



Life changes ...

however that doesn't mean your scale has to. Here's how to manage your weight after menopause. BY DINI COHEN, BA, RHN

As if the hot flashes weren't enough to contend with, you may have found that menopause has left you with a few extra pounds on your frame. Studies find that most women weigh two to eight pounds more post-menopause. This weight gain can mainly be attributed to a shift in hormones (which can lead to water retention) and a slowing metabolism with age. While most people think that weight gain is a normal part of the "change of life," it doesn't have to be. Here's how to stay fit and fabulous after menopause:

EAT LESS

In order to maintain your weight during and after menopause, try eating 200 fewer calories per day.

EXERCISE MORE

Exercise is more important than ever. Include weight-bearing movements in your daily routine such as walking, aerobics, and tennis. Try adding relaxation and meditative exercises to your routine to reduce stress levels. Also, strengthen your core through yoga and Pilates.

ENJOY MINI MEALS

Eat five or six well-balanced mini meals throughout the day. Each should include a healthy fat, carbohydrate, and lean protein. This will keep your blood sugar stable and reduce cravings.

EXPAND BEYOND WHOLE WHEAT

Increase fibre and nutrients by including a variety of grains in your diet. Whole grains are a good source of fibre and are rich in vitamins B, E, and minerals. Experiment with gluten-free grains such as brown rice, quinoa, oats, barley, and buckwheat.

STOCK UP ON PRODUCE

Aim for seven to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Not only are they high in antioxidants and phytonutrients, most are also high in water and fibre — and low in calories.

STAY HYDRATED

Drink plenty of pure water. Our body is made of 70 percent water, so in order for our bodies to work properly we need to stay hydrated.

Swap water for soda and caffeinated beverages as they can draw calcium from your bones, increasing your chance of osteoporosis.

GO WILD

Aim for two or three serving of wild fish per week. Salmon, sardines, and anchovies are all high in omega-3 fatty acids. If fish is not your thing, then try supplementing with high quality fish oil that has been molecularly distilled. (Note: talk to your naturopathic doctor before you supplement with fish oil as it's not recommended for those taking blood thinners.)

GET A CALCIUM BOOST

Eat plenty of calcium-rich foods such as yogurt, collard greens, and legumes. Calcium is vital to preserving bone density. Aim for 1,000 to 1,200 milligrams of calcium a day. If you cannot get enough calcium-rich foods in your diet consider taking a supplement.

BONUS TIP

Calcium is best absorbed when it is combined with vitamin D. Remember, we can only absorb 500 milligrams of calcium at a time, so spread your dose throughout the day and take with meals. Opt for calcium citrate versus calcium carbonate as it a more absorbable form. If you are on Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) or have a history of kidney stones, speak to your doctor about calcium supplementation.

SOY YES

Isoflavones in soy protein help balance hormone levels and also have some estrogenic activity. Choose natural sources of soy such as tempeh, tofu, soymilk, and roasted soy nuts.

SUPPLEMENT WITH A B-COMPLEX

B vitamins are important for liver function and energy production. The recommended daily intake is 100 milligrams. Try not to take B vitamins at night or in the late afternoon, as they will interfere with your nighttime sleep.

LIMIT SODIUM

If you're a fan of salt, opt for dulse flakes in soups and salads instead. Dulse is a red sea vegetable, which is very high iodine. Iodine is helpful in supporting the thyroid gland, especially since it is responsible for your metabolism.

Overall, attitude is key when dealing with the after effects of menopause. If your weight has derailed, don't worry — it is easy to get back on track. Eat a balanced diet, exercise and include stress management techniques. ♥

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