PERIMENOPAUSE CHECKLIST

HOLISTIC HEALTH SUPPORT

Created by Cindy Willems

Perimenopause is a natural stage of a woman's life that will begin to mark the end of her reproductive years. This can happen over 8-10 years and be accompanied by uncomfortable symptoms, such as night sweats, weight gain, hot flashes or mood changes. *What can you do to help?* Here is a simple checklist to support your body. If you have any questions or need more help reach out to us at info@midlifevitality.ca.

How to support your organs most affected in perimenopause:

BONES	As estrogen declines so does the vital substance for your bones, so it's important to reduce things that rob your bones of nutrients. This includes stress, high salt diet, poor diet, not enough exercise, alcohol, pop, too much caffeine, smoking, some medication.
BOWELS	Fluctuating hormones can wreak havoc to your digestive system, causing gas and bloating. If you are experiencing this try: • slowing down how fast you eat • avoid inflammatory food triggers for a while, including gluten and dairy • adding a good shelf stable multi strain probiotic daily
ADRENALS	Stress is a huge component of perimenopause and the more cortisol your body makes to help you deal with the stress the less estrogen is made. This can make your symptoms worse and waistline grow. For some women adding a supplement to support adrenal fatigue or doing mindful meditation is helpful.
BRAIN	Your brain is the first organ to be affected as estrogen declines. Specifically your hypothalamus, responsible for controlling your internal temperature, leading to hot flashes. It also affects your sleep and wake cycle, leading to insomnia. *What can you do?* Set up a good sleep routine in a cool, dark bedroom.
BLOODWORK	Unfortunately blood tests can't determine if you are in perimenopause, as your hormones fluctuate constantly. There is the opportunity, however to check on your thyroid function, vitamin and mineral needs and blood glucose levels.
LIVER	Your liver is responsible for breaking down old hormones, used blood cells, metabolizing your food and clearing toxins, but it can get a little sluggish or overworked. Adding cruciferous foods can help to support your liver function.

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FAQ about Perimenopause...

How do I know if I'm in perimenopause?

If you are in your 40s, experiencing irregular periods, mood swings, headaches, nightsweats, insomnia, anxiety, depression or digestive issues chances are you may be in perimenopause.

Why am I struggling to focus or remember things during perimenopause?

According to Lisa Mosconi, neuroscientist, the change in estrogen begins to affect your brain's hippocampus, the area responsible for your memory. As your brain adjusts to the reduction of estrogen you may also experience some "brain fog", tiredness or inability to focus.

Why am I gaining weight during perimenopause?

Weight gain is common, partly because your body is trying to regulate your insulin response to blood sugar levels as your hormones change. The other reason why weight gain happens around your waistline has to do with consistently high cortisol levels from a constant response to stress. Reduce the stress and often weight loss is easier.

What foods should I focus on to support me body in perimenopause?

A whole food diet is important, free from pesticides, artificial flavours, preservatives and artificial colour. It is also important to avoid stimulants and alcohol because that will affect your liver's ability to function properly.

What kind of exercise is important during perimenopause?

Regular exercise is important to stay strong and flexible, but make sure not to overexercise. Going through all these changes is stressful enough and overexercising will not only tax your joints but add more stress into your already busy life.

Are there any treatment options available for me?

YES! Talk to your health care provider about ways to help reduce symptoms related to perimenopause. This may include looking into hormone replacement therapy (if appropriate for you). Holistic treatments such as acupuncture, traditional Chinese herbs and bodywork can help improve your symptoms, reduce tension in your muscles, calm your nervous system, improve your digestion and help you sleep better. If you live in Toronto please reach out to my clinic at www.womenshealthcentre.ca for help.

"I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship" - Louisa May Alcott

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