

GUIDE TO

EATING WELL

DURING THE MENOPAUSE

Helping women eat well during the menopause,
with the Ultimate Cholesterol Lowering Plan[®] (UCLP[®])



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GUIDE TO **EATING WELL** DURING THE MENOPAUSE

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OVER 15 MILLION WOMEN IN THE UK ARE AT MENOPAUSAL OR POST-MENOPAUSAL STAGE OF LIFE

It can be a challenging time, as changes in hormone levels bring about significant changes to your body. Symptoms such as hot flushes, sleep disturbance, depression and changes in skin and hair quality are commonly experienced.

The following information provides insights on how your body may change when going through the menopause, along with diet and lifestyle advice on how to manage short- and long-term effects.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE MOST IMPORTANT LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE MENOPAUSE OFTEN GO UNNOTICED AS THEIR IMPACT IS NOT FELT IMMEDIATELY. A LOSS OF OESTROGEN MEANS REDUCED PROTECTION TO HEART AND BONE HEALTH, WHICH, IF LEFT UNTREATED, CAN SEVERELY AFFECT LONG-TERM HEALTH.

The UCLP[®] is a dietary plan that has been designed to lower cholesterol and help heart health. The dietary principles of the UCLP[®] can also support bone health, as well as help meet the key nutrients required for women going through the menopause – offering assistance for many other menopausal symptoms.



It is also important to seek advice from your GP or a menopause specialist to help you manage menopausal symptoms, as medical support can be essential. They will be able to advise on the best combination of medical treatment and lifestyle approaches for you.



WHAT IS THE MENOPAUSE?

The menopause is a natural stage of a woman's life, when the level of sex hormones (mainly oestrogen) in the body fall.

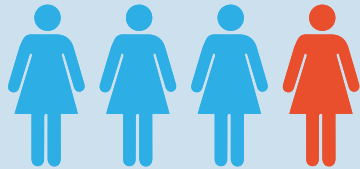
Menopause is defined as the point 12 months after you stop having periods. However, the term usually includes the perimenopause – a time of changeable hormone levels leading up to this point; as well as post-menopause – the first few years afterwards. It usually starts between the ages of 45 to 55, but early menopause (before the age of 40 years) also occurs in around one percent of women.

MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS

During the menopause, your body undergoes many transitions resulting from hormone changes.

AROUND 80 PERCENT OF WOMEN EXPERIENCE HEALTH CONCERNS OR SYMPTOMS

25 PERCENT
HAVE SEVERE SYMPTOMS
AFFECTING THEIR
QUALITY OF LIFE



The range and duration of symptoms varies but may start during the perimenopause and can continue anywhere from a few months to several years after your periods stop. Around 10 percent of women continue to experience symptoms for more than 10 years after menopause.

CHANGES TO YOUR HEART AND BONE HEALTH OCCUR SILENTLY – OFTEN WITHOUT YOU NOTICING THEM. IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE AWARE OF THIS AND HAVE REGULAR CHECK-UPS AT YOUR GP SURGERY TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE KEEPING HEALTHY.

HEART HEALTH



The protection oestrogen provides to the heart is lost during the menopause – making heart health one of the biggest health issues for menopausal women:



Cholesterol levels increase, which, over time, causes damage to blood vessels carrying blood to the heart and brain

- o 59% of women aged 45-54 years have raised cholesterol levels and 66% of post-menopausal women (55-64 years). Before the menopause (35-44 years) 37% have high cholesterol levels*



The rate of body fat gain increases and **where you store fat shifts**. You may begin to store fat more around your middle and around your organs, including the heart – leading you to become 'apple' rather than 'pear' shaped. This can happen even if you are not overweight. The pancreas may also be affected, impairing how well you control blood sugars; high blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels carrying blood to the heart and brain



Blood pressure increases - high blood pressure will also impact on heart health

* NHS Digital. Health Survey for England 2019. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2019>

MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS BEYOND HEART HEALTH

BONE HEALTH

Bone is living tissue, continually regenerating as old bone is replaced with new. After the age of around 30, there is more bone breakdown than bone formation – with the result that bones gradually become less dense and lose their strength.

Menopause accelerates the rate of bone loss, due to the fluctuating levels of oestrogen and other sex hormones, and the frailty of your bones increases. This is most prominent around the perimenopausal stage through to one to two years after your last period. After this time, bone loss continues, but at a steadier rate.

Don't forget, just like heart health, changes to your bone health occur without you noticing, so discuss with your GP.

HOT FLUSHES

Fluctuating hormone levels can disrupt both heat flow in the body and the control of your internal thermostat. Around 80 percent of women experience uncomfortable hot flushes and/or night sweats, which impact on quality of life and disrupt sleep. Many of these symptoms are more pronounced during the perimenopausal and early menopause years, but some women can continue to experience these for a number of years into the menopause.

HAIR & SKIN

Oestrogen and progesterone support hair growth, so when the hormones reduce during the menopause, hair quality can be affected. Hair thinning and loss can also be exacerbated by stress.

Skin quality is influenced by oestrogen levels too. Oestrogen helps the skin to retain moisture and maintain collagen levels, keeping it supple and elastic. When oestrogen reduces during the menopause, skin tends to become drier and less elastic.

