



Lifestyle

Evidence suggests that a healthy lifestyle helps minimize some of the symptoms and issues that arise with menopause and perimenopause. By paying careful attention to diet, exercise, weight and stress levels, and by limiting your consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine, you can make your transition as comfortable as possible.

Diet and weight management

Not all women gain weight in perimenopause and post-menopause, but it is not uncommon. As we age, the rate at which our bodies burn energy and fat declines. A balanced diet and regular, moderate exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight. If you experience persistent weight gain leading up to or after menopause, consult a health-care provider.

Exercise and stress reduction

Weight-bearing activities build bone mass. By adding these to your exercise routine, you can help reduce your risk of osteoporosis, a skeletal disease that reduces bone mass. These activities may include:

- Brisk walking
- Low-impact aerobics
- Dancing
- Weight training

Women dealing with menopause are also encouraged to practice stretching and strengthening exercises to keep muscles limber and toned. Activities like yoga offer added benefits of relaxation.

Heart health

Women's risk of heart disease increases after menopause. Following are some strategies to help you protect your heart's health:

- Quitting smoking
- Checking blood pressure regularly

- Checking blood sugar and cholesterol levels
- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Taking part in regular exercise—30 minutes three times a week or more
- Maintaining a healthy weight

Quitting smoking

In addition to its well-known health risks, smoking can increase the risks associated with some treatments for perimenopause and menopause. For example, contraceptive pills, frequently prescribed for certain menopause symptoms, are not recommended for those who smoke or use nicotine patches or gum.

Additional resources

General Health

Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/chn-rcs/index-eng.php>

Diet

Canada's Food Guide

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>

Physical Fitness

Canada's Physical Activity Guide

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/>

Stairway to Health

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sth-evs/english/>

Mental Health Resources

Canadian Mental Health Association

<http://www.cmha.ca/bins/index.asp>

Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments

<http://www.canmat.org/>

Mood Disorders Society of Canada
<http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca/>

National Network for Mental Health
<http://www.nnmh.ca/>

Stop Smoking Resources

Health Canada
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/quit-cesser/index_e.html

Health Canada
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/pubs/workshop_healthyaging/pdf/tobacco_e.pdf

The SOGC has developed a collection of information materials for women with menopause-related concerns, however your health-care provider remains the best front-line resource to answer your questions.

Visit www.menopauseandu.ca for more information about menopause and other women's health issues.