

OCTOBER 2023

INSIDE

Balance with BOTANICALS

How the plant world can
support your hormones

MENOPAUSE

In association with
NaturalLifestyle

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The real impact

How menopause is
affecting women in
our modern world

THE HOLISTIC APPROACH

HOW TO MANAGE
THE PHYSICAL AND
MENTAL EFFECTS
OF THE MENOPAUSE

THE IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE | *INSIDE MENOPAUSE* GIVEAWAYS | HORMONE BALANCING RECIPES
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reduce my hot flushes and improved my
mental health considerably.*

Steph D

💬 *More energy and more focused they
have done a great job. Will
recommend to all similar aged
males I know. Definitely helped with
so much, didn't think something in a
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Max W

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WELCOME

OCTOBER 2023



When you consider the stark fact that in little over one year's time, one billion women globally are expected to be going through the menopause, it's clear that this is not something that can be ignored, as it seemingly has been over the generations.

Indeed, women are known to suffer in silence, with the Gen-M *Invisibility Report* finding that 87 per cent of those experiencing the menopause think mid-life women are overlooked by society and brands, and it indicates that women are currently surviving menopause with a mixture of grit and determination, rather than being prepared for and supported to navigate its impact. It also found that 94 per cent of women going through the menopause said they felt they would benefit from society being more open to talking about the menopause.

Such data just demonstrates the real need for better support and education for women going through this inevitable process. And while we would never advocate ignoring medical options, it's important to highlight that there is so much an individual can do to support their health and

wellbeing, and in turn, manage their menopause, by making smart nutrition and lifestyle choices.

And that is what this special issue of *Inside* is here to do, bringing you all the advice you need to better understand what the menopause is, why certain symptoms occur, and what you can do to better support your health. Whether it's adding in key botanicals to support hormone balance, addressing stress, ensuring better sleep, or getting fit, we have all kinds of advice from leading natural health experts. We are also delighted to feature a range of recipes from Nutritionist, Chirstine Bailey, all designed to help balance your hormones.

And we also want to give back, and so throughout the magazine, you can find a range of giveaways ideal to support those going through the menopause. All you need to do is visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk/inside to enter. And as always, feel free to email me your thoughts at rachel.symonds@targetpublishing.com, whether you found it useful and any other topics you would like to see us cover.

Rachel Symonds,
Editor



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Master the menopause

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The true cost of the menopause

With one billion women globally estimated to be going through the menopause by 2025, it is no longer something that can be ignored. Here, we bring you an overview of key areas that women are asking for support for.

When Gen-M published its *Invisibility Report* in 2020, the findings were stark, and truly brought into focus the daily impact the menopause has on such vast numbers of the global population, and the need for change in better supporting and understanding women.

The report said that it is estimated that one billion women will be going through the menopause by 2025. And while the natural transition of the menopause is a fact of life for almost all women, Gen-M said that what's deeply troubling is the air of mystery that continues to cloak the subject, and the perpetuating relationship this taboo has with the lack of resource for those experiencing menopause, from brands, organisations, retailers, employers and wider society.

The research conducted in the study found that overwhelmingly, women in their mid-life feel overlooked by society and unable to find

the support they need whilst struggling with physical, emotional, and mental symptoms – from anxiety and panic attacks to insomnia and depression.

The report went on: "There are 48 symptoms of menopause and our research highlights that of the 48, 51 per cent of women can name only three. Better awareness and education of these symptoms across all society must be one of the first steps to normalising the conversation and this is what Gen-M will focus on initially. This research substantiates that fact, and we believe the millions of people currently experiencing the impact of menopause directly or indirectly, that make up Generation Menopause, deserve better.

"The menopause is not just about hot sweats and HRT. From shampoos for thinning hair to extra intensity creams for your skin and temperature regulating clothing and bedding – our shopping needs go through 'the change' as well. We need the brands and retailers we've been loyal to, to transition with us."

Understanding the issues

Gen-M was set up to better support menopausal women after research found 87 per cent of those experiencing the menopause think mid-life women are overlooked by society and brands, and it indicates women are surviving menopause with a mixture of grit and determination, rather than being prepared for and supported to navigate its impact. It also found that 94 per cent of women going through the menopause felt they would benefit from society being more open to talking about the menopause.

The report uncovers insight to better understand the two in three women who were 'blindsided' by the perimenopause and how we can address the isolation and loneliness they face in dealing with it.

Many of the symptoms manifest as emotional and, in the absence of knowledge about the impact of the menopause, can easily be attributed to other causes or reasons – the report found 50 per cent of menopausal and post-menopausal women reference a non-physical symptom. This figure is even higher among those experiencing perimenopause (57 per cent). Of greater concern is some symptoms appear to manifest into more serious emotional and mental health issues and can seriously impact feelings of confidence and

self-worth. These are grave insights into the 'invisible' impact of the menopause on mental health, particularly troubling since women aged 50-54 have the highest suicide rate in the UK, according to the Office for National Statistics.

It also highlighted the responsibility of workplaces and employers to support menopausal women – the fastest growing demographic in the workforce today. Those surveyed whose career was on a high when entering the perimenopause were the most significantly unprepared (90 per cent), knew almost nothing about it (83 per cent) and over half (55 per cent) said it made them feel invisible. The need for workplaces to be better established to cater for perimenopausal and menopausal women was supported by 88 per cent of women surveyed.

The report also said overwhelmingly, it demonstrates the collaborative role of brands, retailers, employers, support networks, medical professionals and society in general in resetting the dial on how we view the menopause. Like many social taboos, it requires collaboration to sweep away years of social norms and this research triggers new thinking on the back of sober facts to build a better today for the one in three women suffering in silence at the moment.



ADDRESS ISOLATION

Another area of concern regarding the menopause is that it can leave women feeling isolated. In fact, 41 per cent of menopausal women feel lonely, invisible, irrelevant and dispensable, according to NHS research.

Offering her advice, Charlotte Hunter, Menopause Nutritionist, explained: "Menopause can be an incredibly isolating experience. Going through menopause at the age of 44, I found myself feeling alone, with no friends who truly understood what I was going through. Many women find themselves in this lonely place, whether it's due to cultural expectations, a lack of support from partners or family, experiencing menopause at an unusual age or because of medical treatments.

"If you're single during menopause, it's essential to focus on the positives and avoid thinking, 'I can't be bothered because it's just me.' Instead, embrace the opportunity to care for yourself, particularly regarding food preparation and cooking. Discover your favourite recipes and remember that cooking for one doesn't have to be a challenge. Embrace the principles of a Mediterranean-style diet, incorporating healthy proteins, abundant vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and nourishing fats. There are loads of cookbooks out there and don't fear family recipes. All you need is a little creativity and be prepared to do some simple maths, so you don't end up eating the same food for the whole week!"

Research by scientists from the University of California San Diego suggests that loneliness during menopause may even come with some health risks; social isolation and loneliness is linked to increased risk of cardiovascular problems in post-menopausal women. Prior to menopause, oestrogen helps keep our blood vessels flexible, which is thought to help prevent heart attacks and strokes. As this hormone naturally declines, the risk of heart disease increases. To better understand the relationship between heart disease and loneliness, researchers analysed nearly 60,000 women – aged 73-85 – with no history of cardiovascular

complications. Up to four years later, those deemed to have had high levels of loneliness and social isolation were 29 per cent more likely to have a heart attack, stroke or cardiovascular-related death.

Charlotte recommended: "It's time to prioritise yourself. Place your needs at the forefront, especially if you have a family to care for. Remember, when you're OK, they'll be OK too. Create opportunities to eat together, engage in activities as a family, and openly discuss what you're going through. Most importantly, seek out your tribe, your community of women on the same journey. I rate online communities for this type of support as you can talk with likeminded people going through the same thing. Issviva is a safe space where you can talk to others and share your experience with no judgment."

Consider sleep too, with James Wilson, aka The Sleep Geek, advising: "Bedtime can become quite a lonely experience when living with the menopause. Hormonal changes, temperature fluctuations and extra sensitivity to alcohol, caffeine, stress and anxiety make sleep more difficult. There are lesser-known menopause symptoms like snoring and sleep apnoea that often become more prevalent as we get older, particularly if we gain weight because muscles around our neck become weaker. This can mean the bedroom becomes a place of restless sleep, which drives some people to sleep alone, sometimes by choice, but more often through necessity.