MENTAL & COGNITIVE FUNCTION

Hormonal fluctuations can impact directly on the brain, causing changes to the way you feel and think. Some women experience increased fatigue, irritability, low mood and/or anxiety, as well as difficulties with concentration or memory.

MUSCLE MASS

Muscle mass decreases faster during the perimenopausal stages and for up to two years after your last period. Muscle continues to decline after this period, but at a steadier rate.

JOINT HEALTH

Some women experience joint pain and stiffness. This is a combination of wear and tear of joints as well as inflammatory conditions such as arthritis that can develop as we age. Reduced oestrogen affects the formation of collagen, which is needed to form cartilage – the shock absorber for your joints.

SLEEP DISTURBANCE

Sleep disturbance is common during the menopause. Poor quality of sleep can be made worse by body temperature changes and night sweats, as well as by anxiety and stress.

REMEMBER: IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING TROUBLING MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEEK ADVICE FROM YOUR GP OR A MENOPAUSE SPECIALIST TO HELP YOU MANAGE THEM.

TAKING CONTROL OF THE MENOPAUSE WITH THE UCLP[®]



Menopausal changes are a natural part of the ageing process. Although they cannot be reversed, medical treatment and lifestyle approaches can help reduce the severity of symptoms.

The UCLP[®] is a healthy and balanced diet that can support your heart and bone health, as well as providing the right balance of key nutrients that may help with other menopausal symptoms.

Below is an overview of the UCLP[®] and how it can help benefit your heart health. On the following pages, we explain how the UCLP[®] may help with your other troubling menopausal symptoms.

It is important to note that this advice should be used alongside expert personalised assessment and advice from your GP or menopause expert.

THE UCLP[®] FOUNDATIONS REFLECT A BALANCED & HEALTHY DIETARY PLAN TO HELP MANAGE CHOLESTEROL LEVELS & OVERALL HEART HEALTH

- **Prioritise plant food** sources of protein, such as beans, lentils, soya and Quorn™, in place of animal proteins
- **Have less often:** processed meats, cakes, biscuits, fast food etc.
- **Opt for low fat** dairy or soya fortified plant-based alternatives to milk and yogurt

Taking these steps will reduce saturated fat intakes, which helps to manage blood cholesterol levels¹

- **Include** at least one weekly serving of oil-rich fish such as salmon and mackerel
- Use **vegetable oils** and spreads in place of animal fats such as butter

Excellent sources of heart healthy unsaturated fats, including omega-3 fats^{2,3}

- Have at least **five** portions of fruit and vegetables a day

Good sources of vitamin C⁴

- **Avoid high salt foods**, for example processed meats, savoury snacks and fast food

Reducing salt in the diet helps to manage blood pressure⁵

THE UCLP[®] FOUNDATION DIET IS COMPLEMENTED BY THE ADDITION OF FOUR SPECIFIC FOODS

Soya foods such as soya mince, tofu, edamame beans and fortified **soya alternatives to milk and yogurt**. These foods are low in saturated fats¹

Unsalted **nuts** including peanuts: rich in heart healthy unsaturated fats²

Oats and barley: oats, oatcakes, oat cereals and pearl barley. These foods provide a specific type of cholesterol-lowering fibre⁶

Food and drinks fortified with **plant sterols and stanols**, which have been proven to lower cholesterol levels⁷

AS WELL AS DIET, IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP ACTIVE

ALL ACTIVITY IS BENEFICIAL – VARIETY IS KEY – AEROBIC, WEIGHT-BEARING, RESISTANCE (WEIGHT) TRAINING, FLEXIBILITY

THE UCLP[®] FOODS ALSO PROVIDE KEY NUTRIENTS THAT, ALONG WITH EXERCISE, MAY HELP WITH OTHER SYMPTOMS OF THE MENOPAUSE



BONE HEALTH

- Low fat dairy and calcium and vitamin D fortified soya alternatives to milk and yogurt (3 servings daily)
- Beans, lentils

Good sources of calcium and protein^{8,9}

- Wholegrain breakfast cereals such as muesli, shredded wheat or bran flakes
- Wholemeal or wheatgerm bread

Sources of magnesium¹⁰

- Tofu
- Nuts and seeds

Provide protein and magnesium^{9,10}

IN ADDITION TO DIET
KEEPING ACTIVE IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR BONE HEALTH IN PARTICULAR. WEIGHT-BEARING EXERCISE (SUCH AS BRISK WALKING) AND RESISTANCE (WEIGHT) TRAINING HELP STIMULATE BONE FORMATION AND SLOW DOWN BONE LOSS

MOOD, COGNITIVE FUNCTION & SLEEP

- Lean proteins: lean meat, Quorn[™], fish, tofu, nuts, beans and lentils

Good sources of iron and/or zinc for cognitive health^{11,12}

- Wholegrain starchy foods: breakfast cereals, oats, brown rice and wholewheat pasta

