

What To Eat For That

A Sister's Guide to Relieving the Worst
Perimenopausal Symptoms with Food



*"Delicious and satisfying. You'll wonder why
you ever ate without this guide."*

by Deborah Hill, CHHC, AADP

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Your Perimenopausal
Food Guide

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I'M SO EXCITED TO SHARE THIS GUIDE WITH YOU!



It's the first in a series of three pieces I designed to help you make your perimenopausal years the best time in your life so far. First, let me share a little of my story with you so that you get to know me better and understand why I do this.

"You need to come get me or I'm going to die."

On the only day I ever asked my husband to come home from work, I truly believed that. Within 2 hours of kissing my husband goodbye that morning, everything "left" me in ways you don't want to know about. When I got to the ER, the nurse was astonished to find that my blood sugar was only 33. "Permanent brain damage begins at 30. You were about 10 minutes from a coma," she said. The virus was certainly aggressive!

You see, I was a graphic artist who chose to stay home with our kids and help my husband grow his landscape construction business. I carried the typical extra 5-10 lbs. of baby weight that just wouldn't come off. I was a baker, and loved making bread, cookies, muffins – this was the easiest thing to grab when I was hungry.

That fateful day in 2003 changed my entire life, though. As the following years passed, I learned so much about nutrition, from why my diet choices actually weakened my immune system and took my gall bladder, to how to keep myself healthy using holistic methods. I graduated from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, and discovered that I was entering perimenopause with a vengeance.

FROM TABOO TO YAHOO!

So, I took my education and applied it to my issues, helping my clients as well. I realized that the “taboo” surrounding this phase of life is still quite strong. We might complain, or talk quietly about treatments, share tears once in a while. But mostly we still silently endure the symptoms.

Today, we are working to help our culture understand and respect this phase of a woman’s life. Many women are mystified, and men, too! (Many men really feel left out, and shunned from the knowledge and understanding.) The pendulum is swinging back the other way, though. Now, while we have a wealth of information, we are challenged to know the best way to apply that information, and use it to help create lifetime health for our sisters and more open communication among the generations.

That's why I wrote this for you.

And why I am breaking the stigma, the silence, and bringing holistic knowledge every sister can use to help herself live these years as the best years of our lives. I hope you enjoy these delicious guides and join us on the journey to our best days yet!



Deborah Hill is a Certified Holistic Health Coach, specializing in perimenopausal and menopausal issues. While not a doctor, she has over 15 years experience in the field, offering her research in holistic methods to bring women together using good food, proper supplementation and lots of support. She is a curious and brave adventurer, finding new ways to enjoy every day, including acroyoga and baking. She speaks to groups of all sizes who are interested in using nutrition to manage perimenopausal issues..

Sometimes all a sister needs is to walk to the kitchen pantry or fridge and pull out something to eat that will make you feel better.

And, knowing what to eat - and when to eat it, is important. There's less need to run right to prescriptions and deeper "interventions", when you have these simple ideas at your fingertips.

HOT FLASHES/NIGHT SWEATS/CHILLS



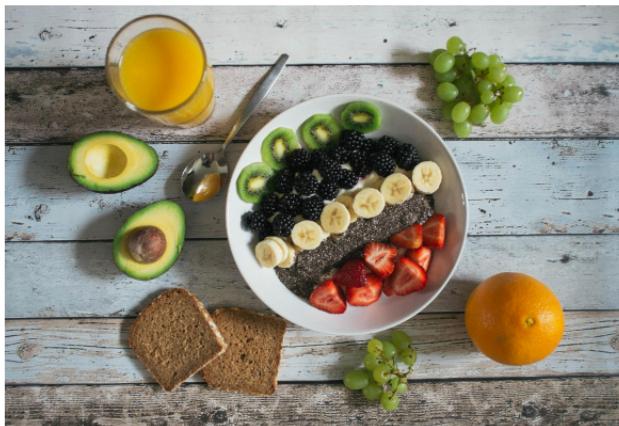
WHY IT HAPPENS

These are worsened by blood sugar spikes and drops, as well as sudden hormonal shifts.

The hypothalamus is the body's thermometer, and reacts to slight changes in hormonal shifts, especially as our estrogen drops.

While it is not known exactly what causes hot flashes, we do know that slowing the flow of sugars into the bloodstream gives us more control over their occurrence, duration and severity. We have two tools for this that I'll show you here - fiber-rich foods and leafy greens and vegetables.

WHAT TO EAT TO RELIEVE HOT FLASHES NIGHT SWEATS/CHILLS



FIBER-RICH FOODS

Slowing the digestion time slows the absorption of sugars into the bloodstream, giving you more stable energy and lowering spikes and sudden drops in blood sugar.

- Beans and legumes
- Nuts and seeds
- Whole grains
- Nuts and seeds, like walnuts, almonds, and chia or flax seeds, have even more blood sugar-regulating nutrients going for them, since their protein and healthy fat further help slow down digestion.

