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All-Natural Menopause Relief

SAN FRANCISCO (Ivanhoe Broadcast News) -- Hot flashes, mood swings, even depression. Symptoms of menopause can be harsh. And since researchers found hormone replacement therapy (HRT) increases the risk of cancer, stroke and heart attack, women aren't left with many options.

"What we're looking for is a treatment that would work, and at the same time, be safe," Deborah Grady, M.D., an epidemiologist at University of California , San Francisco Medical Center, tells Ivanhoe.

Now, UCSF researchers may have found one -- a therapy called MF101.

"It's a combination of Chinese herbs, 22 of them," George Sawaya, M.D., in obstetrics and gynecology at UCSF Medical Center, tells Ivanhoe. "We don't know exactly how MF101 works. As you can imagine, anything that's an extract of 22 herbs, it's very hard to pinpoint the exact mechanism of action."

But in the first phase of the study, MF101 improved menopause symptoms by 30 percent. It appears safer than HRT because it doesn't affect reproductive hormones or promote tumor growth -- suggesting it will not increase the risk of cancer.

Forty-six-year-old Monique Louvigny is participating in the study. "I could obviously benefit from this, but also everybody else who is my age," she says.

MF101 will have to undergo at least one other clinical trial before getting FDA approval for use by the public. The herbs have been used for thousands of years in Chinese medicine, but have never before been tested for safety or efficacy.

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