

THE ROAD TO BECOMING A WORN OUT WOMAN:

A PATH TO AVOID

Stress is a part of daily existence for most of us—though women seem to be experiencing more health problems as a result of this stress. Changes in our society have placed increased demands on women who not only continue the traditional child rearing and homemaker roles, but also hold down a full-time job and succeed professionally. Women now have less and less time to care for themselves and by age 35, start to feel this wear and tear. Because the demands of life never diminish, women must keep pushing themselves to remain productive.

Recognizing that many women are experiencing this progressive decline in their health, The Carolina Center has named this condition the Worn Out Woman Syndrome or **WOWS**. It is important that we recognize that this syndrome is actually a continuum from symptoms that may start out being very mild, causing minimal interference in daily living, but then progress to those which are more severe and debilitating. A woman doesn't become worn out overnight. The process starts when they are young and, if unchecked, will deplete one with age and accelerate the aging process, contributing to a poor quality of life later.

Various stressors at critical points in ones life set the stage for a woman to become "Worn Out":

Childhood and Teen Years:

- Repeated infections and immune system stress: For many of us, this begins in early childhood with the onset of problems such as ear infections, bad upper respiratory infections, and other illnesses that often lead parents to the pediatrician, who then typically prescribe antibiotics.
- Overuse of Antibiotics: Starting in early childhood as a result of these repeated infections, many of us have become stuck in a revolving door of getting multiple courses of antibiotics over the years, and as a result, can experience an increase in immune system weakness.
- Allergies: Many children develop environmental allergies to dust, pollen, mold, and plants, which can lead to asthma and other respiratory disorders.

College Years and the 20s:

- College Stress: Going off to college can mark the start of a series of new health problems or a return of old ones.
- Transition to Adulthood: This is when we make our career choices, when we often choose a spouse, and begin a family. Coping with these emotional stressors can definitely set one up to become more vulnerable to illnesses.

Adulthood:

- Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Parenting: During pregnancy, the nutrition and energy demands on a woman's body are multiplied many times over. This process of nutrient depletion continues with nursing and the lack of sleep that all new mothers experience.
- Professional and Career Stress: As more and more women continue to work while raising children, the ultimate result is the woman who works the "second shift" after their day at work, having to squeeze all the typical duties of motherhood into less time, and often continue to provide all the care for the family.
- Pre-Menopause and Menopause: As rough as all of the above stressors can be for women, the majority can push their way through all this and keep going, though they may feel that life is a chore and they are walking a tightrope every day. This tenuous stability is then destroyed for many women when they reach their early 40s and begin to experience changes in hormone levels, which actually begin well before a woman is fully menopausal and ceases menstruation.

- Older Years: Maintenance of good health as we age is simply a continuation of the important things we must do when younger: exercise, eating a healthy diet, controlling stress, and ensuring that our cellular nutrient levels are at an optimum state. Later in life, it is also important that we maintain healthy levels of vital hormones needed for efficient and proper functioning of all our cells.

In general, this syndrome is often characterized by some of the following features:

1. Generally good health throughout most of one's life, but with increasing minor health problems as time progresses.
2. A gradual compromise of the immune system with increasing incidents of infections of all kinds.
3. A gradual decline in energy with many women compensating by increasing consumption of caffeine and sugar to provide energy to function on a day-to-day-basis.
4. The gradual development of musculoskeletal problems including muscle soreness and weakness, neck, shoulder, and back pain, and chronic muscle tension headaches.
5. The worsening of preexisting chronic digestive disorders such as bloating, gas, constipation, and diarrhea.
6. Worsening of mood disturbances including anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, and irritability, often with a loss of motivation and confidence.
7. A feeling of accelerated aging with loss of muscle tone, increased wrinkling of the face and neck, and inability to engage in physical activity without becoming exhausted.

At a basic level, there are several things that a woman can do on a day-to-day basis to reduce the effects of these stressors and improve the likelihood of remaining healthy and not become "worn out":

- Proper diet
- Exercise
- Stress management
- Preventive health exams with conventional doctors
- Comprehensive prevention with integrative doctor
- Use of maintenance therapies including nutritional and colonic support, massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic

Dr. John Pittman received his medical degree from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia in 1986 and attended the Pediatric Residency Program at NC Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem, North Carolina with an interest in Preventive Medicine. In 1994, he established The Carolina Center, a facility where multiple healing modalities were brought together to help patients with chronic degenerative illnesses. Dr. Pittman is certified in chelation therapy, mercury and heavy metal toxicology, and oxidative medicine. For more information about Dr. Pittman or The Carolina Center, visit www.carolinacenter.com.