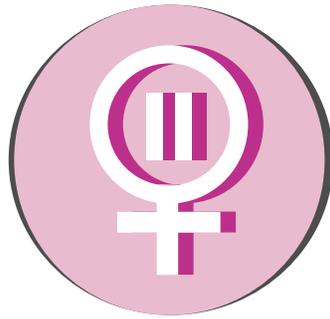


HEALTHY
MENOPAUSE
guide



HEALTHY MENOPAUSE



We are so excited you are partnering with us on your wellness journey. During our time together, I will let you in on some secrets to the cause of menopause symptoms, such as exhaustion, fatigue, hot flashes, hair loss, vaginal dryness, and erratic moods. If you are ready to ditch the struggle and start living energized and self-confident again, you are in the right place!

This guide will help you end the confusion around what you should and should not be eating, and we will work together to understand the nutrients your body needs to thrive.

Here's to your hormone health!

ARE MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS AFFECTING YOUR HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE?

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY TO YOU.

- I feel worn out most days
- I experience hot flashes
- I experience night sweats
- I fear that when I sneeze, I'll have bladder leakage
- I feel like my brain is foggy
- I frequently feel panicked or anxious
- I have excess belly weight
- I have vaginal dryness or burning
- I haven't had my period in 12 consecutive months
- I struggle to lose weight
- I'm not sleeping well
- My sex drive is in the toilet



ANALYZE YOUR RESULTS

The above are some of the signs women experience during menopause. While menopause is a natural transition all women make, it doesn't mean that you should tolerate symptoms that interfere with your health and happiness.

IF YOU CHECKED:

1-2 boxes: You have very few symptoms of menopause. However, you should take steps to balance your hormones now. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

3-5 boxes: You have some symptoms of menopause. It's time to make some changes.

6 + boxes: You have numerous signs of menopause that affect the quality of your life. Ask your doctor for a full sex hormone panel, including stress and thyroid hormones.

This quiz is not intended to diagnose. This quiz wants to raise awareness of how menopause symptoms may affect your quality of life. If you have concerns about hormone health, speak with your primary healthcare provider.

WHAT IS MENOPAUSE?

Menopause is the end of your menstrual periods and ovulation. Therefore, it also marks the end of your childbearing years. It is a natural part of a woman's life as she gracefully ages. Usually, women enter menopause around the age of 50, but it can occur at any age, from their early 40's to their late 50's. In the United States, women's average age to enter menopause is 52. A woman officially enters menopause after 12 consecutive months with no menstrual bleeding and no presence of a condition that could be causing the absent periods (i.e., hypothalamic amenorrhea). A dramatic shift in the balance of reproductive hormones occurs as the ovaries no longer secrete the primary reproductive hormones estrogen and progesterone. Thus, estrogen levels decrease significantly. The ovaries produce the majority of the estrogen in the body, so when they stop producing estrogen in menopause, levels of this reproductive hormone decline. This decrease in estrogen levels is responsible for most of the symptoms of menopause, such as hot flashes and vaginal dryness.

Progesterone levels also decrease during menopause.

Some women go through all the symptoms of menopause with great difficulty and discomfort, while other women experience much fewer and more subtle symptoms. The symptoms and their severity greatly depend on the individual.

BELOW IS A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Headaches and or migraines
- Backaches
- Hot flashes, night sweats
- Excessive sweating
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low sex drive
- Vaginal dryness
- Painful intercourse
- Urinary leakage
- Irritability
- Joint pain and arthritis
- Mood swings
- Low energy levels

If you're like many, when you think about menopause, you think of hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and weight gain, right? Here are 5 Surprising Symptoms of Menopause that you may not know:

#1 Dental Issues

Changing estrogen levels means that your body will experience dryness. The common symptom of vaginal dryness is a great example. This can also be a problem in the mouth that leads to bacterial imbalance, gum disease, and tooth decay.

Osteoporosis doesn't just impact the big bones in the body! The jawbones can be affected; chewing, jaw mobility, and teeth (or dentures) can be compromised.

Stress can make jaw clenching and teeth grinding more prevalent. The extra pressure may cause tooth damage and headaches.

Talk with your dentist about how menopause is impacting your oral health. Often, they have solutions that are easy to implement and will save you from years of discomfort.

#2 Bloating and Digestive Issues

Believe it or not, estrogen helps regulate digestion! Less estrogen means less bile, resulting in dry, hard stools, constipation, and uncomfortable bowel movements.

Lower estrogen is also implicated in water retention, which can be one cause of bloating. Hormonal imbalance can also cause gas and bloating in the digestive process because of changes in how the body metabolizes carbohydrates and proteins.

Consult a Doctor or Nutritionist to discuss ways to shift your eating habits and what foods to focus on to support your health.

#3 Body Odor

Hormonal changes can be a bear when it comes to body odor. Decreased estrogen is to blame for an increase in BO. Estrogen helps regulate your hypothalamus; the hypothalamus is the gland responsible for regulating your body temperature. When estrogen levels drop, your hypothalamus gets confused and responds as though you are hot, even when you aren't. The result is activated sweat glands!

