

MENOHEALTH AT WORK

PROGRAMME THREE

Empowering you to
take control of
menopause



SUPPORTING YOU THROUGH MENOPAUSE & BEYOND

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A photograph of two women in an office setting. The woman in the foreground is wearing glasses and an orange top, looking down at a document with a slight smile. The woman in the background is wearing a light blue top and is also looking at the document. The background is a blurred office window with greenery outside.

INTRODUCTION TO MENOHEALTH AT WORK

Welcome to the MenoHealth at Work support programme. Menopause affects everyone at some time in their life, either personally or for someone they love, live or work with. Although it's now often talked about and written about, is frequently on mainstream TV and is being discussed at parliamentary level, there are still many myths, taboos and concerns about this natural life stage.

MenoHealth aims to demystify menopause by offering practical help and information to support and empower you to take control of menopause.

The information we share is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have any health conditions or are taking any medication, please check with a medical professional before taking any supplements or vitamins or trying any new exercise programme.

For the purposes of the support programme we use the word menopause to describe the whole period of transition through from perimenopause to post-menopause.

And we refer to women throughout the programme although this includes anyone who experiences menopause symptoms including people going through gender change, surgery or drug treatment.

NUTRITION

Top tips for healthy eating for optimal health though menopause.



During menopause, you may experience more gut problems such as bloating, wind, constipation, loose stools, fluid retention, indigestion, or heartburn. Both oestrogen and progesterone have a direct effect on hormone receptors in the gut. Also, a decline in oestrogen may increase levels of cortisol (the stress hormone) which affects digestion.



Good nutrition is one of the many pieces of the healthy menopause jigsaw that can help you to help yourself. Not only can this help with heart, bone and brain health and prevent weight gain, but it can also boost your energy levels and help you to stay focused at work. So where do you start?

It's a vast topic so here are some quick and simple tips to guide you through the things you should try to include and the things you should try to avoid at this time.

As you know, with menopause there's no one size fits all and if you have any health problems or concerns then do consult a qualified nutritional therapist. Also, if you take any medication, it's best to take professional advice before taking any supplements, even if they are classed as 'natural.'

Did you know, that research showed that women who ate plenty of healthy whole plant foods were 30% less likely to report hot flushes and 25% less likely to experience disturbed sleep?

Things you can try:

Good gut health:

Gradually increase the fibre in your diet to include more veg (especially greens like broccoli and kale), wholegrains, pulses and seeds. Try to eat a variety of fruit and veg to promote healthy bacteria in the gut. If you've recently been taking antibiotics, you may want to try a probiotic supplement, although this might make symptoms worse at first. Start with a low dose and build up gradually.

Balance your blood sugar:

During menopause, we become more prone to unhealthy blood sugar spikes after eating, which, over time can lead to insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. Try to have foods that release their energy slowly such as wholegrains (brown rice, oats, wholemeal bread), and vegetables and include some protein in each meal or snack. This will keep you fuller for longer and reduce those cravings for something sweet. There are plenty of non-animal sources of protein too such as nuts, seeds, beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas which are naturally high in fibre and low in saturated fat.

Stay hydrated:

Dehydration can make you feel tired, sluggish and unable to concentrate. Ideally, try to drink about 2 litres of water a day (this helps prevent constipation and so assists your body's natural ability to detox) If you don't like cold water, herbal teas or hot water with lemon and ginger can be a good option.

Magnesium:

This really is the menopausal woman's friend because it helps to calm the nervous system and relieve anxiety; it boosts energy; it relieves insomnia and it supports our bone health as well. Magnesium is needed to convert vitamin D to the active form which enhances the absorption of calcium so it kick-starts the whole chain reaction. Good sources of magnesium include leafy green vegetables such as rocket, kale and broccoli, brown rice, nuts and seeds.



Vitamin C:

Not only is this powerful antioxidant great for the immune system, but it also has multiple other roles including heart health and can even help the body cope with chronic stress. When it comes to our bones, we need it for the

production of collagen, which acts as the cement in the bone matrix holding everything together and helping our bones to remain flexible. Surprisingly, the best source of vitamin C is raw red pepper, which contains almost 3 times as much as an orange, and leafy green vegetables like spinach, kale or rocket contain about twice as much.

Vitamin D:

We know calcium is vital for healthy bones and our risk of osteoporosis increases after menopause. But we can't actually absorb calcium without optimum levels of vitamin D. Vitamin D is only found in food in very tiny amounts, and the best source is sunlight. It's a fat-soluble vitamin, which means the body can store it for a period of time if you've been in the sun regularly over the summer. However, levels can become depleted through the winter months, and because we can't get enough from food alone a daily supplement is recommended (a standard dose is 10 micrograms, equivalent to 400 international units of vitamin D3) from October through to March.

GOPO®

JOINT HEALTH

GOPO® has been clinically proven to help reduce joint pain and stiffness while improving flexibility and mobility. It's an anti-inflammatory which is 100% natural.



Things to avoid:

Avoid taking high doses of any single nutrient:

Vitamins and minerals are designed to work in synergy, which is why eating plenty of the right foods is a sensible way of ensuring the correct balance. If you're struggling to make time to eat well, consider a multi-vitamin which ensures you're not overdosing on any one vitamin or mineral. Always check with your doctor if you're taking any medication to avoid any potential interaction with supplements.



Sugary snacks:

Weight gain is a very common problem during perimenopause and menopause. Eating too much sugary food, snacks or refined carbohydrates can cause spikes in your blood sugar. Your body then releases

insulin to try to restore the balance, but ultimately this leads to a crash in blood sugar which can make you tired, anxious or irritable and more likely to reach for another quick fix sugary snack. This increases the production of your stress hormones (cortisol and adrenaline) which is exactly what you want to avoid during menopause.

