



Menopause Wellness

An Overview of Symptoms, Stages,
and Management

Introduction

- Menopause is a natural biological process.
- It marks the end of menstrual cycles and the end of reproductive years
- Typically occurs between ages 45–55
- Menopause results from the decline in ovarian function, leading to decreased production of hormones such as Oestrogen and progesterone

Common Symptoms

- Allergic reactions
- Anxiety Increasing
- Bladder irritations
- Bloating
- Brain fog and difficulty concentrating
- Breast tenderness
- Brittle and weak nails
- Burning sensation in the mouth
- Changes to Body Odour
- Changes in our skin - dry & itchy
- Confidence
- Decreased libido
- Depression/anxiety
- Digestive issues
- Dizziness
- Electric shock sensations
- Fatigue and tiredness
- Gum issues



Common Symptoms

- Hair thinning or hair loss
- Headaches
- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Incontinence
- Irritability
- Joint aches and pains
- Loss sex drive
- Memory and concentration issues
- Migraines
- Mood swings and low mood
- Muscles tension or weakness
- Night sweating
- Palpitations, panic attacks
- Period changes, irregular, painful and heavy
- Sleep problems and insomnia
- Tingling extremities
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ear)
- Unexplained/sudden weight gain
- Vagina dryness



Stages of Menopause

- Perimenopause – Hormonal fluctuations, it can start as early as 30s or as late as 50s. It is when cycles are no long predictable
- Menopause – 12 months without a menstrual cycle. It is a moment in time
- Postmenopause – Years after menopause, increased health risks

Managing Menopause

- Healthy lifestyle: diet, exercise, stress reduction
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- Non-hormonal medications
- Support groups and counseling
- Regular medical checkups

Herbal Supplements & Non HRT choices

You should ask a GP or pharmacist for advice if you're thinking about using a complementary therapy

- Herbal remedies that are sometimes taken for menopause symptoms include:
- Agnus Castus: It may provide hormone balancing effects
- Black Cohosh: Hot flushes (40mg dose per day)
- Ginseng: mood symptoms and sleep disturbances and overall sense of wellbeing
- Liquorice: decrease hot flushes and night sweats
- Maca: balance hormone levels and improve sexual function
- Milk Thistle: May help balance hormones and also may help prevent Osteoporosis
- Sage: minimise hot flushes
- St John's wort: improve sleep quality, research suggests that taking 900mg p/day may be effective

Nutrition for Menopause

- Dietary changes and proper nutrition can help alleviate these symptoms. Here are some key strategies:
- Phytoestrogens are plant-based compounds that mimic oestrogen in the body. Sources: Soy products (tofu, tempeh, edamame), flaxseeds, sesame seeds, and whole grains.
- Calcium and Vitamin D. Source of Calcium: Dairy products, leafy green vegetables (kale, broccoli), almonds, and fortified foods. Source of Vitamin D: Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel), fortified foods, and exposure to sunlight.
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids can help reduce inflammation, improve mood, and support heart health. Sources: Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts.
- Fibre A high-fibre diet helps manage weight, improve digestion, and stabilise blood sugar levels. Sources: Whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and nuts.
- Staying hydrated can help manage hot flushes and improve overall well-being. Tip: Drink plenty of water throughout the day



**Healthy
Generations**

You can't guarantee good health but you can improve the odds!

Nutrition for Menopause



- Protein - Adequate protein intake is important for muscle mass maintenance, especially as muscle mass tends to decline with age. Sources: Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, and dairy products.
- Avoid Triggers foods and drinks, it can trigger or worsen menopausal symptoms. Avoid: Spicy foods, caffeine, alcohol, and high-sugar foods
- Antioxidants: Antioxidant-rich foods can help combat oxidative stress and inflammation. Sources: Berries, dark chocolate, nuts, and green tea.
- Healthy Fats: Incorporating healthy fats can support hormone production and overall health. Sources: Avocados, nuts, seeds, olive oil, and fatty fish.
- Limit Processed Foods: Reducing processed foods helps avoid added sugars and unhealthy fats, which can exacerbate symptoms. Tip: Choose whole, minimally processed foods whenever possible. Peel more unwrap less.

