

Key Nutrients for Menopausal Women and Their Food Sources

During menopause, hormonal changes can affect metabolism, bone density, heart health, and overall well-being. A nutrient-rich diet can help support the body through this transition. Below are key nutrients and the foods that contain them:

1. Calcium (Supports bone health and reduces osteoporosis risk)

- Dairy: Yoghurt, cheese, milk
- Leafy greens: Kale, collard greens, broccoli
- Fish: Sardines, salmon (with bones)
- Fortified foods: Plant-based milk (almond, soy, oat), fortified orange juice
- Nuts & seeds: Almonds, sesame seeds (tahini)

2. Vitamin D (Essential for calcium absorption and bone strength)

- Fatty fish: Salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna
- Fortified foods: Dairy products, plant-based milk, cereals
- Eggs: Egg yolks
- Mushrooms: Especially sun-exposed varieties

3. Magnesium (Supports bone health, sleep, and muscle function)

- Nuts & seeds: Almonds, cashews, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds
- Whole grains: Brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat
- Dark leafy greens: Spinach, Swiss chard
- Legumes: Lentils, chickpeas, black beans
- Dark chocolate (70%+ cocoa)

4. Omega-3 Fatty Acids (Reduces inflammation, supports heart health and brain function)

- Fatty fish: Salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring
- Nuts & seeds: Flaxseeds, chia seeds, walnuts
- Plant oils: Flaxseed oil, walnut oil
- Algae-based supplements

5. Vitamin B12 (Supports nerve function and energy production, especially important if reducing animal products)

- Animal sources: Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy
- Fortified foods: Nutritional yeast, plant-based milk
- Supplements (for those on a plant-based diet)

6. Vitamin K (Supports bone health and cardiovascular health)

- Leafy greens: Kale, spinach, broccoli, Brussels sprouts
- Fermented foods: Natto (fermented soybeans)
- Dairy: Some cheeses

7. Phytoestrogens (May help balance hormones naturally)

- Soy products: Tofu, tempeh, miso, edamame
- Flaxseeds: Ground flaxseeds
- Legumes: Lentils, chickpeas
- Whole grains: Oats, barley

8. Protein (Maintains muscle mass and metabolic health)

- Lean meats: Chicken, turkey, lean beef
- Fish & seafood: Salmon, prawns, tuna
- Plant-based sources: Lentils, beans, quinoa, tofu, tempeh
- Dairy: Greek yoghurt, cottage cheese

9. Fibre (Supports digestion, hormone balance, and heart health)

- Whole grains: Brown rice, oats, quinoa, whole wheat
- Fruits: Apples, berries, pears, oranges
- Vegetables: Broccoli, carrots, Brussels sprouts
- Legumes: Lentils, beans, chickpeas
- Nuts & seeds: Chia seeds, flaxseeds

10. Iron (Important for energy levels, especially for women still experiencing menstruation)

- Red meat: Beef, lamb, liver
- Plant-based sources: Lentils, chickpeas, tofu, spinach
- Fortified cereals
- Nuts & seeds: Pumpkin seeds, cashews
- Vitamin C-rich foods help absorption: Oranges, bell peppers, strawberries

11. Zinc (Supports immune function and skin health)

- Seafood: Oysters, crab, prawns
- Meat: Beef, lamb, pork
- Nuts & seeds: Pumpkin seeds, cashews
- Dairy: Cheese, yoghurt

12. Antioxidants (Protects against cellular damage and aging)

- Berries: Blueberries, strawberries, raspberries
- Dark chocolate
- Green tea
- Nuts: Walnuts, almonds
- Vegetables: Kale, carrots, tomatoes