Cut back on the alcohol:

Alcohol can be a trigger for hot flushes. It can also impair the action of osteoblasts which help with bone building. Alcohol can lead to loose stools or diarrhoea as it speeds up transit time in the gut and this might impair nutrient absorption. Also, alcohol is often very calorific and can lead to weight gain, so if you're trying to maintain a healthy weight, try to reduce your alcohol intake.

Calcium depletors:

Calcium is so important for our bones, especially after menopause when we are more likely to develop osteoporosis so avoid drinking tea at

mealtimes to maximise uptake from food. This is because tannins in tea can inhibit the absorption of calcium in the gut; instead drink your cuppa an hour before or after mealtimes. Also, some fizzy drinks contain phosphoric acid as a flavour enhancer and this can lead to calcium depletion, so drink in moderation.



Salt:

If you are suffering from bloating or water retention, check your intake of salt as this can make it worse. You may not be adding salt to your meals, but watch for hidden salt in processed meats, pizzas, processed foods and even some breakfast cereals or bread. Check the labels and try to keep it under 6g per day.

Indigestion:

As your stomach acid may be out of balance due to stress, then reducing certain foods and drinks which are known for causing indigestion or acid reflux may help. These include spicy or fatty foods, tomatoes, citrus fruits, fizzy drinks or coffee. Surprisingly peppermint can sometimes cause indigestion – try ginger (in tea or fresh ginger) to settle an upset stomach.

Lower your cholesterol naturally

Did you know that oats, which contain beta-glucans, can naturally lower your cholesterol levels? A bowl of porridge with berries (frozen are quick and cost-effective) and some nuts or seeds will really set you up for the day and help your heart health too.



Be aware of other conditions:

Some people find they develop **IBS (irritable bowel syndrome)**, or it worsens during menopause due to the fluctuation of hormones affecting the gut. [The NHS has a really informative video](#) to help you identify triggers and understand more about the FODMAP (fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides and polyols) diet. You may need to get support from a nutrition professional if you are considering excluding foods from your diet. You can [find a registered professional here](#).

Ovarian cancer:

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms then don't presume it must be menopause, they may be symptoms of ovarian cancer, so please go and see your doctor:

- feeling constantly bloated.
- a swollen tummy.
- discomfort in your tummy or pelvic area.
- feeling full quickly when eating, or loss of appetite.
- needing to pee more often or more urgently than usual.



100 calorie snacks

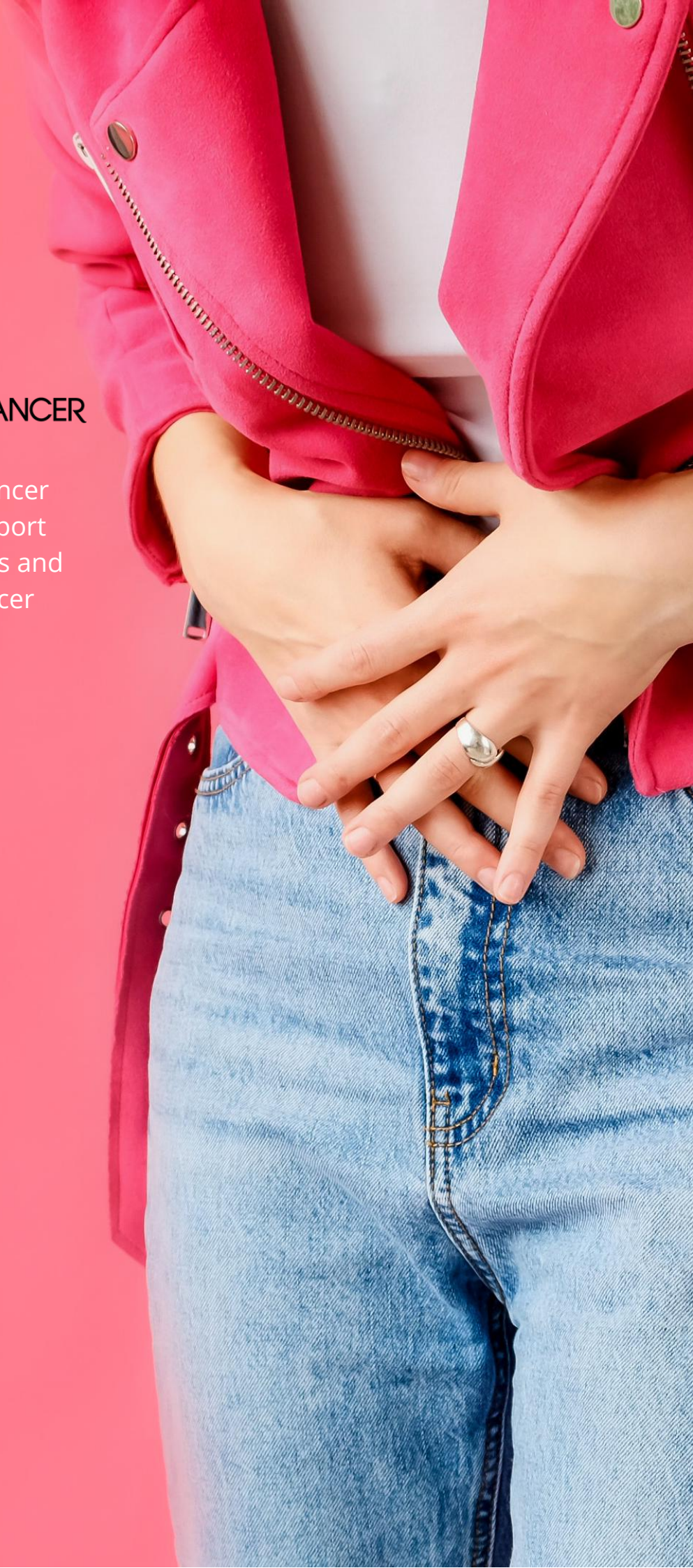
(courtesy of [British Heart Foundation](#))

