalance, what are some of the menopause symptoms that they see anxiety insomnia and dryness. Right.

So whether that's vaginal dryness or dry skin, when you're experiencing that from that perspective that can constitute an imbalance in vata, we also see individuals who who are creating vata imbalance actually have more osteoporosis.

Right? So they're having more joint pain, they're getting more achy and stuff like that. So keeping this in mind and before we even get to how are we going to address these imbalances, you know, because there is a way. Right.

So I'm not just giving this to you to tell you, oh, this is what it is and you're stuck with it. But I but I kind of want you to understand what are some of the symptoms associated with those doses.

So that was Vata, right. So high anxiety, sleep issues, insomnia and dryness. Those are the kind of major ones around a vata, imbalances in perimenopause are post menopause now.

Pitta on the other hand, because pitta dosas are individuals who have very strong metabolism. so it's the it governs transformation in the body. So when an individual who has a pitta imbalance is going through menopause, they might experience more hot flashes, more irritability, more anger like that, that short fuze.

And they're just always sweating because they already have a lot of internal heat. And right.

Identifying Your Dosha Type

one of the things that I see a lot in my patients that have, pitta imbalances during, menopause is that this is the first time they experience hormonal acne.

Right. So now they're getting skin issues. Right. So and you know, skin being the biggest organ, it's it's like coming up this imbalances. It's coming up in their skin.

So and even though pizzas usually have strong digestion when they're imbalanced, they could have digestive issues. and in the menopause, stage. And then the last one of those three would be kapha.

So now, as I mentioned, kapha is something we see as we're thinking about stability and growth of our body, but an imbalance in your kapha dosha, these are going to be the individuals who, in menopause, come to you or come to me and say, I've gained this 20 pounds, I don't know where it came from, you know?

And so they, they, gain weight very easily. They also feel more lethargic and fatigued. They just don't have that energy to move their body. And I often see with those individuals, they're more likely to get depressed.

So you have the voters that have the more of the higher anxiety where my coffers get more depressed. Right? So these are all things like when we're thinking about these symptoms, like we're pretty familiar with them when we're in menopause and when we're talking to them about our doctor, but we're also looking at them from this Ayurvedic lens, per se.

Perfect. I think it's such a good description. And then some of you may be being like, well, I have like two from column A and two from column Katha, and you know, so it it is like you said, right.

There's, it's not like very you are this where you're all or a blend of everything. Right. We are all the elements. But yes, that really broke it down. Well.

And I think just in general, especially in our society in the States and, you know, I would say in Europe too, but Vada is so prominently deranged because we're so busy and we have all these the internal that and the this and the that and like it's like it's so hard to just let yourself be like, we all need to go to nature and, you know, turn everything off and turn off the Wi-Fi and just check in with ourselves and listen to some water.

This society is having a moment. It's definitely having a button that's. I love the term, you know, Vada deranged or it's like, yeah, a lot of gone wild.

So, how before I ask about, you know, things we can do and stuff can you, can we just step back a second and, like, can you just give women, like, how do they know if they're picked, or not?

or cough, like just some of the key points. Yeah. I'm slightly so I mean, there's plenty of, quizzes online that, you know, you can go and take to get an idea.

Truly, you do want to work with a practitioner who can go through the intricacies, intricacies of it because, like you said, you might be like three in this column and two in this column, and then you're like, I don't know what to do, right?

I can generally tell just from the symptoms they tell me and talking to them like, what are you? so you can definitely go do a quiz. for a, a general perspective, I, I use celebrities because people can, like, connect with celebrities, like, think like, oh, I'm more like that person.

So I think that's a good way, thinking about it. So, when let me think of some celebrities that are probably perimenopause, our menopausal. All right.

So, my vata douches, which are like the airy, kind of like a major brain fog going on. Don't know what you know. They walked into a room and they don't know what happened. Right?

Dietary Guidance for Vata, Pitta, and Kapha

I'm thinking somebody like Cameron Diaz or Gwyneth Paltrow, right? When they're imbalanced. so, so, they generally tend to have, figures that are more on the slim side.

They don't really put on weight that easily. but, you know, before. Yeah, I could tell you what they need, but these are the individuals who are, like, always going to the gym and doing yoga and doing this and drinking their smoothie and eating salads and doing all the wrong stuff for their dosha, probably.

All right. So. So, think about think about those actresses for, for, vata, pitta dosha. Oh, pitta is a tough one. So pitta is going to be all right. I've got to add, I'm trying to think also in our age range.

Right. So, Madonna is a pitta dosha and I would say Jennifer Lopez. Right. So on the ball type A personalities aggressive, they, they go for what they want.

