# Denise Asks Awkward Questions – Vagina Muffins

**Denise:** Hello everybody. I'm comedian Denise Scott and welcome to Denise Asks Awkward Questions with Jean Hailes. My guest today is Louise Brown, Head of Public Health and Education at Jean Hailes. She gets thousands of questions each year from women who are confused, frustrated, or just plain angry about their healthcare. All right, it's time to get awkward!

Louise, there seems to be a lot of women who are grumpy with their GP, and I'm going to start with one that even made me a little bit cross. Tabitha, who lives in Parramatta New South Wales, writes, "I went to my GP because I'm getting hot flushes and I think I'm going through menopause, and he said I just had to suck it up unfortunately." Is that true?

**Louise:** No, no. Not, I mean, I think that's probably what women did in the old days, you know, before 30 years ago, women weren't getting treated for, for menopausal symptoms. Now we know there's lots of help.

I think it's really great for women to feel like they can take some control. If you are experiencing menopause symptoms that are really troublesome and bothering you and interfering with your quality of life, then you need help with that. And yes, menopause will pass, eventually women won't have symptoms. You know, they might have symptoms for five years, but in the meantime they're going a bit cray cray. And we want people to be able to function and sleep and feel like they can go to work without having a complete meltdown with hot flushes and things like that.

**Denise:** But if a doctor does say... I haven't had a doctor literally say, "Suck it up, there's nothing we can do," but I've had similar, not about menopause, but about other issues like my arthritic pain or whatever. And I must admit that I just sort of go, "Okay, yes, all right, I'll suck it up," sort of thing and leave. But can you hang in there with that doctor and say, "No, I want something." Or do you go to another doctor?

**Louise:** Well, I mean, I guess it depends how much you value that relationship you have with that GP. But it's okay to say you're not managing, and if the GP's not hearing you, then I would say it's time to maybe forge another relationship with a GP. That's not always easy.

**Denise:** So where would you start?

**Louise:** There's a website called the Australasian Menopause Society, and it is a find-a-doctor service, and doctors belong to this organization and list their services on this website.

**Denise:** Possibly not the doctor who tells you to suck it up.

**Louise:** I would think not. These are doctors that are really interested in menopause and want to treat women with menopausal symptoms. You know, there's not thousands of them, but you may find one in your area. And then there's information that you can find on the website like Jean Hailes, which can help step you through some of the things that you can do yourself.

**Denise:** Excellent advice

Rose from Harrietville Victoria, which by the way, the bakery there won Best Vanilla Slice. That's just a bit of inside goss for you. Rose writes, "My friends tell me that sex after 60 gets worse and more painful. Is that true?" Quite frankly, Louise, I think I can handle this answering this question. No, please...

**Louise:** Do you wanna jump in?

**Denise:** I would love to, but you first, you are the expert.

**Louise:** So, it is true that after menopause, that the vulval and vaginal tissue changes, and that's a result of hormone changes after menopause. The tissue becomes less plump and less lubricated, and that can cause vaginal atrophy. So it's this drying out of the tissue.

So yes, of course, if you don't use anything to lubricate the vagina, then it will be painful. Absolutely. But that doesn't mean it has to be. There's lots of things you can do. There's lubricants, there's vaginal moisturizers. And then there's treatment, you may need some treatment like estrogen creams. But the passage of time unfortunately can result in this drying out of the vaginal tissues. But look, there is help to be had.

**Denise:** Yes. Cause I have dry eyes and so I'm very upset that nothing, not, not one part of my body has moisture, not even my eyeballs. It is quite something to be declared, you're a person with an atrophied vagina.

**Louise:** I know. It doesn't sound positive, does it?

**Denise:** It doesn't sound positive.

**Louise:** And our, our naturopath, Sandra Villella, who makes up beautiful recipes does have a recipe for muffins. And we call them the, in-house, we call them the juicy vagina muffins. So they...

**Denise:** Tell me more!

**Louise:** They have linseeds, ground up linseeds. Now she has been swearing by these muffins for about 20 years.

**Denise:** Let me get this clear. They're muffins you eat?

**Louise:** You eat the muffins. Yes, you eat the muffins. So you grind up the linseeds.

**Denise:** Yes.

**Louise:** The linseeds form the flour.

**Denise:** Yes.

**Louise:** And the linseeds are these phytoestrogens and have this amazing plumping up effect on the vaginal tissue.

**Denise:** Good grief. So I can plump up my body and my vagina by eating linseed muffins.

**Louise:** Absolutely. You have to get the recipe off the Jane Hales website.

**Denise:** I will do that right now.

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

Information about Jean Hailes for Women’s Health

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