

PROGRAM WORKBOOK

Optimizing Women's Hormones





Welcome

Optimizing Women's Hormones

This program is designed to help you achieve optimal hormonal health as you go through the menopause transition. Discover ways to ditch your symptoms so you can feel like yourself!

In this program you will learn what you can do to manage hot flashes and the dreaded weight gain. Plus, you will get a solid strategy on how to prevent osteoporosis and heart disease. Did you know that your risk for these increases after you reach menopause?

As you watch the course videos, keep this guide handy. We recommend printing. Be sure to make notes and plan your actions steps each week.

This workbook is organized by session with key points, pro tips, recommended goals, and resources. You can go through the program at any pace, but we recommend 4–6 weeks so you have time to make changes that will stick.

What are you waiting for? Let's get started!

Participation in this program is completely voluntary. Nothing presented or stated shall be considered medical advice, but solely used for educational purposes. Any lifestyle and diet changes should be discussed with your primary care provider.

This program is not meant for anyone under the age of 18, anyone currently under the care of a physician for a serious medical condition, pregnant individuals, or those nursing or trying to conceive.



Brenda Navin is the founder and president of Launch My Health and is on a mission to make a difference with nutrition. She has over 20 years of experience in healthcare and is a registered dietitian. She truly believes food is medicine and can transform your health from the inside out.

Please be advised that all nutritional information in our recipes is evaluated using the information available at the time of writing. While information is based on recipes specific to Launch My Health, nutrient values and allergens in each food may vary due to your selected portion size, use of other condiments and seasonings, as well as growing conditions, product manufacturer formulations, or any substitutions. The information provided in our recipes is meant to be a guide. If you are concerned about specific food allergens or sensitivities, always check the specific ingredients listed and labels used on your products for allergen information before consuming. Launch My Health is not liable for any food reactions.

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Welcome! Menopause 101

This introduction provides an overview of menopause and the importance of the steps you're taking to manage it!

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Hot Flashes

Hot flashes are thought to be a vasomotor response impacted by adrenaline and estrogen. Your body becomes extra sensitive to even small temperature changes.

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Why Is Weight Gain Happening?

Often, women beat themselves up for not being able to lose weight as easily as they used to, and they especially notice weight gain in their abdominal area. They often think that their lifestyle is to blame.

04

Emotional Rollercoaster

Women go through many change in life. Whether it's puberty, PMS, pregnancy, postpartum, perimenopause, or menopause, hormones often get blamed, almost making it sound like having less hormones would be "better."

05

Hormones and Detoxification

Let's talk about detoxification! You might think this is all about alcohol, but it's actually about much more.

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Special Considerations

If you want to dive deeper into hormones, symptoms, and beyond, there are special considerations to address.



OPTIMIZING WOMEN'S HORMONES

Session One

Welcome! Menopause 101

Classes featured: Welcome to Optimizing Women's Hormones, Menopause 101, Factors That Affect the Menopause Transition

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Menopause occurs when you haven't had a period for 12-straight months. The average age is 51.
- Overall, 25% of women will have few symptoms, 50% will have symptoms for 8–12 years, and 25% will have symptoms into their 80s.
- Loss of estrogen is linked to a number of health problems, like osteoporosis and heart disease, and presents a greater risk for Alzheimer's disease.
- Common symptoms of menopause are hot flashes, mood fluctuations, weight gain (especially in the abdominal area), vaginal dryness, brain fog, and constipation.
- During perimenopause, the ovaries are “sputtering.” This can cause wild and inconsistent hormone levels of estrogen and progesterone.

Facts from the pros to remember:

- Four women reach menopause every minute.
- Perimenopause can last from 4–13 years.
- Women spend up to 40% of their lives in a postmenopausal state.



HOMEWORK

Assignment

Track any symptoms you may have and everything you eat and drink for three days. Don't worry about writing down exact amounts; the purpose is to make you aware of what you are eating.

Quick notes:

FOOD AND SYMPTOM TRACKING

Do you notice a symptom after eating? How do you feel? What time is it?

Day one

What did I eat and drink?

