

SEPTEMBER 2026 WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

MANAGING MENOPAUSE

The transition to menopause (a point in time when a woman has gone 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period) often comes with physical and mental challenges. This month's newsletter is about helping women thrive through this transition.



"Every woman, everywhere, should have access to information, care and support she needs to navigate menopause with dignity..." World Health Organization

SEPTEMBER FEATURED ARTICLES

UNDERSTANDING PERIMENOPAUSE

NATURAL REMEDIES

FUELING FOR MENOPAUSE

MANAGING MENOPAUSE



ELEVATE YOUR EVERYDAY: ONE HABIT AT A TIME

The National Menopause Checklist captures both physical and psychological changes a woman might experience during this transition. Track symptoms to guide discussions with your doctor.

Seek Ways to Reduce Stress

Taking even two minutes to breathe can help reduce stress if you are feeling overwhelmed.

Try this 2-minute exercise.

BEWELL@WORK WORKSHOP

September 16th @ 11:00am to 12:00pm

Join us and Dr. Jennie Lowell, MD, FACOG, an OB/GYN from Maitri Healthcare for **"The Menopause/ Perimenopausal Transition-An Introduction to the Basics."**

Learn about common symptoms and therapies to alleviate them.

REGISTER

BE WELL VT BLOG

Learn About Menopause & Manopause

The Be Well VT blog addresses:

10 Essential Things to Know About Menopause
&
Manopause: How Men Experience Hormone Decline



Check out our **Blue Sky VT DAYS** to learn more about free events for all Vermonters



Understanding perimenopause

Before a woman reaches menopause, she first goes through perimenopause. It is a time of adjustment as the body shifts away from the reproductive years. Preparing for these changes allows you to plan how to manage symptoms and find support.



WHAT IS PERIMENOPAUSE?

Perimenopause is the period of time when a woman's body is gradually transitioning to menopause. It signals the end of the reproductive years and involves many physical and hormonal changes. When a woman's period has been absent for a full 12 months, she has reached the end of perimenopause and is in post menopause.

Every woman's experience of perimenopause is different. Perimenopause can last for as little as four months to as long as ten years. The average length is about four to eight years. Many women begin perimenopause in their mid-forties though it can begin as late as their mid-fifties or as early as their mid-thirties.



SYMPTOMS

- Irregular or skipped periods
- Heavier or lighter periods
- Needing to urinate more frequently
- Hot flashes
- Vaginal dryness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Mood changes
- Changes in sexual desire
- PMS-like symptoms
- Trouble concentrating
- Headaches

Manage Symptoms

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Exercise regularly and include weight training at least two days a week to protect bone health.
- Watch for hot flash triggers such as alcohol or coffee.
- Establish healthy sleep habits.
- Seek ways to reduce stress, such as meditation, tai chi, or yoga.



TREATMENT

If symptoms are severe, your doctor may recommend additional treatment such as:

- Antidepressants to stabilize mood
- Low-dose birth control for irregular or heavy periods
- Hormone therapy to manage symptoms
- OTC or prescription medicine to address vaginal dryness or painful sex



PREGNANT DURING PERIMENOPAUSE

Fertility naturally declines during perimenopause; however, it is still possible to conceive. The ovaries release fewer eggs, and fertility hormones gradually decrease, causing periods to become irregular. But, as long as you continue to have periods, it means you are still ovulating, and pregnancy is possible.





Natural remedies for menopause symptoms

Menopause symptoms range from annoying to nearly unbearable. Hot flashes, mood changes and sleep problems are just a few things that come with this transition.

Some women get relief from their menopause symptoms with complementary or “natural” approaches. Here’s what you should know about these remedies.



ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture involves stimulating specific points on the body. Usually, a practitioner will insert thin needles into the surface of the skin. Some studies have found acupuncture lowered the frequency and severity of hot flashes. But other studies have found no benefit.

If you decide to try acupuncture, make sure you use a licensed and experienced practitioner. They should only use sterile, single-use needles.



HYPNOTHERAPY

Hypnotherapy is when a provider uses hypnosis for health reasons. During a hypnotherapy session, your attention is concentrated and focused. You’ll have a stronger response to things that your provider says.

