

## AMS Diagnosing Menopause: Symptom Score Sheet

This valuable diagnostic tool can be completed together with the woman, or she can do it herself in the waiting room. The woman judges the severity of her own symptoms and records the score - 1 for mild, 2 for moderate, 3 for severe and of course 0 if she does not have that particular symptom. A score of 15 or over usually indicates oestrogen deficiency that is intrusive enough to require treatment, but this is only a guideline. Women are very variable in their tolerance of discomfort, often tolerating quite severe symptoms before they will even consider taking HRT. Scores of 20-50 are common in symptomatic women, and with adequate treatment tailored to the individual, the score will reduce to 10 or under in 3-6 months.

Using the symptom score sheet at subsequent follow-up visits is a useful method of judging whether adequate oestrogen is being taken to alleviate symptoms. Generally there is a halving of the symptom score after 2-3 months on HRT and if the woman is still experiencing a lot of symptoms, she may require a dose increase. If symptoms still persist, changing from the oral route to transdermal may help if the problem is oestrogen malabsorption. Women with irritable bowel syndrome, or taking H2 antagonists commonly absorb oral oestrogen poorly.

### SYMPTOM SCORE

|                                  | Score before HRT | 3 months after starting HRT | 6 months |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Hot flushes                      |                  |                             |          |
| Light headed feelings            |                  |                             |          |
| Headaches                        |                  |                             |          |
| Irritability                     |                  |                             |          |
| Depression                       |                  |                             |          |
| Unloved feelings                 |                  |                             |          |
| Anxiety                          |                  |                             |          |
| Mood changes                     |                  |                             |          |
| Sleeplessness                    |                  |                             |          |
| Unusual tiredness                |                  |                             |          |
| Backache                         |                  |                             |          |
| Joint pains                      |                  |                             |          |
| Muscle pains                     |                  |                             |          |
| New facial hair                  |                  |                             |          |
| Dry skin                         |                  |                             |          |
| Crawling feelings under the skin |                  |                             |          |
| Less sexual feelings             |                  |                             |          |
| Dry vagina                       |                  |                             |          |
| Uncomfortable intercourse        |                  |                             |          |
| Urinary frequency                |                  |                             |          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     |                  |                             |          |

SEVERITY OF PROBLEM IS SCORED AS FOLLOWS

SCORE: None =0; Mild =1; Moderate =2; Severe =3

**NB:** The symptoms are grouped into 4 categories, vasomotor, psychological, locomotor and urogenital. If one group does not respond to HRT, look for other causes and specific treatments for that group.

**Not all of the symptoms listed are necessarily oestrogen deficiency symptoms.**