Symptoms

Day two

What did I eat and drink?

Symptoms

Day three

What did I eat and drink?

Symptoms

Want to track digitally? Check out these free tracking apps: My Fitness Pal, My Plate, Shopwell



OPTIMIZING WOMEN'S HORMONES

Session Two

Hot Flashes

Classes featured: What's Happening During Hot Flashes?, What to Eat for Hot Flashes

My reflections:

What I want to remember:



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- 70% of women in North America and Europe are affected by hot flashes.
- Hot flashes are thought to be a vasomotor response impacted by adrenaline and estrogen. Your body becomes extra sensitive to even small temperature changes.
- Common triggers are stress, caffeine, spicy foods, alcohol, citrus fruits, intense exercise, and sugar.
- Focus on eating a Mediterranean diet and maintaining a stable blood sugar.
- Talk to your doctor or dietitian about adding phytoestrogens if you have a history of hormone cancers or thyroid disease.
- A study showed that women who ate high amounts of green vegetables had the least amount of hot flashes.
- Consuming phytoestrogens for three months can reduce hot flash severity and frequency by up to 25%.

Tips from the pros to remember:

- Aim for less than three grams of added sugar per serving, with no more than 25 grams (six teaspoons) per day.
- Watch out for added sugar in sneaky places like salad dressings, sauces, peanut butter, cereal, and yogurt.
- Aim for 1–2 cups of cruciferous vegetables per day.
- Add in flaxseed, but make sure you grind it or buy it already ground. This will ensure you get the health benefits!
- Avoid processed soy products—they are pro-inflammatory.
- Try 200–300mg magnesium glycinate at bedtime to help with sleep.

Pro tip: Flax contains lignans, which are important for hormone metabolism.



HOMEWORK

Assignment

Choose one or two of the following to focus on:

- I will go through my kitchen pantry, cupboards, and refrigerator and check all foods with labels looking for added sugars. I will then make a list of what I will remove.
- I will eat 1-2 cups of cruciferous vegetables per day.
- I will reduce my caffeine intake and swap in green tea.
- I will try paced breathing methods.
- I will eat protein at every meal and snack.
- I will continue to track my hot flashes and what I am eating and drinking to identify patterns.

Quick notes:

FOODS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Vegetables & tubers

Artichokes
Arugula
Beets
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Carrots
Celery
Celeriac
Chicory
Collard
Cucumber
Dandelion greens
Eggplant
Fennel
Kale
Leeks
Lettuce
Mushrooms
Greens
Okra
Onions
Peas
Peppers
Potatoes
Radishes
Rutabaga
Scallions
Shallots
Spinach
Turnips
Zucchini

Meats

Beef
Goat
Lamb
Pork

Fruits

Avocados
Apples
Apricots
Cherries
Clementines
Dates
Figs
Grapefruits
Grapes
Lemons
Melons
Nectarines
Olives
Oranges
Peaches
Pears
Pomegranates
Pumpkins
Strawberries
Tangerines
Tomatoes

Grains

Breads
Barley
Buckwheat
Bulgur
Couscous
Durum
Farro
Millet
Oat
Polenta
Rice
Wheat berries

Cheese & yogurt

Brie
Chèvre
Feta
Halloumi
Manchego
Parmigiano-reggiano
Pecorino
Ricotta
Greek yogurt

Fish & seafood

Clams
Crab
Lobster
Mackerel
Mussels
Octopus
Oysters
Salmon
Sardines
Sea bass
Shrimp
Squid
Tilapia
Tuna
Yellowtail

Poultry & eggs

Chicken
Duck
Quail
Eggs

Nuts, seeds & legumes

Almonds
Beans
Cashews
Hazelnuts
Lentils
Pine nuts
Pistachios
Sesame seeds
Split peas
Walnuts

Herbs & spices

Anise
Basil
Bay leaf
Cinnamon
Chiles
Clove
Cumin
Fennel
Garlic
Lavender
Majoram
Mint
Oregano
Parsley
Pepper
Rosemary
Sage
Tarragon
Thyme
Za'atar

Sweets

Treats made with nuts, fruits, whole grains, and minimal sugars

A recent study showed that menopausal women who eat green cruciferous vegetables have the fewest complaints about hot flashes. Try to eat 1–2 cups of cruciferous vegetables each day.