But God do they burn out. Right. And and I actually think Jennifer Lopez just canceled her tour this week. So it's totally like, all right. She's she's going my, my memory.

Is about she garnering her burn out at least. Right. That so she's she's connecting back to that self-care. What do I need to balance myself. and then the last one, from a cafe perspective, cafes are kind of like your best friend.

Like you. You want them around, but, like, you can always rely on them. They're solid, but at the same time, it's hard to get them to, like, move. Like if they had to go to the gym, it would be like, let me join a membership and then never go.

they have a good heart, you know, it's just completely different. So when I think of a celebrity with a Cafe Dosha, I'm thinking Oprah Winfrey. Right.

So we know, you know, for over struggles with health and stuff like that. who else could be a half, celebrity? you know, one that you might not think, but actually, I'm pretty sure is cafe is Beyonce.

Oh, yeah. That's that. Oh, I see, like, a whole, you know, we have to, like, make a flowchart. Right? Or, different celebrities. Here's our coffee board I love that I love, but yeah, the, so I would definitely I, I think of, my, my youngest granddaughter is like just pure coffee with these big, beautiful eyes and chubby cheeks and I call her my coffee bear. Oh, but, yeah, coffee is just, you know, it's like Mother Earth, right?

You just want to hug. Yeah. Yeah, they are. They're are best friends. They're very grounded. You just want to want to be with them. But at the same time, they can, they're more likely to get depressed.

They're more likely to, gain weight easier. so keeping that in mind. perfect. No, that's really helpful. All right. So now let's dive into, like, you know what?

Everyone wants to know. So what are the dietary recommendations? Because you brought up a good one because we all think salad right. But you know. So tell us about some food.

And why did you say, you know, salad could be not a good thing. Well it depends on the individual. Right. So, so, let's go back to those imbalances. Right.

So Ivana doesn't just do, it's a whole body health care system, a through diet. That is a key part of it, but it really looks at the lifestyle. Right? So we're looking at nutrition.

We're looking at sleep. We're looking at movement. We're looking at evading curbs. We're looking at all these different things. So when I'm thinking of, the doses, I'm thinking about imbalance.

Right. So the one that I mentioned about eating the salads right. Our vata dosha. Right. So we have a terminology called and just to remind whoever's watching that a vata person when they're experiencing menopause might get more anxious, might get more like they're the ones who are sitting and staring at the ceiling at like 3:00 in the morning, which is, you know, perpetuating that cycle of anxiousness and all that.

All right. so we use a terminology called pacifying and it means to pacify that dosha. Right. So we want to pacify that vata imbalance. Okay. So how do we do that.

We don't do that with salads okay. We do that with warm cooked foods okay. So Miss Gwyneth Paltrow and Carmen Diaz, going to be better suited when they are experiencing these imbalances items to have more cooked food, more root vegetables.

Think soups. Stews, cooked grains, that warm will really help with, balancing that. The other thing to think about from that vata, if you remember, I said like they're the ones that usually get like the joint pains, like the arthritis, like I'm getting really achy and stuff like that.

These individuals also need healthy fats, right. So now we would think things like olive oil and avocados. Right. Because this is going to help lubricate the body, lubricate that dry body.

Right. and then we want to also keep in mind the tastes. Right. So I Aveda has six different tastes. And to help balance or pacify that dosha, you want to really enhance those taste.

So, vata pacifying would be incorporating sweet sour and salty taste that will help ground that vata person. So that might look like foods like, sweet potatoes, carrots, beets.

Right. So back to those root vegetables. Those are going to be that nice sweetness in there that the vata is going to actually do well with. vata is also do well with fermented foods.

All right. So thinking about any of your, kefir yogurts, those kinds of things. and then there are specific herbs and we can talk about that later from the herb perspective.

But I want to make sure I cover the foods. And then from a pitta pacifying. Right. So, do you do you know what your dosha is? Sure. You picked, I know you're red hot and you even wear red, right? So.

Okay, so so here we go. So your child, that we don't even need to use a celebrity here. We can use our own host, doctor Sharon Stills for this one. Right. So, when you were experiencing, menopause, was there certain foods you were gravitating towards?

I'm probably not a great, because I didn't have any menopausal symptoms when I went through menopause, as I had, you know, because I had because I do what I do.

So I never had I never, ever had a hot flash, which you would expect. yeah. So I'm probably not the best example. Not the best example. Okay. All right.

