



Hi there,

We've reached the mid-point of our *Mastering menopause* month – we hope you've enjoyed the journey so far! This week, we explore the connection between our hormones and nutrition, and offer tips on how to eat for optimal hormone health.

The hormone-nutrition connection

As we journey through menopause, we experience a progressive decline in the hormones oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone. This can lead to a loss of muscle mass and bone density, an increased risk of osteoporosis and metabolic changes. The decrease in hormones also increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death in women, so see your GP about getting a heart health check.

Now, let's look at some of the essential nutrients that'll support your health and wellness during menopause.

Protein for muscle mass

Getting enough daily protein will help prevent muscle loss, balance your blood sugar and maintain a healthy weight. Aim to eat at least 1-1.2g of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. So, if you weigh 75kg, this equates to 75-90g. This will usually be about 20-25g per meal and 5-10g for snacks. Good sources include lean cuts of meat, fish, chickpeas, tofu, eggs and nuts.

Calcium, magnesium & vitamin D for bone strength

Calcium and magnesium help maintain healthy bones and prevent bone loss, while vitamin D is needed to absorb calcium. Women aged 19-50 years should aim for 1,000mg of calcium per day, while women over 50 should aim for 1,300mg to reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis.

Good sources of calcium include dairy products such as Greek yoghurt or milk, green leafy vegetables and legumes. For magnesium, eat leafy greens, legumes, nuts, seeds and wholegrains. Small amounts of sun exposure is your best way to get vitamin D (remember to practise sun safety), while oily fish, eggs and sun-exposed mushrooms are other sources.

Omega-3s for brain & heart health

Omega-3 fats from sources such as oily fish, walnuts, flaxseeds and chia seeds can help reduce bad (LDL) cholesterol and increase good (HDL) cholesterol. They also help protect the heart by lowering blood pressure, and can improve brain functioning and memory.

Don't be soy confused

Soy products have received a bad rap in the past, and while it's not recommended to consume highly processed soy isolates, wholefoods like tofu and tempeh are healthy choices – and may even prove beneficial during menopause, as they contain phytoestrogen.

Read our article for more on the essential nutrients for hormone health, where we also discuss the benefits of **low-GI carbs**, **antioxidants** plus the **oestrogen-mimicking properties of phytoestrogen**.

Recipes to try

Whip up one of these hormone-healthy meals this week:

- Miso tempeh veggie bowl
- Baked pesto chicken with spring vegetables
- Smoked salmon omelette
- Black bean brownies
- Edamame avocado smash

Taco Tuesdays, anyone?

Our resident dietitian Meg shows us how to make a healthier version of the viral 'Big Mac' tacos – which are packed with lean protein and sure to be a family hit!

Watch Meg's cooking demo



The Mediterranean way

Due to its abundance of healthy fats, like extra virgin olive oil, omega-3s from fish, and plant foods, like fruit, vegetables, legumes and wholegrains, the Mediterranean diet is a recommended pattern of eating during menopause.

Try out these fresh and delicious recipes:

- Paper parcel baked Mediterranean fish
- Mediterranean tuna salad
- Mediterranean grain salad

Further reading

- Top nutrition tips for menopause, CSIRO
- Foods for menopause, Jean Hailes for Women's Health
- Mediterranean diet, healthdirect

Coming up...

Next week, we look at the importance of maintaining physical fitness during menopause and share some exercise routines that are ideal for this stage of life.

Yours in good health,

Team CBHS Health

Sources:

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