

MENOPAUSE AND NUTRITION

Menopause is part of the natural aging process in a woman's life. The average age at menopause is 51 years, although some women might go through it much earlier or a little later.

During this time, the hormone balance within the changes, and since many processes in the body are regulated by hormones, it can take some time for it to adapt to these changes.

SYMPTOMS:

The symptoms of menopause vary among women; a few of the reported symptoms are:

- Loss of muscle mass
- Increased abdominal weight
- Mood changes
- Hot flashes
- Night sweat
- Anxiety
- Dry skin
- Irregular menstrual bleeding
- Reduced libido.

Abdominal weight gain is associated with chronic inflammation and increased risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR MENOPAUSE:

For women, menopause is a reality check that their bodies are changing. Eating well and being physically active will make this mid-life transition easier.

- **Eat right:** Opt for vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and lean protein which contain the nutrients needed, without too many calories.
- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Avoid oversized portions and using smaller plates and bowls.
- **Eat more often at home:** Choose what goes into your food.
- **Follow a heart healthy diet:** After menopause, your risk of heart disease increases. Limit saturated fat, trans-fats and cholesterol. Replace these with healthy mono and poly unsaturated fats.

- **Be physically active every day:** Physical activity helps in maintaining a healthy weight and high energy levels and decreases the risk of heart disease and other age-related complications.
- **Meet your calcium and vitamin D needs:** This is important to maintain healthy bones and prevent bone loss that can happen after menopause.
- **Read labels:** Use the package label information to help yourself make the best choices for a healthy lifestyle.
- **Drink plenty of water:** As a general rule, drink eight glasses of water every day. That fulfills the daily requirement for most healthy adults.
- **Monitor calorie intake:** When eating out, choose lower calorie menu options. Choose dishes that include vegetables, fruits and whole grains.



References:

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