That's okay. We we will go back to our Madonna and our, who did I say? Madonna. And then Jennifer Lopez. Yeah. J. Lo. All right, so for a pitta pacifying dosha diet, we want to have cooling foods because these individuals, like I said, symptomology.

Right. They're the ones who are going to get the hot flashes. They're the ones that are going to get really irritable and cranky. So the the last thing they need is, the last thing that.

They need is cayenne pepper. Yeah. The last thing they need a spicy, you know, Thai chilies and Mexican hot sauce and, like, all this, spicy stuff is the last thing that they need.

and they want it. Trust me, I'm a pizza dosha. I love that stuff. Does it. Does it love me? Back in? And little amounts. It's okay. But in in high amounts. No, no.

So a pacifying pitta dosha is cooling foods. So cucumbers, melons, dark leafy greens. These are the people who should be eating those salads like me when I eat my, you know, eight cups of dark leafy greens every day.

My body, my mind will love it when I don't, I slow down. I'm not like, abled. Like, you know, it's just not a it's just not a happy place. Right. so pitta is want to avoid that spicy, that fried.

oily kind of foods because they can really aggravate the pitta. From a taste perspective, we are thinking bitter, astringent and sweet. Right? So things like asparagus, broccoli, berries, like I had I don't know how many berries today.

I think I had like two cups of berries today. And and I like, like bitter foods, like, like bitter like, what are they called? I think it's called bitter gourd, actually.

Yeah. And okra, like, I love that kind of stuff if it's made right. so. Funny right now, like, I'm in Phoenix, right? And we're filming this earlier than when you're actually seeing it.

And, like, it is, so pitta, like we're going to hit 110. That's like the first week of June. And it's like automatically it's like, all I want to do is eat berries, drink cucumber water because it's.

So you could imagine putting more heat, like, who would go out and eat a big stew right now because it's so hot. You want these cooling foods. So it's like when you think of it that way, right?

You think of the environment in your body. And so what? You know what doctor Bernard is talking about. You know, about feeding your body, using the elements to really heal.

And that is so not spoken about. And you know, we do that with herbs. We do that with foods. And so this is like really important what she's saying. And you can see really individualized.

Yeah. So so I think this is something that you can kind of take away and start doing right now. Like first pay attention to what you're doing and then go is this making me like is this making my symptoms, my menopausal symptoms better or worse?

Because most people don't really associate the food they're eating? can impact that. Like caffeine, for example. Like, okay, the last thing a pitta imbalance needs is more caffeine, because then they're like all of a sudden more hot flashes.

Right? But if we that we start thinking about it, it's it's, it makes complete sense. and then the last one would be that coffee.

Daily Routines and Ayurvedic Self-Care

Right. So what is a coffee supposed to do? Coffee's. Are those grounded? You can't really get them to to move things. So they would do better with cold meals.

More like raw stuff. something, but also at the same time, something that's easy and light to digest. So no greasy foods? no oily or heavy foods. It will just slow down the coffee even more because they're already, a little bit slower.

they would benefit from using some spices, right. So things like because their digestion is on the slower side, they would benefit from having like black pepper or ginger or tumeric, something to kind of spice it up.

Or maybe that cayenne. Right. They need that to get that, agni or digestive fire, going. so those are kind of the three when you're looking at them as an overall.

Yeah. That's that's so awesome. So let's talk, let's talk about like, routines. you know, we're not going to unfortunately, we're not going to get to everything.

But let's talk about like, some routines for the different dosages and what they can be doing, because I think the idea of Vedic lifestyle and routines and Nabi Yangon, these ghee and all of these yummy things, you know, these are things that women can start to do at home on their own.

Yeah. So that goes back to self-care. Right. So routines are the word for that is dinner. Right. So that's like kind of like your, your daily routines and it if you know I always recommend to people look at your first 24 hours in a day before you even change anything and try and add something.

Just look at your 24 hours and see what you're doing. That way you can go, all right, I can improve my morning routine. I can improve my afternoon routine.

I can improve my evening, my sleep. Based off of what you're currently doing, most people don't pay attention to what they do. Right. So I want you to start there.

And then there are some practices. Your Vedic practices that, can be incorporated. I mean, I Aveda, like I Aveda has an entire 20 things you can do in the morning routine, if you really wanted to.

And you can do it in under ten minutes. It's just, you know, learning, learning it. But there's been some of the big ones from a menopausal perspective, I think is definitely like you mentioned, Aviana and Aviana is a self massage.

Right? So using a warm body oil, whether that's coconut or sesame oil or almond oil to really nourish the skin and also calm the nervous system like we don't need.