HOW TO EAT THEM

- Make a trail mix and eat a handful a day
- Add some beans or legumes to your salads and soups
- Enjoy oatmeal again! Just try it with a slow-acting sweetener like xylitol or stevia, some nuts and berries.
- Put them in smoothies
- Make delicious puddings with chia seeds

WHAT TO EAT TO RELIEVE HOT FLASHES NIGHT SWEATS/CHILLS



LEAFY GREEN VEGETABLES

High in fiber and low in carbohydrates, leafy greens and low-starch vegetables also contain lots of minerals, which enrich the blood and keep it from becoming too acidic. Salad is good, but at this stage of life you may prefer to cook your leafy greens with a little garlic, some olive oil to help transport minerals, and a squeeze of lemon to help release those minerals for our use.

LEAFY GREENS

Spinach
Bok Choy
Collard Greens
Dinosaur Kale

LOW-STARCH VEGETABLES

Broccoli
Kohlrabi
Celery root
Radishes
Cauliflower
Fennel root

Mix one or two low-starch veggies with onion, garlic and sauté in a little olive oil, finish with lemon or balsamic vinegar and voila! Delicious!

It happens at the worst of times,
and all too often...

BLOATING



WHY IT HAPPENS

There's never a good time to feel bloated. But it happens so often now. Progesterone controls the stretch reflexes in our lungs, intestines, anywhere that needs to expand and contract. When progesterone lowers, our peristalsis (the action that moves our food through our digestive system) slows.

If that's not bad enough, we get a one-two punch with less digestive enzymes in our stomachs. Our livers work extremely hard at this time of life to keep up with the hormonal demands, digestion can take second place sometimes.

WHAT TO EAT TO RELIEVE BLOATING



- Fennel seeds (chew on a few or make tea with them) - relieves gas bubbles, relaxes GI spasms, allowing you to deflate.
- Asparagus - containing both pre-and probiotics, this will fight bloat AND help you keep the weight off
- Olive oil - Little black dress night? No problem. Add a little olive oil to your fav veggie (asparagus anyone?) and you'll fit into it.
- Pineapple - Lots of fiber plus a mild diuretic effect, this fruit helps reduce colonic inflammation that can be a cause of bloating.
- Kiwi - One cause of bloating can be constipation. Kiwis pack a powerful punch in a small package. Hydrating, loads of fiber, plus a good amount of potassium gets the bowels moving.

Whether its every afternoon at 2, or right when you need to beat your deadline, suddenly you crash...

FATIGUE



WHY IT HAPPENS

Hormone fluctuations happen at any moment during perimenopause and menopause. This drains our energy quickly, often resulting in sudden “crashing” fatigue. Be mindful of when you choose to eat something sweet, keeping it for evening after dinner. That way you won’t get the blood sugar rush and the sudden drop that often sends us for more quick fixes.

Proteins to the rescue! Think protein first for each time you eat. Add in seasonal fruits and vegetables for juicy vitamins and minerals to revive you.

Also, healthy fats slow the entrance of sugar into the bloodstream, plus give us focus and help our livers to create much-needed hormones without stressing, causing further fatigue.

WHAT TO EAT TO RELIEVE FATIGUE



- Lean proteins, such as chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, protein powders
- In-season fruits and vegetables
- Nuts and seeds, such as pumpkin, almonds, pecans, sunflower
- Whole grains, like oatmeal



- Chia seeds - so powerful they deserve a spotlight of their own! Fiber-filled, complex carbs, and chock-full of healthy fats (4,800 mg. Omega-3's in 2T), these powerhouses added to a smoothie or yogurt will give you a great energy boost without all that draining caffeine.

Oh don't we all hate this part?! As our estrogen lowers, cortisol gets more free reign. Estrogen is the "police officer" for our cortisol, which is called upon for daily processes in the body, as well as responding to the stressors we have. Cortisol also helps to make more estrogen by putting fat on us, in response to the body's cry for the estrogen it's used to getting. So, must we get fatter to make more estrogen. Argh! What's a sister to do?

WEIGHT GAIN



WHY IT HAPPENS

Something to think about while you are mediating the weight gain - our bodies are so intelligently built that they know how to protect us from osteoporosis and osteopenia, and many more detriments to aging. The extra weight is an aid in protection against these diseases.

Another bonus - we actually look better, with smoother skin with a few pounds more as we age. How much should we gain, if at all? Susun Weed, author of "The New Menopausal Years", states that about 5 to 10 pounds over your usual optimal weight is all you need. So, here's how we maintain our weight over the course of your menopausal years so we still feel gorgeous...

