

When You're Hot, You're Hot: How I Laughed My Way Through Menopause

Jan King

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"Just throw back an Ensure shooter with a Pepto-Bismol chaser while you read my book. In no time, you'll be laughing and feeling much better." That's how the author, a humor writer with several books on women's topics, will make the reader feel. From first page to last, she laughs about the difficult and serious situations that menopausal women confront. Her light approach to topics like "power surges," or hormone fluctuations, allows women to be informed while they laugh their way through these misunderstood years. King imparts the knowledge she gained surviving menopause and breast cancer.

Each chapter ends with comical quizzes, good news—bad news jokes, or tidbits like "Crimes of Hormones" (Dorothea Puente poisoned six with arsenic and received one month of community service on a poison-control hotline). "But Seriously?" covers topics such as early detection of colon cancer, and plastic surgery success and costs. Women who offend easily, who don't admit to the occasional male bashing, or who want a purely informative book need not read on.

The PMS chapter touches on mood swings and psychiatric problems like obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, and depression. On PMS rages, King asserts, "If I were a man married to a menopausal woman, I'd confiscate any of her possessions that could be used as a lethal weapon—her underwire bras, her garter belt, her acrylic nails, and her frozen pot roast." She also notes that anger is accepted in men—making them powerful—but an angry woman is perceived as a loose cannon.

"Menopausal Maintenance" includes medical tests for health, explaining Pap tests, endometrial biopsies, pelvic ultrasounds, colonoscopies, and mammograms. "Menopausal Lingo" defines (with humor) HRT, FSH, and other medical terminology acronyms. The menopausal body, cosmetic surgery, male menopause, sexual satisfaction, remarriage, and mid-life pregnancy are some of the other topics covered.

Menopause is a stage in life that many take too seriously. Despite the changes that lead to hormone fluctuations and wrinkles, it is a time to celebrate life. The final chapter discusses King's battle with breast cancer and her bilateral mastectomy. This book demonstrates that laughter can be healing. In the words of Pierre De Beaumarchais, "I quickly laugh at everything, for fear of having to cry."

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