

Wise & Wondrous Woman

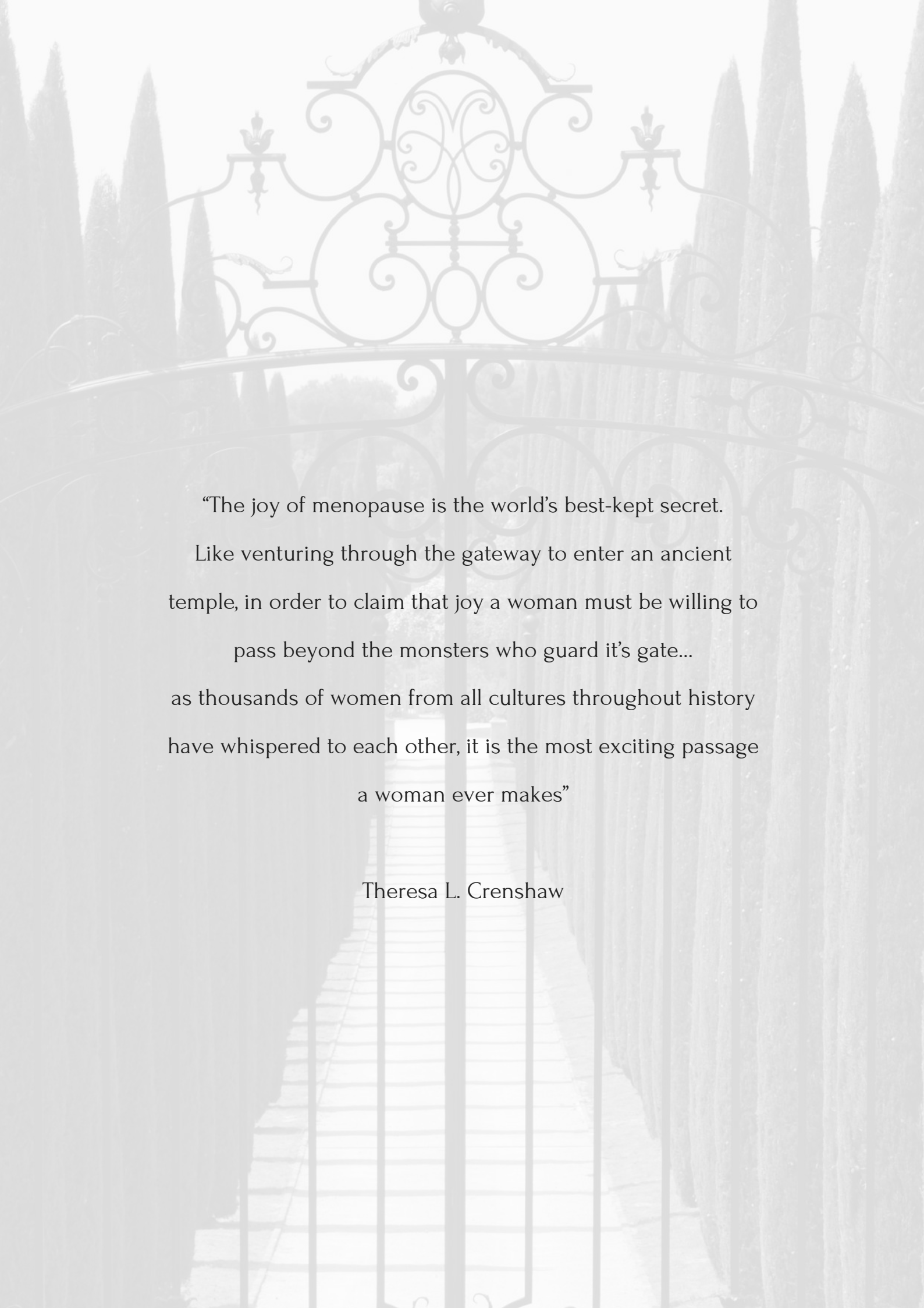


Step-by-step guide to supporting your hormones
during peri-menopause with food

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“The joy of menopause is the world’s best-kept secret.
Like venturing through the gateway to enter an ancient
temple, in order to claim that joy a woman must be willing to
pass beyond the monsters who guard it’s gate...
as thousands of women from all cultures throughout history
have whispered to each other, it is the most exciting passage
a woman ever makes”

Theresa L. Crenshaw

Step One:

Ditch the plastic & go low-tox!

