



# Role of nutrition and healthy life style in menopausal age

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## **Abstract**

For women, menopause is a reality check that your body is changing. This is a time to take care of yourself by making healthy lifestyle choices. Eating well and being physically active will make this midlife transition easier.

Every woman has to face this "change of life" at the time of her last period. On average, women reach menopause at age 51, but it can happen earlier or later. Menopausal symptoms vary with every woman. Common symptoms include hot flashes, night sweats, weight gain around the middle, sleep disturbances and mood changes. However, some women go through menopause with no real symptoms.

Menopause is a natural event experienced by women in middle age. To help women manage this event, it is important to identify their health information needs. A study specific questionnaire must be used to identify menopausal women's health information needs and the resources and challenges related to finding information about menopause. It is essential for policymakers and decision-makers to provide reliable and accurate information to increase awareness and reduce anxiety of women experiencing menopause.

## **Introduction**

Menopause results from a cease in ovarian follicular function and marks the end of menstruation. Clinically, menopause is diagnosed after 12 months of amenorrhea. Menopause occurs either naturally or is surgically or medically induced. The number of middle-aged women is growing rapidly. In 1990, the number of women aged 50 years and over was estimated at 467 million globally. What causes menopause? Hormones. As women age, your ovaries produce less estrogen and progesterone, two of the main hormones for reproduction. As estrogen levels go down, one of the first signs of "menopausal transition" is irregular periods in which bleeding is unusually heavy or light; the time between periods also may become longer.

Low estrogen levels in menopause often result in vasomotor symptoms, atrophy of the vaginal epithelium, and bone loss. Most menopausal symptoms are relieved or disappear with estrogen therapy; thus, until recently, symptoms had been primarily managed with hormone therapy. Consequently, many have increased the use of foods or herbal products containing phytoestrogens, believing that "natural" estrogens would provide all of the benefits but none of the risks of prescription hormones. Soy foods are particularly popular because of their isoflavone content, probably based on the fact that Chinese and Japanese women, who traditionally consume a soy-rich diet, have a lower risk of breast cancer, heart disease, and experience less vasomotor symptoms than American women.

## **Menopausal symptoms**

The initial years of menopause are often accompanied by vasomotor symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats, somatic symptoms such as fatigue, body aches, and vaginal dryness, and psychological symptoms such as irritability, anxiety, depression, decreased libido, and difficulty sleeping. The frequency, severity, and duration of vasomotor symptoms vary according to the population. Night sweats can interfere with sleep and lead to chronic sleep deprivation, chronic fatigue, and mood changes. Estrogen is effective in decreasing the frequency and severity of these symptoms and are commonly used as a positive control in clinical trials.

## **Health issues Associated with Menopause**

### **1. Weight Gain with Menopause**

Due to lowering hormone levels and the natural aging process, many women find it hard to keep extra pounds off in their 40s and 50s. Often women lose muscle and gain fat, mainly in the belly area. Lifestyle factors come into play, too — menopausal women tend to be less active and eat more calories than they may need.

### **2. The Risk of Non-Communicable Diseases**

The risk of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer increases following menopause. Studies show that non-communicable diseases affect more

women than men and are the main cause of death in women globally. Improving women's knowledge by providing equitable and easy access to reliable information could help reduce the rate of non-communicable diseases and improve their health.

### 3. Vasomotor symptoms

Vasomotor symptoms such as night sweats and hot flashes are the only symptoms specifically linked to menopause, affecting 60–80% of menopausal women. The majority of women rate these symptoms as moderate to severe. Factors that can affect the severity of these symptoms include sociodemographic characteristics, lifestyle factors, psychological status and being in a dyadic relationship. The provision of effective and reliable educational materials can strongly encourage menopausal women to engage in self-care and personally manage or treat their symptoms, improving their health and quality of life. Studies show that most women have a poor understanding of menopause.

### 4. Midlife Metabolic Crisis.

Plan for your body's natural metabolic slowdown. As with any time in life, there are no quick fixes when it comes to weight loss. There are, however, ways to avoid a midlife crisis when it comes to a slowing metabolism.

### 5. Osteoporosis.

This condition causes bones to become brittle and weak, leading to an increased risk of fractures. During the first few years after menopause, you may lose bone density at a rapid rate, increasing your risk of osteoporosis. Postmenopausal women with osteoporosis are especially susceptible to fractures of their spine, hips and wrists.

### 6. Urinary incontinence.

As the tissues of your vagina and urethra lose elasticity, you may experience frequent, sudden, strong urges to urinate, followed by an involuntary loss of urine (urge incontinence), or the loss of urine with coughing, laughing or lifting (stress incontinence). You may have urinary tract infections more often.

Strengthening pelvic floor muscles with Kegel exercises and using a topical vaginal estrogen may help relieve symptoms of incontinence. Hormone therapy may also be an effective treatment option for menopausal urinary tract and vaginal changes that can result in urinary incontinence.

### 7. Sexual function.

Vaginal dryness from decreased moisture production and loss of elasticity can cause discomfort and slight bleeding during sexual intercourse. Also, decreased sensation may reduce your desire for sexual activity

(libido). Water-based vaginal moisturizers and lubricants may help. If a vaginal lubricant isn't enough, many women benefit from the use of local vaginal estrogen treatment, available as a vaginal cream, tablet or ring.