Good sources of magnesium to help with mental health¹³

- Oil-rich fish once a week: e.g., sardines, salmon, trout

Omega-3 fats help with brain function¹⁴

- White fish, dairy foods & some fortified plant-based alternatives

Provide iodine, which helps with normal cognition and mood¹⁵

- Fruit and vegetables – at least five a day

Sources of folate and vitamin C, helping mental health^{16, 17}

- Keep well hydrated: two litres of sugar-free fluid per day, ideally water

For normal cognitive function¹⁸

- Keep caffeine to a minimum: choose decaffeinated colas, teas and coffees

The stimulating effects of caffeine can impact mood and sleep

IN ADDITION TO DIET, RELAXATION AND MEDITATION EXERCISES, FOR EXAMPLE YOGA, AS WELL AS GENERAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, CAN HELP TO REDUCE STRESS AND CALM THE MIND

THE UCLP[®] FOODS ALSO PROVIDE KEY NUTRIENTS THAT, ALONG WITH EXERCISE, MAY HELP WITH OTHER SYMPTOMS OF THE MENOPAUSE



HOT FLUSHES & NIGHT SWEATS

- Watch your alcohol and caffeine consumption

Too much can make hot flushes and night sweats worse

- Keep well hydrated

Helps regulate body temperature¹⁹

MUSCLE HEALTH

- Protein foods such as pulses, nuts, seeds, soya, lean meat, fish, Quorn[™] and tofu

Protein helps to build and maintain muscle

TIREDNESS & FATIGUE

- Lean red meat, red kidney beans and lentils, tofu, nuts and seeds
- Fortified wholegrain breakfast cereals, wholemeal/ wheatgerm bread

Sources of iron²⁰; red meat and some fortified cereals also provide vitamin B12²¹

- Low fat dairy food and fortified soya plant-based alternatives
- Nutritional yeast flakes

Provide vitamins B12 and B2^{21, 22}

- Keep well hydrated

Dehydration can cause feelings of tiredness¹⁸

JOINT HEALTH

- Keep to a healthy weight

Excess body weight places strain on joints especially hips and knees

- Fruit and vegetables – at least five a day, including citrus fruits and green vegetables

Vitamin C supports cartilage – your joints' shock absorbers²³

SKIN HEALTH

- Fruit and vegetables – at least five a day: include red/orange vegetables such as sweet potatoes, carrots, squash, citrus fruit, oranges or berries, plus leafy green vegetables

Provide beta-carotene (vitamin A) and vitamin C, which support skin health^{24,25}

- Keep well hydrated

Supports skin health¹⁸

AS WELL AS DIET, IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP ACTIVE DAILY. INCLUDE A MIXTURE OF AEROBIC, WEIGHT BEARING AND RESISTANT EXERCISES AS WELL AS MEDITATIVE AND FLEXIBILITY EXERCISES



USING THE UCLP[®] TO SUPPORT YOU THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE

The UCLP[®] is made up of three steps, is fully flexible and designed to be tailored so it works for YOU.

STEP 1

Getting motivated. Reflecting on your current diet and exploring how you can get motivated and overcome barriers

STEP 2

Building strong foundations for heart health and tackling other menopausal symptoms. Gradually making small but effective changes to your daily diet

STEP 3

Incorporating four key foods to help better manage blood cholesterol levels and heart health

FIND THE FULL UCLP[®] PLAN AND HELPFUL RESOURCES SUCH AS FOOD SWAPS, HEALTHY FATS GUIDE, RECIPES AND MORE AT [HEARTUK.ORG.UK/UCLP](https://www.heartuk.org.uk/uclp)

STEP 1: GETTING MOTIVATED

It's not always easy making changes to the way we eat. Developing a positive mindset and being clear about the benefits you want to achieve can help you succeed.

TOP TIPS:

- Get ready by exploring any barriers that may have stopped you making improvements to your diet in the past – how could you overcome them this time? What's motivating you to make changes now? Write your thoughts down, discuss them with friends or family members. You could even make changes together
- Use the [UCLP[®] checklist](#) to identify the parts of your diet which are already healthy and the specific areas where you can make some improvements

STEP 2: HEALTHY FOUNDATIONS

Using your [UCLP[®] checklist](#) as a basis, decide where you want to focus to build a healthy foundation. Which nutrient-rich foods could you introduce? Which foods could you try to cut back on? Try just one or two changes at a time to create a plan that works for you.

HEART-HEALTHY FATS

A GREAT PLACE TO START

Too much **saturated fat** in the diet can increase your blood cholesterol levels. High blood cholesterol levels have been proven to worsen heart health.

Unsaturated fats when consumed in moderation, have been shown to be beneficial for heart health.²

Therefore, it's not about low fat, but instead, getting the right balance of fats in your diet.

Reducing the intake of saturated fat and replacing it with unsaturated fat is the most beneficial step for improving cholesterol levels and heart health.²



AS ALL FATS PROVIDE CALORIES. IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSUME ALL FATS IN MODERATION.

FATS: THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Saturated fats are predominantly found in animal foods:

all meats, animal fats e.g., butter lard, suet, duck fat, full fat dairy products, cakes, rich biscuits, creamy sauces etc.

Unsaturated fats are predominantly found in plant foods

and oil-rich fish e.g., vegetables oils and spreads, nuts, seeds, avocados and oil-rich fish such as sardines, pilchards, trout, salmon.