Plastics, personal care products, cleaning products, fragrances, pesticides, furnishings, pollution...

All of the chemicals and toxins you are exposed to daily add up. They can be inhaled, absorbed by the skin or eaten. The sum amount of these compounds are known as the 'chemical body burden'.

Your liver is the body organ responsible for breaking down these potentially harmful compounds so that they can leave your body safely.

Another important role your liver plays? The processing of your hormones, such as oestrogen, when they have finished doing their job in the body.

These hormones need to be broken-down by the liver so they can exit the body safely. If your liver is too busy detoxing your chemical burden, then your hormone processing may get put on the back-burner, and this task becomes a lower priority.

If we can reduce the amount of chemicals our body needs to process on a daily basis then we can increase the amount of oestrogen metabolised, leading to a more favourable hormonal balance. Why does this help your peri-menopausal symptoms? Excess hormones re-circulating in your body can lead to hormonal imbalances & increase symptoms experienced.

Another reason to go low-tox?

Many of these compounds found in your make-up, cleaning products, furnishings & plastics act as endocrine disruptors, or xeno-oestrogens, that can mimic your own hormones. This can cause chaos in the body and disturb the delicate balance that our hormones usually create when we are well.

Why is this only a problem now?

In peri-menopause your hormones are changing & transitioning.

The way your body operates starts to change.

Because of this, your approach to health and your wellbeing also needs to change.

Transitioning to a cleaner, nourishing way of living during peri-menopause will help you live an incredible, vibrant life during & after this transition.

How to go Low-Tox

Start small...

- **SWITCH YOUR PLASTIC DRINK BOTTLES/BOTTLED WATER & DRINKS FOR STAINLESS STEEL OR GLASS** - a recent study found that 90% of store-bought water in plastic bottles contained micro-plastics. Soft plastic degrades in heat and over time, and this can cause the plastic to infiltrate your drinking water.
- **DON'T MICROWAVE OR HEAT ANY FOOD IN PLASTIC** - Heating plastic is bad news. Before microwaving food - transfer it into a pyrex glass container or a ceramic bowl. Instead of covering food with plastic wrap, use a sheet of paper towel or use nothing to cover and just clean your microwave after heating. Don't put leftover food into plastic containers until it is cool. Look at using beeswax wraps to wrap food.
- **TRY TO BUY FOODS WITH A HIGH OIL/FAT CONTENT IN GLASS CONTAINERS RATHER THAN PLASTIC** - Fat/oils and plastic are also a bad combination. The fat can actually penetrate the porous plastic.
- **AVOID ANYTHING WITH THE INGREDIENT 'FRAGRANCE'** - This is where all the nasty phthalates and other endocrine-disrupting chemicals hide. Switch your detergents and cleaners to natural or fragrant-free/'sensitive' alternatives. Avoid air fresheners, perfumes, strongly scented soaps and body products. Seek naturally scented products.
- **OPEN YOUR WINDOWS & GET FRESH AIR!** This one seems simple, but often ignored. Fresh air is important to help reduce indoor pollution. That's right. Our indoor air is often much more polluted than the outside world. Adopting a couple of house plants can also help.

How to go Low-Tox

Then take it next-level!

- **BUY ORGANIC OR SHOP AT FARMERS MARKET & SOAK/RINSE NON-ORGANIC PRODUCE** - A good rule is that if you eat the whole vegetable/fruit (e.g. the flesh and the peel) then it needs to be either organic or washed well to get rid of anything sprayed on it. Use 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar in a sink of cold water. Soak veg and fruit for a bit and then give a bit of a scrub & a good rinse.
- **AVOID PACKAGED FOODS, ARTIFICIAL FOOD ADDITIVES, PRESERVATIVES, ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS, FOOD THICKENERS** - All these ingredients can also become 'toxic'. These also need to be processed by the liver.
- **READ THE BOOK 'LOW TOX LIFE' by ALEX STUART** - this book explains other steps you can take to slowly reduce chemical exposure and improve your health.
- **CHECK OUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP'S WEBSITE & DATABASE** - www.ewg.org - A wonderful resource to find out more about certain ingredients/chemicals and the research around them.



Low-Tox

Ditch plastic
Open your windows
Avoid fragrances
Soak & rinse fruit & veg
Avoid food additives
Learn more &
keep switching!

