

# Menopause



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## Menopause

Menopause is the permanent cessation of menstrual cycle.

There are actually three stages of menopause including peri-menopause, menopause and post menopause. By incorporating all three stages, menopause is the term used to describe a normal physiological process in a woman's life specially, the permanent cessation of menstruation that occurs between the ages of 40 and 60, with the average age being 51.

Menstrual cycle is dependent on two endocrine glands secretions, estrogen and progesterone hormones, which decreases after 40 years of age.

Menopause initiates unique risk factors in women for both osteoporosis & coronary heart disease. When a woman goes through menopause, there is a 70 percent decline in estrogen production. There is fall in the level of serum estradiol from 50-300 pg/ml before menopause to 10-20 pg/ml after menopause.

### **Menopausal symptoms:**

Anxiety Hot flush

Irritability Insomnia (inability to sleep)

Headache Vertigo

Palpitation Loss of libido

Mood swings Constipation

Thinning of hair

Dry & wrinkly skin

Melancholia (depression)

Dryness & itching of vagina

Loss of bladder control

Arthralgia & joint pain

Dementia (loss of memory)

Physical & mental exhaustion

Osteoporosis, easy fractures

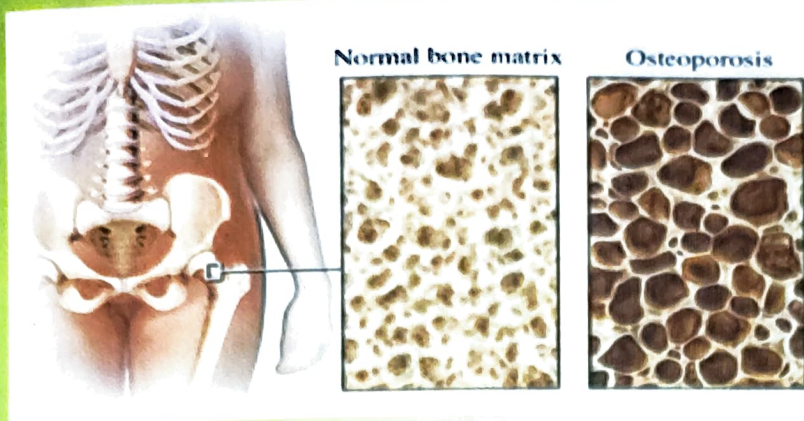


**Benefits of Estrogen hormone:** Estrogen hormone is the nature's gift in women's life to keep healthy. Estrogen hormone protects women's skin, hair, breasts, uterus and vagina. It has other roles like:

- Increases HDL (good) cholesterol, decreases LDL (bad) cholesterol.
- Inhibit occurrence of thickness of blood vessels, relaxes blood vessels and blood flows normally.
  
- Reduces sugar level in the blood.
- Reduce bone resorption & increase bone formation.
- **It has immunological function** which helps in fighting against infections by helping in mobilization of white blood cells or neutrophils.

**Menopause & osteoporosis:** Osteoporosis is a major public health problem. Women are most at risk for developing this often debilitating bone disease. Bone becomes strong as calcium & minerals are deposited from birth until around 30 years of age. After 30 years of age bones naturally start to lose more calcium than deposited. Therefore, the greater bone strength achieved by high calcium early in life, the larger the reserve for later years. Low bone strength results in bones that break easily, particularly the wrist, hip & back. Following menopause there is loss of bone mass by about 3-5 per cent per year. Regular weight-bearing exercise together with an overall healthy balanced diet and adequate calcium and vitamin D intake are all important for preserving bone mass and optimizing bone health.





**Menopause & cardiovascular disease:** The cardiovascular disease develops 10 to 15 years later in women than men, but the risk rate for women increases tremendously after menopause.

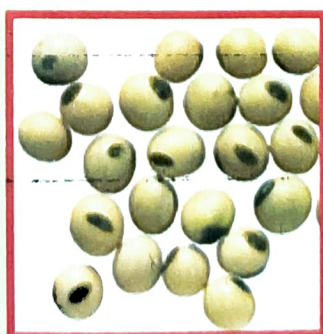
**I. Dietary modifications during menopause:**

To decrease the symptoms of menopause foods should be consumed containing,

**a) Phytoestrogen (isoflavone) rich diet:**

Isoflavones are natural phytoestrogens which tailor the menopausal therapy in a natural way. Phytoestrogens resemble estrogens in structure and function. Therefore intake of isoflavone containing foods must be regular in the diet.

**Isoflavone rich sources:** Flax seed, Soybean, Peas, Chickpea, Lentil, Apple, Carrot, Oats, Olive oil, Sunflower seeds which reduces menopausal symptoms.

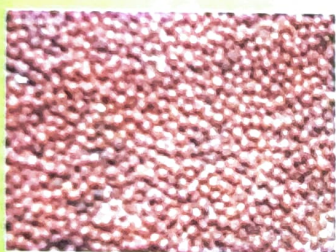


**Calcium rich diet:** Calcium is the most important bone builder mineral used in the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. Loss of bone mass is



a) noticed during menopause; therefore calcium rich diet must be consumed. According to the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) the adequate intake (AI) for calcium for women aged 31 - 50 years is 1000mg per day and 1200mg per day from 51 years onwards.

**Calcium rich sources:**Ragi, Soybean, milk, milk products, Black gram, Rajkeera, Moth bean, Poppy seeds, Sesamum, Garden cress seed, Dry coconut, Rajma, Niger seed, green leafy vegetables like fenugreek leaves, curry leaves, colocasia leaves, rajkeera leaves, cauliflower leaves.



c) **Vitamin D rich diet:** vitamin D help in absorption of calcium in the body. Recommendation for vitamin D increases from 200 IU per day for women under 50 years of age to 400 IU per day for those aged 51-70 years and 600 IU per day for those 70 years or older.

**Sources of vitamin D:**Exposure to Morning sun rays, Fish, Fish oil, Egg yolk, Liver, Cod liver oil and Mushrooms.



## II. Avoid intake of Tea, Coffee & spicy foods:

Certain foods, such as hot beverages and spicy foods exacerbate hot flashes in some women therefore their intake should be avoided. The



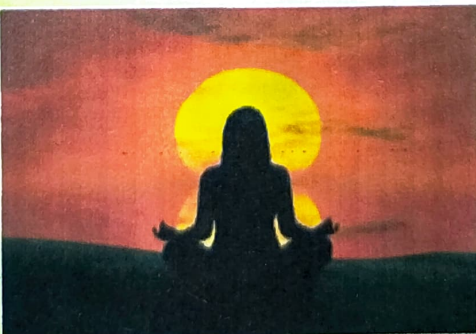
chemical components in the tea & coffee are 'tannin' & 'caffein' which inhibit absorption of iron & calcium in the body. For iron & calcium absorption intake of tea & coffee should be restricted.



**III. Exercise:** Regular exercise like aerobic, walking, breathing exercises like Anulom-vilom, Kapalabhati, yoga like Vajrasan, Uttanpadasan, Bhujangasan, Pavanmuktasan, Tadasan, Trikonasan help to keep body flexible and keep bone strong.



**IV. Meditation:** Meditation is essential to relax your mind. It helps to maintain mental health & essential to reduce menopausal symptoms like depression, anxiety etc.



**V. Entertainment:** Social activity improves mental function; concentration can be improved with crosswords, puzzles, quizzes etc.

Express & share emotions with your partner, family members & friends for psychological support .