



Nutrition for Menopause... what should I eat?

with Caroline Hill
Registered Dietitian



Agenda for Today

- The role of nutrition in managing menopause symptoms
- Are nutritional supplements needed?
- How to feel in control of your food choices to make positive dietary changes



Introduction to me

- Freelance UK Registered dietitian
- Owner of Caroline Hill Nutrition
- Over 15 years of experience in the NHS, medical nutrition industry and private practice
- Workplace Education
- Virtual private practice for 121 clients
- Nutrition consultancy services to the food and medical nutrition industry
- Health writing



Nutrition and menopause

HOW CAN FOOD SUPPORT YOU DURING YOUR MENOPAUSE JOURNEY



How can food help you during your menopause journey?

Manage peri-menopause and menopause symptoms

From hot flushes to brain fog and everything in between

Reduce the risk of associated conditions

Bone health and heart health



Using food to manage your menopause symptoms

Common menopause symptoms

Hot flushes

Brain fog

Anxiety/depression

Weight gain

Night sweats

Sleeping problems

Key nutrients/foods for managing menopause symptoms

Phytoestrogen containing foods

Caffeine/alcohol

Wholegrain carbohydrates





Activity

Menopause
symptoms:
Choose the correct
statement

Carbohydrate

foods cause

weight gain

Carbohydrate

foods can help

me to lose weight



Carbohydrates

What do carbohydrates do?

The main source of energy for the body, particularly glucose. Help to keep our blood sugar levels steady and give us energy,

Complex carbohydrates are the best

High in fibre which slows down the speed at which they are broken down so release energy slowly. Fibre also helps to keep our bowels healthy.

Examples include wholegrain bread and cereals, grains and beans and pulses



Carbohydrates

Limit refined carbohydrates

These foods cause spikes in blood sugar levels. Examples include cakes, biscuits, crisps etc.

Spikes in our blood sugar levels can upset our hormones.

Form part of a healthy, balanced diet to manage weight

When eaten alongside a lean protein source and fruits or vegetables, can help to manage weight.

Limited evidence for low carbohydrate diet – not sustainable, impact energy levels



Caffeine can help
to reduce hot
flushes

Caffeine helps
you to sleep

Caffeine

How does caffeine affect menopause symptoms?

Caffeine has been linked to worsened hot flashes and night sweats. Caffeine can also heighten feelings of anxiety.

What is the association?

Caffeine is a stimulant that narrows your blood vessels and raises blood pressure, which may be involved in triggering hot flashes.



Caffeine

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Caffeine

Caffeine sources

Coffee*

Tea

Energy and soft drinks

Chocolate

Should I reduce my caffeine intake?

Very individual

Assess your overall caffeine intake

Have you noticed a relationship between your caffeine intake and symptoms (frequency, time of the day)



Tips for reducing caffeine

Decaffeinated alternatives

Decaffeinated tea and coffee

Fruit teas (watch out for herbal teas)

Swap for water, no added fruit squash, fruit juice (limit to 1 glass per day)

Caffeine withdrawal

Do not cut all caffeine drinks at once, gradually reduce

Limit caffeine intake after 12/3 pm to aid in sleep



Some plant foods
contain
oestrogen

Eating some
types of plant
foods can help to
reduce your
symptoms



Phytoestrogen containing foods

What are phytoestrogens?

Also, known as plant oestrogens and are the compounds found in plants that can mimic the effects of oestrogen

Food sources of phytoestrogens

Isoflavones: soy products, such as tofu and soy milk, and legumes, like chickpeas and lentils.

Lignans: grains, like oats and quinoa, vegetables, and seeds, such as flaxseed and sunflower seeds



Phytoestrogen containing foods

How do they work?

They mimic the effects of oestrogen. Menopause symptoms are the result of low oestrogen levels.

Which symptoms do they have the most effect on?

Evidence shows that phytoestrogen has the greatest effect on reducing the number and frequency of hot flushes.



Phytoestrogen containing foods

Do they work for everyone?

Phytoestrogens may not work for everyone.

Recent studies have found that gut microbiota may play a role in the effectiveness of phytoestrogens.

How much do I need to eat?

Consuming plant oestrogens several times a day appears to be more effective compared to one larger dose.

It can take two to three months for benefits of plant oestrogens to be seen.



Examples of how to include phytoestrogens into your diet

- Chickpea and quinoa salad, sprinkled with sunflower seeds
- Avocado on wholewheat toast, with sauerkraut
- Strawberry and banana smoothie, made with soy milk and flaxseeds
- Lentil and vegetable soup, served with wholemeal bread
- Apple slices with peanut butter
- Carrot sticks with hummus dip



Alcohol

What impact does alcohol have on symptoms?

Similar effect to caffeine - worsen hot flushes, increase anxiety and affect sleep

Excess alcohol can also contribute to increasing weight

Should I stop drinking?

Stick to the recommended alcohol limits for women of 2-3 units per day and 14 units per week

If trying to manage your weight, choose low sugar mixes and try alternating with non-alcoholic drinks



A top-down view of a variety of fresh, healthy foods arranged on a dark surface. The items include a yellow bell pepper, a bunch of purple grapes, a halved avocado, a whole fish, a piece of salmon, a bowl of chickpeas, a bowl of lentils, a bowl of quinoa, a piece of cheese, a head of cauliflower, a loaf of bread, a bunch of cherry tomatoes, a yellow bell pepper, a slice of grapefruit, and a small bowl of oil. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent light green filter.

Associated health conditions

Managing associated health conditions

What other health conditions are associated with menopause?