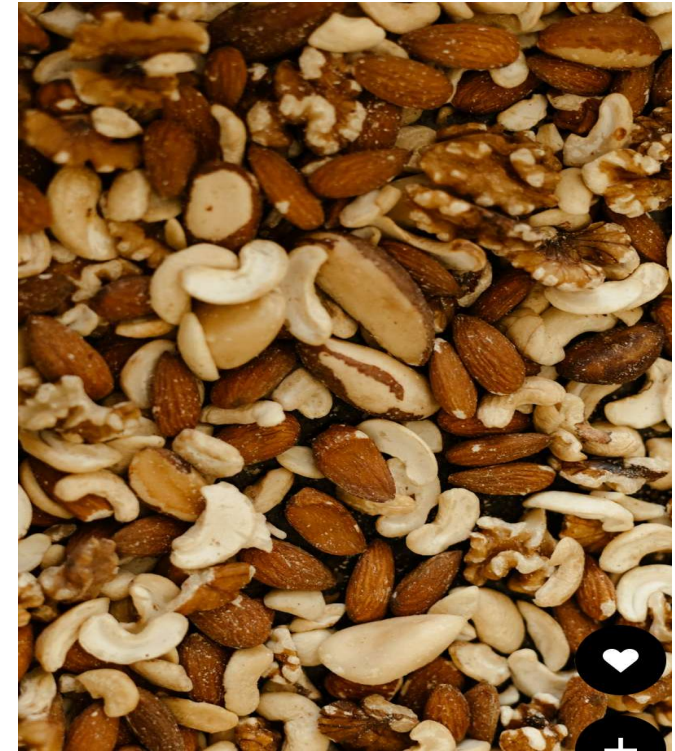
Symptoms associated with low protein intake

- Fatigue
- Hormone imbalance
- Blood sugar imbalances
- Poor concentration
- Frequent infections
- Mood swings
- Dry or flaky skin
- Hair loss
- Brittle nails

Plant-based sources of protein

Protein is important because it builds and repairs tissues, helps produce enzymes and hormones, maintains electrolyte and fluid balance, and helps build strong bones, muscles, cartilage, and skin.

- 3 tbsp sesame seeds - 4.8g protein
- 3 tbsp pumpkin seeds - 2g protein
- 3 tbsp chia seeds - 7g protein
- 3 tbsp flax seeds - 5.7g protein
- 28g cashews - 5g protein
- 28g Almond - 6g protein
- 28g walnuts - 4.3 g protein
- 170g tofu - 11g protein
- ½ cup quinoa, cooked - 4g protein



Nutrition Conclusion

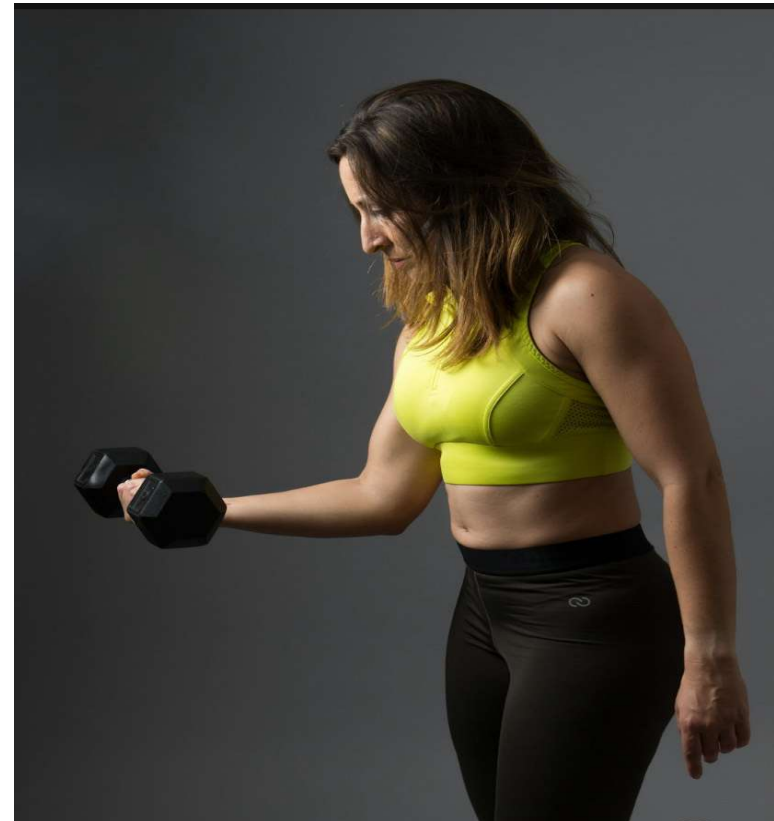
To get the nutrients we need, it is recommended that we eat a diet focused on:

- Fish
- Flaxseed
- Fruit
- Nuts
- Poultry
- Vegetables
- Whole Grains
- While reducing red meat, sugar foods and beverages



Benefits of Physical Activity

- **Improved Cardiovascular Health:** Regular physical activity strengthens the heart, improves blood circulation, and reduces the risk of heart diseases and stroke.
- **Weight Management:** Exercise helps to control weight by burning calories and building muscle mass, which increases metabolism.
- **Mental Health Benefits:** Physical activity reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety, boosts mood, and improves overall mental well-being by releasing endorphins.
- **Enhanced Sleep Quality:** Regular exercise helps to regulate sleep patterns and improve the quality of sleep.
- **Strengthened Muscles and Bones:** Weight-bearing exercises and resistance training increase muscle strength, bone density, and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.