Some evidence suggests that hypnotherapy can provide relief from hot flashes. Hypnosis is generally safe if a trained, licensed health care provider performs it. But if you have any mental health conditions, ask a provider before trying hypnotherapy.



MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Mindfulness meditation is a mental training exercise. It means you completely focus on what’s happening in the moment. It might include breathing, guided imagery or other techniques.

Some evidence suggests that mindfulness meditation training helps menopausal women with:

- How much hot flashes bothered them
- Anxiety
- Sleep quality
- Stress
- Overall quality of life

Meditation is generally safe. But ask a doctor before trying it if you have any physical or mental health conditions.



HERBS FOR MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

Some studies have shown benefits to taking herbs for menopause. But others found that they didn’t help and could even be dangerous.

Many supplements can interfere with medicines or cause problems if you have health conditions. In some cases, herbal supplements may contain things that aren’t listed on the label.

Always talk to your health care provider before taking any herbal or vitamin supplement.

Sources: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office on Women’s Health



Fueling for menopause

The transition to menopause is a natural part of aging for women. It causes changes in your body and often in your lifestyle, too. But even with the hot flashes and sleep disruptions, the power of good nutrition remains constant!



DIETARY SHIFTS FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION

- Focus on a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. These nutritional powerhouses provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that your body needs.
- Include lean protein sources like chicken, fish, beans, lentils, and tofu in your meals. Protein helps maintain muscle mass, which can decrease during menopause.
- Don't fear all fats! Choose healthy fats like those found in avocados, nuts, and olive oil. These fats can help manage cholesterol levels and keep you full longer.
- Calcium is crucial for strong bones, and its importance increases with menopause as bone density may decline. Include low-fat dairy products, leafy greens, and calcium-fortified foods in your diet.
- Excessive sugar intake can contribute to weight gain and blood sugar fluctuations. And too much salt can raise blood pressure. Opt for natural flavors and use herbs and spices to add zest to your meals.



FOOD CHOICES FOR COMMON SYMPTOMS

- **Hot flashes:** Certain foods like spicy dishes, caffeine, and alcohol can trigger hot flashes. Moderating your intake of these triggers may help manage their frequency.
- **Mood swings:** Opt for foods rich in B vitamins and complex carbohydrates, which can help regulate blood sugar and contribute to a balanced mood.
- **Weight management:** Menopause can lead to weight gain. Maintaining healthy portion sizes and focusing on nutrient-dense foods can help you manage your weight.
- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water throughout the day keeps you energized and helps your body function optimally.
- **Listen to your body:** Pay attention to how different foods make you feel and adjust your diet accordingly.
- **Consult a registered dietitian:** For personalized guidance and meal plans, consider consulting a registered dietitian who can help tailor your diet to your specific needs.

Managing Menopause



Women go through many physical and emotional changes during the transition to menopause.

Along with some common challenges, every woman has experiences that are unique to them.

Men: Learn about menopausal symptoms and talk about them with your female partner. Be patient. Ask how they feel and how you can help, including talking through treatment options.

Women: Check in with your female friends. Suggest distracting or relaxing activities to do together. If you are in the transition, share what you are going through, including how others can help.





2-minute stress reliever

Regular deep breathing practice can significantly enhance your ability to manage stress, promote relaxation, improve focus, and enhance your overall well-being.



2-MINUTE EXERCISE



- **Locate a quiet space:** Go to a comfortable and peaceful environment where you will be free from distractions. This can be a private office, your car, or even a quiet corner in a park.
- **Assume a comfortable position:** Sit or stand comfortably with your back straight and shoulders relaxed. You may close your eyes if it enhances the calming effect.
- **Deep inhalation:** Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose for a count of four seconds. Focus on feeling your abdomen expand as you breathe in. This signifies diaphragmatic breathing, the most effective stress reduction technique.
- **Breath retention:** Hold your breath for two seconds, allowing the air to fill your lungs completely.
- **Exhale:** Slowly release the breath through your mouth for a count of six seconds, feeling your abdomen contract as you exhale. Pursed-lip breathing, where you slightly purse your lips as you exhale, can further enhance the relaxation response.
- **Repeat the cycle:** Repeat by inhaling for 4 seconds, hold for 2 seconds, and exhale for 6 seconds. Try to gradually increase to 5 minutes.