Additional information about managing menopause symptoms

- **Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA)** provides information on managing menopause symptoms. Free booklets can be downloaded from the website or ring 1800 500 258 to request a booklet.
  - Hormone Therapy and Breast Cancer
  - Menopause and Breast Cancer
  www.bcna.org.au

- **Cancer Australia** provide a booklet called Managing Menopausal symptoms after breast cancer - A guide for women.
  www.canceraustralia.gov.au/resources

- **Jean Hailes** is a not-for-profit organisation. A number of factsheets on menopause are available from the website.
  https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause

- **The Australasian Menopause Society (AMS)** produces useful patient information sheets about menopause.

Contact the Breast Cancer Care Coordinator for further details:

Debra Cook/Chantelle Litwin
Monday to Thursday
P: 4014 4749   M: 0407 460 586
breastcancercoordinator@calvarymater.org.au

About Calvary

Founded in 1885 by the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary, Calvary is a charitable, not-for-profit, Catholic health care organisation. We’re responsible for over 12,000 staff and volunteers, 15 Public and Private Hospitals, 15 Retirement and Aged Care Facilities and a national network of Community Care Centres.
Hot Flushes

Hot flushes are a common menopausal symptom that may be accompanied by sweating, rapid heartbeat, and anxiety or nausea. When severe, they can interfere with daily activities and disturb sleep. They can also affect your mood and leave you feeling irritable and tired (Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) Hormone Therapy and Breast Cancer booklet).

Hot flushes can be caused by early menopause from surgical removal of ovaries or chemotherapy. Antiestrogen hormone treatment (also called endocrine therapy) can make hot flushes worse for some women. (Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre).

The lifestyle modifications summarised in the BCNA Hormone Therapy and Breast Cancer booklet are a good first approach to reduce hot flushes for many women (see back of pamphlet for how to obtain a copy).

There is evidence from studies that acupuncture may reduce hot flushes. A clinical trial showed combining acupuncture with advice on diet, exercise and psychological support resulted in 50-70% reduction in hot flushes. (lesi et al.JCO 2016)

Benefits of acupuncture

Some studies suggest acupuncture may assist to improve quality of life by decreasing hot flushes and assisting anxiety and depression.

Important things to consider before trying acupuncture

Possible side effects and complications which should be explained by the acupuncturist are listed below. Speak to your doctors if unsure.

- Soreness
- Infection risk if you have low white blood cell counts
- Risk of bleeding if you have low platelet count (blood clotting cells) or are on blood thinners you should avoid acupuncture

Other options to minimise hot flushes

Feeling overwhelmed and anxious may trigger hot flushes. Yoga, meditation, Tai-Chi and other relaxation techniques have been shown to help with anxiety and stress.

There is some evidence that combining these with acupuncture or non-hormonal medicines may decrease the frequency and severity of hot flushes.

Non-hormone medicines - medications without hormone properties that may be helpful in treating hot flushes include:

- The antidepressant venlafaxine (Efexor)
- The blood pressure drug clonidine (Catapress)
- The nerve drug gabapentin (Neurontin)
- If you are taking tamoxifen, it’s important to note that some antidepressants can interact with tamoxifen and could make it less effective. Ask your doctor about any possible interactions between tamoxifen and any drugs you are taking. (American Cancer Society Medical Information. August 2016)

ALERT - Discuss with your oncologist or GP if acupuncture and/or non–hormonal medications are appropriate for you.