- Osteoporosis
- Heart disease

Drops in oestrogen levels can increase the rate at which bone tissue breaks down and reduces your protection against coronary artery disease, therefore, increasing the risk of a heart attack. It helps to control your cholesterol levels .



Bone health and menopause

How can I protect my bones?

Ensure your diet contains calcium-containing foods. Aim for 3 servings per day of calcium-rich foods

Post-menopausal women have increased calcium requirements therefore you may need to consider a calcium supplement

What foods contain calcium?

- 200mls cow's milk = 240mg calcium
- 30g cheese = 222mg calcium
- 1 pot low fat yoghurt = 181mg calcium
- ½ tin pink salmon = 115mg calcium
- 100g boiled kale = 150mg
- 2 slices wholemeal bread = 106mg
- 1 pot soya yogurt = 150mg calcium

Bone health and menopause

What about Vitamin D?

Vitamin D helps with the absorption of calcium from your food.

The majority of Vitamin D is obtained from sunlight.

During the winter months (October – March), take a 10mcg Vitamin D supplement.



Heart health and menopause

How can I protect my heart?

Eating a heart-healthy diet can help to lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

What is a heart-healthy diet?

Healthy fats – unsaturated fats from olive oil, nuts, seeds, and avocado.

Oily fish (like salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, kippers or sardines) – aim for 2 portions per week. Source of omega-3 fatty acids.

Wholegrains such as wholemeal bread, rice & pasta – rich in fibre

5 portions of fruit & vegetables – rich in vitamins and minerals

Beans and pulses – rich in fibre and low in fat

Limit salt intake



Weight gain and menopause

Why do I struggle to lose weight?

The reductions in oestrogen during menopause can lead to the slowing of your metabolism.

Low oestrogen levels can cause visceral fat to be stored in the lower abdomen area, which can increase the risk of insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.

What can I do to lose weight?


Ensure you are eating a healthy, well-balanced diet (Mediterranean style diet)

Exercise regularly

Measure hip and waist circumference as well as weight

Plan meals and snacks



A top-down view of a variety of fresh foods including grapes, a yellow bell pepper, a halved avocado, a carton of eggs, cherry tomatoes, a loaf of bread, a bowl of chickpeas, a whole fish, a piece of salmon, a bowl of rice, a bowl of lentils, a bowl of quinoa, a slice of cheese, a head of lettuce, and a head of garlic. The entire image has a light green overlay.

Do I need nutritional supplements?

Are nutritional supplements needed?

Should I buy a menopause specific supplement?

A number of supplements usually contain Vitamin B6, Magnesium, Iron, Vitamin B12

Key supplements for menopause

10mcg (400IU) Vitamin D - winter months

Calcium - post-menopausal

Omega 3 - if not eating oily fish



Are nutritional supplements needed?

What about herbal supplements?

Common herbal supplements used include red clover, sage, soya isoflavones

What is the evidence for herbal supplements?

Evidence is lacking

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking as some can interfere with medication

Be careful if they contain vitamins and minerals, particularly if taking several different ones



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Making dietary change

How to feel in control of your food choices to make positive dietary changes

Set small, realistic and specific goals

Try to avoid making too many changes at once, start of small and

Plan your meals

Meal planning can help you to keep organised with food shopping and make healthy food choices



How to feel in control of your food choices to make positive dietary changes

80:20 rule

Don't be afraid of having poor nutrient-dense food choices such as cakes, chocolate, etc. Limit their frequency and choose to eat them consciously

Eat mindfully

Keep distractions such as TV, the internet etc to a minimum

Eat in a comfortable position

Enjoy your food!



How to feel in control of your food choices to make positive dietary changes

Eat regular meals and snacks

This helps to keep your blood sugar steady and prevents energy dips or cravings for high fat/sugar foods

Think about what you can add into your diet

Focus on adding nutrient-rich foods to your diet. These foods will naturally help to displace poorer food choices.



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What should I eat?

Top tips



Try phytoestrogen containing foods



Try reducing caffeine intake



Choose wholegrain carbohydrates

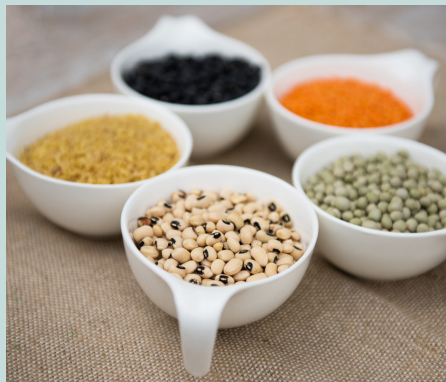
Top tips



Include Omega-3
foods



Increase intake of
calcium containing
foods



Choose high fibre
foods

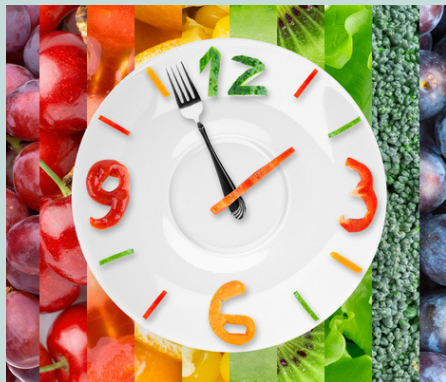
Top tips



Limit high fat, high sugar foods



Limit alcohol intake



Eat regular meals and snacks



Activity

- Set a goal of one thing you could add into diet

Further support



Contact

HOW TO REACH ME



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Caroline Hill
NUTRITION

Any
questions