Step Two

Nourish & Support Your Liver

We learnt in step one that your liver has an important role to play in hormonal balance, especially in times of hormonal transition such as puberty and peri-menopause.

The liver also has other jobs in keeping you healthy & well:

ENERGY BALANCE & BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL

Your liver stores energy and has the job of releasing this energy when we need it. The liver also helps to regulate our blood sugar levels. Peri-menopause can drain you of your energy more easily than normal, so having a liver that responds to this increased need is important. Blood sugar levels can also be erratic during this time - just as you hormones are! In fact, unstable glucose levels can trigger symptoms like hot flushes, heart palpitations, dizziness, headaches and fatigue.

AIDS IN DIGESTION

The liver has a large role in proper digestive function. It produces bile, which is important for digesting your foods and for keeping your bowels moving. If your bile production is not optimal you may experience bloating, gallbladder issues, fatigue, constipation and poor absorption of nutrients from your food.

Bile is also important for the detoxification of oestrogen.

Fat-soluble vitamins (vitamin D, E, K & A) all need bile to be released in order to be absorbed from your food. These vitamins are all very important during peri-menopause to protect the body and reduce symptoms.

So... apart from reducing our chemical burden,
how can we help the liver do the best job possible?

The liver requires certain nutrients from our diet to perform all the detoxing, energy management and bile-making it does.

Without those nutrients, it cannot function the way it needs to.

AVOIDING ALCOHOL, REDUCING CAFFEINE & PROCESSED FOODS

These substances put extra pressure on the liver and can reduce available nutrients dramatically.

How to Love Your Liver

Eat Well...

- **DRINK ENOUGH FILTERED WATER EVERY SINGLE DAY** - At least 2 litres, or 30 mL per kilo of body weight, each day. If you are sweating more (e.g. exercise/sauna/hot flushes) or drinking caffeine/alcohol you may require more than this.
- **EAT YOUR GREENS** - Especially from the cruciferous family of vegetables e.g. Broccoli, Cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, Kale, Cabbage. At least 2 serves daily (1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup uncooked)
- **ADD IN GARLIC, ONION, TURMERIC, SEA SALT, SEAWEEDS & ROSEMARY** - These are spices that will bring flavour to your cooking, but also play a big role in good liver function and detoxification
- **BITTER & SOUR TASTING FOODS** - Bitter tasting foods stimulate bile production release. Additionally, these bitter compounds can increase digestion of your food. Try having a warm cup of water with a squeeze of lemon in the morning; a salad with a bitter dressing and green bitter leaves for lunch and a side of bitter tasting green vegetables for dinner.
- **BRIGHT COLOURED FRUIT & VEG** - e.g. berries, carrots, plums, beetroots. The darker the pigment colour of the food, e.g. dark purple lettuces, the higher the phytonutrient and anti-oxidant levels they contain. Your liver depends of these for efficient detox and elimination of body waste.
- **WELL-DIGESTED PROTEINS** - Amino acids from protein are crucial for liver function. To get amino acids from protein in our food though, the protein needs to be digested well. Eating fresh fish (oily fish are rich in omega-3 which also benefits liver), slow cooked meats and vegetable proteins in small, easy-to-digest portions is best. Chew these foods well. Avoid fried, charred or processed protein foods - like sausages and deli meats.

How to Love Your Liver

Food Suggestions

Breakfast

Warm water with lemon juice or a Turmeric latte/Green tea
Bitter & beneficial to the liver.

Egg omelette with spring onion, mushrooms, capsicum & baby spinach
or Roast Veggie Frittata with broccoli & pumpkin

Try to add some protein (eggs are a perfect, well-digested protein) &
a serve of vegetable and green leafy veg.

Lunch

Salad with rocket, dark lettuce and other greens with grilled chicken,
cucumber, walnuts, carrot, broccoli sprouts and a homemade
turmeric and garlic dressing.

Salads don't need to be fancy, Add a portion of unprocessed meat or protein
(can use chickpeas or mixed beans), a cup of leafy greens, some colourful veg,
a sprinkle of nuts/seeds and a homemade dressing.

Dinner

Oven roasted salmon fillet with steamed broccoli, cauliflower, green
beans/peas/asparagus, roasted pumpkin, fennel, carrot & beetroot.

Can serve with pesto.