The plant fats that break the rules: coconut, palm and shea fats and oils. These vegetable fats have become popular over the last few years, however, unlike most plant fats, these contain very high quantities of saturated fats and should be avoided. Look at the ingredient label of foods to check, as they are used in many products including granolas, bakery products such as biscuits, vegan cheeses, vegan butter and coconut desserts.



SIMPLE SWAPS FOR A BETTER FAT BALANCE

EAT LESS...

- Butter, ghee, lard, suet, hard margarines
- Vegan butter (shea fat) and coconut and palm oil

- Red meat
- Fatty meat
- Processed meat products such as sausages, fatty bacon, salamis, canned meat



- Full fat milk and yogurts
- Canned coconut milk and coconut alternatives to yogurt
- Most cheeses
- Dairy creams
- Coconut alternatives to cream and dairy-free cheeses based on coconut fat/oil



- Cakes and desserts especially pastry, cream and butter-based varieties
- Coconut-based desserts



REPLACE WITH...

- Vegetable spreads and oils such as rapeseed (standard vegetable oil), olive, and soya

- Have more plant food sources of protein like soya mince, beans, lentils, nuts, Quorn™
 - Use to replace half or all the meat in recipes
- Have red meat less frequently and keep portions to no more than 70g cooked weight per person
- Remove all visible fat from meat and skin from poultry before cooking
- Have at least 2 meat-free days every week
- Have fish twice a week – one should be oil-rich e.g., sardines, pilchards, salmon, trout

- Skimmed, 1% fat or semi-skimmed dairy milk
- Fortified unsweetened/low in sugars plant-based drinks: soya, nut or oat
- Low fat/fat-free yogurts or soya alternatives to yogurt
- Lower fat cheeses e.g., cottage cheese, Quark, natural fat-free fromage frais or small portions of 'lighter'/'reduced fat' hard and soft cheeses
- Soya single alternative to cream



- Fruit-based desserts e.g., baked/stewed fruit, fruit crumbles made with vegetable spread, oats, chopped nuts and seeds
- Sugar-free jellies with fruit and low fat custard or soya custard
- Fruit salad
- Low fat or soya alternatives to yogurt with fruit and nuts and/or seeds



MORE SIMPLE SWAPS FOR A BETTER FAT BALANCE

EAT LESS...

- Sweet pastries and doughnuts
- Cookies and rich biscuits with chocolate, coconut and/or with fillings
- Coconut - fresh, dried, desiccated
- All types of chocolate & sweets, especially toffee and fudge
- Crisps, salted snacks
- Sausage rolls and pastry pies
- Creamy or coconut-based curries e.g., Korma, Tikka Masala
- Cheese and cream-based pasta dishes
- Stuffed crust and extra cheese or meat topped pizzas
- Sandwiches with cheese, red meat, processed meat and/or mayo or creamy fillings
- Roasting or frying with butter, lard, other animal fat, vegan butter (shea fat) and palm and coconut oil



REPLACE WITH...

- Plain buns e.g., currant/hot cross and plain or fruit scones
- Plain biscuits e.g., rich tea, ginger nuts
- Oat or wholegrain crackers
- Have less frequently and smaller portions
- Popped corn without salt or sugars
- Potato topped pies
- Tomato sauce, dry and vegetable-based curries e.g., jalfrezi, tikka, dahl
- Tomato sauce-based pasta e.g., arrabiata, tomato and basil
- Thin crust pizzas with vegetable toppings
- Wholemeal or seeded bread, without mayo or creamy dressings, lots of salad and fillings such as hummus, lean chicken, oil-rich fish, egg and falafel
- Use small quantities of vegetable oil e.g., rapeseed or try other cooking methods e.g., boiling, grilling, steaming or a roasting bag



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Fruit and vegetables provide fibre, vitamins and minerals

SOME KEY VITAMINS PROVIDED BY FRUIT & VEGETABLES



Citrus fruit, berries and vegetables such as broccoli, kale, peppers, cabbage are especially high, but most fruit and vegetables are a good source



Good sources include green vegetables such as Brussels sprouts, broccoli, okra and spinach, alongside oranges, strawberries and blackberries



Fruit and vegetables that are red/orange in colour – such as carrots, butternut squash, tomatoes – as well as spinach and kale, are especially rich in beta-carotene, which is converted to vitamin A

DARK GREEN VEGETABLES ALSO PROVIDE THE MINERALS CALCIUM & IRON

e.g. edamame beans, curly kale, young spinach, okra, spring greens and peas

VITAMINS
A & C^{24,25}

IRON &
VITAMIN C^{20,29}

VITAMIN C
& FOLATE^{16,17}

CALCIUM⁸

VITAMIN C⁴

TOP TIPS:

- **All types of fruit and vegetables count** – fresh, frozen, tinned or dried
- **Aim for at least five servings every day.** A serving is about a handful, or three to four tablespoons. For dried fruit, a serving is around a tablespoon. Include some with every meal and as snacks
- **Choose a variety of colours** – they'll each provide different vitamins and minerals



WHOLEGRAINS AND HEALTHY STARCHY FOODS

All starchy foods provide fuel and wholegrain varieties in particular provide magnesium and iron as well as fibre.