Hot flashes and night sweats can leave you, your clothing, and your bedding drenched in sweat. Night sweats, in particular, can breed some funk because bacteria have hours to develop while you sleep. If your sheets and clothing are smelly due to menopausal sweat, try an enzyme cleaner as a pre-soak when you do laundry. That extra step can often help!

Vaginal dryness can cause odor, too. Without sufficient vaginal lubrication to keep pH in check, odor-causing bacteria can flourish.

Breathable fabrics, a daily shower (or two), antiperspirant or deodorant, pre-treating laundry, and following a healthy diet to help alleviate the symptoms in the first place can all make a difference.

#4 Dizziness

Dizziness may signify more serious health concerns, but it can be due to menopause.

Hormone fluctuations may make you experience vertigo and feel faint or lightheaded.

While experiencing other symptoms, you may also feel dizzy or unstable. Hot flashes, dehydration, anxiety, panic attacks, and stress trigger those feelings.

Cardiovascular disruptions and heart disease disorders that develop during menopause may leave you feeling dizzy.

Visit your doctor to determine if your dizziness is related to menopause or a more serious health concern.

#5 Painful Intercourse & Urinary Leakage

Vaginal dryness is a hallmark sign of the genitourinary syndrome of menopause, also known as atrophic vaginitis or vaginal atrophy.

With this condition, vaginal tissues become thinner and more easily irritated – resulting from the natural decline in your body's estrogen levels during menopause. Due to this decline in hormone levels, many women experience pain with intercourse, dryness, and frequent urinary tract infections. 2 in 3 women have this issue. Still, less than 25% talk to their doctor about it. There are now many more solutions for women that we will discuss later in this guide.

THE MAGIC OF ESTROGEN: A GUIDE TO PERIMENOPAUSE AND BEYOND

Perimenopause, the transitional phase before menopause, is a dynamic time of hormonal changes that often takes women by surprise. One of the most significant players in this journey is estrogen, a hormone that not only supports reproductive health but also plays a crucial role in many other areas of well-being. Understanding how estrogen fluctuations impact the body during perimenopause—and the benefits of addressing these changes—can be life-changing.

WHY ESTROGEN MATTERS

Estrogen is often called the “queen hormone” for good reason—it influences nearly every system in the body. Beyond regulating the menstrual cycle and supporting fertility, it protects bone density, promotes cardiovascular health, supports cognitive function, and even contributes to skin elasticity and hydration. This hormone is essential for feeling vibrant and balanced, making its fluctuations and eventual decline in perimenopause and menopause particularly impactful.

ESTROGEN IN PERIMENOPAUSE: A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

Perimenopause, which can start several years before menopause, is marked by **fluctuating estrogen levels**. These ups and downs can create a variety of symptoms that range from inconvenient to disruptive:

- **Mood Swings and Cognitive Challenges:** Anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and memory lapses are common and often unexpected.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Hot flashes, night sweats, and unpredictable menstrual cycles are hallmarks of this phase.
- **Sexual and Urogenital Changes:** Vaginal dryness, discomfort during intimacy, and decreased libido often emerge as estrogen levels decline.
- **Sleep Disturbances:** Insomnia or restless sleep, often tied to hormonal shifts, can leave women feeling exhausted.

This “window of vulnerability” is unique to perimenopause and requires special attention to address both the physical and emotional changes.

ESTROGEN REPLACEMENT THERAPY: RECLAIMING BALANCE

For many women, **hormone replacement therapy (HRT)**—including estrogen replacement therapy (ERT)—can be a game-changer. While some women may hesitate to explore this option, it's important to understand the transformative benefits ERT can offer:

- **Relief from Vasomotor Symptoms:** Hot flashes and night sweats can diminish significantly within weeks of starting therapy.
- **Bone Protection:** Estrogen helps maintain bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis and fractures.
- **Improved Sexual Health:** Vaginal dryness and discomfort can be alleviated, restoring comfort and confidence.
- **Enhanced Cardiovascular Health:** When started early in menopause, ERT may offer heart health benefits by improving cholesterol levels and supporting vascular health.
- **Cognitive and Emotional Balance:** Many women report improved mood, reduced anxiety, and sharper focus with ERT.

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

As an alternative medicine practitioner and advocate for integrative health, Dr. Galina emphasizes the importance of **personalized care**. Every woman's journey through perimenopause and menopause is unique, and so should be her treatment plan. Regular consultations, thorough discussions about symptoms, and tailored solutions—including HRT when appropriate—empower women to feel their best during this transformative phase of life.

EMBRACING THE POWER OF ESTROGEN

Rather than fearing the changes that come with perimenopause and menopause, women can learn to embrace them with the right tools, knowledge, and support. Estrogen is more than a hormone—it's a lifeline to vitality, resilience, and health. By addressing its fluctuations and understanding its profound impact on the body, women can navigate this stage with confidence and grace, reclaiming their well-being and thriving in the years ahead.

SEX HORMONES AND MENOPAUSE

ESTROGEN

The fluctuation in estrogen levels during menopause is responsible for symptoms such as hot flashes, poor quality of sleep, and vaginal dryness. These fluctuations in hormones can also significantly impact your mood, making you feel anxious, depressed, and stressed. While estrogen levels decline with menopause, according to the late Dr. John Lee, estrogen levels drop only 40–60% at menopause, just enough for the monthly cycles to stop.