Fresh oily fish, like salmon, can provide beneficial omega 3 fatty acids which
aid liver function and can reduce peri-menopausal symptoms. Roasting and
steaming vegetables and then filling the plate with these is key to a healthy
dinner. Add a parsley pesto to the fish once cooked for a flavour boost.

Snacks

Chia puddings (homemade)

Fresh fruit or stewed apples

Dips & veggie sticks

Nori Sheets (keep in freezer)

How to Make Your Own Salad Dressing

Store brought salad dressings are made with vegetable oils - like canola or sunflower oil. Although 'vegetable' oil sounds healthy - they really are not! These oils are inflammatory. Store-brought dressing also contain hidden additives, salt and sugars.

It is very easy to 'shake up' your own salad dressing, once you learn how. You will need a small, clean glass jar with a lid that screws on tight and won't leak.



The basic salad dressing ratio to guide you is:

1 part acid : 2 parts oil



'ACID' component of the dressing is lemon juice, lime juice or vinegar.
'OIL' to use is either cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil or flaxseed oil.

Add these in the above ratios - making as much or as little as you would like, then add in any extra flavours - like crushed garlic, turmeric, ginger, mustard, fresh herbs etc - and then seal and shake!

Make enough dressing fresh each time you have a salad.
The small jars are handy to transport so you can add your dressing just before eating to avoid soggy lettuce.

e.g

2 tablespoons flaxseed oil

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1/2 tsp dijon mustard

OR

4 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

few chives, chopped

TIP: PRINT THIS PAGE OUT - POP IT ON THE FRIDGE & TRY TO HAVE/DO SOME OF THESE EACH DAY

- Drink warm lemon water
- Try a turmeric latte instead of coffee
- Reduce alcohol
- Find ways to drink more water
- Try brewing some green tea
- Look at herbal teas to try!
- Plain mineral water can be a good swap for fizzy soda

- Add leafy greens to breakfast
- Add leafy greens to a smoothie
- Add an extra serve of greens to dinner
- Grow some leafy greens in the garden
- Make a green pesto to add to meals
- Try different bitter greens & choose 'darker' coloured leaves e.g. dark lettuces

SELF-CARE

FRESH AIR &
NATURE TIME!

DEEP
BREATHING

EAT MORE:

Broccoli/broccolini
Bok choy/Asian greens
Asparagus
Fennel
Cabbage
Brussel sprouts
Parsley
Kale
Chard
Spinach
Watercress
Garlic, Turmeric & Ginger
Slow cooked meats

LIVER LOVE

Water/Lemon Water/Green Tea
Spices & fresh herbs
Cruciferous Veggies & Leafy Greens
Quality, easy-digested Protein
Eat a Rainbow!
Reduce processed/packageged foods

EAT MORE:

Capsicum
Cauliflower
Kiwi fruit
Nuts & seeds
Eggs
Wholegrains & pseudo-grains
Brown rice
Seaweed
Seafood & oily fish
Onions
Spring onions
Avocado
Legumes

CHEWING FOOD
& EATING
IN A RELAXED
SPACE

STRESS
MANAGEMENT

EAT LESS:

Processed & packaged foods
Food additives
Refined sugars
Alcohol
Caffeine
Table salt
White breads & grains
Vegetables oil
Trans fats
Fried foods
Processed meats & proteins
Take-away food

Step Three

Phytoestrogens to the rescue!

A diet rich in plant compounds with a 'phyto-oestrogenic' action can help modulate and manage hormonal driven symptoms of peri-menopause.

These compounds can also protect heart and bones during menopause.

The table below shows the different types of phyto-oestrogen compounds and where they are found in food. Adding a variety of these into your daily diet may help you manage symptoms and ease your transition.

Lignans	Coumestrol	Phytosterols	Isoflavones
Linseeds	Soy sprouts	Olives	Soy beans
Flaxseeds	Alfalfa	Sunflowers	Alfalfa
Rye	Red Clover	Soy beans	Red Clover
Millet	Brean beans	Pumpkin	Parsley
Sesame seeds	Mung beans	kernels	Chickpeas
Tahini	Red beans		Mung beans
Seaweeds	Split peas		Whole-grains
Buckwheat	Olives		
Whole-grains			
Fruits/veg			

LINSEEDS/FLAXSEEDS

A meal made of flaxseeds can be added to breakfast cereals, stewed fruits, natural yoghurt, smoothies, chia puddings.