DEEP BREATHING TECHNIQUE

Paced breathing helps your body switch out of fight-or-flight and into the “rest and digest” system. This system helps your body cool off and repair.

Before you start, find a comfortable place to sit or lie down.





OPTIMIZING WOMEN'S HORMONES

Session Three

Why Is Weight Gain Happening?

Classes featured: Why Is Weight Gain Happening?, Lifestyle Recommendations for Body Composition

My reflections:

What I want to remember:



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Metabolic changes—ahem, weight gain—happen in the body when estrogen decreases.
- Hormone changes make your body more resistant to insulin and less effective at using food for energy. This contributes to fat storage, especially in the abdomen.
- Insulin is the major hormone that controls your blood sugar levels.
- Consume mostly low and moderate glycemic index carbohydrates.

Tips from the pros to remember:

- Aim for 20–25 grams (3–4 ounces) of protein at every meal. Choose plant or animal sources.
- Aim for 7–10 grams of protein with every snack.
- Be careful of protein bars. They often have a lot of processed ingredients and sugar alcohols, which can cause GI distress. Look for ingredients ending in “-ol.”
- Avoid high-glycemic foods unless eaten with protein.
- Sugar is addictive. It has been shown to stimulate the same area in the brain as opioid drugs.



HOMEWORK

Assignment

Choose one or two of the following to focus on:

- I will eat 20 grams of protein at breakfast.
- I will track my food and beverages to see how many grams of protein I am getting at each meal.
- I will eat only low or moderate carbohydrates this week.
- I will add in a restorative movement—like a light walk, yoga, or stretching—each day this week.

Quick notes:

GLYCEMIC INDEX AND FOOD

Glycemic Index (GI) is a ranking of carbohydrate foods on a scale from 0 to 100 according to how much they raise blood sugar (glucose) levels after eating.



Low GI: 1 to 55

Green vegetables
Most fruits
Raw carrots
Kidney beans
Chickpeas
Lentils
Bran cereal



Medium GI: 56 to 69

Sweet corn
Bananas
Raw pineapple
Raisins
Oat cereal
Multigrain/oat bran/rye bread



High GI: 70 to 100

White rice
White bread
Potatoes

Low-GI foods can:

- Stabilize energy levels
- Lessen mood swings
- Reduce cravings and hunger
- Avoid the blood sugar rollercoaster and stabilize your insulin levels

BUILD YOUR OWN OVERNIGHT OATS

Instructions:

- Add the oats, nut milk, and chia seeds to a jar or container with a lid.
- Then, choose from the additional add-ins and make it your own.

Pro tip: For extra flavor, add nutmeg, cinnamon, cacao powder, clove, ginger, vanilla extract, unsweetened coconut, instant coffee, or a dash of salt.

Base

+

Milk

+

Thickener



½ cup oats



½ cup–1 cup
unsweetened nut milk



1–2 Tbsp chia seeds

Add-ins



½ cup berries of your choice



1 tsp of agave, honey,
or maple syrup



2 Tbsp of nut butter

Quick nut milk tip: When shopping, pay attention to the nutrition label. Avoid added sugar and ingredients you can't pronounce or don't recognize. The ingredients should only read almonds and water.



OPTIMIZING WOMEN'S HORMONES

Session Four

Emotional Rollercoaster

Classes featured: The Emotional Rollercoaster, Improving Emotional Health with Food

My reflections:

What I want to remember:



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- The brain needs estrogen. Remember there are receptors in the brain.
- Estrogen increases blood flow to the brain.
- Estrogen helps clear the plaque that contributes to Alzheimer's disease.
- Focus on eating essential fatty acids and food rich in B vitamins.

Tips from the pros to remember:

- Women often struggle to remember nouns and new information during this time.
- Limit caffeine, sugar, and alcohol.
- Go-to eating formula:
 - › Low-glycemic carb + protein + fat at every meal and snack.
- Make homemade egg muffins with leftover veggies; freeze for an easy breakfast.