PROGESTERONE

Progesterone levels begin to decline after age 30 (long before estrogen). However, there is a more significant decline in progesterone around age 50. The need for progesterone spans a lifetime. Once the ovaries stop producing it, the body will generally continue (to a lesser degree), providing it via the adrenal glands and nerve cells. Progesterone protects against osteoporosis, heart disease, and many other health concerns.

TESTOSTERONE

Although testosterone is predominantly a male hormone, women do require low testosterone levels to be healthy and happy. Women require a healthy testosterone level for bone strength, increased cognitive performance, and an increased sex drive. Women with inadequate testosterone levels can experience low libido, becoming very frustrating and problematic for them. It can also increase the risk of osteoporosis as bones become weaker.

Pomegranate juice has been shown to increase testosterone levels in both men and women. Foods that are high in magnesium also increase testosterone levels. High-magnesium foods include hemp seeds, spinach, and figs. Zinc is also a necessary nutrient for testosterone production, so look for foods that are high in this mineral.

WOMEN'S INTIMATE HEALTH & MENOPAUSE

The vagina changes as we age due to the decline of female sex hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone. One likely development is something known as vaginal atrophy. Vaginal atrophy is the thinning, drying, and inflammation of the vaginal walls. Some women experience vaginal atrophy in perimenopause; however, it often becomes more apparent the closer a woman gets to menopause.

SYMPTOMS OF VAGINAL ATROPHY

The main symptom of vaginal atrophy is vaginal dryness. Dryness is what many women notice first. Other symptoms include:

- Vaginal dryness and discomfort Painful intercourse
- Lower libido
- Shortening of the vaginal canal Urinary problems
- Frequent bladder and vaginal infections Pain in the vulva or vagina
- Vaginal discharge
- Reduced pelvic muscle strength (think bladder leakage when sneezing!)

CAUSES OF VAGINAL ATROPHY

Hormonal changes in the body generally cause vaginal atrophy.

The following puts you at higher risk:

- Smoking
- The use of hormonal birth control medications or devices
- Synthetic hormones
- Low sex hormones (estrogen, progesterone, or testosterone)
- Autoimmunity

WOMEN'S INTIMATE HEALTH & MENOPAUSE

VAGINAL ATROPHY IS TREATABLE.

#1 Change your diet

Focus on foods that support a healthy gastrointestinal tract and vaginal pH.

#2 Take a Lactobacillus-Based Probiotic

Lactobacillus acidophilus is the best probiotic for establishing healthy vaginal balance. Two other strains researched for vaginal health are lactobacillus rhamnosus and lactobacillus reuteri.

#3 Use natural lubricants

Lubricants will not fix the underlying problem. However, they will help you manage symptoms. Natural lubricants work well, and they will not complicate the situation further. Some essential oils that moisturize the vaginal canal well include rose, lavender, Cape chamomile, Roman chamomile, frankincense, and sandalwood. Make sure to procure your essential oils from trusted sources. Then, dilute them before mixing them with olive oil, coconut oil, or vitamin E oil. However, keep in mind that these oils are not safe to use with condoms.

#4 Talk to your doctor about non-invasive treatment options

Just because you've reached a certain age doesn't mean that your sex life has to disappear completely. As a first step, speak to your Ob-Gyn about any specific sexual health issues you may be dealing with. Your doctor will be a great resource to help identify problems and point you in the right direction for possible solutions. They may recommend anything from kegel exercises to short office-based procedures like feminine intimate wellness treatments, which treat issues like vaginal dryness, laxity, or painful intercourse, or vaginal platelet rich plasma therapy.

WHAT IS A FEMININE INTIMATE WELLNESS TREATMENT?

It's a gentle in-office treatment whereby a specially designed device delivers controlled energy to the vaginal wall tissue. It restores vaginal health by generating new collagen, elastin, and vascularization. It has also been helpful for some women who experience mild to moderate stress urinary incontinence.

How does it work?

Using laser or radiofrequency, gentle energy is applied to target the vaginal lining. Both the surface (epithelial) tissue and deep (lamina propria) tissue are affected to promote vaginal mucosal revitalization.

What is a Vaginal Platelet Plasma Therapy?

Vaginal PRP (Platelet-Rich Plasma) is a gentle, in-office treatment that uses PRP from your own blood to rejuvenate and enhance vaginal health. This innovative therapy stimulates tissue repair, promotes collagen production, and enhances sensitivity, lubrication, and sexual function. It may also help reduce symptoms of stress urinary incontinence.

How does it work?

A small amount of your blood is drawn and processed to isolate the PRP, which is rich in growth factors. The PRP is then carefully injected into specific areas of the vaginal tissue to promote tissue repair and revitalization.

Does the procedure hurt?

The procedure requires only a local anesthetic. Patients often report mild pressure or slight discomfort during the injection, but it is generally well-tolerated. The entire process is quick, typically completed in under 30 minutes, and is performed by a licensed healthcare provider.

When will I see the results?

Some women notice improvements within the first few weeks, while the full benefits are typically seen within 3-4 months as the body continues to regenerate tissue and increase circulation in the treated area.