Flaxseed oil can be used as a substitute for olive oil in recipes that call for uncooked raw oil - e.g. salad dressings and pestos, but the oil DOES NOT contain photo-oestrogens. It is still rich in omega 3 fats, though.

DO NOT HEAT FLAXSEED - as heat destroys the delicate oils.

Store both oil and meal in the fridge.

SALAD SPROUTS

You can buy mung bean & alfalfa sprouts from most green grocers. You can also grow these at home. Top your meals and salads with these.

Wash well first.

SOY PRODUCTS

Avoid highly-processed soy products.

Look at including edamame bean (soy beans) to salads.

Choose quality biodynamic or organic tofu and tempeh. Most soy is GMO.

Make miso soup from organic, good-quality fermented miso paste.

You can include small amounts of soy milk - e.g. having the occasional soy chai latte when out.

WHOLE-GRAINS, BUCKWHEAT & RYE

Choose high-quality sourdough bread that has been traditionally made with whole-grain, stone-ground flours.

Don't include too much bread in your daily diet. It should only make up a small portion of your meals - with the main part essentially containing lots of fresh veggies, protein & healthy fats.

Buckwheat is a gluten-free 'pseudo-grain' that is considerably higher in protein. It makes a wonderful substitute for grains if there are issues with gluten. Buckwheat crepes are delicious and can double as a 'wrap'.

These grains are also important for B vitamins.



Step Four

Keep your gut and kidneys healthy & regular

The first couple of step focussed on the liver and how the role it plays in detoxification of hormones and potentially harmful substances so they can exit the body.

But how do these exit? The bowels and kidneys. It then makes sense that we need to keep these pathways or 'exit points' healthy and 'regular'. Especially the bowel. Constipation can cause a back-up of waste. If our poo sits in the bowels too long, the bowels can start hoarding all the wastes we are trying to get rid of!

These metabolites the liver worked so hard at clearing out of the body can then get re-absorbed! Healthy, regular bowels means that our garbage will get taken out in a prompt manner. This makes a huge difference to our hormone balance.

Also remember - bile is crucial for optimal motility in the gut, and water, healthy fats and bitter food are the two key things for healthy bile production & release.

Tips for Regularity

Prunes - these are full of fibre, but also good for bone mineral density.

Flaxseeds & Chia - good soluble fibres

Water! The obvious element...

Exercise & movement

Kiwi fruit & Figs

Stewed apples & rhubarb



Step Five

Give your adrenals time to chill

The last step is quite possibly to most important - yet the most difficult for women to address. It is to reduce stress, learn to relax and practice self-care.

You need to support your adrenal glands by reducing cortisol production (cortisol being the key 'stress' hormone).

Why is this so important?

At menopause, the ovaries shut down their hormone production. This causes other organs, such as the adrenal glands, liver and fat cells, to start picking up the slack and produce sex hormones. This is because your body still requires small amounts of these, such as oestrogen & progesterone.

Can you see now why these areas of your health need the most support during this transition? Your liver & the adrenal glands have just been given a new and important job to do. If they are already pushed to the max doing other things, they will quickly become overworked and overwhelmed!

This also explains why women tend to find weight creep up around this time. The body may want to hold on to those fat cells so they can produce much needed sex hormones! Our metabolism also slows at this stage, especially if muscle mass is low. Looking after your adrenals and liver can ultimately help you maintain your weight.

Before now, your adrenal glands may not have been relied on to make sex hormones. Your ovaries may have done the hard slog while your adrenals were busy keeping up with your busy lifestyle. They may have been too pre-occupied producing cortisol and adrenaline!

Remember, 'stress' is different for everyone. It could be genuine stress, excess caffeine consumption, physical stress or the perception of pressure and urgency that is occurring. You don't have to identify as 'feeling stressed' for your body to be adrenally active.

The above situation of your 'typical busy woman' means that when menopause hits, and ovarian hormone production slows, your body is designed to rely on adrenal hormones, yet you may not have made sex hormones from your adrenals for a very long time. This can cause a massive hormonal issues and be the main driver of those dreaded menopausal symptoms.

Step Five

How to find balance

Find time to balance out the stress, work, endless commitments, worry, intense exercise, care-taking with self-care. Exercise your 'No' muscle.

"Creating calm despite what external circumstances ask of us is an essential life skill. Whatever this may mean for you, do it."

- Dr. Libby Weaver

If you have trouble sitting still, being alone, relaxing and unwinding, then even more of a reason to learn how to, today!