- a handful (40g) of blueberries with a small pot (125g) of plain low-fat yoghurt
- one apple with 1/2 tbsp of pure peanut butter
- two heaped tablespoons (50g) of low-fat cottage cheese and six cherry tomatoes to one rice cake
- one small banana with a medium slice of wholemeal toast
- 3 tbsp of reduced-fat hummus with a whole red pepper cut into sticks
- three dried apricots with eight whole almonds
- a small glass (150ml) of semi-skimmed milk with 1 tbsp of raisins



TARGET OVARIAN CANCER

The UK's leading ovarian cancer charity. They're here to support you, improve early diagnosis and fund life-saving ovarian cancer research.





Recipes and tips

20 easy ways to get your 5 a day

Managing your menopause through food

Recipe to curb your cravings

Moroccan chickpea salad

Managing menopause stress

Boost your antioxidants

Recipe to support your liver

Hormone balancing stir fry

Boost your levels of Omega 3



EXERCISE

EXERCISES TO WORK YOUR WAIST

MenoHealth at Work Programme Three

Try this
exercise

SLEEP

Practical ways to improve quality of sleep through menopause.



Have you noticed that you are having difficulty sleeping through the night, often waking up in the early hours and drifting back off to sleep as the alarm goes off? You're not alone, 30-60% of women suffer from sleep problems when going through menopause.

Hot flushes may be the catalyst leading to a negative cycle of wakefulness, panic about not sleeping and worrying about how you'll cope the next day. The more we worry about not sleeping, the worse it becomes so we end up connecting bedtime to anxiety and frustration, so it becomes a cue for negative feelings and disrupted sleep.

HRT is proven to help with menopause-related insomnia.



Here are some tips to help you get your much-needed zzz's.

- Keep your bedroom cool, 18°C is the recommended temperature and a chill pillow can help during the summer.
- Chamomile or Valerian tea is a natural remedy you might want to try.
- Some people find that taking a magnesium tablet before bed, or having an Epsom Salts bath can help to relax you and promote better sleep.
- Lavender or Roman Chamomile essential oils have been shown to improve sleep quality but don't overdo it, just a few drops in a warm bath or in a carrier oil to rub onto the skin will be enough.
- Over-the-counter remedies which contain antihistamines (diphenhydramine) should only be used for a short time as they are addictive. The NHS website warns "You can become dependent on diphenhydramine if you take it continuously for a period of time, e.g., if you take it every day for more than 2 weeks."

- Keep a small fan next to your bed along with a spray bottle of water. Spritz your face then use the fan to cool the water and take the heat away. Try [FanU](#) which doesn't have to be held in your hand, it's £12.99 and 10% goes to the charity Breast Cancer Now.



Research has shown that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can help people to change their habits and behaviours for a better quality of sleep. With NHS recommended techniques, between 70-80% of people see improved sleep, often in under four weeks. CBT has been shown to help menopausal women improve their sleep, using techniques which will increase their body's natural drive to sleep better and reduce the worry and anxiety attached to poor sleep. [Find a registered CBT practitioner here.](#)



FAN U™

The FanU is lightweight, stylish and quiet and it comes with a USB and rechargeable battery. 10% of every sale goes to Breast Cancer Now – a charity that Julie (founder of MenoHealth) has supported for over 20 years and has raised over £1 million with her voluntary group.





TRY THESE TOP TIPS TO IMPROVE SLEEP

Thanks to Kathryn Pinkham at [The Insomnia Clinic](#)

- **Don't spend too long in bed.** The first thing we do when we can't sleep is start going to bed earlier to try and increase our opportunity for sleeping. Reduce the amount of time you spend in bed, go to bed later and get up earlier. This will encourage your body's natural sleep drive to kick in. By reducing the time you spend in bed you will crave more sleep, fall asleep faster and find your quality of sleep will improve.
- **Set a wake time** and stick to it, regardless of how badly you have slept. By getting up early you will train your body clock to associate mornings with being awake. Staying in bed, dozing, often results in grogginess and low mood, so instead get up, have a cuppa and get some fresh air and exercise rather than trying to catch up on lost sleep.
- **Stop clock-watching.** If you are waking from hot flushes then it is very tempting to look at the clock with each waking to monitor how little sleep you are getting. However, this increases the pressure to fall back to sleep and makes it less likely. Set your alarm for the morning then avoid looking at the time again.
- **Don't lie in bed awake.** If you can't get to sleep after a hot flush or can't fall asleep, get out of bed. The longer we lie in bed trying to fall back to sleep the more frustrated we get. This, in turn, means we begin to subconsciously relate bed to feeling stressed and being awake rather than asleep and it makes it more likely that this pattern will continue. Leave the bedroom and do something relaxing like read a book downstairs, then when you are tired go back to bed.
- **Don't worry about it.** The worst thing you can do is worry, as worrying about sleep is worse than not sleeping. Not sleeping just makes you tired, and you have been tired before. But worrying about sleep makes you stressed, anxious and low. Follow the above tips to give yourself the best possible chance of sleeping well, but outside of that accept that sleep is not the only thing you can do to feel better. Try to leave a bad night behind you and focus on the day ahead. Go for a walk, get some fresh air and eat healthily to improve energy levels rather than just focusing on sleep.



EXERCISE

SELF-MASSAGE AND TAPPING TECHNIQUES

MenoHealth at Work Programme Three

Try this
exercise



Women's
Health
Concern

Established in 1972, Women's Health Concern is the patient arm of the British Menopause Society since 2012. It provides a confidential, independent service to advise, inform and reassure women about their gynaecological, sexual and post reproductive health.