"If you want to continue to sleep next to your partner there are things you can do to address symptoms. For temperature fluctuations, try separate duvets or sheets, so you can create a little sleep haven that works for you; a sprung mattress with natural fillings is the best for temperature regulation and understand the impact alcohol can have on your sleep. A pre-sleep ritual, with a targeted sleep time in line with your natural rhythm, will help you relax before bed."

• The Gen-M report can be found at www.gen-m.com

Top Picks

Our Menopause product showcases

Best for Perimenopause/ Menopause support

Embrace Liposomal Vitamins C, D3 & B Complex and unleash the power of hormonal balance, enhanced immunity and renewed energy. Prioritise your well-being with this transformative supplement. Sunflower liposomal vitamins are pure, natural Liposomal supplements that provide the highest bioavailability of any oral delivery system of nutrients. Bloom through menopause and radiate vitality! Available online and at the Health Stores.



www.sunflowerliposomes.com

Relieve Menopausal Anxiety

Research conducted by Anxiety UK and Kalms has revealed that 85% of the 179 women surveyed believe their anxiety was triggered by the menopause.^[1] Results also showed that 61% of women that are taking medication, or have been recommended medication, have been recommended anti-depressants for their menopausal anxiety.^[2] Kalms Lavender One-A-Day Capsules are a traditional herbal medicinal product used for the temporary relief of the symptoms of mild anxiety such as stress and nervousness, exclusively based on long-standing use as a traditional herbal remedy. Contains Lavender Oil. Always read the label.

www.kalmsrange.com



[1] Menopausal Anxiety Survey, carried out by Anxiety UK, May 2019.
[2] Menopausal Anxiety Survey, carried out by Anxiety UK, May 2018.

Sleep well with Helios

At Helios we receive numerous calls asking for help with the symptoms of menopause. There are many homeopathic remedies that can help relieve symptoms of hot flushes, anxiety and one of the most common symptoms is difficulty sleeping. Helios Sleep combines four homeopathic remedies Avena sativa, Coffea, Passiflora and Valarian. These four remedies have a long history of traditional use for all manner of sleep disturbances from getting off to sleep to frequent waking in the night. Being natural Helios Sleep has no known side effects and comes in our easy to use single dose dispenser.



www.helios.co.uk

Terranova Smooth Mag

Smooth Mag is an innovative and intensely synergistic blend of high absorption magnesium which is enhanced with pyridoxal 5-phosphate (the active form of vitamin B6, which facilitates magnesium function), inositol, FOS, soluble stabilized rice bran, green oat seed (Avena sativa) and Montmorency cherry. This unique formulation is in an easy-to-mix, unflavoured (but mild tasting) powder form, which can be stirred into water, juice, plant-based milk alternative or milk. As with all Terranova products, Smooth Mag is 100% additive free and 100% vegan



www.terranovahealth.com

Pure. Premium. Organic Evening Primrose Oil.

Organic Evening Primrose Oil is rich in the omega 6 essential fatty acid, gamma linolenic acid (GLA). This premium unrefined oil is taken from the first cold press to retain its full nutritional value and bioactives. Renowned for its ability to provide exceptional nutritional support for women, especially after the age of 45, evening primrose (Oenothera Biennis) oil is perfect for supporting health and beauty regimes inside and out. The UK's only organic evening primrose oil certified by the Soil Association and grown without the use of synthetic pesticides or other chemical sprays. Contains 100% active ingredients, no artificial fillers and no nasties.



www.viridian-nutrition.com



Menopause You've Got This!

Menopause Complex

Nutritionist formulated with natural extracts including sage which helps with comfort during the menopause.

VIRIDIAN

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BETTERYOU PRODUCT SHOWCASES

Magnesium Sleep Body Lotion

Menopausal women often experience disrupted and low-quality sleep as a result of the significant hormonal, physical, and psychological changes occurring in their bodies. Factors such as temperature regulation, insomnia, and restless legs contribute to the challenges of achieving a restful night's sleep. BetterYou's Magnesium Sleep Body Lotion delivers 100% pure magnesium chloride and essential oils of lavender and chamomile, directly to the skin to immediate absorption. It provides a natural solution to help relax tired, aching muscles and promotes a deeper, more rejuvenating sleep.



Magnesium Relax Flakes



A relaxing blend of 100% pure magnesium chloride, calming essential oils to ease tension and clear the mind. Magnesium relax flakes are naturally scented with rose geranium oil, helping to calm feelings of stress and anxiety, as well as bergamot oil, known for its properties to improve physical and mental fatigue due to its effect on the stress hormone serotonin. Added to a warm bath two to three times per week, the bath flakes help to elevate magnesium and aid relaxation. Certified vegan and palm oil free, fully recyclable packaging.

BetterYou D3000 + K2 Oral Spray

Providing an optimal dose of vitamin D (3,000iu) and K2 (75µg), the convenient daily oral spray gets to work immediately, delivering the highly bioavailable formulation directly to the bloodstream via the inner cheek. Essential for supporting strong immune system, maintain bone health, and effective blood clotting, these two key nutrients work synergistically in the body to ensure calcium is transported and absorbed into the bones. The expert formulation is certified vegetarian-friendly and is free from any traces of palm oil. The great-tasting, pill-free supplement comes in eco-friendly, 100% recyclable packaging.



B-complete Oral Spray

BetterYou's B-complete oral spray provides an expert blend of all 8 B-vitamins, essential for energy production and helping to reduce menopausal fatigue. These important nutrients also support normal psychological function with vitamin B6 promoting optimal levels of serotonin, the 'good-mood' neurotransmitter. Providing a convenient and effective alternative to tablets and capsules, the great-tasting natural peach, plum and raspberry flavoured oral spray is certified vegan, palm oil derivative free, and is contained in 100% recyclable, planet-friendly packaging.



GenM

Being a Gen-M member, we're part of a collective of brandson a mission to help make the menopause a more positive experience for everyone. While the majority of our products are suitable to help manage your menopause symptoms, products with the M-Tick are considered vital to support your health during this stage of your life. Look out for the M-Tick icon on pack.



For more information visit www.betteryou.com

Top Picks

Our Menopause product showcases

Menopause Multinutrient

Menopause Multinutrient is an advanced multivitamin for women's health during and after menopause, containing vitamin B6 to support female hormones, with magnesium, zinc, green tea and lycopene. Supports female hormone balance, energy, mental health and wellbeing, skin, hair, nail, bone and, heart health.

Includes all key nutrient, in particular optimum levels of magnesium, zinc, calcium, vitamins D & K2, lycopene, and green tea. Optimally absorbed, high potency nutrients using the best and easiest nutrient forms for the body to absorb and use, such as methylfolate and methyl B12. Suitable for vegetarians and vegans. 30 days' supply at 3 capsules per day.

www.biocare.co.uk



Feel your best with Organic Maca from Rio Health

Maca (*Lepidium meyenii*) is a root vegetable that is grown in the Peruvian Andes. Here, the soil is extremely rich in minerals which accounts for the high levels of trace minerals in the root. Regarded

as an adaptogen and superfood, Maca is also known as 'Peruvian Ginseng' for its similarity to Asiatic ginseng in supporting physical and mental

performance. It has been used for centuries in the Andes to balance hormones, enhance fertility, and to increase energy and stamina. Rio

Amazon Organic Maca is available as capsules or powder.

riohealth.co.uk



Menopause Complex with natural plant extracts

Menopause Complex by Viridian is an innovative combination of potent plant extracts. In a base of sage which helps with physical and mental comfort during the menopause. Featuring hops, which have been shown to contain potent phytoestrogens, especially 8-prenylnaringenin (8-PN). These plant-based compounds can help with the tell-tale signs associated with the menopause, such as hot flushes, sweating, restlessness, and irritability. The hops extract used in Menopause Complex is a standardised source which has been well-studied. Lemon balm contributes to relaxation and supporting sleep. The addition of saffron in this formula contributes to emotional balance and improved libido.

www.viridian-nutrition.com



Deflame for a Smoother Menopause

Menopause is an inflammatory transitional phase in a woman's life characterised by the onset of inflammation-related symptoms as estrogen levels drop and the body's ability to regulate inflammation may be compromised, leading to common menopausal symptoms such as hot flushes, joint pain and mood swings. This is where a revolutionary, natural product like Deflame can be very useful. It contains four of Mother Nature's most powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant ingredients, that can help manage excess inflammation and improve associated symptoms during menopause. Formulated using Liposomal technology for enhanced absorption and effective results. Ingredients: Curcumin, Ginger, Vegan Omega 3 and Indian Frankincense. 100% Vegan.

www.rhythmnutrition.com / Instagram: [rhythm_nutrition](https://www.instagram.com/rhythm_nutrition)



Magnesium L-Threonate for Mood and Sleep

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Magnesium L-Threonate uses the only high-absorption form of magnesium which has been shown to effectively raise concentrations in brain cells. There is a wealth of research indicating that sufficient cerebral magnesium levels play a critical role in maintaining a healthy and balanced mood, achieving restful sleep, and improving energy levels. Magnesium is also essential for over 300 other vital processes - including maintaining bone density. It's also 100% vegan, non-GMO, gluten free, and UK made.

www.timehealth.co.uk



Working it out

Fitness trainer, Joey Bull, is here to explain the benefits of exercise during the menopause and inspire you to find the activity that works for you.