Wholegrains include:

- Wholemeal bread
- Oats and oat cakes
- Wholegrain rice and pasta
- Wholegrain breakfast cereals, such as muesli, bran flakes, Weetabix, malted wheats

TOP TIPS:

- Start your day with wholegrain breakfast cereals, including fortified varieties, or enjoy a small bowl as a snack
- Wherever possible, opt for wholemeal or wheatgerm bread, chapattis and wraps
- Swap from white to wholewheat pasta and brown rice

WHOLEGRAIN FORTIFIED BREAKFAST CEREALS, WHOLEGRAIN PASTA AND WHEATGERM BREAD ARE GREAT FOR IRON, WHICH CAN REDUCE TIREDNESS²⁰

MOST WHOLEGRAIN FOODS PROVIDE IRON AND MAGNESIUM WHICH HELP WITH BONE AND MENTAL HEALTH^{10,13}



MORE PLANT FOOD SOURCES OF PROTEIN

For heart health, prioritising plant food sources of protein can help keep saturated fat intakes down. Some proteins, like oil-rich fish and nuts, provide heart-healthy unsaturated fats.²

Consuming enough protein is important for maintaining muscle and bone health.^{9,26} For muscle growth, it's helpful to spread your protein intake out throughout the day.

THE BENEFITS OF PLANT PROTEIN FOODS

- Provide all the essential amino acids, as well as other nutrients such as fibre, vitamins and minerals
- Tend to be lower in saturated fats than animal sources and some provide the beneficial unsaturated fats
- Environmentally friendly compared to animal sources – especially red and processed meat

PROTEIN FOODS CONTAINING MAGNESIUM, IRON AND ZINC CAN SUPPORT YOUR MOOD AND MENTAL HEALTH.^{11,12} THESE INCLUDE NUTS, SOYA, TOFU, BEANS AND QUORN™

TOP TIPS:

- Eat more plant food sources of protein, such as beans (kidney beans, edamame, chickpeas, baked beans), lentils, Quorn™, soya mince, tofu, nuts and seeds. Use them to replace some – or all – of the meat in dishes such as casseroles, curries and stir fries
- Eat smaller portions of lean meat and ensure you don't have it every day. A portion of cooked red meat should be no more than 70 grams – the size of your palm
- Aim for at least two meat-free days each week
- Trim any visible fat or remove the skin from poultry
- Keep processed meats (sausages, pies, pasties, tinned meats, bacon and salami) to a minimum
- Aim for two servings of fish a week. One of these should be oil-rich, such as salmon or mackerel, which provide heart-healthy omega-3 fats.³ When buying your fish, make sure it's from sustainable sources – look out for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) logos
- Spread your protein intake evenly throughout the day and consider protein-based snacks, such as a small handful of nuts, or nut butter spread on wholemeal crackers

LOW FAT DAIRY FOODS & PLANT-BASED ALTERNATIVES

LOW FAT DAIRY FOODS AND SOYA FORTIFIED PLANT-BASED ALTERNATIVES ARE LOW IN SATURATED FAT AND PROVIDE PROTEIN, CALCIUM, AND VITAMINS D, B2 AND B12



LOW IN SATURATED FAT¹



PROTEIN & CALCIUM^{8,9}



PROTEIN²⁶



VITAMINS B2 & B12^{21,22}

TOP TIPS:

- It can be difficult to get enough calcium without including fortified plant-based drinks and yogurt alternatives or dairy in your daily diet
- Try switching some or all your dairy to fortified soya alternatives to milk and yogurt. These are naturally low in saturated fat. Check the labels for fortification with calcium, iodine and vitamins D, B2 and B12
- Opt for lower fat dairy versions – skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low fat or diet yogurt
 - Opt for lower fat hard cheeses and consume less frequently
- Other calcium sources include tinned fish with edible bones, such as sardines and pilchards; bread (flour is fortified with calcium); some dark green vegetables such as kale, pak choi, okra and baby spinach; some nuts, such as almonds, brazil and hazelnuts; and sesame seeds or tahini paste

REMEMBER...VITAMIN D

- **Vitamin D** is an important nutrient for bone health and helps the body absorb calcium^{27,28}
- Very few foods provide us with enough vitamin D. Sunshine on the skin is our main source during the spring and summer. However, as we age, this process becomes much less effective. Some vitamin D is found in oil-rich fish, eggs, meat, offal and fortified foods such as soya alternatives to milk and yogurt, margarine and breakfast cereals
- A daily supplement of **10 micrograms** (mcg or µg) of vitamin D should be taken*:
 - **All year round:** for those over the age of 65 and people with darker skin tones; those with little sun exposure and/or who cover up their skin
 - **During autumn and winter:** everyone should be taking a supplement
- Check in with your GP surgery and get your bone density checked. Your GP may advise a higher dose calcium and vitamin D supplement for you



*www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/

HEALTHY HYDRATION

ENSURING YOU ARE WELL HYDRATED HAS MANY ADVANTAGES DURING THE MENOPAUSE

Drinking enough water (or sugar-free and low caffeine fluids) contributes to overall physical and mental health – including the regulation of body temperature.^{18,19} Even mild dehydration affects temperature regulation and can make hot flushes and night sweats worse. It can also increase headaches or fatigue and impair cognitive function.



