

Women face a unique set of gender-specific health concerns, such as menopause and cervical cancer. And while women tend to be more proactive in their health care than men - a good way to catch health issues early on - preventive health tactics can't hurt. This issue of *Balanced Living* looks at women's health, including how to promote bone health, foods for a variety of health concerns, supplements and menopause, and more. Read and pass this along to other women in your life.



Yours in health,

Andrew Weil, M.D.

Supplements And Herbs For Menopause

Once women reach the [menopause](#) years, typically around the age of 50, a variety of physiological changes occur that can have a profound impact on their lives. Menopause is a term that refers to the end of menstruation, the result of the natural decline in the hormones (estrogen, progesterone, and others) produced in the ovaries. In addition to accepting menopause as a normal and natural stage of life, and eating a diet that includes soy foods, Dr. Weil recommends the following herbs and supplements to address different symptoms associated with menopause:

- 1 **Black Cohosh** (*Cumicifuga racemosa*). One of the best-studied traditional herbs, [black cohosh](#) is used to help alleviate some symptoms of menopause, including hot flashes. Black cohosh seems to work by supporting and maintaining hormonal levels, which may lessen the severity of hot flashes. Many women report that the herb works well, but it isn't effective for everyone. While any therapy that influences hormonal actions should be a concern, black

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7 Lifestyle Tips To Help Promote Healthy Bones

Both men and women experience a decrease in bone mass with age. However, as women reach menopause and estrogen levels decline, bone loss escalates making it even more important for women to promote [bone health](#). In addition to eating a balanced diet and prudent supplementation, the following lifestyle habits can help preserve and increase bone mass:



- 1 **Eat Soy Foods.** Some studies suggest that the phytoestrogen compounds in soy may help protect bones and prevent bone loss – try to eat several servings of whole soy-based foods each day.
- 2 **Minimize Salt.** Keep salt intake to a minimum, as sodium can increase the amount of calcium lost through urine.
- 3 **Drink Tea Instead Of Coffee.** Regular consumption of coffee has been associated with lower bone mass in women. Tea has less caffeine (which can interfere with calcium absorption) and offers flavonoids, which may enhance bone strength.

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Quick Tip

The Importance Of Alone Time

Since time constraints, packed schedules and over commitments have become the norm, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Re-charge yourself once in a while by scheduling alone time - it will help you stay grounded and in touch with your thoughts and feelings. Consider meditating first thing in the morning or winding down alone with a cup of caffeine-free tea and a book before bed.



Supplements And Herbs For Menopause

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cohoosh does not appear to have estrogenic activity and thus may be safe for women with a personal or family history of breast cancer.

- 2 B Vitamins.** This group of water-soluble vitamins may help women deal with the stress of menopausal symptoms.
- 3 Gamma-Linolenic Acid (GLA).** Both [evening primrose oil](#) and black currant oil are sources of GLA, an essential fatty acid that can help influence prostaglandin synthesis and help moderate menopausal symptoms.
- 3 Sage (*Salvia officinalis*).** Highly prized as an herbal medicine, women have long valued sage as an ally as they transition through menopause. German health authorities endorse the use of sage as a treatment for excessive sweating based on traditional use and small human studies. A preliminary study using a Swiss-based sage formula showed reduction of hot flashes frequency by 40 percent and also demonstrated reduction of hot flash intensity.



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- 4 Avoid Carbonated Beverages.** Many soft drinks contain phosphoric acid, which can contribute to calcium loss.
- 5 Get Regular Exercise.** Weight-bearing exercise (walking, jogging or any exercise done on the feet) and [strength training](#) (such as weightlifting or working with resistance bands) can help fortify bones and build bone mass.
- 6 Don't Smoke And Keep Alcohol Intake Moderate.** Moderation will help preserve bone and slow bone loss.
- 7 Eat Leafy Greens.** A diet rich in leafy greens, such as Swiss chard, kale, parsley and spinach can help you receive adequate amounts of vitamin K. This vitamin helps activate certain proteins that are involved in the structuring of bone mass. Low intake of vitamin K has also been linked to low bone density.



Foods That Can Benefit Women

As we know, women incur their own unique health issues, but the good news is that many related symptoms can be positively affected by diet. Consider eating the following foods to alleviate symptoms of some common health conditions:



ginger tea

- **Nuts.** Almonds, walnuts, cashews and macadamias contain heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. They are also rich in magnesium, which may help alleviate some of the emotional symptoms, fluid retention and breast tenderness associated with premenstrual syndrome. Try the recipe on page 4!
- **Whole Soy Protein.** Foods such as edamame or tofu can lower levels of homocysteine, a toxic amino acid linked to increased risk of heart disease. Soy foods can also help ease symptoms of pre-menstrual syndrome and [perimenopause](#).
- **Fresh Garlic.** This medicinal herb may help lower cholesterol levels to promote heart health. Use one or two chopped raw or lightly cooked cloves a day.
- **Green Tea.** Rich in EGCG, a polyphenol that may help to moderate inflammation and lower cholesterol, green tea makes a great heart-healthy substitution for your morning coffee or afternoon soda.
- **Cruciferous Vegetables.** Cabbage, along with other cruciferous vegetables, can help lessen the risks for women predisposed to cervical and [breast cancer](#).
- **Ginger.** If you are pregnant and have morning sickness, consider using ginger to keep your stomach calm and settled.



Dr. Weil's Anti-Inflammatory Food Pyramid is a practical eating guide that consumers of all ages can use. This simple tool promotes optimum health and healthy aging by providing dietary advice that addresses inflammation. Learn more - join Dr. Weil on Healthy Aging: Your Online Guide to the Anti-Inflammatory Diet.

Weil Vitamin Advisor Tip



Avoiding Additional Supplements

Unless your doctor recommends additional supplementation, avoid combining your [Weil Vitamin Advisor supplements](#) with those from other sources. This will help you avoid potential interactions or adverse reactions, and allow your customized supplement regimen to provide all of the nutritional support you need.

Curried Spiced Mixed Nuts

A Fast Food, Good Food exclusive! These nuts are perfect as an appetizer. As soon as you start to smell a wonderful aroma wafting from the oven, its time to remove the nuts. They will continue to cook as they cool. You can easily double the recipe and freeze some for later use.



INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2 In a medium bowl, whisk together the olive oil, maple syrup, curry powder, salt and cayenne. Add the nuts and toss with a spatula until evenly coated. Spread the nuts evenly on the baking sheet.
- 3 Bake for 10 to 12 minutes and stir them about halfway through. Nuts are done when they are aromatic and slightly golden. Let them cool to room temperature, then use a metal spatula to loosen them from the parchment. Transfer to a serving dish or an airtight container. Store in the freezer for up to a month.

Makes 10 servings.

This recipe is courtesy of Dr. Weil's cookbook: FAST FOOD, GOOD FOOD.

Like this recipe? Then try out these other suggestions:

- **Cashew Brittle**
- **Smoky Roasted Chickpeas**
- **Walnut, Quince & Manchego Bites**

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons grade B maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/8 teaspoon [cayenne pepper](#)
- 1/2 cup raw walnuts
- 1/2 cup raw almonds
- 1/3 cup raw cashews
- 1/3 cup raw pistachios

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

- Calories 112
- Protein 3.2g
- Saturated Fat 1.1g
- Monounsaturated Fat 4.3g
- Polyunsaturated Fat 4.1g
- Carbohydrate 4g
- Fiber 1.5g
- Cholesterol 0mg
- Vitamin A IU 18.2
- Vitamin E 0.00
- Vitamin C .32mg
- Calcium 23mg
- Magnesium 34.81mg