If you are in the midst of menopausal symptoms, then you might not be feeling very motivated to get into your gym wear and exercise, especially if you are experiencing issues with hot flashes, low mood and lack of energy.

But the truth is exercise at this stage of your life can offer so many benefits, not just when it comes to your physical health but supporting you mentally and emotionally too. And remember, it need not be intense for you to feel the benefits.

To help you discover what exercise works best for you, and why it may help, we caught up with Joey Bull, a fitness ambassador for menopause community, www.issviva.co.uk, to get you started.

GET IN A GROUP

Joey explains how group exercise could help motivate you.

"Whilst menopause is often a transformative phase for many women, it can also bring feelings of loneliness and isolation. As hormonal changes and various symptoms take centre stage, communication becomes crucial in navigating this journey. Showing women they are not alone in their struggles makes all of this more manageable and finding environments with others going through similar challenges is a game changer," she explained.

"When I run my group classes, it is obvious how much the camaraderie alleviates any

feelings of isolation, from laughter to shared stories of 'middle age moments'. Many can't even remember the exercise I've set for them, but it's a safe space and instead of being stressful, there is mutual understanding and light heartedness. Being with others fosters bonds of fun and a sense of 'We will all get through this one day!'. Advice from the older ladies who have navigated the journey can prove invaluable. Witnessing their vitality and zest for life reminds us that menopause is not a permanent setting.

"While as a coach, the fitness session's focus is on enhancing body brain communication and improving senses during these workouts, the really important bit which makes it gel and

brings huge benefit is happening all on its own. As tribes, we seek and gain a lot from company and community. Think of the hunter gatherer, the chase, the catch, the bringing it home and telling the story, being heard and patted on the back, then sharing it out and finally curling up close to loved ones. No further processing is required, all our physical and emotional needs are met in the thrill, the surge of energy, the satisfaction, the offloading, the bringing together. Our nervous systems are wired for this. People speak of flight, fright and freeze or even dissociation and shut down, but coming together and co-regulating is the one we should be focussed on. Group exercise ticks lots of these boxes."



Getting started

Taking those first steps to exercise can be hard, especially if you are going through the menopause and can feel more vulnerable. So, what does Joey advise?

She explained: "For those not yet fitness enthusiasts, starting exercise may feel intimidating. But even simple activities like brisk walking or gentle stretches at home can help boost mood, enhance bone density, and reduce menopausal symptoms. Gradually incorporating more challenging exercises like swimming or dancing can also make fitness enjoyable and less daunting."

Reap the benefits

There really are so many gains from being active, and you don't have to work out for hours to benefit. Small, achievable lifestyle changes are the most likely to keep you consistent.

Joey advised: "Exercise is vital for stress release and better restoration at nighttime, it is an essential deep sleep enhancer. Another must is to stimulate muscle fibres and activate micro vessels. This isn't just for a strong vascular system and bone density but for a responsive, vibrant body and brain, not least a boost for libido."

"When the latter slips, we lose the bonding hormone, oxytocin, the very thing that makes us feel engaged in life. Seek to produce your own endorphins. When communication falters, loneliness can intensify. So, get moving, cultivate friendships based on this massive common denominator, nobody is judging, there is only understanding and unity!"

TOP TIPS

There are different ways you can motivate yourself to get active, and stick to it, as Joey explains:

- **Tip 1: Diet focus** – keep caffeine, sugar and carbs to a minimum and only after eating a balanced meal of fibre and protein. Aerobic exercises like brisk walking, jogging, or dancing can improve circulation and help the body flush out toxins.

- **Tip 2: Hot flushes** – these make the body feel clammy and hot but cold flushes are also common with menopause. Once again, stressors and blood sugar spikes contribute to sudden fluctuations in body temperature. A few moments of calming practices like yoga or tai chi can help regulate cold sweats.

- **Tip 3: Sleep** – exercise is vital for stress release and better restoration at night time, it is an essential deep sleep enhancer.

- **Tip 4: Pins and needles and 'crawling skin'**: These sensations might be related to nerve changes during menopause. Tension creates compression so global moves like swimming can reduce the nerve compression and can alleviate these sensations. Cranial and classical osteopathy will help considerably.



Joey Bull is a fitness ambassador for menopause community, www.issviva.co.uk

Guide to holistic *MENOPAUSE*

Nutritional Therapist, Alice Bradshaw, guides us through the physical and mental health effects of the menopause, and advises how you can holistically help yourself.

Brain fog, mood swings, irregular and heavy periods, hair loss, anxiety, night sweats, joint pain, bloating, weight gain, vaginal dryness, loss of libido – sound familiar? These are just some of the not-so-delightful symptoms experienced by many women as they approach and enter the menopause.

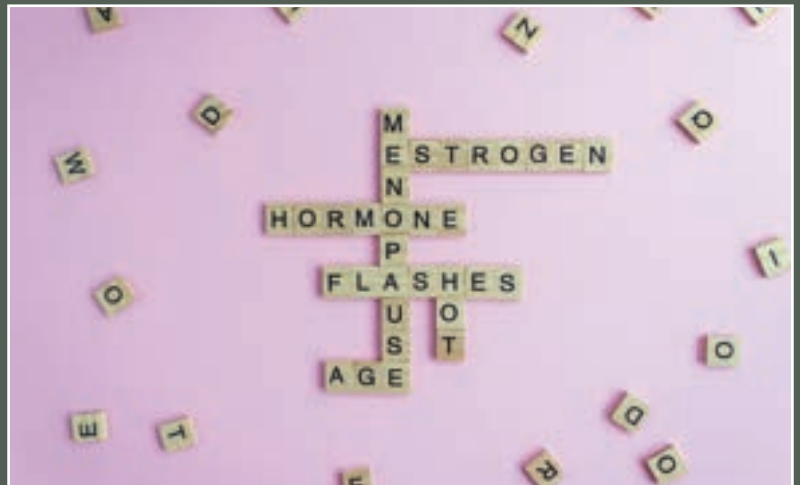
Thankfully, these symptoms (caused by the fluctuation in hormone levels) are now openly discussed, meaning that women no longer need to feel as if they are losing their minds as they navigate this stage of life.

Menopause is defined as the permanent cessation of menstruation and typically occurs around the age of 51 but can happen as early as age 40 or as late as age 55 and beyond. Twelve months without a menstrual cycle means that a woman has entered the menopause. The period beyond this is known as post-menopause, meaning that the menopause technically lasts for one day (the one-year anniversary since the last menstrual cycle). What concerns most women are the symptoms leading up to that one day (and beyond), which may last for many years and is termed the perimenopause.

Modern women lead dynamic lifestyles. Around the age of 40, many are juggling careers, managing growing families, caring for ageing relatives and running households.

Perimenopausal symptoms may creep up gradually and may not even be recognised for what they are. Sleep may become disturbed, exacerbating many of the most bothersome symptoms such as low mood, feelings of stress, memory loss and general brain fog. Weight gain, especially abdominal fat, is often a concern and many women find that their normal fat-loss strategies don't produce the desired results. Ultimately, a woman may feel confused and embarrassed by the manner in which these symptoms erase her usual competence and confidence.

So, what's going on?



Menopause occurs when there are no eggs remaining in the ovaries.

Females are born with about one million eggs (ova), but this number declines over a lifetime, diminishing to just a few around the age of 50. Around this time, the absence of active follicles (where the eggs are found) results in a decline in the hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. This drop in oestrogen results in a cascade of other hormonal shifts, which contribute to the myriad of symptoms that occur.