How long does it last?

The results of vaginal PRP typically last 12-18 months. Some patients opt for annual treatments to maintain their results.

What are my limitations after the procedure is done?

Patients can usually resume normal activities the same day, but it's recommended to avoid sexual activity for 24-48 hours following the procedure to allow for optimal healing.

For which patients is this treatment appropriate?

Vaginal PRP is appropriate for women experiencing symptoms such as decreased vaginal sensitivity, dryness, or mild to moderate stress urinary incontinence. It is also a great option for women seeking a non-surgical and hormone-free approach to improving sexual wellness.

Is this procedure safe for women with breast cancer?

Yes, vaginal PRP is a safe, hormone-free treatment option for women who cannot or prefer not to use estrogen therapy, making it ideal for breast cancer survivors experiencing vaginal symptoms.

Are there other non-estrogen alternatives (besides intimate feminine wellness treatments) that can help with symptoms?

Osphena is the other non-estrogen treatment for vaginal atrophy. Osphena is an oral pill taken once a day, and the total retail price is \$200 per month or \$2,400 per year. Even if covered by insurance at 50%, the yearly cost is \$1,200. Like all oral medications, there are potential side effects, the most common one being hot flashes.

How much does a feminine intimate wellness treatment cost?

The overall cost is often less than the cost of 1 year of hormone therapy. Most offices offer financing options such as Care Credit. In some cases, women can submit through a flexible spending or health savings accounts and get the procedure covered or partially covered.

Will insurance cover the procedure?

There is no billable code for this procedure, and it is not covered by insurance.

THYROID HORMONES AND MENOPAUSE

The occurrence of many thyroid diseases, hypothyroidism, nodules, and cancer is highest among postmenopausal women. The diagnosis of thyroid dysfunction during menopause is difficult since the signs can be broad or similar to other menopausal complaints. Your thyroid gland is critical for many different processes in the body, so you must take care of it now and make sure it is functioning correctly. The two most common thyroid conditions are hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism. Physicians will most likely prescribe thyroid medications for these disorders, but they don't necessarily help our bodies heal, especially for subclinical cases. Thyroid medications must be administered with caution during menopause because of their adverse effects. For example, high doses of L-thyroxine can lead to cardiac arrhythmias and increased bone turnover. The following supplements support thyroid function and are completely healthy for us to act as both preventative and protective measures against thyroid disease.

NUTRIENTS FOR THYROID SUPPORT

SELENIUM: Selenium is an essential mineral for our health. This element combines with other polypeptides to form the amino acid selenocysteine. The thyroid has an exceptionally high concentration of proteins that contain selenocysteine. These proteins are required to convert T4 into the more active thyroid hormone T3; therefore, they play an essential role in hormone balance.

IODINE: Iodine is an essential mineral whose most significant role in the body is the synthesis of thyroid hormones. Your thyroid depends on iodine so much that an iodine deficiency can lead to thyroid disease.

VITAMIN D3: Vitamin D3 is a fat-soluble vitamin that your skin can produce when exposed to sunlight. Worldwide, many are deficient in vitamin D, especially those who live in colder climates and don't see enough of the sun.

INOSITOL: Inositol, also known as vitamin B8, is not a vitamin but rather a sugar molecule. Our bodies can synthesize inositol; therefore, it is not considered a true vitamin. Inositol supplements can reduce levels of thyroid antibodies and are often taken in conjunction with selenium to reduce inflammation in the thyroid and ensure that it is functioning correctly.

PROBIOTICS: The gut microbiome tremendously impacts our health more than we had previously thought. It most likely affects every system in our body, so naturally, it also affects thyroid hormone synthesis and balance.

ZINC: Zinc is an essential mineral with many vital functions in our bodies, including metabolism and supporting the immune system. Zinc also plays a crucial role in thyroid hormone balance.

AMINO ACIDS: Amino acids are like the building blocks of all the proteins in our bodies. Although our bodies can produce some of them, many amino acids are essential because we must get them from our diet. The thyroid hormones consist of iodine and a specific amino acid known as tyrosine.

ADRENAL HORMONES AND MENOPAUSE

Although the ovaries are the primary site of estrogen and progesterone synthesis, the adrenal glands play an essential role in producing sex steroids as we age. The adrenals create sex steroids that have both androgenic and estrogenic bioactivity. However, many of us have exhausted our adrenals by reaching perimenopause. The adrenal glands have to make enough cortisol to keep up with the demanding stressors of our everyday life, and eventually, they get exhausted—otherwise known as adrenal fatigue. Adrenal fatigue is not a medical condition per se - it's a consequence of overworked adrenal glands. Women with adrenal fatigue are known to have more severe symptoms throughout perimenopause. Taking care of our adrenal health is essential because if these glands aren't functioning correctly, the transition into menopause will be even more challenging. But don't worry - nearly every suggestion I make in this program supports healthy adrenal function!

ADAPTOGENS FOR ADRENAL SUPPORT

Maca powder, Ashwagandha, Siberian ginseng, and Rhodiola are fantastic adrenal adaptogens. They support the adrenal glands and help them create a healthy response to stressors. Adrenal adaptogens also significantly improve hormone balance.