WOMEN'S
HEALTH

SUPPLEMENTS & ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Can they improve the symptoms of menopause?
Is natural the best way?



There are a wide range of supplements available which might help with some of your menopausal symptoms although not all have adequate research and evidence to prove that they work. But that doesn't mean they don't work! It is very much a personal choice along with some trial and error to establish what works for you.



It's vital that you check with your pharmacist or GP before taking any supplements, however 'natural' they may seem as many are contraindicated when taking other medication.



Isoflavones

These are types of phytoestrogens which are plant-derived substances which mimic oestrogen and can help with hot flushes. Soybeans and soya products are the richest sources and isoflavones can be found in foods like soya milk, chickpeas and tofu.

Red Clover

This has four oestrogenic isoflavones and often comes in tablet form under the trade name Promensil. For women who cannot take HRT, this is an alternative remedy to improve night sweats and hot flushes. Women with a history of breast cancer should speak to their doctor before taking this or any other isoflavone supplement.

Sage

This is used to reduce sweating as it contains oestrogenic substances which help to relieve hot flushes and night sweats and offers an alternative for those who have tried Red Clover without success. However, it should not be taken by women who are trying to conceive during perimenopause as it instigates and strengthens periods.

Evening Primrose Oil

This is an omega-6 essential fatty acid and is said to help with breast tenderness and mood swings.

Black Cohosh

This is said to help with night sweats and hot flushes. It has been widely researched but is not recommended for anyone with liver damage or if you've been advised against using HRT or have a family history of breast cancer. It can interact with other medications, so seek advice from GP first.

Promensil[®]

Promensil offers a range of menopause supplements containing standardised red clover isoflavones.





St John's Wort (or Hypericum)

This can help with low mood and mild to moderate depression. This may affect other medications or those taking Tamoxifen, so medical advice must be sought before taking this.

Ginkgo (or Maidenhair tree)

This is said to improve memory, concentration and mood. This should be avoided by those on blood thinning medication.

Ginseng

This may help to boost mood, wellbeing and libido. This should be avoided by those on blood thinning medication or who have diabetes.

Tribulus

This is said to help increase levels of testosterone in women and men and may help to boost energy, strength and vitality.

Marigold

This herb is traditionally used to improve circulation to the pelvic organs and can help to improve uterine tone, relieve cramps and normalise menstrual bleeding.

Red Raspberry Leaf

This can be picked in gardens or bought at health food stores and used to make herbal tea. It can relieve cramping and painful periods during perimenopause.



Dong Quai

This contains phytoestrogens and is traditionally used to treat heavy bleeding and premenstrual syndrome.

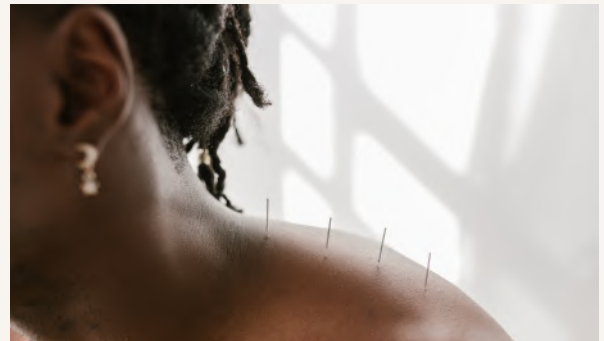
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

This has been found to be helpful for anxiety, stress, hot flushes, low mood, night sweats and fatigue. It's a non-medical approach designed to give practical ways of managing symptoms. Professor Hunter, a clinical psychologist with King's College London has pioneered a CBT approach specifically for menopausal symptoms, with a [factsheet and self-help manual](#).

Magnets

Some people find using a menopause magnet, (which is placed inside their knickers), can reduce symptoms of menopause such as hot flushes. This is said to work by reducing excessive sympathetic nervous system activity and increasing parasympathetic nervous system activity. There is no significant published research to prove or disprove the effects. Anyone with a pacemaker, insulin pump or other internal

device should seek advice before using a magnet.



Acupuncture

Symptoms of menopause can be treated with acupuncture. Treatment involves the insertion of very fine needles into specific points of the body to affect the flow of the body's 'qi', or vital energy. There have been very few studies into the effectiveness of acupuncture, but some find it helpful for treating hot flushes, anxiety and depression linked to menopause.

Anti-depressants

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIS) and Serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIS) are both used as anti-depressants for anxiety but have also been found to relieve hot flushes too which can be helpful if you're struggling but can't take HRT.



EXERCISE

EXERCISES FOR HIPS, LEGS AND BUMS

MenoHealth at Work Programme Three

Try this
exercise

MENOPAUSE BLUES OR DEPRESSION?

How to tell and when to seek professional help.



What is depression? One description is that depression isn't about feeling unhappy, it's feeling you'll never be happy again.

So how do we know if our feelings are a normal emotional reaction to stressful times, the menopause blues or whether we're suffering from the symptoms of depression? These questions are a guide to help with this or you [can access the online NHS quiz here](#).

- Are you suffering from feelings of sadness, hopelessness or emptiness?
- Do you find it hard to find pleasure in activities you used to enjoy?
- Has your appetite changed?
- Are you lacking energy and motivation?
- Has your sex drive reduced?
- Are you having trouble getting to sleep and staying asleep? Or are you finding it hard to get up in the morning?
- Have you had thoughts about harming yourself or ending your life?
- Do you feel guilty or tearful for no reason?
- Have you recently suffered a traumatic event, such as a bereavement?
- Do you find yourself avoiding friends and family?



It's important to seek help if you are depressed. However, if you think your low mood is due to menopause then there are many solutions available such as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy), anti-depressants and talking therapy.

