

# Menopause

The menopausal transition will happen at some stage in every woman's health journey, usually between the ages of 45 and 55. The average age for a UK woman to experience the menopause is 51 years of age. Menopause signals a woman's last monthly period and the end of her natural reproductive years, and it is typically confirmed 12 months following the last menstrual period.

You will often hear this part of a woman's life referred to as a transitional journey, and this is because it rarely happens overnight; instead there are typically several stages, and symptoms can occur months or even years before menopause happens.



Unfortunately, there's widespread misconception that menopause is a disorder caused by falling hormone levels that needs to be cured. In fact, it is a natural part of every woman's health journey and a gradual transitional phase of adjustment between active and inactive ovarian function. This transitional phase involves biological and physical changes and for many women, a variety of symptoms may come and go as the body adapts.

However, just as you would prepare for any other journey, you can prepare for the menopausal transition too. Simply by supporting your body with the right ingredients and environment it needs to thrive, you can influence the way your body responds to the hormonal changes. And the sooner you can start to prepare your body, the better equipped you will be. The good news is that targeted diet and lifestyle factors, and key nutrients and botanicals can provide a strong and sturdy foundation to support a smooth and comfortable journey. The key lies not in resisting but rather embracing the menopausal transition and helping your body adapt to this new terrain. And no matter where you are on the journey, whether you're thinking 10 years ahead, or already experiencing symptoms, now is the right time to begin.

*"The best time to plant a tree is 10 years ago. The second best time is now"*

## Stages of the menopausal transition

### Pre-menopause

Menstrual periods are regular and hormone levels are predictable through the monthly cycle. Some early symptoms such as hot flashes and altered sleep patterns may start to appear.



### Peri-menopause

Ovarian function starts to decline, hormone levels (oestrogen & progesterone) start to fluctuate, periods start to become irregular and symptoms may increase. Perimenopause is associated with a wide range of possible symptoms which may include hot flashes, insomnia, changes in cognitive function, night sweats, mood changes, anxiety, lowered resilience to stress, vaginal dryness, changes in skin tone and hair quality, low libido, weight changes, joint pain, low energy and headaches. The severity of symptoms and the time frame of perimenopause can be different for every woman; for some perimenopause may last for a few months, yet for others it can continue for many years.



### Post-menopause

A woman's last menstrual period is defined as the menopause. The stage from the last period onwards is post-menopause. During post-menopause, ovarian function has declined, and the production of both oestrogen and progesterone decline. Women will continue to make some oestrogen for the rest of their lives, but progesterone production will stop completely. During the post-menopausal stage, women are at increased risk of osteoporosis and cardiovascular health problems.



Here is an overview of dietary, lifestyle and supplement factors to consider, no matter where you are on the journey. These are centred on providing the 360° support that your body needs.

## Menopausal transition - Key diet, lifestyle & supplement factors

### Dietary factors

- 🍴 Avoid refined, processed, convenience foods and sugary drinks and snacks
- 🍴 Eat 3 distinct meals daily, choose organic wholefoods cooked from scratch
- 🍴 Reduce caffeine & alcohol
- 🍴 Include good quality protein (poultry, meat, tofu, tempeh, beans, chickpeas, eggs) and fat (nuts, seeds and their oils, oily fish, avocados, olives, grass-fed butter) with each meal
- 🍴 Increase variety of plant foods; aim for 40+ different types of fruits, vegetables and culinary herbs in your diet each week
- 🍴 Have a daily portion of fermented foods such as kefir, kombucha, sauerkraut or kimchi
- 🍴 Add sea vegetables to your diet
- 🍴 Include a portion of cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli & cauliflower daily
- 🍴 Add phytoestrogen-rich foods such as miso, tempeh, tofu, flaxseeds & chickpeas into your diet

### Lifestyle factors

- ♥ Pay close attention to your sleep hygiene to ensure you are regularly getting good quality sleep
- ♥ Audit your diet, lifestyle and environment to identify ways you can eliminate toxins wherever possible
- ♥ Self-care is non-negotiable during the menopausal transition. Find ways to support your mental and emotional wellbeing and do more of it!
- ♥ Regular exercise that raises your heart rate at least 4 times per week

### Key nutrients

- ★ **Magnesium** - Supports a healthy stress response, mood balance, nervous system, restful sleep and has even been found to be a useful support for hot flashes
- ★ **Vitamin C** - Supports a healthy stress response
- ★ **Vitamins B6, B12 & Folate** - Often nicknamed 'anti-stress' nutrients for their powerful ability to balance mood and calm the nervous system. Also important for hormonal processing and to support cardiovascular health.
- ★ **Omega 3s** - Support healthy hair and skin, cognitive function, mood balance and cardiovascular health
- ★ **Algae sourced calcium & magnesium** - Support the nervous system and healthy bones
- ★ **Vitamin D** - Supports healthy bones
- ★ **Glutathione** - The body's master antioxidant which protects against toxins and oxidative stress. Glutathione works well with alpha lipoic acid, green tea, milk thistle, turmeric and selenium

### Targeted botanicals

- ✿ **Rhodiola rosea, ashwagandha & shatavari** - Renowned for their stress-protective effects
- ✿ **Sage** - Has a long history of traditional use in supporting a reduction in hot flashes, night sweats and associated climacteric complaints in menopausal women
- ✿ **Red clover** - A rich source of phytoestrogens and commonly used as a traditional remedy to reduce high cholesterol, osteoporosis and menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal atrophy and dryness