HOMEWORK

Assignment

Choose one or two of the following to focus on:

- I will reduce my caffeine intake to one cup or less per day.
- I will cut my alcohol intake to see if I notice changes in my mood and sleep.
- I will use the “eating formula” at every meal.
- I will consume foods rich in B vitamins at every meal.
- I will eat a healthy fat source every day.

Quick notes:

PROTEIN BITES FORMULA

Choose 1–2 of your favorite ingredients from each category. Try new combinations to create new flavors!

Instructions:

- Start with a ½ cup healthy base, add 1–2 Tbsp of sticky & sweet, and add extra flavors to taste.
- Combine in a bowl, roll into balls, and store in fridge or freezer.
- Other fun add-ins: nutmeg, hemp seeds, fruit, dried fruit, or extracts (vanilla, peppermint, almond).

Healthy base

+

Sticky & sweet

+

Extra flavor



Oats



Ground dates



Shredded coconut



Almonds or other nuts



Ground flaxseed



Nut butter



Chocolate chips



Cacao powder



Protein powder



Honey



Extracts



Cinnamon



WHAT TO EAT LIST

Essential Fatty Acids

Essential fatty acids have been shown to be effective in reducing perceived stress levels and anxiety in women going through menopause. “Essential” means that our body doesn’t produce them on its own. We must get them from food.

Food Sources:

Sardines, salmon, herring, ground flaxseeds, chia seed, walnuts, and soybeans

B Vitamins

Not a meat-eater? No problem! It’s important to get enough essential fatty acids from a variety of sources.

Food Sources:

- **Meat and seafood:**

- › Beef, chicken, eggs, salmon, lamb, turkey, tuna, and shrimp

- **Plant sources:**

- › All types of beans, broccoli, lentils, potatoes, sunflower seeds, bananas, and dark leafy greens



OPTIMIZING WOMEN'S HORMONES

Session Five

Hormones and Detoxification

Classes featured: Hormones and Detoxification, How to Reduce Toxins in Your Life

My reflections:

What I want to remember:



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Excess hormones can become toxic in the body.
- Toxins are in our environment and in the body; we cannot avoid them 100%.
- Chemicals in our food can be hormone-disruptors, which mimic or block the action of human hormones.
- Eat detox-supporting foods, like cruciferous vegetables, and eat plenty of fiber to escort toxins out of the body.

Tips from the pros to remember:

- Hormone-disruptors are phthalates, bisphenol A, polychlorinated biphenyls, pesticides, and mercury.
- Ditch plastic and replace it with glass.
- Prioritize wild-caught fish, and look for a busy fish counter as a sign of freshness. Aim for two servings per week.
- Add in high-fiber foods slowly. Start with three grams per day, and add three grams every three days until you reach 25–30 grams per day.



HOMEWORK

Assignment

Choose one or two of the following to focus on:

- Identify kitchenware to replace with non-toxic options.
- Clean out fridge and pantry of food and beverages with chemicals.
- Consume two servings of cruciferous vegetables per day.
- Eat a food from the high-fiber list at every meal and snack.

Quick notes:

4 FOOD-RELATED TOXINS TO AVOID OR LIMIT

BPA

- BPA (bisphenol A) is a hormone-disrupting chemical.
- Use stainless steel, glass, or aluminum for water bottles and food storage.
- Use alternatives to plastic wrap.
- Choose BPA-free canned goods.
- Brew coffee in a glass French press instead of a percolator.
- Keep plastic out of the dishwasher, freezer, and microwave.

Chemical additives

- Aspartame and acesulfame potassium (found in products listed as “sugar-free,” “no sugar added,” and “diet”).
- Potassium bromate (found in bread and baked goods).
- Caramel coloring (found in precooked meats, soy sauce, and chocolate-flavored products).
- Carboxymethylcellulose (found in beer, cake icings, jellies, ice cream, and diet foods).

