# Denise Asks Awkward Questions – Bearded Ladies

**Denise:** Hello everybody. I'm comedian Denise Scott and welcome to Denise Asks Awkward Questions with Jean Hailes. Today's guest is the Clinical Director of Jean Hailes, Dr. Liz Farrell. She has qualifications I can't even pronounce, but let's just say she is brilliant, and she has been a world leader in women's health for over 40 years. All right, it's time to get awkward!

Liz ,Vasha from Tarneit in Victoria wants to know, "Ever since I turned 50, I feel like I have eyelashes growing out of my chin. I'm constantly plucking, what is happening? Am I growing a beard?"

**Liz:** So, the answer to that is our hormones become more like a male set of hormones, postmenopausally. So after the menopause our ovaries [00:01:00] produce very little estrogen, minuscule amounts of estrogen and no progesterone really.

But we still keep producing testosterone, which of course is the first male hormone and the third female hormone. So we know that men have beards and mustaches and they lose their hair and that's what happens. My mother was a very elderly lady and died at 96, and I regularly had to get the wax out on her chin and on her upper lip to get rid of her hairs.

Sometimes women on Hormone Replacement Therapy will have less growth of hair, but basically it's to do with the ratio of the different hormones that are in our bodies with the change after menopause.

**Denise:** Well, can I tell you Liz that, because I live in Melbourne so I went through a lot of lockdown, and It was Judith Lucy, [00:02:00] my friend, who got me on to the Lady Face Shaver. Oh my goodness. Because you couldn't go to a beautician and I couldn't get rid of my hair. And I used it, this is a true story, first time I used it and I went to bed that night, I felt tremendous Liz, I had the smoothest face. Woke up the next morning, stubble. Like, oh, I had so much stubble, I couldn't believe it. So yes, I grew a goatee. But we, you know, we got to wear masks. Mandatory mask wearing, how good was that for the ladies with beards?

**Liz:** Fantastic. I loved it.

**Denise:** Margaret from Ceduna in South Australia wants to know, "Why do I suddenly have a gut? I used to carry weight around my boobs and thighs, but now I have a stomach. Furious."

**Liz:** I hear this story so often, and yes. What happens once again, it's to do with that ratio of our hormones after menopause. So our estrogen drops, but our testosterone stays the same, so our shape becomes more male like.

So women have a pear shape, and that's during reproductive years when we're having periods, and then we get that apple shape after the menopause. And it's because of that change in ratio. It's because the estrogen drops, we get an increase in our belly fat, so we lose the waist.

**Denise:** Unless you're Madonna. Have you checked her out lately?

**Liz:** No.

**Denise:** No apple shape for Madonna.

**Liz:** Yeah, but look, you know, that's not Ms or Miss or Mrs Average.

It's a bit sad really, isn't it? Getting older should be a time of great [00:04:00] joy and happiness because you've gone through all these years. But in fact it's, it's more maintenance. You've gotta actually be more concerned about the maintenance of your body than you have when you are younger.

And it's really hard, but requires a lot of dietary control and exercise. And what happens also is that women tend to lose a lot of core strength as they get older. So a lot of people just walk, but they don't do any exercises on their core muscles.

**Denise:** Yeah, I find picking up my grandson, that that helps my core's strength. Up you come buddy!

**Liz:** And your pelvic floor.

**Denise:** Ah, yes.

**Liz:** Because you've gotta tighten your pelvic floor as well as your core when you lift them up.

**Denise:** Gosh, my grandson's gonna get really tired of me picking him up. Even when he is asleep.

**Liz:** It's a very good exercise.

**Denise:** All right, that's it for today. If I'm not here and you have more questions, go to jeanhailes.org.au. Bye everybody.

Information about Jean Hailes for Women’s Health

Jean Hailes for Women's Health is a national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the health of all women, girls and gender-diverse people. For free, evidence-based and easy-to-understand health information, visit [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au).

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