



Better eating for
beating
(peri)menopause



Who am I?

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What I will cover.....

- Menopause and perimenopause
- Why and how diet matters
- Which foods to include
- Useful herbs
- Putting it into practice



Menopause and perimenopause

- Menopause signifies the end of menstruation
- Ages 45- 54 (normally)
- Perimenopause can start 6-13 years before menopause
- Early menopause is associated with long-term health risks such as cardiovascular disease, neurologic disease and osteoporosis
- More women are experiencing early menopause!
- More women are experiencing peri-menopausal symptoms



Menopause and perimenopause

unwelcome symptoms

- loss of skin elasticity
- mood changes (anxiety and depression)
- headaches and migraines
- hot flushes/ flashes
- night sweats
- insomnia
- fatigue
- vaginal dryness
- urinary incontinence
- heart palpitations
- joint pain and formication (sensation of crawling skin)



Why and how diet matters

- Diet and lifestyle can both really count if you are bothered by hot flushes
- Chinese don't have a word for hot flushes - they don't get them!
- Being overweight or having a chronic disease increase the chances of having hot flushes (1)
- In a Turkish study 72% of participants using complimentary and alternative medicine found it to be useful in alleviating symptoms (1)
- Oestrogen deficiency may decrease pancreas insulin secretion - less glucose tolerant
- Oestrogen facilitates the body's ability to use glucose as fuel within the mitochondria
- Frequent increase in weight during menopause (2 - 2.5kg of weight gain per year) (2)
- Frequent increase in triglycerides and cholesterol levels (2)
- Histamine intolerance driving symptoms of hot flushes...?
- Oestrogen regulates the systems of biology required for brain glucose metabolism and mitochondrial function (3)
- Progesterone needs higher carbohydrates and more calories to be produced

1. Ozcan H, Çolak P, Oturgan B, Gülsever E. Complementary and alternative treatment methods for menopausal hot flashes used in Turkey. *Afr Health Sci.* 2019 Dec;19(4):3001-3008. doi: 10.4314/ahs.v19i4.21. PMID: 32127875; PMCID: PMC7040329.

2. Ulysse J, Gaspard, Jean-Michel Cottal, Frédéric A. van den Brûle. Postmenopausal changes of lipid and glucose metabolism: a review of their main aspects. *Maturitas*, Volume 21, Issue 3, 1995, Pages 171-178,

3. Wang Y, Mishra A, Brinton RD. Transitions in metabolic and immune systems from pre-menopause to post-menopause: implications for age-associated neurodegenerative diseases. *F1000Res.* 2020 Jan 30;9:F1000 Faculty Rev-68. doi: 10.12688/f1000research.21599.1. PMID: 32047612; PMCID: PMC6993821.

Why and how diet matters

- Phytoestrogens are plant compounds with a similar chemical structure to oestradiol, these compounds have an oestrogenic and anti-oestrogenic effect depending on circulating oestrogen levels (4)
- It is thought that a traditional Japanese diet rich in plant-based oestrogen hormones, such as soya isoflavones, lignans and other polyphenols helps to smooth this mid-life transition (5)
- Anti-inflammatory diet known to help prevent vasomotor symptoms (hot flushes)
- Gut health is important for elimination of oestrogen
- Reducing high histamine foods and drinks
- Eating quercetin-rich foods such as red onions, red peppers, apples and pea shoots can help remove histamine from the body
- Following a lower carbohydrate and higher fat diet may reduce weight gain

4 Bedell S, Nachtigall M, Naftolin F. (2014). The pros and cons of plant estrogens for menopause. *J Steroid Biochem Mol Biol*, 139: 225-236..

5. Vahid Dastjerdi M, Eslami B, Alsadat Sharifi M, Moini A, Bayani L, Mohammad Khani H, Alipour S. Effect of Soy Isoflavone on Hot Flushes, Endometrial Thickness, and Breast Clinical as well as Sonographic Features. *Iran J Public Health*. 2018 Mar;47(3):382-389. PMID: 29845026; PMCID: PMC5971175.

Which foods to include

2 main categories of phytoestrogens are isoflavones and lignans

- isoflavones are mainly found in soybeans, think tofu, tempeh, edamame beans, tamari, soy sauce, soya milk
- lignans can be found in wholegrains, legumes, fruit, vegetables and flaxseed
- Members of the cruciferous and turnip family can help oestrogen clearance, think broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and swede
- Anti-inflammatory foods include oily fish (salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, herring), turmeric, garlic and ginger
- Feed the gut microbiome – fibre, colour and variety
- Reducing high histamine foods may be useful as well, wine, aged cheese, avocado, tomatoes, leftover meat, coffee.
- Consider time restricted eating – but be careful in perimenopause!

1 Bedell S, Nachtigall M, Naftolin F. (2014). The pros and cons of plant estrogens for menopause. *J Steroid Biochem Mol Biol*, 139: 225-236..

2. Vahid Dastjerdi M, Eslami B, Alsadat Sharifi M, Moini A, Bayani L, Mohammad Khani H, Alipour S. Effect of Soy Isoflavone on Hot Flashes, Endometrial Thickness, and Breast Clinical as well as Sonographic Features. *Iran J Public Health*. 2018 Mar;47(3):382-389. PMID: 29845026; PMCID: PMC5971175.

Useful herbs and nutrients

- Red clover -potential to reduce hot flushes and vaginal atrophy
- Sage may increase alertness, calmness and feeling of content, shown to reduce hot flushes by 64% within 8 weeks
- Saffron protective of mood and brain function, anti-inflammatory
- Collagen and vitamin C for connective tissue (joint pains)
- Vit D and K2 for bone health
- Magnesium - contributes to a reduction of tiredness and fatigue, reduces hot flushes and promotes relaxation
- Omega 3 - reverses oxidative stress. Oxidative stress may lead to premature aging, poor cognition and decreased cardiovascular function.
- Nettle or Tulsi (Holy Basil) teas are also helpful if you have a tendency to hot flushes linked with being in a high histamine state



Putting it into practice

Breakfast

- Scrambled eggs/ tofu, sauteed kale, leftover rice, avocado
- Greek yoghurt with 1 Tbsp ground flaxseeds and 1 Tbsp chia seeds, seasonal fruit
- Smoked salmon, sourdough, watercress, and tahini dressing

Lunch

- Lentil and goats cheese salad with dressing
- Tinned mackerel, mixed leaves, broccoli, handful of seeds, peppers and dressing
- Soup (bean/ lentil), with grilled tempeh and a handful of seeds
- Sushi with a side of edamame beans

Dinner

- Salmon and soy salad
- Mixed bean chilli/ stew
- Grilled chicken, rice, and 3 portions of seasonal vegetables

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