## **Causes of Menopause**

### **1. Naturally declining reproductive hormones.**

As you approach your late 30s, your ovaries start making less estrogen and progesterone — the hormones that regulate menstruation — and your fertility declines. In your 40s, your menstrual periods may become longer or shorter, heavier or lighter, and more or less frequent, until eventually — on average, by age 51 — your ovaries stop releasing eggs, and you have no more periods.

### **2. Surgery that removes the ovaries (oophorectomy).**

Your ovaries produce hormones, including estrogen and progesterone, that regulate the menstrual cycle. Surgery to remove your ovaries causes immediate menopause. Your periods stop, and you're likely to have hot flashes and experience other menopausal signs and symptoms. Signs and symptoms can be severe, as hormonal changes occur abruptly rather than gradually over several years.

### **3. Chemotherapy and radiation therapy.**

These cancer therapies can induce menopause, causing symptoms such as hot flashes during or shortly after the course of treatment. The halt to menstruation (and fertility) is not always permanent following chemotherapy, so birth control measures may still be desired. Radiation therapy only affects ovarian function if radiation is directed at the ovaries. Radiation therapy to other parts of the body, such as breast tissue or the head and neck, won't affect menopause.

### **4. Primary ovarian insufficiency.**

About 1% of women experience menopause before age 40 (premature menopause). Premature menopause may result from the failure of your ovaries to produce normal levels of reproductive hormones (primary ovarian insufficiency), which can stem from genetic factors or autoimmune disease. But often no cause of premature menopause can be found.

For these women, hormone therapy is typically recommended at least until the natural age of menopause in order to protect the brain, heart and bones.

## Nutritional requirement during menopause.

During menopause, eat a variety of foods to get all the nutrients you need. Since women's diets are often low in iron and calcium, follow these guidelines:

**Get enough calcium.** Eat and drink two to four servings of dairy products and calcium-rich foods a day. Calcium is found in dairy products, fish with bones (such as sardines and canned salmon), broccoli, and legumes. Aim to get 1,200 milligrams per day.

**Pump up your iron.** Eat at least three servings of iron-rich foods a day. Iron is found in lean red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, leafy green vegetables, nuts, and enriched grain products. The recommended dietary allowance for iron in older women is 8 milligrams a day.

**Get enough fiber.** Help yourself to foods high in fiber, such as whole-grain breads, cereals, pasta, rice, fresh fruits, and vegetables. Most adult women should get about 21 grams of fiber a day.

**Eat fruits and vegetables.** Have at least 1 1/2 cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables each day.

**Cut back on high-fat foods.** Fat should provide 25% to 35% or less of your total daily calories. Also, limit saturated fat to less than 7% of your total daily calories. Saturated fat raises cholesterol and boosts your risk for heart disease. It's found in fatty meats, whole milk, ice cream, and cheese. Limit cholesterol to 300 milligrams or less per day. And watch out for trans fats, found in vegetable oils, many baked goods, and some margarine. Trans fat also raises cholesterol and increases your risk for heart disease.

**Use sugar and salt in moderation.** Too much sodium in the diet is linked to high blood pressure. Also, go easy on smoked, salt-cured, and charbroiled foods -- these foods have high levels of nitrates, which have been linked to cancer.

**Limit alcohol** to one or fewer drinks a day.

### **Foods to Help Menopause Symptoms**

Plant-based foods that have isoflavones (plant estrogens) work in the body like a weak form of estrogen. For this reason, soy may help relieve menopause symptoms, although research results are unclear. Some may help lower cholesterol levels and have been suggested to relieve hot flashes and night sweats. Isoflavones can be found in foods such as tofu and soy milk.

### **Avoid Foods During Menopause**

If you're having hot flashes during menopause, you may find it helps to avoid certain "trigger" foods and drinks, like spicy foods, caffeine, and alcohol.

## Healthy Life Style

This Definitely helps in overcoming the Menopausal stage. We should Read labels & use the packagelabel information to help yourself make the best choices for a healthy lifestyle. Drink plenty of water. As a general rule, drink eight glasses of water every day. That fulfils the daily requirement formost healthy adults. Maintain a healthy weight. If you're overweight, cut down on portion sizes and eat fewer foods that are high in fat. Don't skip meals, though. A registered dietician or your doctor canhelp you figure out your ideal body weight.

## Conclusion

Menopause is a natural stage in the life of middle-aged women and can have a significant impacton quality of life .Identifying the information needs of menopausal women can help us in the design of practical training programs, raise levels of awareness and improve quality of life. The women require various types of information, particularly information about cancers, the clinical signs of menopause and non-hormonal therapies for menopausal symptoms. Therefore, it is important that health policymakers and decision-makers provide reliable and accurate information about these aspects to improve women's understanding of menopause and help ensure peace of mind Skipping periods during perimenopause is common and expected. Often, menstrual periods will skip a month and return, or skip several months and then start monthly cycles again for a few months. Periods also tend to happen on shorter cycles, so they are closer together. Despite irregularperiods, pregnancy is possible. If you've skipped a period but aren't sure you've started the menopausal transition, consider a pregnancy test Keep up with regular visits with your doctor for preventive health care and any medical concerns.Continue getting these appointments during and after menopause.

Preventive health care as you age may include recommended health screening tests, such as colonoscopy, mammography and triglyceride screening. Your doctor might recommend other testsand exams, too, including thyroid testing if suggested by your history, and breast and pelvic exams.

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