Yeah, we do need, I'm a big spa person. We do need to schedule our massages where somebody else does it, but we can also do a little bit of that self-care or self-care every day at home.

Right. So, whether that's like, you know, five minutes before bed using an oil to kind of like, calm the nervous system, especially for that vata individual who has sleep issues that self-massage at night is going to be really good.

so how would you do it? You know, it's quite simple, right? So long strokes on the body, right? Allow the oil to penetrate and you can. And if you don't want to go to bed with like that oily skin, do it 15 to 20 minutes.

But like do it while you're watching Bridgerton or something. You know, do it and then go take your shower. All right. So whatever you have going on, you can incorporate it into that.

then the next one, from a great practice from a menopausal perspective is meditation. And I know not everybody

like, I can't get a vata to sit down at all, you know, but there's other ways that you can meditate.

Right. So whether that, a guided meditation, whether that's yoga nidra to help you fall asleep, which is, more guided, meditation, to kind of listen to, you know, body scans, all of these are options if you don't want to just sit there silently.

Also, just breathwork can help, right? So being in touch with how our body works and kind of listening to it, this can all really help with the mood swings that we experienced during, menopause.

So just kind of creating that sense of peace and calm should be a priority, I think, in menopause, because there's just so much going on. And then the the last one I would say is, is yoga, right.

So I think there's a big misconception around what is yoga. And, and I forget who it was talking to me the other day about it. And I'm like, that's that's not what yoga is like.

They just thought it was all like, you know, putting your Lululemon pants on, going going to the studio and doing all these poses. I'm like, no, you've been watching way too much reality TV.

no. Yoga is really it's a a practice where, you're getting more in touch with yourself from a physical body, mind, perspective. Right? And really kind of increasing that self-awareness.

And it can be done through a practice, pranayama or breathing exercises. It can be done through asanas, which is a physical practice. there's many ways to do it.

So don't let like, what you think you get is steer you away from trying some sort of practice. and then the last one, I think, and this isn't really a ayurvedic perspective, except for the fact that it, is prioritizing sleep.

But from the perspective of entire Veda, there's certain times of the clock, and we really focus on circadian and rhythm and Iryna. So trying to rise with the sun and going to bed and rest when the sun sets, you know, and kind of keeping that clock tapped into when our body and our and our, different hours of our doses are also very active too.

So, you know, I already mentioned you have these kind of doses through three stages of your life. You also have them in a 24 hour clock when you should be doing certain activities and when you should be resting and that kind of stuff.

so just just keep that in mind. It's it's really about step one. Look inward. Pay attention to what you're doing now. Step two don't be hard on yourself.

Slowly add in some of these practices. And step three is really get to know yourself more. beautiful. Beautiful, beautiful. Yeah. You know, these things you're calling out at the end, it's like sleep and meditation and massaging yourself and being in tune with the rising and setting sun.

Where to Learn More and Closing Remarks

You know, this is this is medicine. This is real good medicine. And, you know, ancient wisdom is wise. And we we have gotten away from it. But it's really the way back home to nervous system regulation, to honoring who you are and what your dosha is and what you need at different, at different times of the day and different seasons out there, you know, in the earth seasons and the different seasons of your life.

So thank you so much for just so eloquently explaining it and just giving us a dive. You know, a little a little dip into into ayurveda And for those who would like to, to do the deep dive with you, where can they learn more about you?

Yeah, absolutely. So, my website is drbhanote.com and on social media, all the platforms, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, @drbhanote So really easy to find me.

There's only one. And that's B H A N O T E so it's there, you know, you get it right when you Google. So go follow Dr. Bhanote and think about, you know, like, you know, like she said, go take a quiz.

Just, you know, just get curious. Curiosity is the first step in in learning and healing. So, I love that you are here because it's a topic near and dear to to my heart and one that I find so important. And, when I was in India doing punch karma, I to have such a sweet tooth and I didn't want to eat anything except sweet.

And it was the first time and this was, you know, I was in my 40s. It was, you know, within the last decade that I was there doing this definitely due to go back.

And it was the first time after doing Punch Karma, which is ayurveda cleansing and balancing that I came home and I was like, you know, past the hot sauce, you know, past the, like I was like all of a sudden my palate expanded.

And so we, we, we need to be embracing all the seasonings and all the flavors, and ayurveda is just a really good way to dive in. So thank you for bringing the wisdom today and sharing with the ladies and what a lovely conversation.

So thank you all for being here. I hope you go get so much more curious about innovative and integrated into your hormonal journey. So sending you all lots of love and thank you for being here and spending the time and learning with us, and we'll be back with another conversation.

So stay tuned.