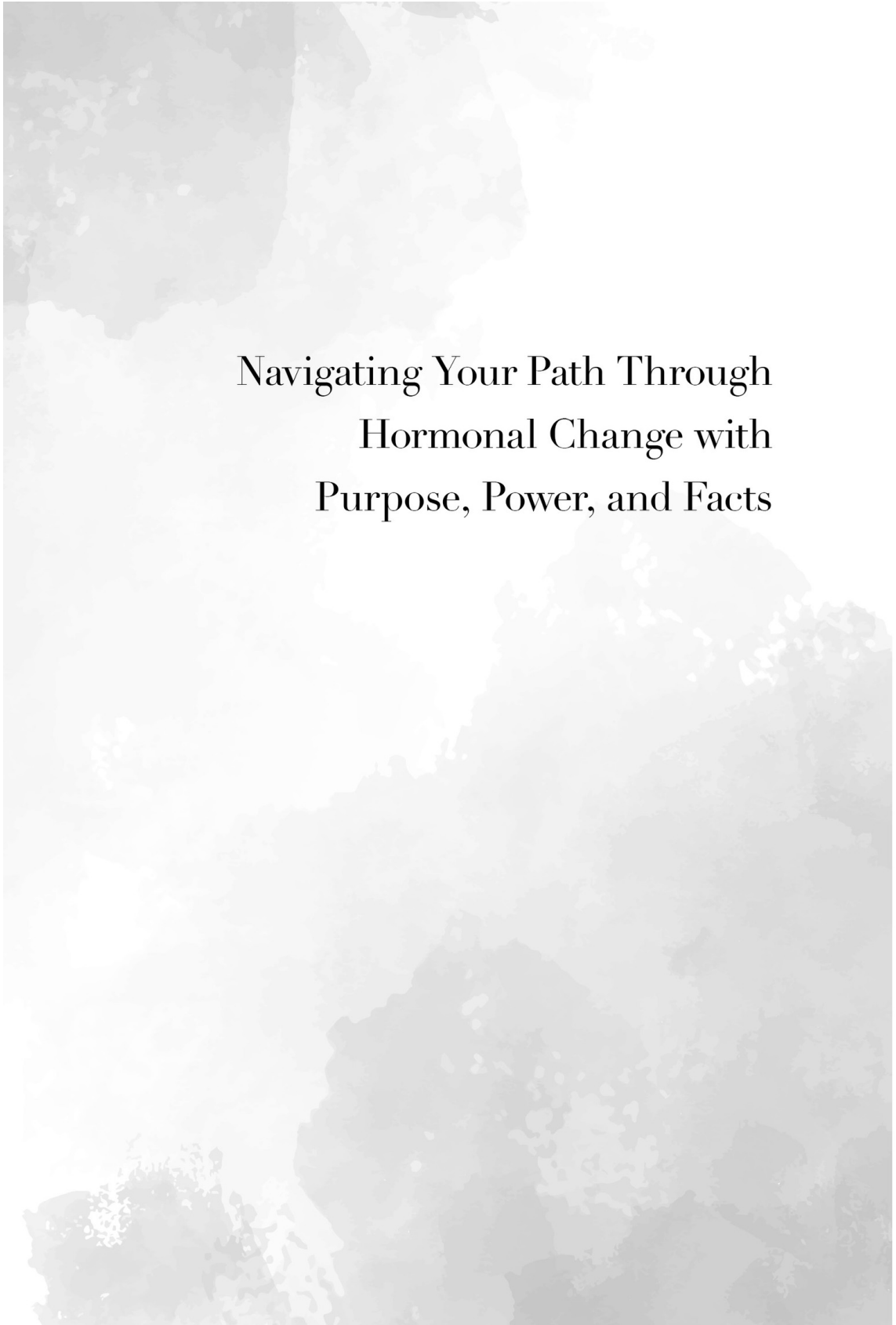


the
new
meno
pause

Navigating Your
Path Through
Hormonal Change
with Purpose,
Power, and Facts

Mary Claire Haver, MD

Author of the National Bestseller THE GALVESTON DIET



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No book can replace the diagnostic expertise and medical advice of a trusted physician. Please be certain to consult with your doctor before making any decisions that affect your health, particularly if you suffer from any medical conditions or have any symptoms that may require treatment.

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Letter to the Reader

Dear Reader:

As a board-certified ob-gyn, I have spent countless hours in hospital rooms, in my clinic, in birthing centers, and in the operating room. In these spaces, I've heard the anguished cries of birthing mothers and brand-new babies, and details of confounding symptoms originating in and from the wildly complex and fascinating female reproductive system. I studied for years, endured grueling residency hours, and dedicated over twenty years to clinical practice so that my understanding of this system would allow me to support and engender women's health. I prided myself on my commitment to this specialty and on my ability to actively listen to patients.