Oestrogen has a protective effect on the bone, meaning that menopausal women need to be proactive about maintaining bone density and strength with diet and lifestyle changes. Reduced oestrogen levels are also associated with insulin resistance and an increased risk of central adiposity (fat around the waist), cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Many menopause associated symptoms, particularly hot flushes, appear to be related to altered function of the hypothalamus, which manages communication between the nervous system and the endocrine (hormonal) system. Many body functions are controlled by the hypothalamus, including body temperature, sleep patterns, metabolic rate, libido, mood and reactions to stress. It's known that endorphins, often referred to as the body's feel-good chemicals, are crucial to hypothalamic function and may help to alleviate hot flushes. Exercise and acupuncture are two of the most effective methods of increasing endorphins.



Nutritional and botanical supplements

There seems to be no end of nutritional supplements available which claim to support the menopausal transition. Many are indeed based on solid scientific research, so it's worth doing some homework to see if there's anything that may help both generally, as well as for specific symptoms.

A comprehensive multivitamin and mineral formula will provide a good foundation for a menopause-supportive supplement programme. This will provide B vitamins, vitamin C, E and many valuable antioxidant nutrients. Women who have compromised bone density can also take a mineral complex which provides bone-supportive nutrients such as magnesium, calcium and zinc along with vitamins D3 and K2. An iron supplement may be prescribed for women who have extreme heavy periods during the perimenopause to protect against anaemia.

There are also numerous botanicals that have been extensively researched for their ability to lessen menopausal symptoms by bringing hormones gently back into balance. These include dong quai, fenugreek, kudzu root and sage. Essential fatty acids either from fish oil supplements or a non-animal-based alternative (usually from flaxseeds, for example) can also be very supportive.

Sea buckthorn oil has historically been revered for its ability to relieve conditions associated with dry skin and mucus membranes and may be particularly supportive for menopausal women. Some women may choose to take this as a supplement while others may find benefits from applying the oil directly to the skin.

Reishi and maitake are two of many mushrooms known to support health in numerous ways. Their actions are referred to as adaptogenic due to their reported ability to support the way the body handles stress. As such, many women are adding these to their health regime.

Although perimenopause and the period beyond may seem intimidating with its list of uncomfortable and often debilitating symptoms, women can feel empowered to know that there are many proactive measures that they can take to manage this transition. Being informed and educated, along with an optimistic mental attitude, will go a long way to ensuring this new season of womanhood is a positive experience. ►

NATURAL SOLUTIONS

For the last few decades, hormone replacement therapy (HRT), along with anti-depressant medication, seemed to be the inevitable prescription for managing the menopausal transition. Today, more women want to be more proactive and take a natural route to manage their symptoms. With the increased openness about menopause in society, women now have access to more information and lifestyle options.

A healthy menopause plan should consider nutrition and lifestyle, as well as physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. This is a stage in life that needs to be supported with high quality nutritional measures. Nutritional researchers have seen that a higher intake of fruits and vegetables are associated with less intense menopausal symptoms. Phytoestrogens found in a wide range of plant foods are thought to play an important role in supporting women through the perimenopause and post-menopause. These compounds are thought to mimic the

effects of oestrogen in the body but have been shown to support the balance of this hormone, resulting in a reduction of symptoms such as hot flushes, night sweats, and studies also suggest they may support healthy cholesterol levels.

Phytoestrogens include isoflavones (found in legumes, soya, lentils and chickpeas) and lignans (found in flaxseeds, whole grains and vegetables).

While certain 'superfoods' are often touted as beneficial for menopausal women, what is often overlooked is the importance of maintaining healthy insulin levels.

Insulin is a hormone with multiple roles within the body and is best known for regulating blood sugar levels and is therefore influential in fat storage and weight gain. High blood sugar levels are also implicated in conditions that may commonly affect menopausal women, such as cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline and diabetes. Some studies suggest that vasomotor menopausal symptoms (such as hot flashes

and night sweats) are made worse by insulin resistance, meaning that maintaining good metabolic health is important at this life stage. Insulin levels can be kept in check by consuming a diet that focuses on fresh food, protein and fats, while minimising refined carbohydrates, sugar and alcohol.

Keeping active is vital during this life stage. Exercise helps to regulate hormones in several ways and raises endorphins, which will support mood and may even reduce hot flushes, as mentioned earlier. Weight bearing exercise is especially crucial for the maintenance of lean body mass and to prevent the loss of bone density and strength.

Finding time to switch off and manage stress will also make a significant difference to a woman's experience of menopause. Self-care and a positive mental attitude are also essential for mature women – especially because for most of her life, she may have been raising a family and nurturing others while neglecting her own wellbeing.



Alice Bradshaw is a qualified Nutritional Therapist with a passion for health writing.

She has worked in the natural health industry for 25 years and is Head of Education and Nutrition Information at Terranova Nutrition.



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Terranova Dong Quai & Soya Sprout Complex is a broad-spectrum botanical-based supplement, providing herbs traditionally used to support female reproductive health. Dong quai has been used by Chinese herbalists for thousands of years to support healthy hormonal balance and manage discomfort associated with painful or heavy menstruation, as well as supporting symptoms associated with the menopausal transition. Soya bean sprouts are a rich source of isoflavones. These phytoestrogens are linked to many of the positive health outcomes associated with the consumption of soya and other isoflavone-rich foods. Additional herbs, including fenugreek, kudzu root and rhodiola root, further support healthy hormonal balance. *Inside Menopause* is offering readers the chance of winning one of 10. Visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk/inside to enter.



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Managing the menopause *transition*

Nutritionist, Rose Holmes, explains how you can manage your menopausal symptoms with the help of South American botanicals.

Menopause is also known as the climacteric, a word indicating a critical period or event, possibly having extreme and far-reaching implications. The term 'climacteric' refers more to the gradual changes of ovarian function that start before the menopause and continue thereafter for a while, whereas the term 'menopause' refers more to the specific event (i.e., the cessation of monthly menstrual bleeding).

In fact, the word 'menopause' is from the Greek 'men-' (meaning 'month') and 'pausis' (meaning 'cessation') and is recognised to have occurred after 12 consecutive months of amenorrhea (no periods). The moment of menopause is, therefore, known with certainty only in retrospect – at least one year later and there are no adequate biological markers for the event of menopause.

The word 'climacteric', on the other hand, implies a period of time as the Greek word 'klimater' means 'step', indicating the process has stages. Although the word 'menopause' is the one favoured in most cultures, the word 'climacteric' – which indicates a progressive phenomenon that takes place in an extended period of time – is, perhaps, better suited to this stage in a woman's life. Although climacteric is the better-fitting term, this article will use both words, interchangeably.





A gradual process

The transition of a fully functional ovary to a post-menopausal ovary is a physiological process that takes years and reflects the status of the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian function that occurs before and after the final menstrual period (FMP).

This relates to changes of the rhythmical pattern of uterine bleeding, and changes in the ovarian hormone level, which may precede these pattern changes. There are markers for these changes, in particular, levels of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), which start gradually rising seven years before the FMP and have a steeper upward inclination two years before, and estradiol (which markedly decreases two years pre-FMP). These trends continue after FMP for two more years before stabilising. Indeed, estradiol is the form of oestrogen made mainly by the ovaries and whilst high amounts are produced during reproductive years, almost none is produced after menopause.

The end of ovarian function is a gradual process that takes years to evolve. Various symptoms may occur, many of which deteriorate quality of life. Symptoms may include hot flushes, sweating, night sweats, sleeping problems/insomnia, fatigue, physical exhaustion, brain fog, difficulty concentrating, memory lapses, mood swings, irritability, emotional strain, headaches, anxiety/stress, depression, panic disorders, joint stiffness, osteo-muscular pain/tension, dizziness, palpitations, sore/tender breasts, and vaginal dryness/tenderness. In addition, women can experience recurrent urinary infections, urinary incontinence/bladder weakness, weight gain, digestive problems, bloating/

water retention, sagging breasts/change in breast size, tingling in extremities, feeling cold, heart palpitations, breathing difficulties, dry eyes, altered skin (texture, acne, itching), thinning hair, brittle nails, burning mouth, dry mouth, tooth decay/gum bleeding, altered sense of taste/smell, body odour, loss of bone density, dyspareunia (painful intercourse), low libido, and loss of motivation/confidence.

The climacteric is a period of change, physically, mentally and emotionally. A woman's experience of menopause/climacteric will reflect her chosen responses to these changes, as well as her existing state of health and her life circumstances.

In addition to experiencing the climacteric body changes, women aged in their 40s and 50s may also be experiencing personal life changes – children growing/moving out, becoming grandparents, suffering illness/bereavement of parents/relatives – that may contribute to stress levels. The ability to adapt to these changes will largely affect her experience during this climacteric life stage.

