

ment of the change period. As the weather becomes colder towards the North and South extremes, this period commences later in life, and conversely the hotter the climate the earlier it starts, although it is quite common for those who commence to menstruate early to reach their climateric later in life. Those who commence their menstrual periods later often reach the menopause earlier. Again married women who have borne children and breast fed them themselves commence the change of life at a later date than childless married women and spinsters.

The changes in sexual activity vary from case to case but contrary to general belief the feelings or desire for sexual satisfaction often increase at the outset of the menopause instead of otherwise, and it is this fact that can cause, if not appreciated and understood, unhappiness and discord in the married relationship.

If the monthly periods cease abruptly a serious disturbance in health can be the result, but Nature knows her own business best and considers that a gradual change over is the better way. Usually therefore the menstrual flow becomes less and less with longer irregular periods between activity, until it finally ceases altogether.

Excessive loss of blood at these times is not at all unusual in the early stages, especially in strong active women, causing some degree of debility, but in the normal way of things any excessive flow soon diminishes, unless of course there is some disease present which aggravates the condition. As a wise precaution the advice of a medical authority should be sought when the flow is excessive in order to confirm or otherwise that the condition is not being aggravated by abnormality in some way. The usual assurance quietens the mind of the doubtful and helps considerably towards a tranquil acceptance of this normal phase in a woman's life.

It is as well at this stage to state that it is only in a small minority of cases that serious physical or mental disease develops, although a considerable amount of discomfort and personal inconvenience is not unusual. Many women in fact pass through the period with very little disturbance to health in any way.

The menopause has a profound effect on the blood circulation, causes flushes, alternating sensations of heat and cold, and unpleasant skin tinglings. Powerful palpitation of the heart may occur at any time whether actively engaged or at rest, and a feeling of shortness of breath without apparent cause, accompanied by heavy heart thumpings, are often noticeable disturbances of the circulatory system. Cold sweats sometimes follow but none of these symptoms, when allied to climateric changes, indicate heart disease. Giddiness, temporary defective vision, and ringing in the ears for short spells, are further symptoms which may be experienced at this time.

It is comforting to women of our present age to know that there are remedies for most of the symptoms due to the menopause, but it is essential that early treatment is introduced, for delay in seeking advice can sometimes lead to serious conditions developing.

General symptoms, as apart from defined symptomatic indications, comprise unaccountable aches in any part of the body, which fluctuate in intensity, and flit from place to place in a most irregular manner. There is often nervous tension, peculiar headaches of severity ranging from the slight and intermittent, to the intense and prolonged, stabs of real pain, vomiting and other distressing and irritating indications that the change of life is progressing and in passing is making its going felt. Indigestion and constipation are more or less common features of the condition.

Symptomatology provides a formidable list of possibilities, but the greatest contribution that the medical profession can make to offset any group of disturbing features, is that of giving assurance to their patients that ultimate recovery from

the normal processes of the menopause is certain. Also that early treatment and understanding advice will prevent the onset of many of the distressing symptoms, which in a normal healthy woman should not occur.

As a general guide one can say that stimulants of all kinds should be avoided but moderation in all things should be the sensible approach.

A reasonably quiet, regular existence, ensures that tranquility that Nature seeks whilst she performs her transformation in the feminine body. Fresh air and gentle exercise combined with a well balanced diet provide the standards of bodily fitness which offsets many of the minor disturbances.

Self-consciousness and self-pity can be successfully countered by pleasant understanding companionship and this is where a tolerant appreciative husband can play such an important part in the married woman's life.

The irritability so often present during the climateric should be handled firmly but sympathetically, without neglecting an understanding of the cause.

The foregoing survey of a subject that affects every woman is only brief, but it is hoped it is sufficient in its essentials to indicate that it is not necessary to suffer silently whilst going through this vital time, and that with the application of reason and advice from competent persons, is a period not to be feared but to be quietly endured, in the knowledge that ultimate health and happiness will be the result.

Middle-aged women have wise and valuable helpers in the Nursing Profession and sound advice is available simply for the asking. Nurses understand because they also are women.

## Innoxia Baby Kit.

A SPECIAL BABY KIT has been introduced by Innoxia, containing three essential items of baby care: Baby Soap, Baby Powder and Protective Baby Cream.

The latter is derived from the already famous water-repellent Barrier Creams and acts as an invisible barrier between baby's delicate skin and outside irritants. By using it regularly mothers need have no fear of chafing, nappy rash and similar discomforts and the ingredients of this entirely new and revolutionary cream are such that it will soothe any soreness caused by wet nappies before Protective Baby Cream was used.

Conforming to the highest standards of baby toilet requisites only the purest ingredients are used in the Soap and Baby Powder and all these items can be bought separately as well as in the handy kit bag. The packaging theme is pink, white and blue and little ducks add a gay nursery touch.

The retail price of the complete Baby Kit is 5s. 8d.; the individual preparations cost 2s. 3d. each for Baby Powder and Baby Cream respectively, and 1s. 2d. for the Baby Soap.

All these will be available from Innoxia stockists throughout the country from July, 1952, onwards.

## 15,000 Maternity Cases in a Year.

THE GREAT KANDANG KERBAU Maternity Hospital, in Singapore, which dealt last year with 15,000 cases, has lately been finding it difficult to cope with the influx of arrivals. For lack of beds, many cases lie on mattresses on the floor.

Overworked rural midwives on the island had to bring in 360, or so, of 1951's cases.

Singapore welfare and health centres are handicapped by a serious shortage of staff. There are now no fewer than 40 maternity and child welfare centres on the island—10 main, 5 subsidiary; and 25 clinic centres.

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