

To Eat is a Necessity, but to Eat Intelligently is an Art” Managing Menopause



Nursing

KEYWORDS :

S. Kala Barathi

Professor, Obstetrics & Gynaecological Nursing department Saveetha College of Nursing, Saveetha University, Thandalam, Chennai.—602 105 Tamil nadu.

Dr. Mrs. S. Kalavathi

Principal, Rani Meyammai College Of Nursing, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu.

Postmenopause is the end of a woman's reproductive cycle when she stops having her menstruation period. After menopause a healthy diet can help a woman lessen her menopausal symptoms and fight diseases. If you just recently experience menopause then consider a healthy, well balanced diet accompanied by regular exercises. Postmenopausal women are also at high risk of Breast cancer that's why an antioxidant-rich diet based on Vegetables, Fruits and whole grains is necessary.

The aging process is associated with many changes in hormonal and physiological function, some of which are gender related. In women, one of the most dramatic hormonal changes is the striking reduction in estrogen production that accompanies menopause is the period that has special nutrient requirement.

As we grow older, we face many challenges. Combating chronic diseases and other conditions associated with aging. Menopause symptoms can also be greatly affected by nutrition. With proper eating habits, hot flashes, depression, weight gain and bloating can be decreased. Evaluating diet and nutrition is part of maintaining and enhancing your physical and mental wellbeing as you age.

Calorie

For women between 31 and 50 years old,

- With a sedentary lifestyle, 1800 calories should be plenty
- With a moderately active lifestyle, 2000 calories are appropriate
- With an active lifestyle, 2200 calories are needed

For women over the age of 50

- With a sedentary lifestyle, 1600 calories should be plenty
- With a moderately active lifestyle, 1800 calories are appropriate
- With an active lifestyle, 2000-2200 calories are needed

Watch what you eat and keep fit

Menopause is associated with reducing resting- and physical activity- related energy expenditure and increasing central fat stores (stomach and thighs), which are risky factors for heart disease. To maintain body weight at premenopausal levels, women may need to cut back their caloric intake by 10-15 %, and increase physical activity.

Although menopause presents special challenges to women, consuming adequate amounts of calcium, limiting animal fats, eating plenty of whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, and frequent exercises can help ensure women a healthful passage through menopause.

Foods to fight Menopause Symptoms

A good diet during menopause is the one we should follow to promote healthy living during any time in our life. If it is menopause that makes you change your diet for feeling better from the inside out, that's great. Phytoestrogens act like a weak estrogen that may ease the symptoms of menopause. Good sources of boron and estrogen include: Fruits (plums, prunes, strawberries, apples, tomatoes, pears, and grapes, orange), Veggies (cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, cucumbers, pears, lettuce, onions, soybeans, sweet potatoes). Beans are good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals including folic acid, minerals, and vitamin B-6. For menopause, they provide omega-3 fatty acids ("the right fats") which may help relieve the hot flashes. Other sources

of omega-3s include fish, olive and canola oils.

Diet rich in vegetables, grains, fruits and calcium and lower in fat, alcohol, calories and caffeine is a wise choice for women at mid life. Estrogen level decline during menopause and this reduction makes bone marrow susceptible to calcium loss. Increase calcium intake and moderate weight-bearing exercise are essential to minimize the development of osteoporosis.

Driving Down Estrogen Levels may increase cholesterol. Prior to menopause, estrogen helps protect a woman's arterial walls from fat and cholesterol build up by raising the levels of HDL ("good") cholesterol and lowering the levels of LDL ("bad") cholesterol. As menopause drives down estrogen levels, this protection disappears and leaves women as vulnerable to heart disease as men. To compensate for this loss of protection, women should adopt a diet that is low in total and saturated fats and cholesterol and high in complex carbohydrates, such as grains, fruits and vegetables. Breast, colon and lung cancer are other significant health risks for menopausal women. A diet rich in the anti-oxidant vitamins A, C and E and beta carotene may have a cancer-protective effect. Many foods containing antioxidants are also important sources of dietary fiber, helping to alleviate the constipation often noted during menopause.

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Healthy eating can prevent or reduce certain conditions that may develop during and after menopause

Dietary guidelines

Eat a variety of foods to get all the nutrients you need. Since women's diets are often low in iron and calcium, follow these guidelines.

Calcium: Women are at a greater risk of developing osteoporosis, so it is important to get plenty of calcium. Eating and drinking 2-4 servings of dairy products and calcium-rich foods a day will help ensure that you are getting enough calcium in your daily diet. Calcium is found in dairy products, clams, sardines, broccoli and legumes. Be careful not to take more than 2,000mg of calcium a day as it may increase the chance of developing kidney problems.

The extra urinary calcium loss during the postmenopausal period is 30mg per day. As calcium absorption in this age group is lower it is recommended to increase the intake from 1000mg to 1300mg per day.

People aged 51 to 70 should have 1000 IU of vitamin D₃ daily. Vitamin D intake helps with mood disorders and also keeps the bones healthy.

Protein: It is an essential part of healthy diet, but eating lots of protein causes calcium loss that could lead to a decrease in bone density and osteoporosis.

Iron: Eating at least 3 servings of iron-rich foods a day will

ensure enough iron in your daily life. Iron is found in lean red meat, fish, eggs, green leafy vegetables, almonds and enriched grain products.

Fruits and vegetables: Include at least 2-4 servings of fruits and 3-5 servings of vegetables in your daily diet.

Drink plenty of water: Drink at least 8- 10 glasses of water a day.

Maintain a healthy weight: Lose weight if you are over weight. Eat more good fats: Saturated fat and Trans fat – the bad fats – increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. But poly unsaturated and monounsaturated fats – the good fats – contribute to good health and helps maintain healthy weight.

Foods rich in healthy fats include:

- Olive and canola oil
- Fish and seafood
- Olives
- Peanut butter
- Nuts
- Avocados

Omega - 3 fatty acids helps with cramps. Taking fish oil or flax-seed oil eases PMS symptoms.

Foods to reduce menopausal symptoms

Plant- based foods that contain Isoflavones (plant estrogens) work in the body like a weak form of estrogen and may help relieve menopausal symptoms in some women. Some may lower cholesterol levels and have been suggested to relieve hot flashes and night sweats.

Women with a history of breast cancer should avoid high intake of soy products as the naturally occurring estrogens in soy may contribute to development of some types of breast cancer.

Conclusion: Varieties of foods are important in maintaining good nutrient levels. Know which foods to add to your meals and which to eliminate.

Eat more of the right fats; eat more fruits, vegetables and beans while avoiding the high- fat, high-sugar foods. Following this simple approach to good nutrition during menopause and beyond will ensure a wholesome, healthy lifestyle

“The doctor of the future will no longer treat the human frame with drugs, but rather will cure and prevent disease with nutrients”.

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