

# The naturopathic advisor



**Natural Lifestyle has teamed up with experts at CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine) to answer some of your burning health questions. This issue, you asked:**



## Q Are there natural ways to ease the side effects of the menopause?

We can make a positive impact on the side effects of menopause, which may include hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal changes, such as thinning of the mucosal membrane, dryness and discomfort, mood changes, bladder issues and loss of libido. Women in

the post-menopausal age group are also at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis so it is important to offset these health risks.

Take regular weight-bearing exercise and manage stresses. Follow an anti-inflammatory diet and choose organic for better phytonutrient content and fewer toxic residues. Reduce red meat intake, choosing grass fed lean meats only, and increase small oily fish, such as sardines. Switch all white flour products for wholegrain, and increase consumption of green leafy vegetables. Limit sugar and alcohol, eat a small handful of raw nuts and two tablespoons of freshly ground flaxseeds daily. Favour water cooking methods such as steaming, poaching and sautéing.

If choosing soy, use only foods prepared with soy beans or soy flour, such as tofu, tempeh etc., and traditionally prepared non-genetically modified, preferably organic soy. Avoid highly processed soy and soy supplements (for example, soy protein isolate). The phytoestrogens in soy foods, which may ease symptoms, are most effective when metabolised to equol. Equol production requires certain bowel bacteria, which vegetarians are four times more likely to produce than non-vegetarians. A more heavily plant-based diet can support an easier transition through menopause.

Many herbs can be used for menopausal symptoms. Sage tea is a popular one for hot flushes. Black cohosh is recommended for flushes

and mood/sleep disorders; combined with St John's wort, it may be even more effective, but get advice from your herbalist. Maca is useful for menopausal symptoms with sexual dysfunction. Coconut oil can be used as a vaginal lubricant.

For bone health, increase calcium and magnesium-rich foods, such as kale, almonds and natural yoghurt, and boost vitamin D if necessary with supplementation to reach optimum levels (125nmol/L, a blood test is required). Add cold pressed olive oil to meals at the table and do not cook with vegetable seed oils. Use lots of herbs to flavour your cooking.



Your question has been answered by Naturopath, Gemma Hurditch, for CNM. For information on CNM training in a range of natural health therapies, visit [www.naturopathy-uk.com](http://www.naturopathy-uk.com)

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