In addition to experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned above, women in climacteric years may have increased risk of chronic diseases; these increased disease risks may be the influence of increased age or may associate with ovarian function decline, including metabolic syndrome (atherosclerosis risk may be impacted by deficit of ovarian steroids), genitourinary atrophy (vaginal mucosa status is dependent on estrogenic levels) and osteoporosis (as increased bone turnover is influenced by ovarian function and clearly associated with menopause). ▶



Rose Holmes BSc (Hons), Dip.ION, PGCE, mBANT, CNHC is a Registered Nutritional Therapist with a special interest in chronic illness, circadian rhythm disruption and healthy ageing. She is the Education and Training Manager at Rio Health and provides training to other practitioners and health professionals on natural therapies. Rose is the author of the book, *Oral Health and Systemic Disease: A Clinical Guide for Nutritional Therapists and Functional Medicine Practitioners*.



CHOOSE BOTANICALS

As well as having a healthy, nutritive diet and a suitable lifestyle and exercise regime, during this period of immense change, women may benefit from use of adaptogenic herbs.

Adaptogens are non-addictive and can support energy, resilience to stress, and hormonal balance. Adaptogens can modulate the body's response to environmental (internal and external) changes and increase the body's resistance to physical, biological and chemical stress.

The superfood, maca, is an example of an adaptogen. Maca grows high in the Peruvian Andes, where the rich soil and harsh conditions help to create this amazing plant, also referred to as Peruvian ginseng. Sometimes referred to as natural HRT, maca may increase several hormones, including estradiol. Maca doesn't try to mimic oestrogen like phytoestrogens (such as soy) but can increase the body's production of oestrogen if levels are low. Maca also suppresses cortisol, so helps to reduce stress. Maca is nutrient-rich, including vitamins, protein (so reduces hunger) and minerals (including calcium and phosphorous for strengthening bone). Macamides and macaenes in maca are thought to boost libido/energy. Maca also may help to reduce hot flushes/night sweats, insomnia, depression and anxiety.

Muira puama is another South American adaptogenic plant useful for older individuals and in the menopause/climacteric. It is a nervous system tonic and may help counter some of the cognitive and mood aspects, including brain fog, difficulty concentrating and mood changes, as well as helping to

reduce stress and support sexual health. Muira puama is thought to stimulate sexual desire both psychologically and physically, through a direct action on brain chemicals such as dopamine and serotonin. It also appears to boost the production of sex hormones. Its common name is potency wood and it may have this effect on both men and women.

Catuaba is often suggested for use alongside muira puama. Catuaba, another South American adaptogenic plant, is neuroprotective, helps to increase energy and reduce stress/fatigue. Catuaba may boost libido, especially in cases where overwork or stress is a factor. Catuaba also has antiviral and antibacterial properties and supports recovery after illness, as well as after stress. Catuaba is a particularly useful healthy ageing botanical.

Damiana (*Turnera aphrodisiaca*, aka Mayan aphrodisiac) is another South American plant, usually consumed as a tea, to help balance hormone levels and control hot flushes. Damiana can help reduce anxiety and is, like muira puama, maca and catuaba, said to boost libido, particularly in cases where anxiety may be a factor. Damiana also has mild anti-depressant activity and helps promote relaxation.

Suma (*Pfaffia*) root is prized throughout Latin America for its restorative properties and its effects as a natural treatment for hormonal imbalances caused by the menopause/climacteric. This is thought to be due to its rich store of phytosterols, including beta-sitosterol, stigmasterol and beta-ecdysterone. These sterols are thought to have oestrogen-like properties that probably account for its benefit to those suffering from symptoms of

hormonal imbalance. Suma is commonly referred to as Brazilian ginseng and is considered a ginseng for women mainly, but supports all those who have stressful lives, supporting numerous body systems, such as cardiovascular, endocrine (for example, blood sugar regulation), and nervous systems, as well as supporting sexual health.

Suma is highly recommended for women approaching the menopause and for women looking for a natural alternative to HRT. The active constituents of suma can stimulate production of estradiol-17 β in the ovary and so it is helpful in addressing both menstrual irregularities (for example, PMS) and climacteric/menopausal disorders. Suma is rich in beta-ecdysterone, an important component for the growth, repair and maintenance of healthy skin cells, and also contains stigmasterol, a precursor to oestrogen, that enables the body to maintain its own levels of this important hormone naturally. Suma is highly recommended for use during menopause/climacteric and is also useful for women following withdrawal from the contraceptive pills (another occasion when the hormonal system can become imbalanced).

Menopausal/climacteric symptoms are numerous and varied, often impacting more than one body system simultaneously. It is clear that climacteric symptomatology impacts quality of life very early and for an extended period of time. Adaptogens, by helping the body to adapt to its environmental (internal and external) changes, can help ensure that this period in a woman's life – which is a developmental event/phase – is less stressful, less strained, less difficult, and it increases opportunity for resilience, health, and fulfilment during this important mid-life transition.

■ **References available on request.**



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Inside Menopause is offering readers the chance of winning

one of two bundles, comprising five products from Rio Health, all great for women's healthy ageing: Muira Puama (90 capsules, 5:1 extract), South American botanical also known as 'Potency Wood'; Catuaba (90 capsules, 5:1 extract), South American botanical, often suggested for use with Muira Puama; Maca (60 capsules), superfood adaptogen 'Peruvian Ginseng'; Damiana (90 teabags), 'Mayan Aphrodisiac'; and Suma (60 capsules), 'Brazilian Ginseng'. Visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk/ inside to enter.

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It's not you, it's the menopause

Nutritionist, Katie Lane, explains the importance of supporting the brain and psychological function during menopause.

A woman's experience of entering, and navigating, menopause can be wildly different.

Perimenopause involves hormone fluctuations that might feel similar to being a teenager again, with symptoms coming and going, slightly different month to month, not always knowing what's happening. Menopause is potentially easier to track or anticipate, with specific symptoms expected of an oestrogen downswing, but within both, the truth is that oestrogen is inconsistent. This inconsistency of circulating oestrogen levels means that not all oestrogen needs around the body will always be met.

This means ultimately that unmet oestrogen receptors, depending on where

they are in the body, can show up in a number of ways. Common menopausal symptoms include changes in metabolism, weight, sleep quality, and temperature control. The brain can also be affected. Many women report changes to brain function, including decreased clarity of thinking or 'brain fog', and poorer working memory. Some suggest that changes in brain function can also increase the likelihood of other mental health conditions, such as anxiety or depression. As with any changes to mental health, rest and relaxation is really important to support detox and cellular repair processes and reduce inflammation. Inflammation in the brain or nervous system, from any cause, will negatively impact mental health and could contribute to poor cognitive function.

Brain-friendly nutrition

There are ways to support brain function to negate some of this, which can include diet and supplements.

Supporting the brain through menopause with the diet might look like including foods high in good fats, such as avocados and oily fish, high antioxidant foods like green tea and berries, and adequate protein intake.

Supplements could include complexes of multiple B vitamins, which can support both mental health and energy levels. Vitamins B1, B3, B6 and B12 all contribute to normal psychological function, and B5 contributes to normal synthesis and metabolism of steroid hormones and some neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, and dopamine. Omega 3 supplements containing both EPA and DHA contribute to the maintenance of normal brain function. Krill oil supplements contain both EPA and DHA, but also choline and astaxanthin.

PLANT POWER

Plants and herbs that contain plant oestrogens include soy, red clover, and sage. A specific type of plant oestrogen called isoflavones, found in soy, has demonstrated an affinity for oestrogen receptors in multiple tissues of the body.

Taking isoflavones supports dropping or fluctuating oestrogen levels by directly introducing a gentle form of oestrogen to the body to effectively fill any gaps. It could potentially help mitigate symptoms associated with lower circulating oestrogen levels. Therefore, supplements that contain a combination of nutrients, like those mentioned, can support women through the multiple stages of menopause.



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Inside Menopause has teamed up with Cleanmarine to offer readers the chance of winning one 12-month supply of its MenoMin supplement. Cleanmarine MenoMin combines B vitamins, vitamin D, omega 3, folic acid, biotin and isoflavones and is a scientifically formulated omega 3 and multivitamin blend especially for people aged 40+ during peri-menopause or menopause. MenoMin's expert blend can support your hormonal activity¹, tiredness², brain³ and hair, skin and mucose membranes⁴ and bones⁵ (references available on request). Visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk/inside to enter.



