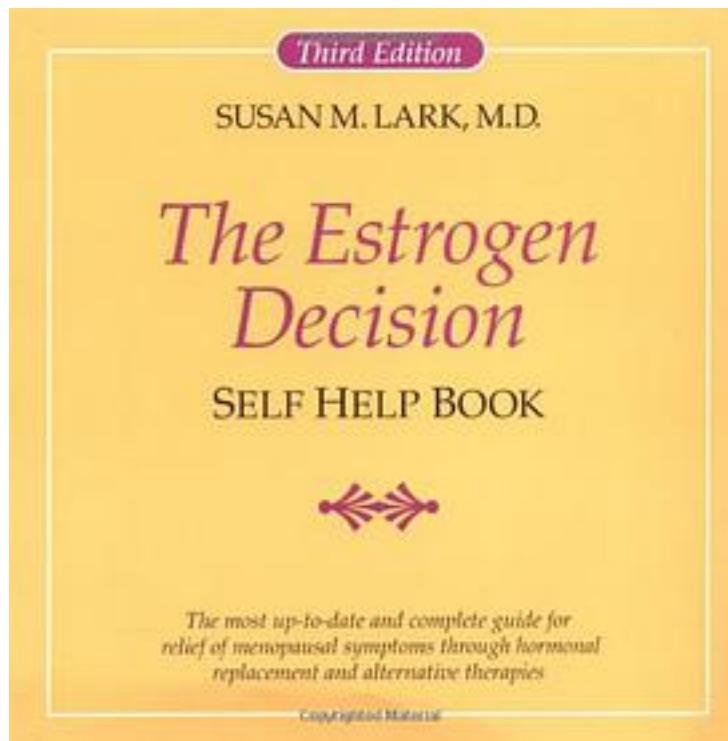


# The Estrogen Decision



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Millions of women today face a major decision whether or not to use estrogen during and after menopause. They include not only women who have ceased menstruating entirely, but also women in their forties and early fifties whose age and menstrual cycle changes indicate the approach of menopause. Menopause, by definition, means the last menstrual period, but many people use the term more loosely to include the years leading up to and following the last period. The number of women facing this important decision is growing dramatically as the large population increase of women born after World War II reaches midlife. In fact, the number of women between

the ages of 45 to 54 is expected to grow 73 percent between 1990 and 2010, according to a recent article published in *American Demographics* (35 million women in the United States are currently menopausal). For women in their menopausal and postmenopausal years, the maintenance of good health and well-being, as well as prevention of diseases of aging such as heart disease and cancer, become major issues. The role of estrogen in attaining these goals is a central issue for most midlife women.

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