Food dyes

- Regular intake of food products with dyes have been linked to health problems such as cancer, allergies, headaches, and behavior disorders.
- Some synthetic food dyes are made from petroleum.
- The nutrition label may only say “artificial color,” or it may state the name of the synthetic color, for example “Yellow 5.”
- Look for products with natural dyes like fruit and vegetable extracts.

Heavy metals

- Even at low levels of exposure, heavy metals are associated with organ damage. Examples include mercury, arsenic, and lead.
- Avoid fish with the highest mercury levels, such as swordfish, bigeye tuna, shark, marlin, orange roughy, and King mackerel.
- Reduce the amount of arsenic in rice by rinsing dry rice multiple times and cooking it in a large water-to-rice ratio.

TOXINS IN YOUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

When using products with a label (cosmetics, household products, etc.), pay close attention to what's listed under ingredients.

Toxin	Where they are found
Bisphenol A	Plastic bottles, inner can linings, and chronic xenoestrogen exposure
Dioxin	Meat and surface water
Mercury	Fish and mercury dental fillings
Perfluorinated chemicals	Non-stick cooking and baking pans
Atrazine	Pesticides found in drinking water
Organophosphates	Pesticides found in baby food
Glycol ethers	Cleaning products, liquid soaps, and cosmetics
Phthalates	Plastic containers, cosmetics, toothbrushes, lotions, and cosmetics
Arsenic	Rice and some drinking water
Fire retardants	Furniture, car seats, changing table pads
Lead	Water and lead-based paints
Mold	Damp home or workplace
Glyphosate	Herbicide in farming



OPTIMIZING WOMEN'S HORMONES

Session Six

Special Considerations

Classes featured: Hormones and Special Considerations, Optimizing Women's Hormones Wrap-up

My reflections:

What I want to remember:



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Your risk for osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease increases when you reach menopause.
- The highest rate of bone loss occurs one year before your period stops.
- You need vitamin D and calcium, plus exercise, for healthy bones.
- The risk for stroke doubles in the 10 years after menopause.
- It's important to consume Omega-3 fatty acids.



HOMEWORK

Assignment

Choose one or two of the following to focus on:

- I will consume an Omega-3 fat each day this week.
- I will take a brisk walk each day this week.
- I will consult with a personal trainer to create an exercise plan that works for me.
- I will eat two calcium-rich foods per day.

Quick notes:



CALCIUM AND VITAMIN D RICH FOODS

Pro tip: Vitamin D is essential for absorption of calcium in the intestine. The following foods are rich in vitamin D:

- Bok choy
- Canned salmon
- Chia seeds
- Egg yolks
- Figs
- Fish
- Fortified dairy products
- Kale
- Sardines
- Tofu
- White beans



TIPS FOR PURCHASING A SUPPLEMENT

Check for drug–nutrient interactions.

- Food first!
- Check with your dietitian or physician.
- You can use a free interaction checker online to check for medication and food interactions. It's smart to verify with your physician as well.

Buy reputable brands.

- The company should test every batch—not skip lot testing, where only some are tested for quality.
- Check for certification label: USP, CGMP, NSF.
- Choose tablet form!
 - › Gummies or liquid may have water or sugar added as filler.
 - › Capsule form is good but allows for more oxidation to happen.
- Be cautious when purchasing from large, third-party resellers. Many reputable brands do not allow this. Check out the brand's website for information on verified retailers to purchase from.

Take with food.

- Take supplements with a snack or a meal to avoid stomach irritation.
- The presence of carbohydrates and proteins stimulate digestive enzymes that allow for better absorption for the supplements.
- Iron should be taken on an empty stomach.



Program Completion

Congratulations on completing the Optimizing Women's Hormones program!

You should have implemented a few strategies by now and be starting to notice changes in how you feel. Remember this is only the beginning of your journey. With your newfound knowledge, you have additional tools to understand and manage the menopause transition. Keep building on your healthy habits from the list of action steps.

Cheers to your health and wellbeing!

Want to continue learning?

Check out one of our other programs: Putting Out the Flame, Restore Gut Health, Optimizing Brain Health, Home Chef Pro, and Kids in the Kitchen.