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Holistic sleep support

Are you finding sleep is lacking as you progress through the menopause? You aren't alone, but there are many things you can do to holistically support healthy sleep, as nutrition expert, Emily Simpson, explains.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing where a woman's oestrogen levels decline, and the ovaries run out of functioning eggs. This usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 years, with the average age in the UK for a woman to reach the menopause being 51 years.

The perimenopause is when symptoms usually start, which can be a few months or years before your periods stop and can persist for some time afterwards. Perimenopause is the stage where oestrogen levels decrease, therefore causing periods to become irregular. It typically lasts five years but can vary in length and may last up to 10 years. The menopause itself is a single day when your periods stop.

The time after menopause when you haven't experienced a period for 12 months is post-menopause. Once you have reached this stage, you are then post-menopausal for the rest of your life.

The sleep connection

The menopausal transition lasts approximately seven years, with symptoms lasting for months or several years. It is a time of major hormonal, physical and psychological change, which can lead to several of the 34 associated symptoms occurring.

A very common symptom associated with each stage of the menopause is interrupted sleep. The most common sleep problems include hot flashes and night sweats, insomnia and mood disorders, which are thought to affect around 70 per cent of menopausal women. These all play a part in contributing to poor sleep. Hot flashes are unpleasant sensations of extreme heat which can occur at any time during the day or at night and

usually last for several minutes. Hot flashes at night can cause the body to wake up and make it difficult for you to get back to sleep. Insomnia or sleep disorders can develop at this stage of life due to a loss of reproductive hormones (oestrogen and progesterone).

A lack of sleep or interrupted sleep can have a dramatic knock-on effect as it can affect your ability to think, remember and process information. Additionally, it can cause mood disruptions, weakened immunity and increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. Therefore, it is important to try and resolve your sleep issues in order to get the recommended seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

STEPS TO BETTER SLEEP

To improve your sleep during the menopausal transition, there are several key steps you can take.

One of the most important is trying to maintain a regular sleep schedule where you go to sleep and get up at the same time each day. Additionally, developing a bedtime routine is essential to signal to your body it is time to wind down. This can include soaking in a warm bath, reading a book, listening to calming music or completing a skincare routine. Try not to use your phone or computer at least 30 minutes before bedtime as the blue light from these devices can make it difficult to fall asleep.

Diet wise, you should avoid eating large meals close to bedtime, stay away from caffeine later in the day and avoid having a lot of alcohol to help you drift off to sleep.

If these steps fail to help your sleep issues, then there are numerous supplements which may improve your sleep quality.

Magnesium is an essential mineral, which is involved in over 300 biological reactions in the body, in particular, bone health, sleep and energy metabolism. It plays a vital role in the body's sleep-wake cycles so is essential for a good night's sleep. A deficiency can also result in muscle cramps, anxiety, headaches, low mood, disrupted sleep, and mood swings, which are also key symptoms of the menopause. It is recommended that women consume 320mg of magnesium daily. Food sources include brown rice, cashews, spinach, avocados and almonds.

However, in the modern diet, we are not getting enough magnesium, so it is important to look at supplements to keep those levels topped up.

Transdermal magnesium supplements avoid any gastrointestinal issues as they

are absorbed directly into the bloodstream. They come in several formats, including bath flakes, lotions and gels, which can be built into your nighttime routine.

B vitamins play a key role in numerous bodily functions and can help with menopausal symptoms including insomnia and reducing the number and severity of hot flushes. Vitamin B6 contributes to hormonal regulation, which is vital during the menopause to help ward off menopausal depression and increase energy by boosting serotonin. The B vitamins, in particular vitamin B12, are important for normal energy-yielding metabolism.

Additionally, as vitamin B12 becomes more difficult for your body to absorb from its sources over the age of 50, it is important to supplement to maintain levels. Studies have shown that folic acid and vitamin B12 levels were significantly lower in post-menopausal women compared to pre-menopausal. Therefore, it is important to consider a supplement to help combat side effects of a deficiency including low energy.

5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) is an amino acid that the body naturally produces. It is used in the production of serotonin, a chemical neurotransmitter which controls your mood and emotions. It helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle, maintains your mood and helps you think clearly. Serotonin helps produce melatonin which regulates our sleep pattern. Studies have shown optimum levels of 5-HTP in the body are essential to aid sleep and maintain a well-balanced mood.

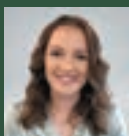
Sleep issues, like many other menopausal symptoms, are unique to each individual so, if after trying multiple remedies and your sleep has still not improved, it is important to seek help from your GP or a medical professional.

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Emily Simpson is a Nutritional Expert and Product Development Technologist at BetterYou. A scientific scholar and first-class Biological Sciences graduate, Emily studied at Durham University before joining the Product Development

department at BetterYou. Assisting with the development and delivery of innovative, world-leading pill-free supplements, from concept through to launch, Emily plays a fundamental role in the brand's new product pipeline.

Probiotics during menopause – can they help?

Nutritionist, Adrienne Benjamin, takes a closer look at the link between our digestive health and the menopause.

Our gut microbiome is the community of trillions of bacteria that live in our digestive tract and perform a wide variety of important bodily functions, linking to and impacting all of the organs and systems in our body.

Probiotics are bacteria that, when administered in adequate amounts, provide a health benefit to the host through their ability to modify the intestinal bacteria. They act as proxies (substitutes) for the microbes that live in our intestines and are found in certain foods and in supplements.

The menopause connection

Many menopause-related issues are closely linked to the microbiome and gut health, including energy production, brain health, weight and hormonal balance, and studies are also now linking specific symptoms, such as vaginal atrophy, itching and dryness. The precise mechanisms underlying each of these links are not yet clearly understood, but research is continuously uncovering new connections and modes of action.

On a basic level, the GI tract (bowel) is the primary route by which the body removes excess hormones and if the digestive tract is not functioning well, this can also impact liver function and detoxification, leading to hormone imbalances.

As we reach menopause, both oestrogen and progesterone levels fall, and this has been associated with increased gut permeability and digestive issues. In addition, low oestrogen levels are linked to reduced gut microbiome diversity and particularly a reduction of *Lactobacillus* bacteria, which are the key strains found in the female genito-urinary tract. This reduction in *Lactobacillus* has been shown to increase susceptibility to UTIs and other infections and has also been associated with vaginal atrophy and related menopausal symptoms, such as itching, burning and dryness.





HORMONE BALANCE

Another way in which bacteria in our microbiome impact our hormones is through direct interaction with our endocrine system, which is the hormone system that regulates the body's biological processes and includes all sex hormones.

The gut bacteria are involved in regulating free circulating hormone levels, with some bacteria helping to regulate and metabolise oestrogen, helping to recirculate oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone and ensuring oestrogen levels are balanced in relation to other hormones. A diverse microbiome with many bacteria species is required for this re-circulation and may be key in increasing and/or regulating hormone levels during menopause and particularly post-menopause.

Healthy detoxification and elimination pathways are also required to clear unwanted hormones from the body effectively and efficiently and our gut bacteria play a key role in both of these pathways, with different bacteria strains binding to toxins and breaking down foods to help eliminate unwanted compounds from the body.

In addition, gut bacteria are also known to be involved in manipulating metabolic physiology and thus influence weight and energy balance, key issues for some women during menopause. Our gut microbes are specifically involved in energy production through short chain fatty acid metabolism, estimated to contribute five per cent of total body energy. Furthermore, another consequence of reduced oestrogen is an increase in cortisol (the stress hormone), which may contribute to digestive disturbance and weight gain, particularly around the middle.

Finally, our microbes influence mood as they are specifically involved in neurotransmitter production (chemical messengers responsible for balancing brain function) and research has demonstrated a clear link between the microbiome and the brain through the gut-brain axis.

In summary, whilst more research is required to understand the specific mechanisms of action related to their function, supporting the gut microbiome with probiotics could potentially help to improve menopause-related symptoms and outcomes, with *Lactobacillus* species, in particular, supporting the vaginal microbiota.



Adrienne Benjamin is the Nutritionist at ProVen Probiotics and specialises in understanding and sharing the ways in which our gut and microbiome help to support our health.

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The stress effect

Nutritional Therapist, Catherine Gorman, explains the importance of addressing stress to better cope with the menopause.

Modern life is busy, and many women are already struggling with work-life balance. Throw in some big hormonal changes, and it can become the perfect stress storm. Menopause symptoms such as hot flashes, weight gain, forgetfulness, and brain fog can be stressful but fluctuating hormones can make it worse, with women often feeling irritable and less able to cope.