You can access help at [NHS Every Mind Matters](#) – Answer 5 quick questions to get your Mind Plan and access links to talking therapies, you can do [self-referral](#) to a therapist, find out how to help others and access urgent support.

Although it is in no way meant to be a substitute for professional or medical help, exercise is a tried and tested way of improving our mental health and wellbeing

Physical activity has a positive impact on our well-being thanks to changes that take place in the brain during exercise. The 'runner's high' is caused by a potent cocktail of hormones including a neurotransmitter called anandamide, from the Sanskrit word for 'bliss' but you don't have to go running to feel the bliss!



If you can get active outdoors this has been shown to reduce stress and other negative emotions. Even as little as five minutes exercising outdoors can help to reduce anger and depression and improve mood so try to build in a brisk walk before you start work or at lunchtime if you can.

As depression and anxiety often go together, it's helpful to find ways to relax. Even if it's only 10 minutes a day where you take time to do something you enjoy, breathe deeply, daydream, read a book, sing aloud, listen to music, call a friend or try mindfulness.

If you are unsure how to help someone who might be struggling with low mood but don't know what to say, the SHUSH technique might be helpful:

- Show you care
- Have patience
- Use open questions
- Say it back
- Have courage



EXERCISE

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

MenoHealth at Work Programme Three

Try this
exercise

EXERCISE

The all-around menopause medicine for physical and psychological symptoms.



Research by Women in Sport - Menopause, Me and Physical Activity - found that one-third of women stop being physically active during menopause. Many of the symptoms of menopause prevent us from exercising such as loss of motivation, low confidence, fatigue, heavy periods, pelvic floor problems, hot flushes and achy joints. It's little wonder so few of us are working out when we just want to lie in.



Lack of time is another barrier and although we know we should be exercising, there's always something else we should be doing so exercise goes to the bottom of the to-do list.

Often, we don't prioritise ourselves and can even feel guilty about taking time to exercise.

It's easy to see why the barriers to exercise multiply through menopause when it often coincides with other life changes such as increased career responsibilities, ageing parents, childcare for grandchildren, teenage tantrums or empty nest syndrome.

So, it's easy to look for a quick fix - for our expanding waistlines, aching joints, insomnia, low mood or lack of energy. It's so much easier to use a cream, a potion or a prescription to sort things out. But there is something out there that has miraculous benefits. If your GP told you about a medicine that you had to take every day that might taste a little bitter for a few minutes but had all these benefits, wouldn't you want to take it?

- Helps you to lose weight
- Tones your muscles
- Fights fatigue
- Improves your sleep
- Lifts your mood
- Increases your bone density
- Reduces your risk of dementia, stroke and heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression and some cancers by 20% to 50%

If we reframe exercise and see it as a miraculous medicine, it may make it easier to take.

Also, it may also help to think of this as a movement rather than exercise, which we often equate with high-intensity workouts. Even if you can manage two 10-minute sessions of moderate intensity movement each day, you can really benefit both in terms of improved health and wellbeing, but also in the reduction of some menopause symptoms.

Protect your telomeres

Telomeres are the protein endcaps of our chromosomes like the protective caps at the end of our shoelaces which prevent them from unravelling. They're like our biological clock, the older we get, the shorter our telomeres become. Certain things make them unravel more quickly such as unhealthy lifestyles (smoking, excess sugar, lack of exercise). But exercise can keep our telomeres intact, so we stay younger for longer. If you can build up to exercising at moderate intensity for 150 minutes a week, then

you can turn back the clock by 7 years.



Boost your natural testosterone

DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) is a form of natural testosterone which helps to counterbalance levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. As menopause can elevate our stress levels, we need to find ways to reduce this and exercise helps natural production of DHEA. This means we're more able to deal with stress and keep our cortisol levels in check. This in turn means we are more likely to sleep better and it can also help with weight control.

Menopause muscles

We can't see this happening but every year after the age of 30

we start to lose muscle, and after 50 we can lose 1-2% of our muscle mass each year. By the time we're 80 we can have lost half our muscle mass and become frail (this is called sarcopenia). Muscles are the powerhouse of our bodies; they burn far more calories than fat so if we stay strong we can actually burn more calories even while we sleep. Keeping a healthy ratio of muscle to fat also helps to reduce inflammation and reduce our risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, stroke and many other diseases.

What are the best exercises to do during menopause?

The best exercise is the type that you enjoy and will do regularly - all movement is good!

Ideally, we need a variety of exercises and combine:

Aerobic exercise – this literally means with oxygen and it's great for your cardiovascular system. Ideally, for the best health benefits, we should include brisk walking, jogging,

cycling, swimming, keep-fit (aerobics) or dancing for a minimum of 150 minutes a week at moderate intensity or at least 75 minutes at high intensity. Aerobic exercise helps you to burn stored fat for fuel. [You can use this calculator](#) to get an idea of how many calories different activities burn.



Resistance exercise for strong, toned muscles – this means lifting, pushing or pulling against a load. It could be lifting dumbbells or working on gym machines, using resistance bands or lifting your own body weight. Equally, it can mean heavy-duty gardening, lifting and pushing a wheelbarrow, or carrying heavy shopping bags. The key is to start off slowly and gradually increase the weight

you lift and the number of repetitions you do.



Stretching for flexibility – we need to regularly work our joints in a full range of movement to keep supple and this can also help ease menopause-related achy joints. Gentle stretching can be done first thing in the morning to help you get moving, or throughout the day when you are feeling stiff. Deep stretching where you work to your limits is best done after a thorough warm-up to reduce the risk of injury.

Balance – don't forget to include some balance and coordination into your weekly routine as this begins to deteriorate without us noticing. Even balancing on one leg when you brush your teeth can help;

or see how long you can balance on one leg with your eyes closed.