TOP TIPS:

- Aim for around two litres of sugar-free fluid from drinks every day – approximately six to eight glasses
 - You may need more if it's hot or you are physically active (even if you are not sweating)
 - Great choices include:
 - Tap water is the best
 - Tea, herbal tea or coffee. Avoid adding sugar, syrups or creamy toppings
 - Diet/sugar free soft drinks and cordials
- X Fruit juice and sweetened soft drinks should be avoided as they provide a lot of sugar and calories

HOW TO CHECK YOUR HYDRATION LEVELS: THE URINE COLOUR TEST

A simple way to check if you are well hydrated is to check your urine colour – it should be a pale straw colour or lighter. If it's darker than this, consider drinking a little more fluid throughout the day

CAFFEINE

Some people are sensitive to caffeine and find that consuming too much or too late in the day will disrupt their sleep and/or worsen hot flushes

If you are sensitive to caffeine:

- Don't have caffeinated drinks after lunchtime
- Opt for decaffeinated varieties of cola drinks, tea and coffee
- Avoid energy drinks
- Keep a tab on your current intake of caffeine drinks and cut down your intake gradually to a level where you feel improvements in your mood and/or sleep



SALT

Keeping salt intakes to a minimum – no more than **one teaspoon** (6g) of salt per day – can help maintain normal blood pressure, which is important for heart health.⁵ Most of the salt in our diet comes from highly-processed foods such as processed meats (salamis, tinned meat, pies, sausages, bacon and sausage rolls), soups, sauces, fast food, takeaways and savoury snacks.

TOP TIPS:

- **Check labels** to find lower salt varieties of foods you eat regularly
 - Look for **'lower salt'** on front of pack
 - Use front of pack traffic lights – always opt for **green** or **amber** if green is not available especially for ready meals. Avoid **red**
 - For ingredients like stock cubes and sauces, even with reduced salt varieties, use in moderation
- **Limit fast foods**, takeaways, ready meals and salted snacks such as crisps or Bombay mix
- **Cook more meals from scratch** so you limit added salt – use herbs and spices to enhance flavour instead. Be aware that some people find spicy foods exacerbate hot flushes

ALCOHOL

ALCOHOL, ESPECIALLY IN EXCESS, CAN LOWER MOOD, IMPAIR BODY TEMPERATURE CONTROL AND DISRUPT SLEEP QUALITY. IT IS ALSO HIGH IN CALORIES

TOP TIPS:

- Have no more than the safe upper limit of 14 units a week
- Spread your units out across the week
- Have some alcohol-free days
- Avoid binge drinking i.e. consuming more than 6 units of alcohol at any one time



ONE UNIT:

- Half pint lower alcohol [4%] beer/lager/cider
- One shot of a spirit



TWO UNITS:

- 175ml glass of wine
- 1 pint lower strength [4%] beer/lager/cider
- 440ml can higher strength [5.5%] beer/lager/cider
- A double shot of a spirit



THREE UNITS:

- Large [250ml] glass of wine
- 1 pint of higher strength [5%] beer/lager/cider

STEP 3

FOUR UCLP[®] FOODS THAT PROVIDE ADDITIONAL HELP WITH MANAGING CHOLESTEROL LEVELS



The final step of the UCLP[®] focuses on introducing four foods that complement the heart-healthy foundations in step 2 and help manage cholesterol levels. The four foods are soya, nuts, oats and barley and foods fortified with plant stanols or sterols. Could you regularly introduce some or all of them into your diet?



SOYA

Soya foods and drinks are, in the main, naturally rich in protein and low in saturated fat. Reducing how much saturated fat we consume, contributes to the maintenance of normal blood cholesterol. They also provide fibre, vitamins and minerals, and are the main dietary source of naturally-occurring isoflavones, a type of plant oestrogen.

TOP TIPS:

Aim for one to two servings of soya foods and/or drinks daily. Use them in place of some or all your meat or dairy.



ONE SERVING DAILY OF

FOOD	100g soya mince or chunks	HOW TO CONSUME	To replace meat in your favourite dishes
	A large handful (30g) of roasted edamame beans (soya nuts)		As a snack
	A serving (75-100g) of tofu (regular or marinated) or tempeh		Use in dishes such as salads, stir fries, casseroles or curries Marinated tofu is great as a snack or in salads

OR TWO SERVINGS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE DAY OF

FOOD	A large glass (200ml) soya drink	HOW TO CONSUME	In drinks, on breakfast cereal or in cooking
	A serving (150g) of soya plain or Greek-style alternative to yogurt		As a snack or dessert, on breakfast cereal or in a smoothie
	A serving (80-100g) of fresh or frozen young soya (edamame) beans		As a side dish, in cooked meals, salads or to make a dip
	2 pots (125g) of fruit soya alternatives to yogurt, soya dessert or custard		As a snack or dessert

Alpro soya alternatives to milk and yogurt are low in saturated fat, and a source of protein, calcium and vitamins D, B12 and B2. Reducing consumption of saturated fat as part of a healthy balanced diet helps to maintain normal blood cholesterol.