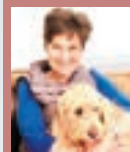
When oestrogen levels drop, it becomes harder for the body to regulate stress hormones like cortisol. This means baseline cortisol levels may become elevated, which can cause poor self-esteem, anxiety, insomnia and even depression. Oestrogen also helps boost production of the feel-good neurotransmitter, serotonin, so when it starts dwindling, this may add to low mood.

Morning cortisol levels are naturally high, enabling us to wake up and get on with the day. Levels fall to their lowest in the evening, when melatonin starts being produced, enabling sleep. But if cortisol stays elevated, it can hamper melatonin production, resulting in restless nights and insomnia.

EXTRA SUPPORT

Maca is an adaptogenic herb derived from the root of a cruciferous vegetable native to Peru and has a long history of use for managing stress and lowering cortisol. Studies suggest it may benefit women during menopause by helping alleviate some symptoms, including hot flashes and interrupted sleep.

Finding time to relax and calm stress hormones is also essential. Try activities like meditation, yoga, Pilates, and tai chi. Deep, mindful breathing helps clear out carbon dioxide and cortisol. Magnesium is a well-known natural relaxant. It is available in topical lotions and oils, which can help promote sleep and relaxation at bedtime.



Catherine Gorman is a Nutritional Therapist and Health Coach at Good Health Naturally, a leading worldwide producer of nutritional supplements.

A holistic plan

During menopause, it is more crucial than ever to find ways to eliminate extra stresses to prevent cortisol from rising even higher. Avoid known stressors such as overstimulation from social media, drinking too much caffeine or alcohol, and smoking.

Diet can make a huge difference. Cut back on inflammatory processed foods and sugary snacks, which disrupt blood sugar balance and increase stress hormones. Instead, include protein, such as beans, pulses, nuts, seeds, wild fish, and organic meat, with every meal. It will help balance blood sugars, stopping crashes in energy.

Ensure there are plenty of B vitamins, especially B3, B5 and B6, and eat wholegrain foods, nuts, seeds, avocados, bananas and sweet potatoes. Deficiencies have been linked to low energy, stress, anxiety, irritability and poor concentration.

Increase vitamin C-rich foods like citrus fruits, bell peppers and tomatoes. Research shows people with higher vitamin C tend to be more resilient and able to cope with stress. Therefore, it is helpful to eat a rainbow of coloured vegetables and fruit every day. Choose organic where possible, as pesticides are known endocrine disruptors, which can negatively affect hormones.

If we look at Japan, women have minimal and sometimes no menopause symptoms. Research suggests this is because they consume high amounts of soybeans, rich in phytoestrogens and isoflavones. These molecules have a similar chemical structure to oestrogen and can help lessen hormonal imbalance. Soy is the richest source, but it can be found in edamame beans, miso, tempeh, tofu, flax seeds and red clover.

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Good Health Naturally's Ancient Magnesium Lotion Ultra with Melatonin is formulated with rest and relaxation in mind. When applied to the skin, you get fast and effective absorption of ultra-pure Zechstein magnesium chloride and melatonin. Massage into the skin before bedtime to help support a calmer and rested state. Ancient Magnesium Lotion with Melatonin includes approximately 105mg elemental magnesium, 325mg OptiMSM and 1.5mg melatonin per four pump presses/5ml. Suitable for vegans. *Inside Menopause* is offering readers the chance of winning one of three. Visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk/inside to enter.





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The CBD connection

Heard about CBD but not sure how it might help support you through the menopause? Adele Wragg has all the answers.

Do you prefer a natural remedy to managing the menopause? Or conventional medicine such as HRT? Or both? We live in a world where having the power to choose our treatment is our right, and for those of us not able to take HRT or for those who simply prefer a natural remedy, it can send us on a wild goose chase to find the right alternative.

CBD versus HRT

HRT works by replacing hormones that reduce during the menopause, which targets menopause symptoms such as hot sweats and mood. Different types of HRT include tablets, skin patches, vaginal gels and creams.

CBD isn't a direct replacement for HRT during menopause as they are very different in the way they work. HRT replaces hormones, while CBD interacts with receptors in the body (does not contain hormones). Symptoms associated with the menopause

have been researched in relation to CBD and have shown promising results for temperature regulation, sleep, mood, depression, brain fog, pain and memory (references are available on request).

Directly comparing CBD with HRT is difficult as they are very different remedies altogether. CBD is natural and has shown promising therapeutic effects in numerous studies relating to various symptoms linked to the menopause, whilst HRT replaces hormones and also targets menopause symptoms.

KEY MENOPAUSE NUTRIENTS

Ingredients that are important during the menopause includes:

- **Vitamin B12** – beneficial for menopausal women because it helps the body produce melatonin during sleeping hours, as well as release it earlier. This makes it easier to fall and stay asleep, preventing sleep deprivation. Likewise, vitamin B12 stimulates serotonin in your brain, known as the feel-good neurotransmitter. This can stabilise your mood, minimise stress and maximise your sleep quality.
- **Vitamin B6** – like vitamin B12, vitamin B6 can boost melatonin production to regulate your sleep-wake cycle. If you're struggling with lack of sleep during menopause, low melatonin production may be an issue and increasing your B6 intake could be the answer. Vitamin B6 has many other health benefits, such as improving mood and supporting immune function. It can also help to lower levels of homocysteine in the body, which is the protein responsible for increasing your risk of dementia, Alzheimer's and general cognitive decline.
- **CBD oil** – studies suggest that CBD oil can be helpful for those who experience mood changes and sleep issues as a result of menopause. Derived

from hemp, it can reduce anxiety and consequently sleep disturbances for deeper and restorative sleep. Furthermore, menopause seems to disrupt the endocannabinoid system, and there are cannabinoid receptors throughout the female reproductive system. In other words, CBD oil could reduce other menopause symptoms like hot flushes and night sweats.

● **MCT oil** – supplementing with MCT oil during the menopause is your knight in shining armour when it comes to wellbeing. It does make a difference as a contributing factor to your overall health when every little counts. Adding MCT oil enhances CBD absorption.

Having various options available is of great importance. Every woman's journey through the menopause is unique – what works for one woman may not work for another.

The information contained within this article is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice and reflects the opinion of the author only. If you have, expect to have, or suspect you may have any medical condition, you are urged to consult with a health care provider. Do not stop taking HRT without consulting with your doctor first and notify them of any supplements or remedies you may be taking.

READER OFFER



Feminapause is a vitamin B12 and B6 fortified CBD oil menopause supplement developed by women for women. This CBD oil-based supplement helps you through the menopause naturally. Feminapause is recommended to start taking in the early perimenopause onset and helps aid all stages of the menopause. *Inside Menopause* is offering readers the chance of winning one of six. Visit www.mynaturallifestyle.co.uk/inside to enter.



Adele Wragg is the founder of Feminapause. Working in a male dominated environment, she found herself feeling anxious as symptoms of the menopause unfolded, making the everyday feel increasingly difficult. As an ex-professional dancer, she experienced severe joint pain in her late 40s. After research, she turned to CBD oil to help and found it helped ease her hot sweats and sleep. The missing link was a deficiency in B vitamins, which gave her a boost of energy and this powerful combination led to the birth of Feminapause.

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Feminapause™ benefits:

- ✓ Regulates sleep patterns
- ✓ Improves overall wellbeing
- ✓ Alleviates tiredness & fatigue
- ✓ Helps with hormone imbalances
- ✓ Relieves anxiety & brain fog
- ✓ Reduces hot flushes & night sweats

CBD

Research shows that CBD oil interacts with receptors in the body responsible for pain, mood and **hormone health**

B12

A vitamin B12 deficiency is common in the over 50s and often leads to symptoms such as **fatigue, tiredness, & memory problems**

B6

B6 helps the body make melatonin & serotonin which are responsible for mood and sleep. **B6 also balances hormones**

As featured in:

The Guardian

Women's Health

THE Sun

Health & Wellbeing

LONDON LIVE

itv Dr. Chris's Health Headline

Customer Testimonials:

💕 I'm now on my second bottle and wow what a difference this has made, I hardly have any hot sweats, I get no bad migraines and I can actually sleep. I will never stop taking these. They are fantastic products!

Claire C

💕 The product is amazing. The Extra Strength formula is very effective for me. It has helped me to maintain my daily routine and has had very positive health affects. It has stopped my hot flushes and dizziness.