PROGESTERONE DECLINES GREATLY AFTER 50

Progesterone naturally begins to decline around age 30 and, by age 50, has decreased significantly. According to the late Dr. John Lee (leading progesterone specialist), estrogen levels drop only 40–60% at menopause, just enough for the monthly cycles to stop. Sadly, progesterone levels may drop to near zero in some women causing hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, and other troubling symptoms. Stress, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, and xenoestrogens all accelerate progesterone decline. During perimenopause and menopause, the sharp decline of progesterone can lead to estrogen dominance – despite lower estrogen levels.

COMMON SIGNS OF LOW PROGESTERONE

- Anxiousness
- Depressive states
- Gallbladder problems
- Headaches
- Highly emotional
- Hot flashes
- Low Libido
- Migraines
- Mood swings
- Night Sweats
- Weight Gain

HEALTH BENEFITS OF PROGESTERONE

- Enhances thyroid hormones
- Good for your bones
- Good for your heart
- Helps with weight loss
- Keeps estrogen in check
- It may offer protection against some cancers
- Prevent hot flashes and night sweats
- Prevent some headaches
- Promotes restful sleep
- Supports healthy mood

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SYNTHETIC PROGESTINS

Many women in menopause feel they have no other recourse than to take synthetic hormones. Synthetic progestins found in conventional HRT can cause undesirable side effects, including a heightened risk of cancer, edema, and depression. They can even raise the risk of heart disease, blood clots, and stroke. Side effects are infrequent with natural progesterone.

NATURAL SOLUTIONS...YES, IT'S POSSIBLE

Let's break it down...

MODIFY YOUR DIET

The most significant dietary adjustment you can make for optimal hormone balance is maintaining healthy blood sugar and cortisol levels. When your blood sugar is stabilized – your adrenal glands and hormone levels are happy. To support blood sugar levels, we need quality protein and healthy fats. We must also reduce refined sugar, caffeine, and processed carbohydrates. Magnesium, zinc, B6, and vitamin C also boost progesterone levels, so focus on foods with these nutrients, such as seeds, clean meats, organ meats, green vegetables, and root veggies too!

The following are foods believed to increase progesterone...

- Cherries
- Chicken
- Grass-Fed Beef
- Oregano
- Organic Eggs
- Shellfish
- Thyme
- Turmeric
- Walnuts

DITCH XENOESTROGENS

Xenoestrogens are chemicals found in the environment that mimic estrogen. They are in our care products, household cleaning products, cosmetics, fragrances, and food. Therefore, it's easy to switch out some of your most-used products to chemical-free, natural ingredients that won't increase the total estrogen in your body. Regarding food, we discussed that animals raised with hormones should, understandably, be avoided as these hormones will be transferred to us. You should also avoid endocrine-disrupting chemicals found in personal care products, such as phthalates, sulfates, BPA, and parabens. BPA is a common material found in plastic and cans. Most products that list "fragrances" in their ingredients contain phthalates, even if it's not explicitly stated in their ingredient list. Stick to products with natural fragrances, such as essential oils or herbs.

Here's what you need to avoid to reduce exposure to xenoestrogens and other endocrine-disrupting chemicals:

- CAFO meat (Confined Animal Feeding Operations) meats injected with steroids and other pharmaceuticals.
- Canned foods (contain bisphenol A, aka BPA)
- Conventional produce, sprayed with chemicals (many are FRS toxins) Farm-raised fish treated with chemicals
- Household air fresheners Household cleaning products Many beauty-care products PCD's from industrial waste Plastics - think water bottles

REDUCE STRESS

Reducing stress is key to keeping healthy in general, but it will also help treat estrogen dominance. If you're under chronic stress, the adrenal glands will shift their focus toward producing more cortisol to deal with this stress. However, that means that they are taking away the "resources" to create progesterone. Find ways to destress and relax; this can be different for each person. Take a bath, go for a relaxing walk, meditate, read a book, or practice yoga. Practice anything that helps you eliminate stress and make time for it daily or at least weekly. Although your schedule might get busy, your health (both physical and mental) should be a top priority, so don't be afraid to take time out for yourself!

2 SUPPLEMENTS THAT MIGHT HELP

- Magnesium: Magnesium is a fantastic stress reliever. It increases GABA, normalizes cortisol levels, and encourages healthy sleep. If there were such a thing as a 'desert island' supplement for menopausal women, magnesium would be it!
- Taurine: Taurine is an amino acid and neurotransmitter that calms the brain by increasing GABA.

MANAGE WEIGHT AND EXERCISE

Regular exercise can help with weight management, and it also helps the body fight hormone imbalance in other ways. It enables the liver to become more efficient at removing bad estrogen from the body, increases insulin sensitivity, improves mood (which helps with the mood swings associated with menopause), and reduces cortisol levels (the stress hormone) in the body.

NUTRIENTS THE BODY NEEDS DURING MENOPAUSE

As you undergo these changes to your hormone levels, your body might require specific vitamins more than it used to. These include vitamins that support adrenal function, help balance hormone levels, and aid in improving specific issues that arise due to low estrogen levels, such as bone loss.

