

HEALTHY LIVING

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deep inhale. A push of breath forms an audible exhale. Her head twists and drops heavily upon the mound of pillows. Her legs slide in and out from under the sheets settling together above the cotton layers. Her arms stretch back as she spreads her fingers wide against the headboard. Beads of sweat pool at the curve of her collarbone then drop upon her nightshirt, drawing it closer and closer to her skin. Her torso pops from the bed as she gazes into the eyes of her demanding lover. The alarm clock: 1:50 a.m. Tossing her feet to the side, she leaves her bed in search of a dry nightgown.

Many women refer to this romance of reality as their own personal summer due to the incessant flashes of heat. Menopause affects women within the age range of 35 to 60 years of age, but there is not a set timeline for when this change may begin or end. For females who begin to experience a few of these perimenopausal symptoms: sudden fluctuations in mood, irritation, tearfulness, difficulty with word retrieval, absence of menstruation, low motivation, and a low-sex drive, the result may be tragic to their sense of self-worth. Possibly, after sparking romance through a glance 30 years ago across the smoky haze of a bar to the eyes of her future husband, after closing the pins on her child's diapers, after soothing the battle wounds of the teenage years, and after slowly walking

patients, at least for the ones whose cars are stickered with, "I love my dog," type slogans. However, Honey does take certain days off for the women who prefer to have all Cece's attention on them. Whatever the preference, Cece will discover exactly what each woman needs to allow her to be completely at ease in her office for a full hour, the duration of the initial consultation.

She begins her diagnosis with what she finds to be an imperative first step, actively listening. The next step is to explore the components of her diet, her means of exercise, her stresses and the ways that the stages of menopause might have started to compromise her lifestyle. Every diagnosis is unique (one of the main reasons that she has such a loyal following) since every female is unique and needs her own plan to help her gain a sense of "rebirth into life as a being of her very own."

Some women may only believe in traditional medicines, for whom Cece will suggest a prescription that can be picked up at a local pharmacy while others may believe in holistic healing for whom she may recommend a variety of herbal supplements, dietary enhancements, or natural bio-identical hormones. She attempts to "blend traditional with non-traditional interventions with an emphasis on natural hormone therapies." She takes a body, mind and spirit approach to her therapy, which means that she will analyze the effects on the physical being, the cognitive stresses and/or ambitions yet to be fulfilled, and the needs for the nurturing of the soul.

Everything that Cece recommends or believes for the women who come to see her is deeply rooted in her own beliefs of how to maintain her own healthy lifestyle. She is a lifelong learner; her education began as a graduate of Philadelphia's Temple University and continued on with a second degree from Regis University.

down the aisle to a two-step rhythm, to watch a wedding that will never again be her own, it may seem that her reason for being has diminished. No longer a minute-by-minute mother. No longer the primary keeper of tissues and secrets. No longer the dancing queen that he called his "groove thing." Now, it is her turn to finally ask, "What do I want?" To answer, "Is this the end or the beginning?"

My Own Personal Summer A WOMEN'S HEALTH AND MENOPAUSE CENTER

By Toni Taddonio



Cece Huffnagle, owner

Cece Huffnagle, owner of "A Women's Health and Menopause Center" believes that it is the beginning. Cece and Patty (a longtime friend and administrative manager) are located in a historic home at the corner of 9th and Washington in the Governor's Park neighborhood. The choice of using a home as the place for her practice mirrors Cece's approach to assisting her clients in their healing process: she provides a safe haven where a woman is listened to and actually heard. Comfort flows out of the muted yellow walls upon entrance and seems to draw you toward one of the overstuffed armchairs that beg to be curled up into while waiting. I felt as at ease as if I were entering my own bedroom, tossing my clothes in the hamper and slipping on my chenille robe, to have a few precious moments of down time after a long day.

Patty, with a warm smile, led me down a few stairs to Cece's office and quickly traded me for Cece's keys to bring "Honey" in from the car. The only four-legged member of the staff provides a further sense of being home for some of Cece's

Presently, Cece is pursuing a doctorate in spirituality. She is an "RN and a Certified Nurse Practitioner with over 20 years of experience helping women take charge of their personal health." Taking charge and endless ambition led her to open, prior to her Denver location, "Wellspring for Women" in Boulder, one of the first nurse practitioner, run and owned, practices in the United States. Patty and Cece shared a gleeful smirk while explaining about their own challenges in giving up caffeine after recommending to some of the patients to do the same. They both believe in "walking the walk" that they ask others to follow and their love for their job sets the bounce in their footsteps. I marveled at how both women seemed to glow with vitality.

Cece's parting thought for me was that a woman, perimenopausal, menopausal or postmenopausal, is still able to make a choice about her reproductive life, but it is her reproduction of herself that will be the fulfillment of her dreams, her health and her happiness. The beauty of a woman in the middle years of her life does not fade, it does not come "undone," it blossoms with opportunity.

Without any formal consultation, I had experienced a type of healing, a feeling of connection, brought on by swapping stories, knowledge and laughter, calling out to my individuality but minimizing any thought of solitude. Upon parting, I sensed a new beginning as my perspective for the day was suddenly renewed with boundless energy, invigorated by the infectious smiles and serene beauty of Patty and Cece.

A Women's Health and Menopause Center is at 700 E. 9th Ave., Ste. 106 in Denver. They can be reached at (303) 837-1060. Please call for upcoming dates and locations of their free women's hormone seminars. Also, be sure to visit their Web site at www.cecehuffnagle.com.

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