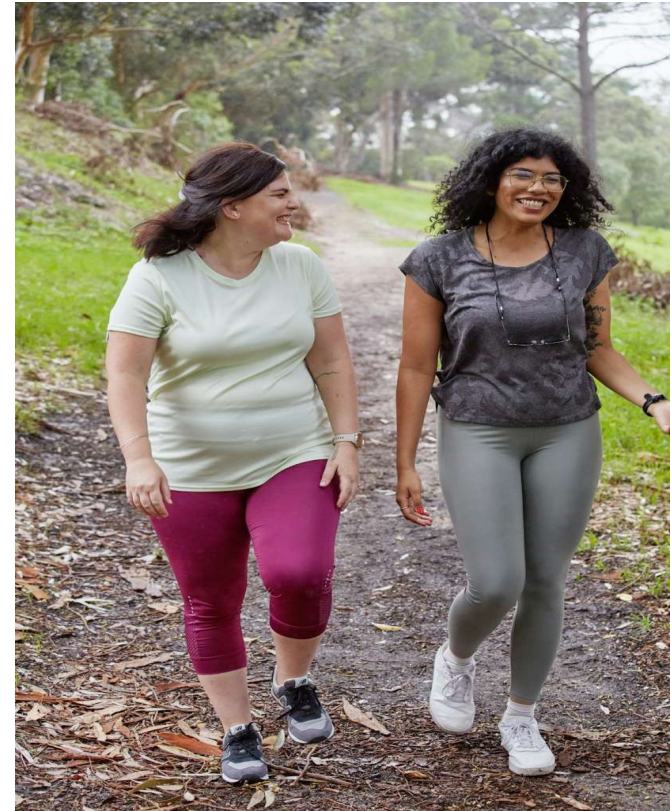
Benefits of Physical Activity

- Increased Energy Levels: Regular physical activity boosts energy by improving muscle strength and endurance.
- Improved Flexibility and Balance: Activities like yoga and stretching improve flexibility, while balance exercises help prevent falls, especially in older adults.
- Chronic Disease Prevention: Regular exercise can help prevent or manage various chronic conditions, including diabetes, arthritis, and certain cancers.
- Enhanced Brain Function: Physical activity promotes brain health, improving memory, cognitive function, and reducing the risk of cognitive decline.
- Social Benefits: Group activities and sports can enhance social interactions and build a sense of community and belonging.



Benefits of Physical Activity

- We should aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week to help prevent heart disease, walking, cycling, dancing or swimming - activities that use larger muscles at low resistance are good aerobic exercises.
- [Health & Wellbeing Charity in Islington - Healthy Generations](#)
- Healthy Generations has around 90 classes a week either face to face or online, the classes are free with option to donate, available to everyone over 18.
- Menopause fitness class every week on Tuesday's at 6:30pm @ Whittington Park Community Association.
- [Menopause - Healthy Generations](#)



Exercise into Daily Routine

- Set Realistic Goals: Start with manageable goals and gradually increase intensity.
- Schedule Workouts: Dedicate specific times of the day for exercise.
- Mix It Up: Incorporate different types of exercises to prevent boredom and target different muscle groups.
- Stay Consistent: Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of high-intensity exercise per week.
- Listen to Your Body: Rest and recover as needed to avoid injury.
- Stay Hydrated and Eat Well: Proper nutrition and hydration support exercise performance and recovery.



Mental Health and Emotional Well-being

- By acknowledging the emotional and psychological challenges of menopause and actively engaging in coping strategies, women can navigate this transition more comfortably and maintain better quality of life.
- Here are some common issues and coping strategies:
- Emotional and Psychological Challenges
- Mood Swings: Hormonal changes can lead to mood swings, irritability, and increased emotional sensitivity.
- Anxiety and Depression: Some women experience heightened anxiety or depression due to hormonal fluctuations, sleep disturbances, and changes in life circumstances.
- Sleep Problems: Hot flashes and night sweats can disrupt sleep, leading to fatigue and irritability.
- Cognitive Changes: Some women report memory lapses and difficulty concentrating, often referred to as “brain fog.”
- Body Image and Self-Esteem: Physical changes, such as weight gain and changes in skin and hair, can affect self-esteem and body image.