VITAMIN E

Vitamin E plays an essential role in supporting the adrenal glands. These glands are responsible for synthesizing a small percentage of the body's total estrogen levels; therefore, they become significant during menopause. If the adrenal glands are functioning properly, then when the ovaries stop producing estrogen, the glands will still produce and release some estrogen into the bloodstream. This slight increase in estrogen levels can help relieve some of the symptoms of menopause. Research has shown that vitamin E supplementation during menopause helps ease symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats. **Sunflower seeds, avocados, almonds, swiss chard, and butternut squash are all rich in vitamin E.**

THE B VITAMINS

The B vitamins (especially vitamin B5) have several functions in the body, including regulation and support of the adrenal glands. Vitamin B5 (also known as pantothenic acid) is especially important in the production and metabolism of hormones synthesized by the adrenal glands. It plays a role in synthesizing cholesterol, the precursor to all steroid hormones (including estrogen and progesterone). The B vitamins are heavily involved in energy production and, therefore, also help with memory, regulation of mood, and cognitive functioning. This group of vitamins can minimize "brain fog," which is the difficulty concentrating and poor memory that some women experience in menopause. Vitamin B5 is found in **chicken, oats, and other whole grains, eggs, beef, and potatoes.**

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C provides adrenal support and functions in many other pathways that work hard to keep us healthy. It is an important player in the immune system and bone health as well. The adrenal glands are concentrated with vitamin C and use this nutrient to synthesize cortisol, the stress hormone.

However, if the adrenal glands become overworked and fatigued (which happens when we're under a lot of stress), the supply of vitamin C might run low. A diet rich in vitamin C ensures that you are providing your adrenal glands with enough of this vitamin for them to function properly and keep the hormones balanced, even when they're under stress. Vitamin C also provides a protective factor against bone loss because it is an important nutrient in the synthesis of collagen. Collagen is the abundant protein in our bones and connective tissues, making them durable and strong. Adequate intake of vitamin C is easily obtained through diet alone. **Citrus fruits, such as lemons and oranges, grapefruits, red peppers, and Brussels sprouts, all contain a very high percentage of your daily recommended intake of vitamin C.** One orange already contains over 100% of your needed vitamin C!

CALCIUM

Almost all of the calcium in our bodies is found in the skeletal system (over 99%). It is the main mineral component of bone. When estrogen levels decrease in menopause, the risks of osteoporosis significantly increase.

Estrogen has protective effects against osteoporosis and bone loss. Thus, calcium is extremely important during this stage in your life because you need to ensure that your bones are getting enough of the nutrients they require to stay as strong and healthy as possible, even with lower estrogen levels. Dairy products (such as organic kefir and full-fat yogurt) are known for being rich in calcium, but **sardines, nuts, and seeds are also excellent sources of this mineral.** You should also make sure you're getting an adequate vitamin D intake, which many individuals are deficient in. Vitamin D is essential for the effective absorption of calcium.

SUPERFOODS FOR MENOPAUSE

POMEGRANATE

Pomegranate contains estrogen-like compounds that are structurally like the female estrogen estrone. Pomegranate contains the highest amount of steroidal estrogens than any other plant-based source. Pomegranate also helps modulate estrogen and acts as an aromatase inhibitor. While you can eat pomegranates, experts suggest pomegranate extract or pomegranate seed oil.

LIGAN RICH SEEDS, GRAINS, AND LEGUMES

Four main plant constituent groups have demonstrated weak estrogenic activity; however, only lignans and isoflavones have shown specific human estrogenic activity. You get lignans from seeds, whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and some fruits. Because lignans are abundant in grains and legumes – I do not recommend a Paleo diet for menopausal women. However, I would suggest you soak, sprout, or ferment your grains and legumes to make them more digestible.

ISOFLAVONE RICH SOYBEANS

Soy is also well-known for its estrogenic effects. Some studies have found that women who were in menopause and who ate a diet rich in soy had improvements in their joints and bone health, something that deteriorates following the decrease in estrogen. Soy might also reduce the common symptoms of menopause, including hot flashes, excessive sweating, and heart palpitations, which can sometimes occur. It is the Isoflavones in soy that provide the estrogenic effects. Safe sources of soy are sprouted organic tofu, organic soybeans, organic miso, and organic soymilk. It's essential to purchase non-GMO and organic soy only.

PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS

Portobello mushrooms are a good source of vitamin D and B12 that we need as we get older. Other mushrooms, such as cordyceps and reishi, have estrogen-modulating effects and may help reduce common menopause symptoms.

PROTEIN POWDERS

Blood sugar stability is essential for hormone balance. Unfortunately, many of the protein powders on the market have ingredients that may inhibit hormones. Avoid highly processed protein powders with isolates such as soy, whey, and grain-based powders. Look for hemp, pumpkin, chicken, beef, or bone broth protein powder. I suggest Nutiva, Sunwarrior, Vital Proteins, Ancient Nutrition, or Rootcology protein powders. If these are out of your budget, don't compromise on quality. It would be better to pass than bring in poor-quality proteins that may inhibit hormone balance.