So, if you love walking – keep doing it, and try to add in some strengthening exercises too.

If you love swimming – keep doing it and try to add in some impact exercises too.

If you love yoga – keep doing it and try to add in some aerobic exercises too.

Progression is key – so once something becomes easy, it shows your body has adapted and you need to then challenge yourself to do a little more.

Please consult a medical professional before you try any new exercises, especially if you have any health conditions or are concerned about their suitability.

Finding time

If you are stuck at your desk, try to stand more often – standing for 4 hours a day where you would normally sit is the calorie equivalent of running 10 marathons a year!

Try this – get up and down from your chair as many times as you can in 30 seconds. You'll notice how it gets your heart beating and it also strengthens your glutes and legs.

As long as you have no knee problems, try hopping or skipping (you can do this without a rope). It's fantastic for boosting your bones, and burning calories and if you can build it up to 5 minutes a day, it will make a positive difference.

Use the stairs whenever you can and aim to climb four flights of stairs (60 steps) in a minute or less.

Don't forget your pelvic floor exercises – make it a habit and do them 3 times a day – [here's how](#).

Remember there's a wide selection of exercise videos included in the MenoHealth at work support programme that fit easily into your busy working day.



EXERCISE

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR JOINTS FOR EXERCISE TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURY

MenoHealth at Work Programme Three

Try this
exercise

BREAST CHANGES

What's normal; using the TLC way to recognise symptoms and busting the myths about breast cancer.



Have you noticed a change in your breasts?
Have you suddenly gone up a cup size or two?
Are your breasts feeling tender or swollen?

These changes are very typical during perimenopause and menopause. You may be familiar with breast pain or swollen breasts before your period (called cyclical mastalgia). This is due to the changes in hormones during the menstrual cycle and the same thing can happen in perimenopause due to loss of oestrogen, regardless of your periods.



As the production of oestrogen made in the ovaries declines, our body tries to compensate by making small amounts of oestrogen from our adrenal glands or in fat tissues, particularly around our

stomach or breasts. This is why we often notice a change in our body shape with bigger boobs and a widening waist.

Also, as oestrogen levels decline, the connective tissue in the breasts becomes less elastic and milk glands shut down (this is called involution). Breast density changes as the ratio shifts to being less dense with less fibrous tissue and more fat.



Although these changes are mainly due to hormonal changes, there are some things we can do to help ourselves; test each one out and keep a note to see if your symptoms improve:

- Reduce your caffeine consumption – replace it with decaf or herbal teas.
- Get the right size bra – and remember this might change



through your menopause journey. Download a guide on how to choose a well-fitting bra.

- Make sure you wear a well-fitted sports bra when exercising.
- Consider wearing a soft bra to give support when you go to sleep at night.
- Cut back on salt in your food – too much salt leads to water retention and can make your breasts feel swollen.
- Consider taking evening primrose and vitamin E – this has been shown to help with breast tenderness, but do check with your pharmacist or GP if you take any other medication.
- Stop smoking – this can affect and narrow your blood vessels leading to an increase in breast pain.

Although breast changes are typical during menopause, and you may notice some breast tenderness in the first few weeks of taking HRT, if you notice any changes, you must see your GP and ask for further investigation to rule out breast cancer:

- A lump or swelling in the breast, upper chest or armpit
- A change to the skin, such as puckering or dimpling
- A change in the colour of the breast – the breast may look red or inflamed
- A nipple change, for example, it has become pulled in (inverted)
- Rash or crusting around the nipple
- Unusual liquid (discharge) from either nipple
- Changes in size or shape of the breast
- Pain in your breast or armpit that's there all or almost all the time.

Most breast changes, including breast lumps, are not cancer but the sooner breast cancer is found, the more successful treatment is likely to be.

So, give your breasts some TLC: Touch, Look and Check:

- **Touch** your breasts: can you feel anything unusual?
- **Look** for changes: does anything look different?
- **Check** any changes with your GP

Everyone will have their own way of touching and looking for changes. Get used to checking regularly and be aware of anything that's new or different for you. [This video shows you how.](#)

If you're worried about breast health or breast cancer you can speak to breast care nurses for free by calling 0808 800 6000 or by email. Or find out more from the charity [Breast Cancer Now](#).

Breast cysts are a benign (not cancer) condition. They're one of the most common causes of a breast lump and develop naturally as the breast changes with age due to changes in hormone levels during perimenopause. It's common to have more than one cyst. [Find out more](#) about symptoms and treatments for breast cysts.



**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** The research
& care charity

Breast Cancer Now is steered by world-class research and powered by life-changing care. They support anyone affected by breast cancer, the whole way through, providing support for today and hope for the future.

Let's bust some of the myths surrounding breast cancer.

Does deodorant cause cancer?

There's no convincing evidence of a link between breast cancer and deodorants, antiperspirants or their ingredients.

Do underwire bras cause breast cancer?

Underwire bras do not increase your risk of breast cancer. There have been some concerns that the wires in the cup of underwire bras may restrict the flow of lymph fluid in the breast causing toxins to build up in the area. However, there's no reliable evidence to support this.

Can squeezing or being hit in the breast cause cancer?

An injury, such as falling or being hit in the chest, will not cause breast cancer. Squeezing or pinching the breast or nipple will not cause breast cancer either. Sometimes an injury can lead to a benign (not cancer) lump known as fat necrosis. This is scar tissue that can form when the body naturally repairs the damaged fatty breast tissue.



Does stress cause cancer?

A number of studies have looked at the links between stress and breast cancer, but there isn't enough evidence to show a clear association. Stress can be linked to a rise in other lifestyle behaviours, such as being less active or drinking alcohol, which could increase your risk of breast cancer.