Often, women have become the carers, the nurturers and the ones to hold it all together that we forget the art of just 'being'. We can lose our identity as a person. We are 'Mum', 'Wife', 'Boss' or 'Daughter'.

Look at this transition into menopause as the start of a new chapter. It is a time where you give more love to yourself and rediscover your identity.

What activities used to make you happy?

What do you enjoy doing that allows you to be creative?

PRIORITISE SLEEP!

If you aren't getting restful sleep, then this needs to be addressed.

Your practitioner can help you with this.

Meditate
& Deep
Breathing



Yoga,
Qi gong
& Tai Chi

Walking in
Nature &
Creativity

Relaxation Techniques for Hot Flashes

Mind/body relaxation techniques to help relieve both stress and the severity and frequency of hot flashes work well for many women.

1. **Paced respiration.** Paced respiration is slow, controlled, deep, rhythmic breathing that is sustained for a specified period of time:

- Sit in a straight-back chair with both feet on the floor.
 - Rest hands on the abdomen.
- Slowly count to four while inhaling through the nose & feel the abdomen rise.
 - Hold that breath for a second.
- Then, slowly count to four while exhaling through the mouth — let the abdomen slowly fall.
- Repeat this exercise for 15 minutes twice a day at the beginning of a hot flash.

2. **Word repetition.** A second technique is repeating a word, sound, phrase, or muscle movement:

- Pick a focus word or short phrase that you are comfortable with.
 - Sit quietly in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
- Relax your muscles, starting with your feet and moving to your calves, thighs, abdomen, shoulders, head, and neck.
- Breathe slowly and naturally, saying your focus word, sound, or phrase silently to yourself as you exhale.
 - If other thoughts come to mind, just return to your repetition.
 - Continue for 10 to 20 minutes once or twice a day.

3. **Meditation.** Another mindful technique is simple meditation:

- Sit in a comfortable position, either in a chair or on the floor, with proper posture (straight back and neck). Take a couple of deep, cleansing breaths.
 - Close your eyes and breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
 - Focus on each breath—slowly breathing in and out.
 - Start with 5 to 10 minutes of meditation and work up to 15 to 20 minutes or more daily.

Breakfast

Balancing Blood Sugars

It is important to keep your blood sugar balanced to reduce the symptoms of perimenopause. Spikes and dips in your blood sugar create an additional stress on your body, and your body is already going through the stress of changing hormones!

The erratic, rollercoaster of poorly controlled blood sugar can leave you cranky, exhausted, craving carbs and gaining weight.

Sugars also feed the unhealthy bacteria in your gut, and you need a healthy gut to clear old hormones and to make chemicals that make you feel good, like the neurotransmitter serotonin.

Starting the day with low-sugar foods that are high-protein, contain healthy fats and are rich in fibre is key. And when I say fibre, the best source is from fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and not grains.

If we sneak in some photo-oestrogenic foods, like flaxseeds, and some liver friendly foods, such as green leafy veggies and lemon, then you are eating the breakfast of a Queen!

NOTE: As tempting as it sometimes is - never skip breakfast. If you aren't hungry early in the morning, have some lemon juice in warm water and then eat breakfast a little later. The lemon juice may stimulate your appetite.

If you are rushed in the morning, get up a little earlier to sit down and enjoy your morning meal. It is so important in order to start your day right!

Protein/Fat

Eggs
Cured salmon
Chia & seeds/nuts
Oats/Buckwheat

Liver Loving

Green leafy veg
Broccoli
Turmeric
Lemon Juice

Phyto-oestrogen

Flaxseeds
Sprouts
Rye sourdough
Sunflower seeds

Breakfast

Phyto-oestrogen Loaf

- 2 1/2 cups spelt flour, sifted, sifted
- 1/4 cup ground linseed meal
- 1/2 cup mixed seeds - e.g. pumpkin, sunflower & sesame
- 3 teaspoons baking powder, sifted
- 250 mL Bonsoy soy milk
- 250 grams organic or biodynamic tofu
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/4 cup chopped prunes or Medjool dates, pitted
- Extra seeds for sprinkling on top

Preheat oven to 180 oC.

Line a loaf tin with baking paper.

Place all dry ingredients together in a mixing bowl.

Blend the tofu in the food processor with the prunes/dates. Gradually add in the soy milk until smooth. then add in the lemon juice and combine.

