



The Wisdom of Menopause: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing During the Change

Christiane Northrup, M.D.
Bantam Books

Dr. Northrup was an Ob/Gyn physician. Her first book, *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*, was originally published in 1994. She was inspired to write about her own menopausal experience, divorce after a lengthy marriage and the maturation of her children. Menopause was only one of the great changes she experienced at this time of her life. Around the time she began this book, Dr. Northrup stopped practicing medicine and was devoted to exclusively gathering information, writing and lecturing.

This is a big book. The actual text is just under five hundred pages. Northrup presents material on the physiology of the transition, types of hormone supplements, diet and nutrition, bleeding issues, sexuality, sleep, appearance, bone health, breast health and lifestyle. Dr. Northrup tries to create comprehensive reference books for her readers — it is a strong, single source of much of the literature.

I would offer one caveat: Dr. Northrup no longer practices medicine actively. Over the last five years I have done a great deal of reading about many topics on menopause, hormones and medical physiology. When I apply these facts and ideas to real, living patients, I am constantly surprised. One must keep in mind the variations among each individual. Applying medical research and study to patients is a humbling experience. Some new ideas work extraordinarily well and sometimes nothing works all of the time. A number of thoughts that are written are just plain wrong. If a physician asks a patient how they are doing with treatments, and truly listens to the answers, the real story will come out. Since Dr. Northrup no longer sees patients, I feel it weakens the work she has done.

Keep in mind when reading this, or any other medical text — what is recommended by a medical professional, still may not be right for you.

Another point I find interesting -- in the original publication, cover photos show Dr. Northrup standing, dressed in a professional looking suit with neatly arranged hair. In Dr. Northrup's revised editions, updated pictures now show her casually lying in a large chair, wearing informal clothes and sporting a softer hairstyle. It looks like the marketing department has altered Dr. Northrop's image from a reserved, smart, professional doctor to being just one of the girls.

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