STEP 3

THE OTHER UCLP[®] FOODS

NUTS

Nuts are nutritional powerhouses, providing fibre and vitamins and minerals. They are especially great for heart health because they provide heart healthy unsaturated fats²

Have a small handful a day of any type of unsalted/unsweetened nuts, including peanuts



TOP TIP:

Use as a snack, on cereal, in a smoothie or as part of a main meal

OATS & BARLEY

Oats and barley contain a type of fibre, beta-glucan, which has been proven to lower blood cholesterol when consumed in the right quantities⁶



Below are examples of a single serving. You can consume any combination to make up your 3 daily servings:

- Small bowl of porridge oats (25-30g oats)
- Small bowl of oat-based flakes e.g., Oatibix flakes
- One Oatibix (a normal serving of 2 biscuits will count as 2 servings)
- 3 oatcakes
- 3-4 tbsp of cooked pearl barley

TOP TIP:

Start by including 1 serving daily and gradually build up to the effective cholesterol-lowering quantity of 3 servings a day

STANOLS AND STEROLS

Foods fortified with plant sterols and stanols eaten in the right quantity as part of a meal have been proven to lower blood cholesterol⁷

Every day, have EITHER:

ONE sterol/stanol-fortified mini drink or fortified fruit yogurt;

OR

THREE servings of sterol/stanol-fortified skimmed milk or spread

TOP TIP: ALWAYS CONSUME WITH MEALS

For more detailed information on each of the steps, help with setting targets and practical resources including ideas for meals, eating out and shopping, go to WWW.HEARTUK.ORG.UK/UCLP

A WORD ABOUT WEIGHT

Being overweight can impair heart health and increase our blood cholesterol levels (especially when the fat is stored around our middle). It affects how well blood sugars are controlled and places strain on our joints. It can also make hot flushes and night sweats worse.

If you've decided you want to lose weight, plan for a gradual, steady loss – aiming for a realistic goal. Losing around five percent of your initial starting weight will bring about noticeable benefits.

FOR MORE TIPS AND ADVICE FROM
HEART UK ON MANAGING YOUR WEIGHT

[CLICK HERE](#)

TOP TIPS:

- Avoid cutting out major food groups or following very restricted diets. This can lead to shortages of the other nutrients your body needs during the menopause
- Try not to skip meals and be sure to include a healthy breakfast to start the day
- Reduce your portion sizes. Try slowing down and eating more mindfully, to see if this helps you eat less
- If you eat desserts, fried foods or takeaways, try to reduce the frequency and amounts
- Limit cakes, biscuits, confectionery, crisps and pastries. If you find yourself snacking from boredom or stress, try to find other ways to manage these emotions
- Try to stay physically active
- Monitor your progress and consider seeking support from a health care professional or commercial slimming group if you are struggling. The NHS 12-week weight loss plan is a useful resource [CLICK HERE](#) to find out more.



KEEP ACTIVE

Being physically active is as essential as diet for our mental and physical health. Physical activity has been associated not only with better heart, bone, joint and muscle health but also with improved mood and sleep and reduced anxiety.

HOW MUCH AND HOW OFTEN?

Of importance is to reduce sedentary time and avoid long periods spent sitting

BE ACTIVE

at least **150 MINUTES** MODERATE INTENSITY PER WEEK
increased breathing
able to talk

OR

at least **75 MINUTES** VIGOROUS INTENSITY PER WEEK
breathing fast
difficulty talking

BUILD STRENGTH
ON AT LEAST 2 DAYS A WEEK

MINIMISE SEDENTARY TIME
Break up periods of inactivity

IMPROVE BALANCE
2 DAYS A WEEK

CYCLE **BRISK WALK** **SWIM**

GYM **YOGA** **CARRY HEAVY BAGS**

STAIRS **RUN** **SPORT**

BOWLS **TAI CHI** **DANCING**

TOP TIPS:

- If your job involves a lot of sitting down time, make sure you get up every couple of hours and move around and, if you can, go for a short brisk walk during your breaks
- If you haven't exercised in a while, check with your doctor first. They may also be able to refer you to locally-run activities
- It's always best to get advice from experts. Check your local authority leisure centre and see if any classes are running or if you can have an induction with a trainer. This is particularly important with weight resistant training
- Start small. Brisk walks and cycling are a great way to start if you're a beginner
- Find activities that fit in with your day-to-day routine
- Try new activities. If you don't like one, try another
- Exercise with a friend to keep each other motivated
- Remember to build up slowly

OTHER APPROACHES TO MANAGING THE MENOPAUSE

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is highly effective at managing bone and heart health, as well as other menopausal symptoms including hot flushes and mood swings. HRT options can be discussed with your GP or menopause specialist

Psychological approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or mindfulness meditation can help with anxiety and mental health as well as weight control

Smoking is not great for heart health, will impact on bone health and may worsen hot flushes. See your GP for help with stopping

