

Tips and resources for women during perimenopause and menopause

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A woman's health changes throughout her life, especially during midlife. Perimenopause happens in the years leading up to menopause. It usually starts in a woman's early 40s but can start as soon as her mid-30s. Most women go through menopause between the ages of 45 and 55.

During these times, women's hormone levels shift and can cause physical changes and emotional symptoms like hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings and changes in menstrual cycles. Other common symptoms include weight fluctuations, sleep problems and memory lapses.

The role of nutrition

Good nutrition plays an important role during perimenopause and menopause, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). When women are going through these phases of life, they need a healthy diet rich in essential nutrients to ease symptoms and help their overall well-being.

Key nutrients include:

- **Calcium and vitamin D:** Vital for bone health, as the risk of osteoporosis increases post-menopause. Women should eat a variety of dairy products, leafy greens and fortified foods, along with getting vitamin D from safe sun exposure.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** Found in fish, flaxseeds and walnuts, these healthy fats can help reduce inflammation and support heart health. This is important as the risk of cardiovascular conditions increases after menopause.
- **Fiber:** A high-fiber diet can help women manage their weight and digestive health, both of which can be challenging during menopause due to metabolic changes.
- **Phytoestrogens:** Plant compounds found in soy, beans and flaxseed that can mimic estrogen and help lessen some symptoms.
- **Protein:** Found in lean meats, fish, eggs, dairy products and quinoa, this essential nutrient supports muscle mass and metabolism.

Eating a variety of whole foods, staying hydrated and cutting back on processed foods can raise a woman's energy levels and improve mood stability.

Talking with their health care provider

Perimenopause and menopause can be difficult. Women should talk about their individual experiences and symptoms with their health care providers.

Here are some tips for women when they talk to their provider:

- **Be prepared:** Write down their personal perimenopause or menopause symptoms, how often they're having them and any lifestyle changes they've noticed. This helps their provider better

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understand their situation.

- **Ask questions:** Ask about treatment options, including lifestyle changes, hormone replacement therapy or other therapies that may help.
- **Talk about nutrition and exercise:** Openly discuss their diet and any changes they're thinking about. A health care provider can give nutritional advice, as well as discuss any physical challenges the individual has noticed and provide safe exercise options.
- **Follow-up:** Get regular checkups. Menopausal symptoms can change, so ongoing conversations with their provider can help individuals get the right care as their needs change.

By understanding perimenopause and menopause, making nutrition and exercise a priority and talking openly with their health care provider, women can navigate these phases of life with greater ease and confidence.

Resources through the HealthSelect medical plans

The HealthSelect of Texas medical plans, including Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM, includes benefits and resources to help women thrive through all the phases of their life. Visit the women's health page on the [HealthSelect website](#) to register for related webinars and to learn more about HealthSelect benefits and recommended health screenings for women.



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