Coping Strategies

- Education and Understanding
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Mental Health Support
- Therapy, Social Support
- Communication: Sharing experiences with friends, family, or support groups
- Support Groups: Joining a menopause support group, either in person or online.
- Medical Interventions:
 - Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)
 - Non-Hormonal Medications
- Self-Care and Personal Time
- Hobbies and Interests
- Relaxation and Pampering

Relaxation Techniques to Improve Sleep Quality

- **Sleep Hygiene Practices:** Maintaining a regular sleep schedule. Creating a comfortable sleep environment (cool, dark, and quiet). Limiting exposure to screens and stimulating activities before bedtime. Avoiding caffeine and heavy meals in the evening.
- **Aromatherapy:** Using essential oils like lavender, chamomile, and sandalwood can create a calming environment conducive to sleep. These can be used in diffusers, bath soaks, or applied.
- **Mindfulness Meditation:** Practising mindfulness can reduce stress and promote relaxation. Techniques involve deep breathing, body scanning, and focused attention on the present moment. Healthy Generations has free classes please check the website.
- **Yoga and Tai Chi:** Gentle movements, stretches, and deep breathing exercises can improve sleep quality. These practices help reduce stress and improve overall well-being.
- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I):** Focuses on changing sleep habits and misconceptions about sleep and insomnia. Techniques include stimulus control, sleep restriction, and cognitive restructuring.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR):** Involves tensing and then relaxing different muscle groups in the body. Helps reduce physical tension and promotes relaxation.
- **Breathing Exercises:** Techniques such as diaphragmatic breathing or the 4-7-8 method can promote relaxation and help induce sleep.
- **Guided Imagery:** Visualisation techniques involve imagining a peaceful and relaxing scene. Helps distract the mind from stressors and promotes a state of calm.

Five ways to reduce pelvic symptoms of menopause

- Fact: 40 to 60% of women will suffer from Pelvic problems after menopause.
- HRT, the GP can prescribe local Oestrogen cream pessaries, these can reduce irritation and urinary tract infections but can take up to 6 weeks to become effective.
- Vaginal lubricants, the best type to use is silicone or hyaluronic lubricants for sexual intercourse.
- Reduce irritation, don't use soap or perfumed products
- Stop smoking, smoke can reduce the effects of naturally occurring Oestrogen in the body.
- Pelvic floor muscle exercises, The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that sling underneath the pelvis and are responsible for controlling our bladder and bowels. They also support our entire pelvis and are involved in sexual pleasure. It's important to do pelvic floor exercises.
- TRY: Pelvic Floor Exercise for women video with Rachel Bromley
- (Leading women's health physiotherapist Nuffield Health).

Pelvic floor exercise

- Best to start it off by lying on your back either on the bed or floor,
- Gently drawn in the pelvic floor, you should feel it drawing up and in, the same sort of feeling as when you are stopping yourself from passing wind.
- Start by doing some quick squeezes, squeeze let go, squeeze let go.
- Now you can move on to the long squeezes, making sure that you are breathing, this time you are going to tight the pelvic floor so feel that area between your legs moving up and in and count for a couple of seconds, counting out loud, can help you to do your squeezes and keep breathing.
- You should try doing 10 of the short squeezes and 10 of the long squeezes 2 or 3 times a day.
- Gradually building up to do this exercise while sitting, standing up or walking.

Xenoestrogens

- Xenoestrogens are endocrine disruptors, chemicals that alter the normal function of hormones. There are 70.000 registered chemicals that are specifically categorised as xenoestrogens meaning they have an estrogenic effect.
- These compounds mimic hormones, which interfere with the work of natural hormones. Xenoestrogens are specifically harmful to reproductive organs in women and men, the immune system and the neurological system.
- They disrupt hormone balance and cause oestrogen dominance. Some effects of this are: obesity, infertility, breast, testicular and prostate cancer, endometriosis, miscarriages, diabetes and early onset puberty.

Xenoestrogens

- Common sources of xenoestrogens are food, plastic, skin care products, building supplies, pesticides, and contraceptives. Here are a few ways to reduce your exposure to the xenoestrogens.
- Avoid pesticides, especially in foods.
- Peel non-organic fruits and vegetables,
- Buy hormone free meats and dairy products.
- Avoid plastic in the following everyday kitchen products, water bottles, canned foods (most are lined with plastic) Teflon and other non-stick cookware, plastic wrap to cover food and by removing plastic covered food as soon as you get home from the store.
- Choose household products carefully.
- Choose chlorine free alternatives for the following products: Paper towels, tampons and menstrual pads, toilet paper, coffee filters.

Conclusion

- Menopause is a natural stage in life.
- Awareness and lifestyle adjustments help manage symptoms.
- Medical advice ensures better health during this transition.

Thank You

- Questions & Discussion