Stir in the lemon zest, flour and seeds until combined.

Place mixture into the pan and press the mixture down with wet hands.

Sprinkle the extra seeds on top.

Bake for 1 hour.

For breakfast, serve with some full-fat ricotta cheese, berries and a drizzle or maple syrup or raw honey.

Phytoestrogens (plant oestrogens) are substances that occur naturally in plants. Eating phytoestrogens can produce either some of the same effects as human oestrogen (oestrogenic effects) or opposed effects (anti-oestrogenic effects). Which effects are triggered depends on existing levels of oestrogen in the body, and how the phytoestrogens bind to oestrogen receptors in the body.

Because of this, these foods act to 'modulate' oestrogen.

Breakfast

Nut & Seed Pudding

- 1/4 cup ground linseed meal
- 1/2 cup almond milk
- 1 tablespoon of desiccated coconut
- 10 almonds, chopped
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup or raw honey
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamon or cinnamon
- Raspberries, blueberries, blackberries or stewed fruits to top
- YOU WILL NEED a clean jar with a lid e.g. an old salsa jar

Mix all ingredients in the jar - except for the berries/stewed fruit.

Stir together well or seal jar and shake to combine.

Leave in fridge overnight with lid on.

In morning serve with fruit and a dollop of natural yoghurt.



Lunch

Fancy Sardines on Toast Recipe

- 1 tin of sardines in extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 heaped tablespoons of parsley, chopped
- 6 cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1/4 red onion, diced finely
- 1 heaped tablespoon hummus or 50 grams marinated goat's feta
- Lemon juice to taste
- Cracked black pepper & pinch sea salt
- 1 slice of whole-grain or rye sourdough bread - toasted OR use a cup of baby spinach if not eating bread

Place sardines in a bowl and mash with a fork. If using feta, add and mash together with sardines. Add parsley, onion and hummus and mix to combine. Add tomatoes, lemon juice, salt & pepper and gently fold through.

Heap onto toasted bread or spinach to make a salad. Add more pepper and lemon juice if desired.

Serves one (or two if smaller portions).

Sardines are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and are an excellent source of calcium. One tin of sardines (that include the bones) supplies a whopping 300 mg of calcium - the same as most supplements!

Sardines are also a wonderful source of easy to digest protein.

Add some phyto-oestrogens by adding a teaspoon of tahini to the mix or sprinkling some sunflower seeds on top.

Snacks

Linseed, banana & date muffins

- 12 dessertspoons linseed meal
- 1 cup chopped medjool dates
- 1/4 cup boiled water
- 2 ripe bananas
- 60 grams of butter, melted and cooled
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

Makes 6 muffins

Preheat oven to 180 degrees.

Soak chopped dates in boiling water while preparing the rest of the recipe.

Prepare muffin tins with baking paper.

Use a fork to mash bananas in a mixing bowl. Add nutmeg and combine well. Mix through the date mixture and cooled melted butter. Fold through the linseeds and baking powder followed by the eggs.

Spoon even amounts of the mixture into prepared muffin tins, starting with about 2 heaped dessertspoons in each.

Bake in the oven for 25 minutes. Remove from tin when cooked and cool slightly on a rack.

Snacks

Hormone balancing bliss bites

- 1 & 1/2 cup walnuts
- 1/2 cup dates (pitted) - approx 8
- 2 heaped Tablespoons almond butter
- 1 Tablespoon coconut oil
- 1/4 cup dark raw cacao powder
- 1/4 cup desiccated coconut (plus 2 tablespoon extra for rolling)
- 3 level Tbs. maca powder
- 1/4 tsp cardamom powder
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon powder

Put the walnuts into your food processor and grind until they are close to finely ground. Add in the dates and process to form a thicker mix.

Add in the almond butter & coconut oil and mix until a dough forms. Sometimes you might have to add a little extra to get the dough to form nicely.

Add in the 1/4 cup of cacao powder, maca, cardamom, and cinnamon until well mixed.

Remove your blade from your food processor, then form round balls using about 1 TBS of mix per ball.

Roll these in your hands, then roll in the extra coconut.
Pop in the fridge for 1 hour to set.

These can be eaten straight away or kept in the fridge and enjoyed over the next 3-4 days. They can be taken anywhere in a small storage container.

Serving size - 2 or 3 daily.
They can also be frozen.