Shaheen K

💕 Feminapause is truly life changing! Due to a large fibroid, I am unable to take HRT which left me with no support during menopause. Within the first month, I had more energy, zero hot flushes & quality sleep.

Kath G

Experience why people love our menopause supplements.
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Eating for **hormonal** *balance*

Nutritionist and author, Christine Bailey, shares her favourite menopause-friendly recipes from her Menopause Plan. For further details, visit www.christinebailey.co.uk and Instagram @christinembailey.

MAKES 24 CRACKERS

TOMATO AND PEPPER FLAXSEED CRACKERS

These crackers are the perfect addition to snacks, meals, dips and spreads. Packed with omega 3 fatty acids, they also provide a good source of protein and fibre to reduce cravings and balance blood sugar levels. These can either be dehydrated or baked in the oven.

Ingredients:

- 300g whole flaxseed
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 2 sundried tomatoes in oil drained and

chopped

- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2tbsp nutritional yeast flakes
- ½ tsp sea salt to taste
- 185ml water

Method:

- Grind the flaxseed in a food processor until fine. Add the remaining ingredients and blend to form a stiff paste. Use enough water to create a thick, spreadable dough.
- Spread the batter on to a non-stick baking sheet/baking paper placed on a

baking or dehydrator tray. The batter should be about ½ cm thick.

- Shape into a rectangle. Score lines into the batter to make individual crackers.
- Put in a dehydrator set at 115°F/45°C for five to six hours then flip over. Dry for a further five hours until dry and crispy. If baking, preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 6. Bake for 20 minutes then flip over and cut through the lines again. Bake for another five-10 minutes until they are cooked through and dry.
- Allow the crackers to cool, then store in an airtight container.



SERVES 4

MATCHA MINT GREEN TEA ICE CREAM

A fabulous antioxidant packed ice cream – the addition of silken tofu provides protein and phytoestrogens. Adding protein powder or collagen is another great way to boost your daily protein intake.

Ingredients:

- 300g silken tofu drained
- 1tbsp matcha green tea powder

- 30g protein powder or collagen powder
- 60g xylitol or caster sugar
- Handful of mint leaves
- 250ml soy milk vanilla flavour or coconut milk
- Dash peppermint extract to taste
- 30g coconut oil softened

Method:

- Simply place all the ingredients in a food

processor and blitz until smooth. Taste, adding a little more peppermint extract if wished.

- Pour the mixture into the ice cream maker and churn according to the instructions. Alternatively, pour into a shallow freezer proof container and freeze until firm.

- Allow the ice cream to soften for 10 minutes before serving.



This Asian style salad is packed with protein, omega 3 fatty acids and antioxidants from the colourful vegetables. Using edamame beans provides beneficial phytoestrogens, as well as additional protein and fibre. Light and crunchy, this is the perfect energising lunch.

Ingredients:

- 1tbsp olive oil
- 200g raw prawns
- 2 carrots, cut into julienne
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and cut into julienne
- 1 cucumber, deseeded and thinly sliced
- 200g edamame beans, cooked
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and diced
- Handful of mint leaves, chopped
- Handful of coriander leaves, chopped
- 4 spring onions, finely chopped

Dressing:

- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- 1 red chilli deseeded and diced
- 1tbsp fresh ginger, chopped
- 2tbsp fish sauce
- 2tbsp sugar
- Juice from 2 limes
- Pinch of black pepper
- 1 lemon grass stalk, lower part only chopped

Method:

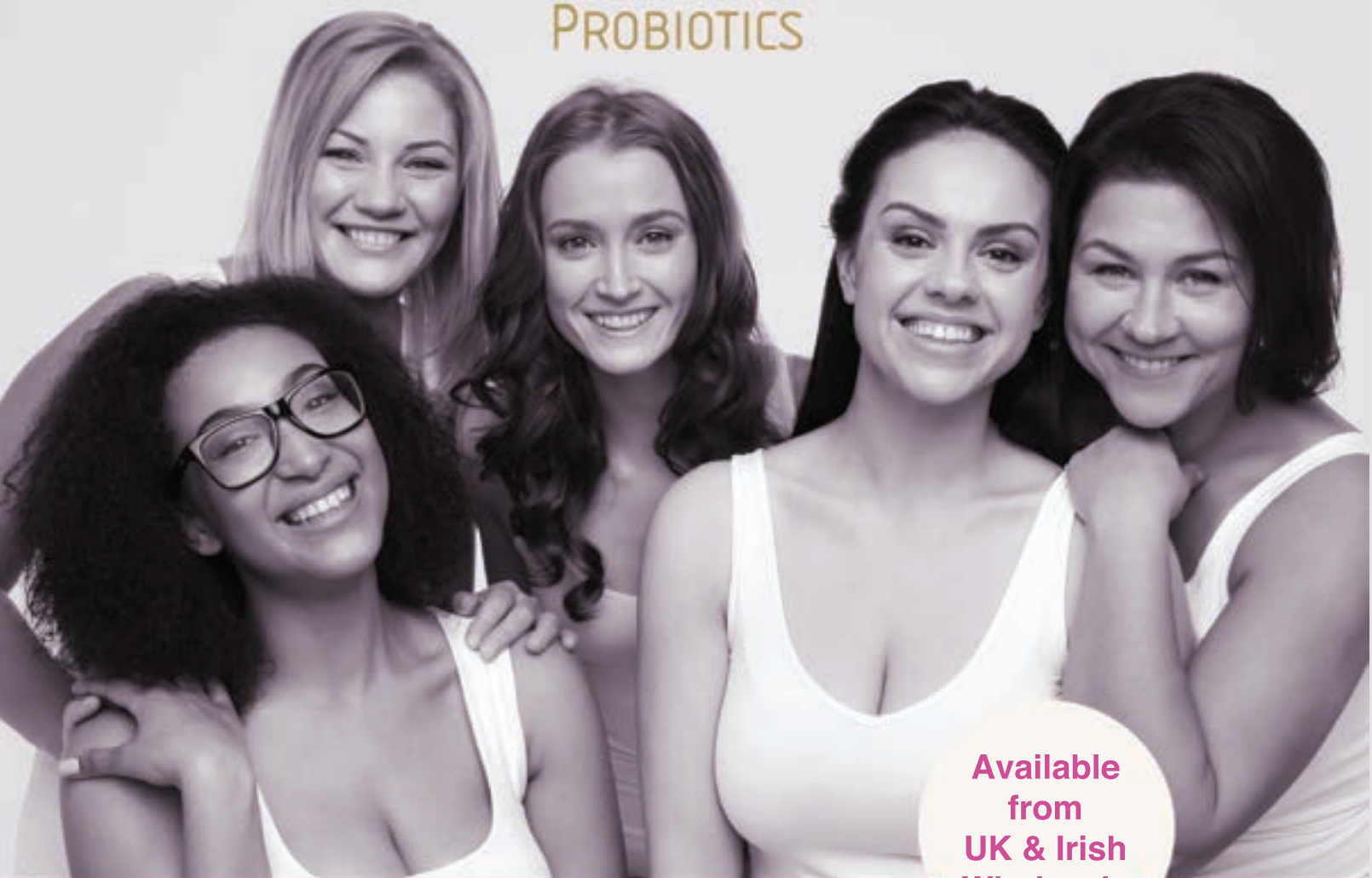
- Make the dressing by placing everything in a blender and processing until smooth.
- Heat the oil in a sauté pan and fry the prawns until pink and cooked. Remove from the pan and cool.
- Combine all the ingredients for the salad in a large bowl and toss. Just before serving, add the dressing and toss well.

VIETNAMESE PRAWN AND EDAMAME BEAN SALAD

SERVES 4



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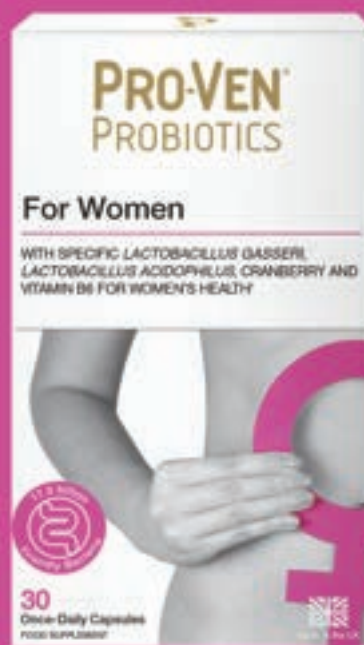


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