Yet it wasn't until I began to be active on social media that I discovered that throngs of women had been yelling loudly for years, but no one had been listening. And they were desperate for help. These were women in perimenopause or menopause, and they felt isolated and distressed by a collection of disruptive symptoms. They often could not find support, from spouses or from friends; worst of all, doctors and other healthcare providers were denying them the legitimacy of their symptoms. Each woman seemed to feel isolated in her own dismay and despair.

I'll admit there was a time when I wouldn't have heard them either. But once I went through menopause myself, I *got it*. I could relate not just through empathy but through my own personal experience—I too had my life severely disrupted by sweat-soaked sleepless nights, annoying and unhealthy weight gain, frustrating brain fog, significant hair loss, and drying skin.

In my case, being on a birth control pill for contraception and to control my polycystic ovarian syndrome had likely staved off perimenopausal symptoms in my late thirties and early forties. When I was about age forty-eight, however, my healthcare provider and I decided I should stop taking the pill and “see where I was hormonally,” knowing menopause was coming soon. Around the same time, my beloved brother, Bob, became terminally ill, and in my rush to provide him care at the end of his life, I forgot my own. I was devastated by Bob’s death, and I attributed many of the physical and emotional symptoms I was having—most notably new belly fat and little sleep—to my grief.

I tried to be tough and power through it. But night after night of disrupted sleep changed my mind. I tried melatonin, meditation, and proper sleep hygiene, but nothing was working. The loss of sleep made me groggy and fatigued during the day, which made it harder for me to find the energy to exercise and easier to choose less healthy foods. It was a vicious circle of lethargy and unhealthiness! Finally, I decided to start hormone therapy, although for a number of reasons that I now know are common (and somewhat misguided), I felt as if doing so was an act of throwing in the towel.

I was lucky that I had the ability to self-diagnose and self-treat. I was also fortunate in that I had access to research and medical insight that helped me create a comprehensive approach to my own care. This included nutritional strategies, exercise, and stress reduction techniques. Fortunately, the combined approach worked, and I began to feel better. I can’t overstate the profound relief I experienced when I started to feel like myself again.

Soon thereafter, I decided to share many facets of this approach in a program I created called the Galveston Diet. I offered this program first through my clinic in Galveston, Texas, and then later in a book of the same name. I began talking more and more about menopause on social media—and my reach has grown to over three and one-half million followers across my channels.

To say the response was overwhelming is an understatement. The program clearly spoke to and met a need that many had for a realistic and

attainable approach to improving symptoms of perimenopause and menopause utilizing lifestyle and nutrition. I am so proud of the program and how many people it has helped and will continue to help.

But there are always more women to reach, to help. Indeed, the population entering this phase of their lives is not just big, it's *enormous*—by the year 2030, the world population of menopausal and postmenopausal women is projected to increase to 1.2 billion, with 47 million new entrants each year. Can you imagine the power of a population this size if we can unite to demand continued improvements in the standard of care for women at this stage of our lives? We could rally behind my personal mantra for *The New Menopause*: Menopause is inevitable; suffering is not.

Of course, even though we are in the midst of changing, this is a big ship to course-correct, and it's going to take a long time to get everyone on board and heading in the right direction. Yet simply by reading this book you are already on the gangplank; you have access to information and proven strategies that can help improve your quality of life and increase longevity.

So let me say this: I hear you. I see you. This book is for you and anyone else (partners, family, coworkers, supporters of any sort) seeking a better understanding of the menopausal transition and life after reproduction ends. My hope is that it will help educate and empower women to care for themselves or to help others care more deeply for them as they experience and deal with these changes.

A book may not be able to take the place of an in-person doctor's appointment, but the pages ahead present an opportunity for a fresh start in how you are or will experience perimenopause (the precursor to menopause), menopause, and postmenopause, and how you approach your well-being during these stages of life. Many will argue that menopause is a natural process and we should just let it take its course and allow our bodies to do what they're supposed to do. My response is that yes, the process is natural, but that doesn't mean that it is not harmful.

What do I mean by that?

Well, as your body naturally produces less estrogen (the hallmark of “the change”), your risks for developing serious medical conditions—including diabetes, dementia, Alzheimer’s, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disease—go up. You may choose to change nothing about your lifestyle or hormonal levels to deal with the risks for these serious conditions, but I firmly believe that you should be fully informed about the range of those risks, as well as the options for mediating them. Put simply, perimenopause and menopause signal significant changes to your health, and you should be able to make an informed choice about the future of it. This book will put that agency in your hands, no one else’s.

Mary Claire Haver



You’ll see many stories from my patients and social media followers throughout this book. They’re not the typical before and after stories you might expect. Rather, they are intended to demonstrate the many, sometimes surprising, ways menopause symptoms may manifest. My goal in providing these stories is to allow you to see what may be your own truth in the testimony of others and to validate you and your experience.