Do mobile phones cause breast cancer?

Some people worry that radio waves produced and received by mobile phones may be a health risk, especially if they keep their phone in their breast pocket. However, there's currently no evidence that radio waves from mobile phones cause breast cancer or increase the risk of developing it.



Can chemicals in the environment cause breast cancer?

Lots of studies have looked at the relationship between breast cancer and chemicals in the environment such as pesticides, traffic fumes and plastics, but there's no clear evidence of any links. It can be very difficult to work out the effects of individual chemicals when we are exposed to low levels of thousands of chemicals during our lifetime and more research is needed.

Can working night shifts cause breast cancer?

Although it was previously thought working night shifts may increase breast cancer risk, the latest research has found people who work night shifts are at no

greater risk of breast cancer than those who don't.

Can exercise increase your breast size?

Since breasts don't have muscle, you can't firm up breast tissue with exercise. However, beneath the breasts are fibrous connective tissue and muscles that can be strengthened and this can help with posture too.



balance

Brought to you by renowned menopause specialist, Dr Louise Newson. The free balance app allows you to track your symptoms.





EXERCISE

10-MINUTE WORKOUT

MenoHealth at Work Programme Three

Try this
exercise

SURGICAL MENOPAUSE

Not your typical menopause.



It's estimated around 4,000 women a year will undergo surgery that will put them into immediate menopause. This usually occurs following the removal of both ovaries, or if the ovaries have been damaged due to chemotherapy, radiation or medications, before the age of 45 or natural menopause.

Typically, surgical menopause happens following oophorectomy which is when the ovaries are removed. A hysterectomy is when the uterus is removed and does not lead to immediate menopause unless the ovaries fail afterwards, however it can lead to an earlier menopause usually within 5 years of having the operation.



Natural menopause occurs over a period of several years as egg stores naturally decline and oestrogen and progesterone fluctuate which can cause the gradual onset of menopause symptoms.



With surgical menopause, there is an abrupt stop to the production of hormones, so HRT is often recommended, particularly for young women who are years away from when their body would naturally enter menopause, so as to protect their bones, heart, brain and other vital organs. However, for women who have had certain types of cancer, HRT may not be recommended but this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking specialist advice from an oncologist and menopause specialist to create an individual plan that considers your quality of life.

Often, local oestrogen (pessaries, creams or a vaginal ring) can be prescribed which helps with vaginal dryness and discomfort.

Having a hysterectomy and oophorectomy has an emotional impact, not just in terms of loss of fertility, but also psychologically as the loss of oestrogen also affects our emotions. Some women feel particularly lonely going through surgical menopause as none of their peers are going through it at the same time. Getting the right support can make a huge difference. The website [Surgical Menopause](#) has a wealth of resources and you can get support from someone who has been through this experience. You can also find them on Instagram [@together_in_surgical_menopause](#)

Following surgery you will be given specific exercises to do and things to avoid such as heavy lifting. Get medical advice before beginning any exercise regime as it will depend upon your particular surgery as to what is safe. Walking is normally recommended, gradually building up activity over six weeks until you feel able to resume your usual activities and have been signed off by your consultant.



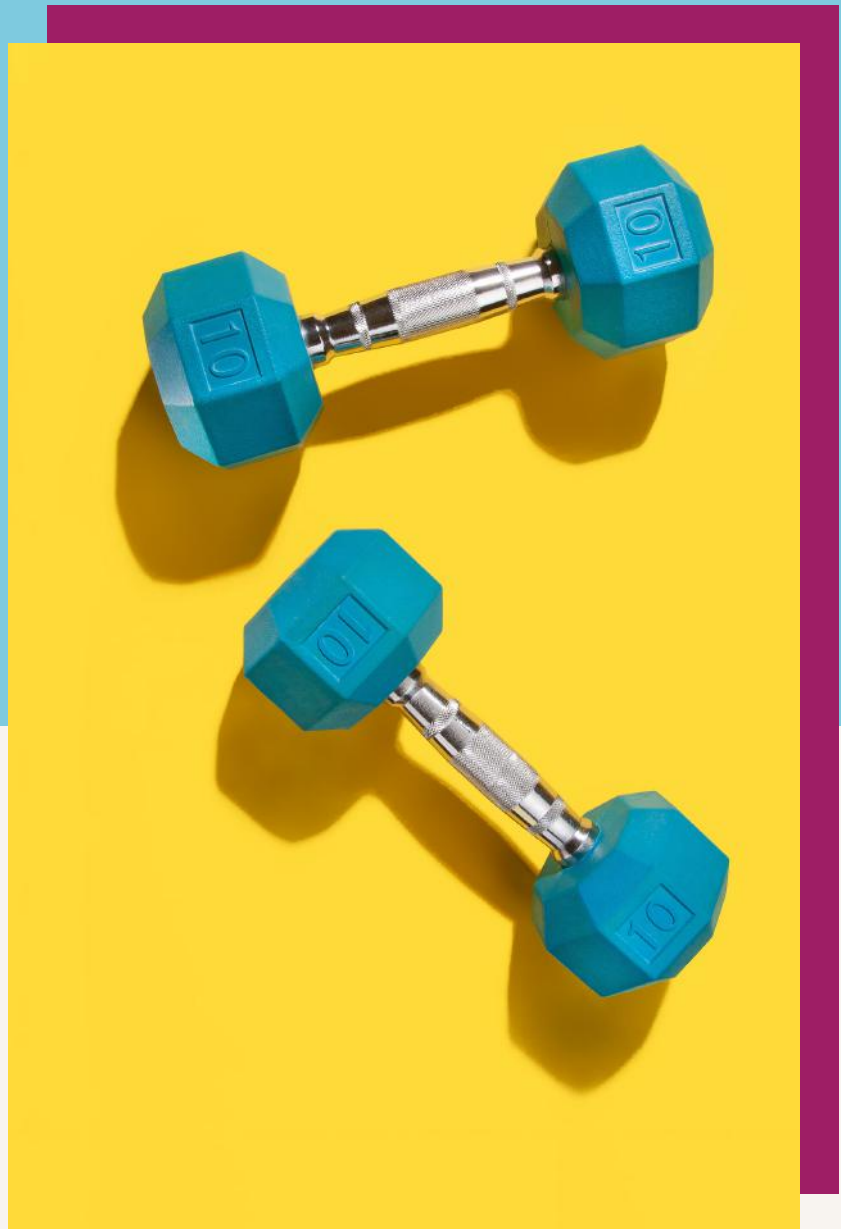
Together in Surgical Menopause is a patient-led, fact-based resource for those who are either experiencing or would like to learn about surgical menopause.



