

Managing Hot Flashes

Hot flashes can cause a sudden, intense, hot feeling on your face and upper body. They can be associated with fast heartbeat, sweating, nausea, dizziness, anxiety, headache, weakness, or a feeling of suffocation. The hot flash is followed by a flush, leaving you red and perspiring. Please follow the recommendations below in the order given, starting with Step 1. If your hot flashes are not controlled by the recommendation, continue with that recommendation and proceed to the next step.

Step 1: Avoid Triggers

- Some triggers of hot flashes include stress, alcohol, warm temperature, caffeine, diet pills, saunas, spicy food, hot showers, and smoking.
- Try to identify the trigger(s) of your hot flashes and avoid them if possible.

Step 2: Control Your Temperature

- Dress in layers and do not wear wool, synthetics and silk. It is best to wear cotton, linen, and rayon to allow air circulation and absorption. Use cotton sheets (not synthetics).
- Avoid turtlenecks. Stick to open-neck shirts.
- Drink ice water.
- Lower the thermostat.
- Take a cool shower before bedtime.

Step 3: Do Exercises and Relaxation Methods

- Exercising 30 minutes or more on most days can help.
- Try the following relaxation and stress reduction methods to improve your hot flashes: massage, paced respirations (deep, slow abdominal breathing), meditation, or yoga.

Step 4: Modify Your Diet

- Over time, a low-fat diet helps some women with hot flashes. However, losing too much weight can worsen symptoms.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and spicy foods.

Step 6: Taking Medication

- There may be a certain class of medication that can reduce your hot flashes. You can discuss this with your physician.