PROBIOTICS

Cultured foods help keep the gut microbiome thriving. Research is emerging, demonstrating a connection between the gut microbiome and hormone health. Researchers now believe that certain microbes in the gut secrete and modulate hormones to such an extent that the gut microbiota should be classified as part of the endocrine system! To cultivate a robust gut microbiome, you should incorporate cultured foods such as cultured vegetables, sauerkraut, beet kvass, sugar-free non-dairy yogurt, and kefir waters.

ORGANIC PASTURE-RAISED EGGS

Studies show eggs boost testosterone! Organic eggs are filled with even more essential nutrients than conventional eggs - especially omega-3 fats.

Conventional eggs also have soy, as soy is a by-product in most chicken feeds. In general, eggs are a cheaper source of protein and healthy fats than meat, so it is worth investing a little more to buy organic. Eggs are a complete source of protein, containing every essential amino acid you need. They contain omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins A and E, beta-carotene, and choline, essential for fetal brain development.

SHATAVARI

Shatavari is wild asparagus. In Ayurveda, it is considered a female tonic. Traditionally, it has been used to boost libido, tame hot flashes, curb night sweating, and lessen brain fog.

Shatavari also has immunomodulating, apoptogenic, and anti-stress effects. Customarily, Shatavari is mixed with a glass of warm milk and honey, but it can be incorporated into a wide range of dishes, drinks, and teas. You can purchase Shatavari powder on Amazon.

YOUR AMAZING 3-DAY MENU

DAY 1

Upon waking, drink warm lemon water.

BREAKFAST

SMOOTHIE

Serves 1

- 1½ cups coconut milk
- 1 scoop hemp protein powder
- 1 date, pitted
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 brazil nut
- 1 teaspoon ground flax seed

Add all ingredients to a high-speed blender.

LUNCH

KALE AND SWEET POTATO WITH A SIDE SALAD

Serves 2

- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 cups chopped sweet potatoes
- 1 bunch of kale, chopped
- 1 15-ounce can of black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 6 cups vegetable broth

Melt coconut oil in a large pot over medium heat add onion and garlic. Stir for about 3 minutes until fragrant. Add sweet potatoes, kale, black beans, paprika, cumin, and vegetable broth. Stir well and cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Continue to cook for about 15 minutes or until the sweet potatoes are tender.

SIDE SALAD

Serves 2

4 cups mixed greens
1 handful of cherry tomatoes
1 cup peeled and chopped cucumber
½ cup broccoli slaw
1 avocado, diced
1 lemon, cut in half, tahini, for dressing balsamic vinegar, to taste, sea salt and black pepper, to taste

Combine mixed greens, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, and broccoli slaw in a large bowl and top with avocado. Squeeze the juice of the whole lemon over the top. Drizzle salad with tahini and toss with balsamic vinegar. Season with salt and pepper, as desired.

SNACK

green tea with 1 apple and 3 Brazil nuts

DINNER

BEEF CHILI AND LARGE SALAD

Serves 6

1 tablespoon coconut oil
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
2 large carrots, chopped
1 medium celery rib, chopped
2 medium red bell peppers, chopped
1-pound chopped portobello mushrooms
1 medium jalapeño pepper, chopped (optional) 1½ pounds ground beef
3 garlic cloves, chopped sea salt, and black pepper, to taste
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 tablespoon ground cumin
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 24-ounce can of crushed tomatoes, undrained
1 cup beef (or chicken) broth, preferably organic

Optional Toppings: 1 large avocado, diced, ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped

Heat the coconut oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrots, celery, bell peppers, mushrooms, and jalapeño pepper (if desired) and cook, occasionally stirring, until the vegetables are soft and fragrant, approximately 5 to 7 minutes.

Add the ground beef and garlic and season with salt and black pepper to taste. Cook, breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon until the meat is browned, around 5 to 6 minutes.

Add the oregano, cumin, chili powder, cayenne pepper (if desired), and tomato paste. Stir everything together and cook for another minute or two until the spices become fragrant.

Add the crushed tomatoes and the broth and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat to medium and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove from heat and adjust seasonings, if necessary. Top with avocado and cilantro, if desired, and serve immediately.

LARGE SALAD

Serves 4

- 2 cups mixed greens 2 cups spinach
- 1 handful of cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 1 cup peeled and chopped cucumber
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1 lemon, juiced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil, sea salt, and black pepper, to taste

Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and serve.



Day 2

Upon waking, drink warm lemon water.

BREAKFAST

SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH AVOCADO

Serves 1

- 1 teaspoon coconut oil
- ½ red pepper, chopped
- ½ cup spinach
- 2 eggs
- sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- ½ avocado, sliced

Crack eggs into a small bowl and whisk well with a fork—season with salt and pepper. Melt coconut oil in a hot pan over medium heat. Add red pepper and spinach. Sauté for 2 minutes. Pour eggs into the hot pan and cook for about 1 minute. Use a fork to swirl the eggs around the pan until curdles start to form.

Continue to do this for about 2 to 3 minutes until you get your desired consistency. For firmer eggs, cook about a minute or two longer. Top with avocado.

LUNCH

KALE AND QUINOA BOWL

Serves 2

- 1 cup quinoa, uncooked
- 2 cups vegetable broth 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 bunch of kale, torn
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 15-ounce can of lentils, drained and rinsed
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 lemon, juiced

Add the quinoa, broth, and celery to a medium pot. Cover and boil for 20 minutes until all the water is absorbed. Remove from heat and set to the side.