WHAT TO EAT TO MANAGE WEIGHT



- Proteins - Again?! Yes! Proteins stabilize your blood sugar, reduce cravings, and sustain energy. You won't feel the need to snack as much, and will choose better nutrition when you do want a snack. Protein first!
- Berries - High in fiber to keep you full longer and lower cholesterol, these delicious treats contain antioxidants which lower inflammation, keeping you from higher cortisol and added pounds.
- Leafy Greens - High in fiber, plus rich in minerals. Minerals keep your body working at peak levels, and fight inflammation and weight gain.
- High potassium foods - Apricots, avocados, bananas, sweet potatoes, beans, pumpkin seeds. Why? Anytime you regulate blood pressure, you help ease inflammation, lowering cortisol and easing the weight concerns.

Good food, lifestyle choices, and regular exercise help you stay strong, feel great, and help you keep your gorgeous figure.

You can't get comfortable in your own skin anymore. It just itches, so you scratch, and then realize you've done some damage! What's going on? What can you do?

ITCHY SKIN



WHY IT HAPPENS

Ugh, a sister's skin can just ITCH! Estrogen is an important contributor to the condition of the skin, and when it fluctuates and drops, the elasticity and support of our skin suffers.

Changes to the skin can make it feel itchy. Dry, itchy skin is just not comfortable.

Besides avoiding long, hot showers, smoking and losing sleep, we can find relief in the kitchen pantry. Certain foods may change the texture of skin, by treating the underlying loss of moisture and collagen from the outer layers.

Let's take a look at some foods that are a delicious way to softer, smoother skin...

WHAT TO EAT TO RELIEVE ITCHY SKIN



- Oranges and Papayas - Vitamin C helps us produce collagen, which gives structure to the skin. Try freezing papaya and blending it with a little water or nut milk for a delicious frozen dessert.
- Sweet potato - Foods high in Vitamin A help repair skin damage. Try some sautéed in a little olive oil for breakfast.
- Avocado - Foods high in Omega 3's help soften dry skin and plump it up. Plump skin is more protected than thin skin.
- Beef, crab, beans, oysters - all high in zinc, which helps soothe and repair skin and protect it from future abuse.

It's important to have a nutrition plan that includes lots of Omega 3 and B Complex. , Even though it is not food, an adequate intake of water is critical to relieving the dryness that happens as our estrogen lowers.

AM I IN PERIMENOPAUSE?



if you are between 39 and 60, here's a few questions to help you understand whether you are in your perimenopausal or menopausal journey. These might get quite personal, but being honest will help you so much more.

Take a deep breath and grab a pen, here we go...

PHYSICAL

- Do you find yourself grabbing coffee and anything handy to eat, "just for now", only to be exhausted and hungry a few minutes to an hour later?
- Do you find yourself ravenous some days, and totally not hungry other days?
- Did your exercise time fall off your calendar?
- Is your sleep disrupted more than a couple times per month?
- Have you found that your periods are changing - heavier, flooding, lighter, closer, missing, pain changed, duration changed?
- Are you getting headaches/migraines more often?
- Do you find that you suffer bloating, constipation and heartburn more often, and for no apparent reason?
- Are you becoming sensitive to soaps, foods, smells, and/or the feel of some fabrics against your skin?

AM I IN PERIMENOPAUSE?

- Are you gaining a little more weight, despite your best effort?
- Are you beginning to feel a rush of heat through your body once in a while?
- Did your exercise time fall off your calendar?
- Is your hair thinning?
- Are you suffering occasional breakouts on your scalp, face, shoulders, and/or chest?

EMOTIONAL

- Are you moody, snapping at or lecturing your kids and significant other for the smallest things?
- Do you feel overwhelmed by your calendar and “to Do” lists? Do you have multiple lists, by the way, because you fear that you’ll forget that thought or item?
- Is the word right on the tip of your tongue, but you can't seem to find it?
- Are you finding yourself crying at small things, or at nothing, even though you've always considered yourself a practical person?
- Did you lose your libido, or the opposite, do you find yourself with spikes of libido and then experience “deserts”?
- Are you feeling invisible, unappreciated or feeling like you have to press your point to be heard by doctors, loved ones and/or coworkers?



There are more issues during perimenopause. They come and go like the weather. But, these give you a good indication that you are joining the sisterhood in sharing the journey through the next phase of life.



WHAT'S NEXT?

These are the top 5 concerns I hear about from sisters throughout the perimenopausal and menopausal years that can be addressed with foods. They learned to turn to their kitchen pantry, and you will, too! Many times it's all you need to do to help the situation.

Remember, though, that if you don't find relief after trying these ideas, it's important to check with your doctor for deeper interventions. After all, there is no reason to suffer.

This can be the best time of your life!



I have special treats for you, sister, when you

Receive My Newsletter

I'll send you my other two eBooks:

What to Drink for That: Teas for Your Perimenopausal Symptoms

What to Take for That: Supplementation for Your Perimenopausal Symptoms

I'm looking forward to getting to know you better and helping you thrive through perimenopause.

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