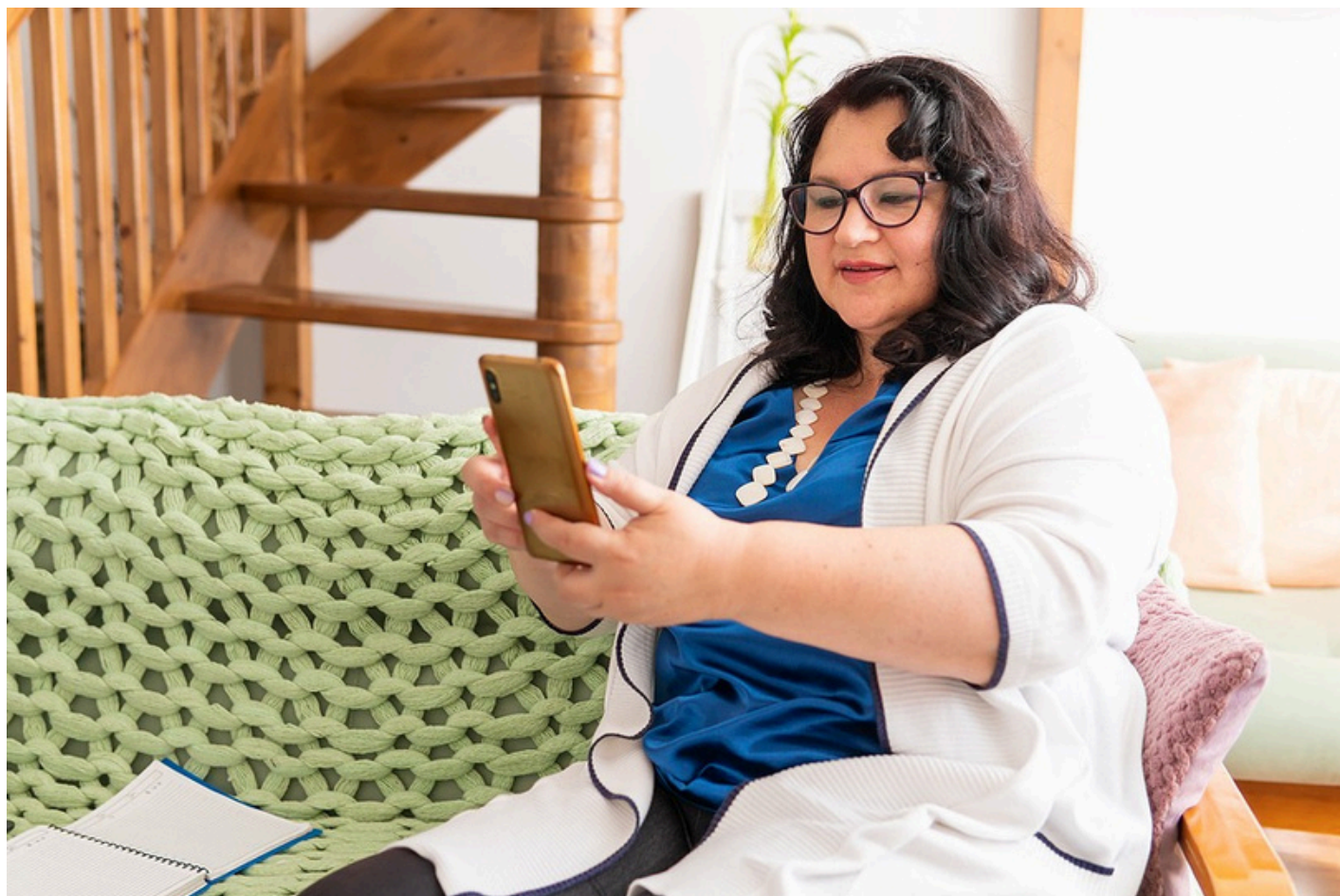


What to Eat During and After Menopause



Eating well can help you maintain your health as your body undergoes changes during menopause. Read on to learn more about how a nutritious diet can help you feel your best and reduce the risk of age-related diseases.

What is menopause?

Menopause occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. It marks the end of a woman's menstrual periods. During the normal process of menopause, the body creates less of the hormones estrogen and progesterone. Having less of these hormones may cause:

- hot flashes
- sweating

- fatigue
- vaginal dryness
- changes in sleep
- changes in mood
- irritability

What should I eat to manage the symptoms of menopause?

Your best bet is to eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein choices. This will help you get all the nutrients your body needs to feel good and keep energy levels up. The risk of heart disease also goes up after menopause, so choosing nutritious foods is important.

Here are some tips to get you started:

- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits
- Choose whole grains like oats, quinoa, barley and whole grain cereals and breads.
- Choose plant-based proteins like legumes, beans, nuts and seeds more often and lean meats, fish, eggs and lower fat dairy.
- Choose healthy fats like olive oil, vegetable oil and the fat found in nuts and seeds and fatty fish like salmon and trout.
- Limit highly processed foods with added sugar and salt, like fast foods, desserts, baked goods, candy, chocolate, ice cream and jams.

Read our article on [Canada's Food Guide](#) and check out our [Menu Planner Checklist](#) for more information.

Looking for recipe inspiration? There are many tasty and nutritious recipes to choose from on [Cookspiration](#).

What nutrients should I pay special attention to?

Pay attention to how much calcium and vitamin D you get. These nutrients are important for maintaining bone health and preventing bone loss that can happen after menopause.

Good sources of calcium include milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified plant-based beverages, canned fish with boned and tofu. Read more about where to find calcium [here](#).

Vitamin D can be found in milk, fortified plant-based beverages, fatty fish and egg yolks. Health Canada recommends that people over 50 years old take a vitamin D supplement containing 400 IU of vitamin D daily. Read more about vitamin D [here](#).

What about flax or soy supplements?

Flax and soy contain “phytoestrogens” or plant-based estrogens, which copy the effects of the hormone estrogen in the body. So far, studies have shown that taking soy or flax supplements does not help reduce hot flashes or menopause symptoms. Flax and soy are nutritious foods and can still be included as part of a balanced diet.

Bottom line

Eating a balanced and nutritious diet is your best bet for staying healthy during menopause. Choose a variety of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein foods each day. Make sure you are getting enough calcium and vitamin D to keep your bones strong.

This article was written and reviewed by dietitians from Dietitians of Canada. The advice in this article is intended as general information and should not replace advice given by your dietitian or healthcare provider.