Place a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add coconut oil. Once the oil has melted, add kale and bell pepper. Sauté until wilted.

Once the quinoa has cooled, lightly fluff it with a fork. Spoon the quinoa into a large salad bowl and add sautéed vegetables, lentils, avocado, and red onion. Add balsamic vinegar and lemon juice. Toss to combine and serve.

SNACK: ¼ cup hummus and chopped vegetables

DINNER

CAULIFLOWER RICE AND CASHEW CURRY

Serves 4

Curry Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons coconut oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 chicken breasts, cut into cubes
- 1½ cups canned coconut milk
- ½ cup puréed pumpkin
- 2 small red onions, sliced
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- ¾ cup cashews
- 1 tablespoon cilantro leaves to garnish



Rice Ingredients:

1 tablespoon coconut oil
1 cup raw cauliflower rice*
¾ cup canned coconut milk
¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
1 teaspoon raw honey
sea salt, to taste

*NOTE: Cauliflower rice can be purchased at Whole Foods Market, Trader Joe's, and other specialty grocery stores.

Place a large skillet over medium heat. Add coconut oil. Once the oil has melted, add minced garlic and chicken. Once the chicken becomes white on all sides, add coconut milk and puréed pumpkin to the chicken.

Stir well, and add sliced onions, curry powder, cumin, cinnamon, salt, and pepper. Continue to stir for about 5 to 7 minutes to allow the mixture to thicken. Turn off the heat and set it to the side to cool.

To cook the cauliflower rice, add coconut oil to a medium pan. Once the oil has melted, add the cauliflower rice and coconut milk. Continue to stir for about 3 minutes, then add the remaining ingredients. Stir well until the liquid begins to evaporate and the rice becomes sticky.

Stir the cashews into the chicken and garnish with cilantro before serving.

DAY 3

BREAKFAST

QUINOA BREAKFAST BOWL

Serves 1

- ½ cup cooked quinoa
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds
- 1 tablespoon ground flax seeds
- ½ cup almond milk
- 1 scoop protein powder stevia, to taste

Tip: Cook quinoa ahead of time according to package instructions to make assembling this bowl a breeze.

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Serve warm.

LUNCH

HORMONE SALAD

Serves 2

- 3 cups mixed greens
- 1 cup broccoli slaw
- 1 cucumber, chopped
- ¼ red onion, chopped
- 1 avocado, diced
- ¼ cup dried cranberries, unsulfured
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 1 orange, juiced for the dressing
- 2 tablespoons flax oil
- balsamic vinegar, to taste
- sea salt and black pepper, to taste

Place the mixed greens, slaw, cucumber, and onion in a large bowl. Top with avocado and cranberries. Squeeze the juice of 1 orange over the salad.

Next, top with flax oil and balsamic vinegar—season with sea salt and black pepper to taste.

Mix well and serve.

SNACK: 1 green apple and 2 tablespoons almond butter

DINNER

BISON BURGER WITH SALAD

Serves 4

Burger Ingredients:

1 pound ground bison
sea salt and black pepper, to taste
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon coconut oil

Dressing Ingredients:

¼ cup tahini
1 lemon, juiced
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 teaspoon dulse flakes
sea salt and black pepper, to taste

Salad Ingredients:

4 cups spinach
1 BPA-free can of garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1 cucumber, chopped
¼ red onion, sliced
1 avocado, diced

Place bison in a mixing bowl. Add salt, pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder and mix well to combine. Form into 4 patties. Melt coconut oil in a hot pan; add patties. Fry on each side for about 5 minutes until the center is no longer red. Set to the side to cool.

To make the salad dressing, combine all the dressing ingredients in a small mixing bowl and mix with a fork.

Place spinach in a large salad bowl. Top with garbanzo beans, cucumber, onion, and avocado. Pour the dressing over the top and mix well before serving.

SNACKS

SESAME KALE CHIPS

Serves 2

- 1 bunch kale
- 1 heaping tablespoon of coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon ginger powder
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Wash and dry the kale. Strip the kale leaves from the stem and tear the leaves into a large mixing bowl. Add coconut oil, garlic powder, ginger powder, salt, and sesame seeds. Mix well and spread onto a baking sheet. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until crisp.

DATE WITH ALMOND BUTTER

Serves 1

- 1 date
 - ½ teaspoon almond butter
- Split the date in half, lengthwise. Spoon in almond butter and enjoy.

AVOCADO WITH SEA SALT

Serves 1

- ½ avocado
- 1 dash of garlic powder
- 1 dash of sea salt
- 1 tsp dulse flakes

Sprinkle half an avocado with garlic powder, salt, and dulse.

ALMOND SESAME PROTEIN BALLS

Serves 2

½ cup almonds

½ cup sesame seeds

6 pitted dates

1 tablespoon coconut oil

½ cup almond butter

1 tablespoon chia seeds

Combine the first five ingredients in a high-speed blender. Blend until the almonds are finely chopped. Scoop into 1-inch balls and lightly roll the balls in the chia seeds. Place the balls in a covered container. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving. Store refrigerated for up to 1 week.

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