TRY THESE TOP TIPS IF YOU ARE PREPARING FOR SURGERY THAT MAY LEAD TO MENOPAUSE

Thanks to Helen Kemp, author of *'Surgical Menopause – Not Your Typical Menopause'*

- Find out as much as you possibly can before your surgery, see: www.thesurmenoconnection.com and www.surgicalmenopause.co.uk.
- Once recovered from the actual surgery, keep an open mind with regard to the types of medications, treatments and activities you're prepared to try. Some swear by HRT, other can't take it or choose not to. It's an individual choice. Keep checking in with yourself as the weeks and months after surgery tick by. What works for you at one stage may no longer be appropriate or effective 12 months down the line
- Get active and try to stay active. Not only will it help in the fight against osteoporosis and heart disease, it's great for your mental and emotional wellbeing.
- Make time for yourself. Meditate or use the time for self-reflection and record your thoughts in a journal.
- Find a community and stay connected. It can become all too easy to isolate and withdraw, especially if anxiety and/or depression are part of your milieu of menopause symptoms. If you want to track your recovery with others going through similar experiences, see www.hystersisters.com.



EXERCISE

USING LIGHT HAND WEIGHT TO IMPROVE UPPER BODY STRENGTH AND TONE

MenoHealth at Work Programme Three

Try this
exercise

bonebalance™

A 100% natural way to protect your bone health – especially important in women post-menopause. Use code MENO-BB for a unique 5% discount.





A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Julie Robinson

At the age of 36, our Founder, Julie Robinson had to have a hysterectomy and was advised against HRT.

“I had no idea that the long nights of insomnia that plagued me for years were anything to do with menopause. Nor did I associate the heart palpitations

that led to me being admitted to hospital, with menopause. It was a throwaway remark by the consultant, who assured me I wasn't having a heart attack, that this disruption to the heart rhythm is often associated with 'the change'. Given that all women are certain to experience

menopause, it's astonishing to think that it's still surrounded by myths, taboos and confusion. That's why I'm passionate about bringing women together in a safe space to support, inform and empower them to live their best lives.”



MENOSISTERS SUPPORT GROUP

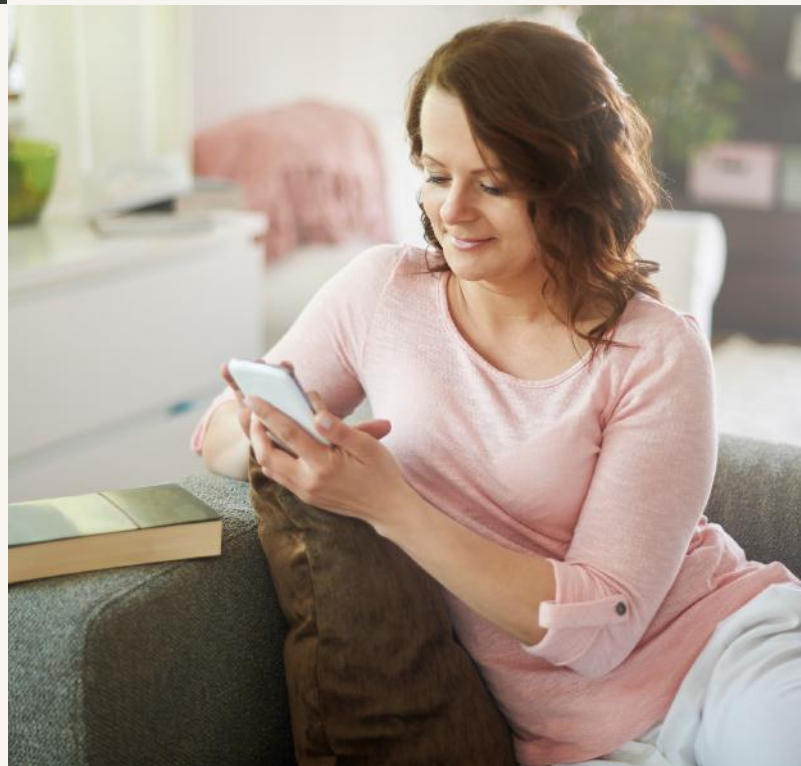
Join our private Facebook group where women come together to share their highs, lows and daily experiences of menopause.

Join now!

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Join us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn for all the latest news, menopause updates and top tips to take control of menopause.

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MENOHEALTH SHOP

Explore our range of books, fans and exercise equipment all designed to help you to take control of menopause.

Explore our shop





Find your nearest BMS menopause specialist. This register covers healthcare professionals who are current members of the British Menopause Society and have demonstrated specialist competency in menopause.



Main Ave

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Central

North A

Park A

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First Street

South Street

Channel Street

South Street

MENOHEALTH AT WORK

PROGRAMME THREE



Empowering you to
take control of
menopause

