

Natural Solutions to Menopause Highlights

Include hormone balancing phytoestrogens in your diet

- Include hormone balancing phytoestrogens (plant foods that can have an oestrogen-like activity and a hormone balancing effect on your body) in your diet. These include pulses such as lentils, chickpeas and soya products. They supply you with an oestrogen-like activity (where needed), which will help with the symptoms of the menopause such as hot flushes, night sweats and memory changes.
- Three-kinds of phytoestrogens: isoflavones (found in high concentrations in legumes such as soya, chickpeas and lentils), lignans (highest amounts found in flaxseeds, sesame and sunflower seeds, cereals and vegetables), and coumestans (found in sprouted mung and alfalfa beans).
- Most of the research on isoflavones has been done on soya but all legumes contain isoflavones. Recommended intake of about 45mg per day. One serving of tofu (55g) or 1 pint (600ml) soya milk gives about 40mg.
- Ensure intake is from products made with whole soya beans, not 'soya isolate' or 'soya protein isolate'.
- "Help cushion the effects of the hormone rollercoaster you go through in peri-menopause"

Reduce exposure to Xenoestrogens

- Xenoestrogens = foreign estrogens coming from the environment. Can cause hormone disruption.
- Buy organic foods where possible to reduce exposure to xenoestrogens which come from the pesticide and plastic industry.
- On a tighter budget, buy the smallest foods as organic. The smaller the food, the more pesticides it can absorb, so for example, choose organic grains such as rice and oats instead of larger vegetables such as sweet potatoes, which can be peeled.
- Can also buy 'natural' cleaning products for the home to reduce exposure through this method.

Choose the Best Supplements

- If using vitamin and mineral supplements to help balance hormones, avoid minerals in the form of oxides, sulphates, and carbonates. These are inorganic forms and more difficult to absorb. Choose minerals in the form of citrates.
- Vitamin C = alkaline ascorbate over ascorbic acid
- Vitamin D = D3 cholecalciferol over D2 ergocalciferol
- Vitamin B6 in the form of pyridoxal-5-phosphate
- Fish Oils amount of EPA and DHA. Aim for 770mg EPA and 510mg DHA daily.

Control the Ageing Process Through Omega 3 and Antioxidants

- Two groups of foods that are especially important for controlling the ageing process: Omega 3 fatty acids because they control inflammation and fruit and vegetables because they supply good levels of antioxidants.
- Aim 3,000 ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity) units per day. All types of berries especially good.

Sleep

- Sedative herbs: chamomile, valerian and skullcap.
- Eat tryptophan-containing foods = tryptophan occurs naturally in certain foods which can be used in an evening meal to help aid sleep.
- Fish, whole grains, beans, almonds, peanuts, eggs, bananas, dates, organic dairy.

Cookware

- PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) of most concern in non-stick coatings.
- Avoid non-stick pans and utensils.
- Cook with stainless steel or cast iron.

Cortisol/Stress

- Eat little and often to help balance any sugar spikes.
- Adrenaline and cortisol are released as blood sugar drops and can impede weight loss.

Specific Supplements for Menopause

- Overall Maintenance Program: A high quality multivitamin and mineral designed for menopause, 500mg vitamin C twice a day, omega 3 fatty acids (containing 770mg EPA and 510mg DHA per day).
- Hot Flushes/Night Sweats: Black Cohosh 150-270mg per day
- Hormone Balance: Agnus castus 300-550mg per day