Complementary or alternative therapies that may help manage menopause include hypnotherapy, massage, acupuncture and reflexology. Bioidentical ('natural') hormones and herbal remedies (such as black cohosh, ginkgo biloba, ginseng, evening primrose oil and St. John's wort) are also used by some women. However, these have less reliable scientific evidence on effectiveness and dose needed. They may be of variable or unregulated quality and can have side effects and interactions with other medications. **Always check with your GP or pharmacist for advice if you're thinking about using them**



...IN SUMMARY

THE MENOPAUSE CAN BE A CHALLENGING TIME BUT IT'S ALSO A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE STOCK OF YOUR DIET & LIFESTYLE

MAKING POSITIVE CHANGES CAN HELP MAINTAIN GOOD LONG-TERM HEALTH AND ADDRESS ANY SYMPTOMS YOU MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING

- Diet and lifestyle approaches can help with the management of menopausal symptoms and can help promote long-term health. Regularly remind yourself of the benefits to help stay motivated
- The UCLP[®] approach offers many advantages for the menopause, in particular heart and bone health – the most crucial for long-term health and wellbeing. Following the UCLP[®] may also help with other menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes, sleep disturbance, mood and cognitive function
- Identify the dietary changes you would like to make using a [checklist](#) or food diary and set yourself some realistic goals. Tackle one to two changes at a time, and only once you have these under your belt, attempt more changes
- Aspects you might want to consider include heart-healthy fats, wholegrains, fruit and vegetables, prioritising plant proteins over animal proteins, and keeping well hydrated
- Seek support with weight loss and other areas of lifestyle and medical management as appropriate
- Finally, don't forget to review your progress and celebrate your successes!

Other sources of information

- The NHS www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/
- The Menopause Charity www.themenopausecharity.org/
- The Menopause Exchange www.menopause-exchange.co.uk/index.htm
- Women's Health Concern www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause/
- Menopause Matters www.menopausematters.co.uk/
- The NHS 12-Week Weight Loss Plan www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/start-the-nhs-weight-loss-plan/

HEARTUK.ORG.UK/UCLP FOR MORE TIPS & ADVICE

HEARTUK.ORG.UK/UCLP-RECIPES
for delicious recipes to inspire you



NUTRIENTS AND THEIR HEALTH BENEFITS



The health claims that appear throughout this document

1. Reducing consumption of saturated fat contributes to the maintenance of normal blood cholesterol
2. Replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats has been shown to reduce blood cholesterol. High cholesterol is a risk factor to heart disease
3. Consuming 250mg of omega-3 fats EPA and DHA daily contributes to the normal function of the heart. Oil-rich fish like salmon and sardines provide around 3000mg EPA and DHA in one serve
4. Vitamin C contributes to normal collagen formation for the normal function of blood vessels and helps protect our cells from damage
5. Reducing consumption of salt contributes to the maintenance of normal blood pressure
6. Oat and barley beta-glucans have been shown to lower blood cholesterol. High cholesterol is a risk factor for heart disease
7. Consuming 1.5-3g of plant sterol and stanol esters every day has been shown to lower blood cholesterol. The beneficial effect can be seen within 2-3 weeks
8. Calcium is needed for the maintenance of normal bones
9. Protein contributes to the maintenance of normal bones
10. Magnesium contributes to the maintenance of normal bones
11. Iron contributes to normal cognitive function
12. Zinc contributes to normal cognitive function
13. Magnesium contributes to normal psychological function
14. Oil-rich fish provide a specific type of omega-3 fat - DHA. Consuming 250mg DHA daily contributes to the maintenance of normal brain function
15. Fish, dairy milk and some fortified soya alternatives to milk are sources of iodine. Iodine contributes to normal cognitive function
16. Citrus fruit and salad and green vegetables provide vitamin C. Vitamin C contributes to normal psychological function
17. Fruit and vegetables provide folate. Folate contributes to normal psychological function
18. Keeping well hydrated by drinking at least two litres of sugar-free fluid daily contributes to the maintenance of normal physical and cognitive function
19. Water contributes to the maintenance of normal regulation of the body's temperature. At least 2L of sugar-free fluids, should be consumed per day
20. Iron contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue
21. Vitamin B12 contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue
22. Vitamins B2 contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue
23. Vitamin C contributes to normal collagen formation. Collagen formation is needed for the normal function of cartilage, which supports our joints
24. Vitamin A contributes to the maintenance of normal skin
25. Vitamin C contributes to normal collagen formation for the normal function of skin
26. Protein contributes to the maintenance of and growth in muscle mass
27. Vitamin D contributes to the maintenance of normal bones
28. Vitamin D contributes to normal absorption/utilisation of calcium and phosphorus
29. Vitamin C contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue

Source: UK Government. Dept of Health & Social Care [2020]. Great Britain nutrition and health claims (NHC) register. Register of nutrition and health claims that may be made in commercial communications in Great Britain. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-britain-nutrition-and-health-claims-nhc-register>

This booklet is sponsored with an education grant from Alpro. Alpro soya alternatives to milk and yogurt are low in saturated fat. Reducing consumption of saturated fat as part of a balanced diet and lifestyle helps to maintain normal blood cholesterol.