

World Menopause Day

18th October 2023

Natural Ways to Reduce the Symptoms of Menopause

What is Menopause?

Menopause is the term given when a person's menstruation cycle ends, once someone has had a full year without periods. It is a natural process usually affecting those aged 45-55. Menopause marks the point in one's life when they are no longer fertile. Perimenopause can begin for some people in their 30s, but usually between the ages of 40-44 and has similar symptoms to menopause.

What are some common symptoms of Menopause?

- Hot Flashes
- Tiredness/ Sleeping Troubles
- Irregular Periods
- Mood Changes (Anxiousness, Depression and Irritability)
- Night Sweats
- Brain Fog
- Vaginal Changes
- Urinary/Bladder infections
- Bone Changes

Here are some tips to naturally reduce symptoms of Menopause:

Balanced Diet

According to the NHS, A balanced diet refers to eating a wide variety of foods in the right proportions and consuming the right amount of food and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. There are also certain nutrients that can be consumed to reduce some of the symptoms you might experience throughout menopause such as foods rich in:

- Omega-3 – Found in salmon, avocado, chia seeds, walnuts.
- Probiotics – Found in yoghurts, certain cheeses, sourdough bread, kombucha.
- Calcium – Found in milk, yogurt, cheese, salmon.
- Magnesium- Found in bananas, spinach, avocado, brown rice.
- Iron – Found in spinach, red meat, eggs, dark chocolate.



Vitamins

Similar to the importance of eating a balanced diet, consuming the right vitamins for our body's needs are essential for good health, particularly when going through menopause. The following vitamins (in the right proportions) can help reduce the symptoms of menopause. Please note it is important to check the quantities of vitamins you are consuming as issues can arise from going over the recommended daily allowance.

- **Vitamin B6** is responsible for serotonin production, which can reduce as we age. This can be responsible for fluctuation in mood, so by taking foods rich in Vitamin B6 such as milk, salmon, tuna or bananas, or a B6 supplement, this should help manage this symptom.
- **Vitamin B12** is essential for bone health, red blood cell production and neurological functionality. Our ability to absorb this vitamin reduces as we age, so by supplementing this vitamin to our diet or consuming B-12-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs or dairy, we are reducing the chances of developing health issues associated with a deficiency in B12.
- **Vitamin K** can help women experiencing menopausal symptoms by reducing the amount of disturbed sleep and the severity of night sweats experienced at this time. Vitamin K can be found in cooked kale, raw spinach, cooked broccoli and pork chops.
- **Vitamin C** has many benefits for our health, particularly when we are going through menopause. This vitamin helps with keeping cells such as muscles and bones healthy, which typically weaken at this time. Vitamin C is found in citrus fruits, tomatoes, broccoli and kale.

- **Vitamin D** is also essential for bone health. Our ability to absorb this vitamin reduces as we get older, which increases our risk of osteomalacia, bone pain and fractures. You can increase your Vitamin D intake by getting out in the sun, consuming fatty fish, egg yolks, fish liver oils or cheese.
- **Vitamin E:** Studies have shown that consuming Vitamin E through menopause can reduce stress and your risk of developing depression, as well as helping with weight management. You can find Vitamin E in almonds, hazelnuts, avocado and shellfish.

Stay Hydrated

Our sense of thirst depletes as we age, so ensure to carry a reusable water bottle around with you to ensure you are staying hydrated. Aim to drink 1.5-2 litres of water every day to help combat and reduce some of the common symptoms of menopause including fatigue and brain fog. Hydration is essential at this time to replace the moisture lost through night sweats and hot flashes.



Exercise

Incorporating exercise into your daily routine can help reduce the symptoms of menopause by boosting your mood and improving sleep. By combining cardio exercises such as a daily walk or run, strength training such as weightlifting or resistance exercises, as well as balance exercises such as yoga or tai chi, you can improve the strength of your muscles and improve your heart health as you age. According to the NHS, Adults should aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercises or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity exercises per week to reduce the risk of heart disease and other illnesses.

Limit caffeine and alcohol intake

Caffeine and alcohol should be limited when you are experiencing menopause, as they have a huge impact on the quality of sleep. The consumption of alcohol also has been proven to lead to a higher rate of depression, further impacting the symptom of low mood often experienced throughout menopause. On top of this, as we age our risk of developing diseases such as heart disease, stroke, and osteoporosis increases. The consumption of alcohol and caffeine can impact our ability to maintain a healthy weight and in turn increase our risk of developing these diseases. Try mocktails or other non-alcoholic beverages on a night out to make reducing your alcohol intake a more achievable goal and opt for decaffeinated versions of your favourite teas or coffees, to help you stay on track.

Talk to your Doctor.

If your symptoms are affecting your quality of life or are becoming unbearable for you, it is a good idea to talk to your doctor or a medical professional specialising in Menopause, to help you better manage the symptoms. Alternatively, if you are experiencing menopausal symptoms before the age of 45, you should speak to your GP.

