



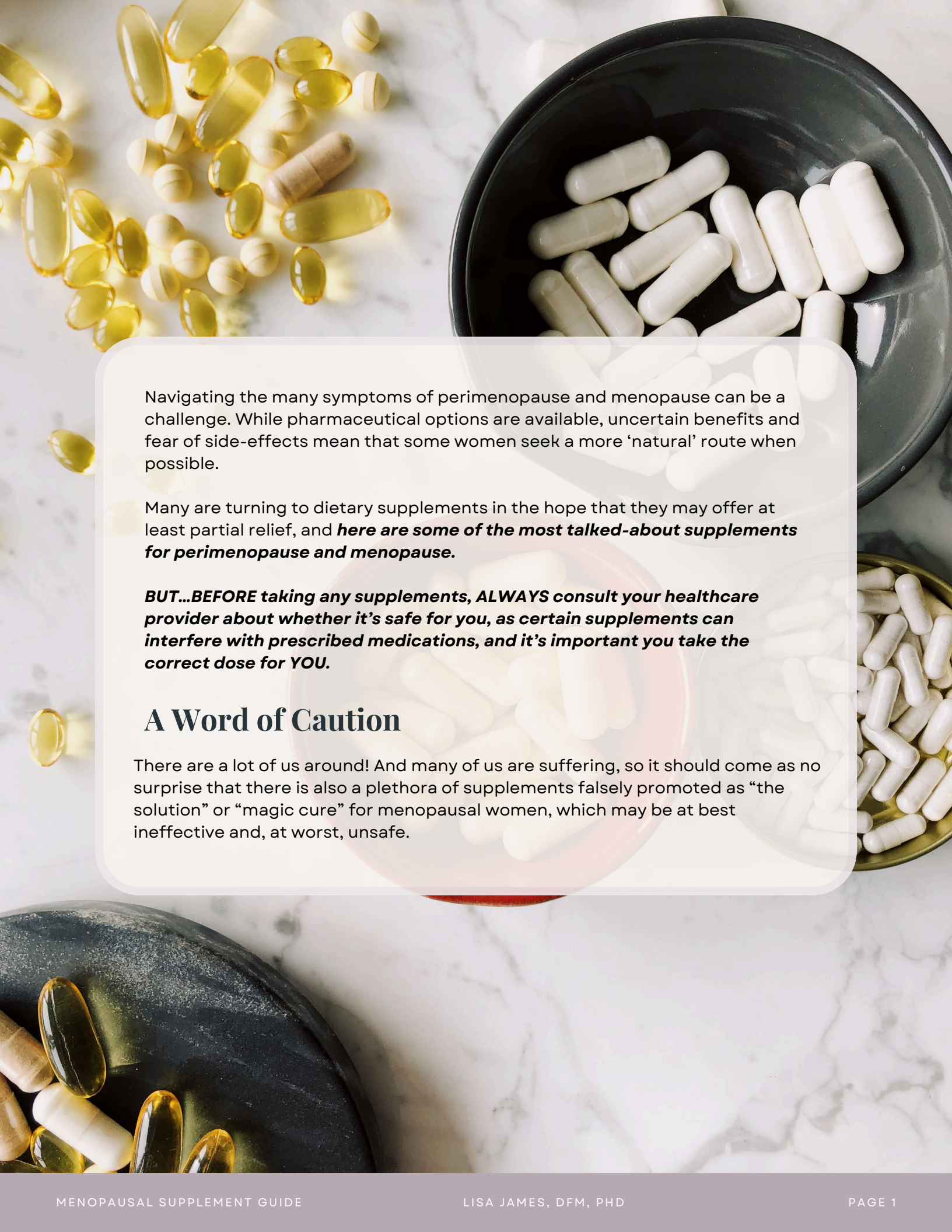
Perimenopausal & Menopausal Supplement Guide

Partnering with a knowledgeable health professional can simplify the overwhelming array of options during menopause.

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Navigating the many symptoms of perimenopause and menopause can be a challenge. While pharmaceutical options are available, uncertain benefits and fear of side-effects mean that some women seek a more ‘natural’ route when possible.

Many are turning to dietary supplements in the hope that they may offer at least partial relief, and ***here are some of the most talked-about supplements for perimenopause and menopause.***

BUT...BEFORE taking any supplements, ALWAYS consult your healthcare provider about whether it's safe for you, as certain supplements can interfere with prescribed medications, and it's important you take the correct dose for YOU.

A Word of Caution

There are a lot of us around! And many of us are suffering, so it should come as no surprise that there is also a plethora of supplements falsely promoted as “the solution” or “magic cure” for menopausal women, which may be at best ineffective and, at worst, unsafe.

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MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is involved in muscle function and bone health, and so a deficiency might exacerbate joint issues, leading to poor sleep, muscle cramps and pain.



KEY FEATURES:

- Healthy muscle and nerve function
- Bone health
- Heart health
- Sleep
- Muscle cramps



BENEFITS:

Magnesium is vital for various bodily functions and is a popular choice for women navigating perimenopause and menopause.

It's involved in numerous biochemical reactions throughout the body, and is thought to help regulate mood, support strong bones, and maintain hormone levels.



CONSIDERATIONS

Like any supplement, it's essential to ***consult a healthcare provider for proper dosage***, as excessive intake can lead to digestive issues (such as diarrhea) and kidney problems.





CONSIDER THIS

About **60% of the body's magnesium resides in the bones**, directly impacting the prevention of osteoporosis. Osteoporosis, characterized by diminished bone mineral density, is a concern for 10–30% of postmenopausal women, with its prevalence growing as women age.

A significant factor in this is the **drop in estrogen levels during menopause**. This decline means that bone degradation can occur more rapidly than its reconstruction. Consequently, bones become more fragile and porous.

Moreover, insufficient magnesium levels can increase inflammation, further compromising bone strength and resulting in joint pain.



DOSAGE

How much to supplement with varies, depending on age. When it comes to supplements, it's essential to differentiate between the overall weight of the supplement and the actual magnesium content. **"Elemental magnesium" on a product's label indicates the quantity of magnesium.**

There are different types of magnesium supplements, and taking the right one is important. Each form of magnesium has its own set of benefits and is suited for different purposes.

TYPES OF MAGNESIUM	
MAGNESIUM CITRATE	This is one of the commonest forms of magnesium supplement and is often used for its laxative properties. It's primarily recommended for relieving constipation and improving digestion. It's also well-absorbed, making it a popular choice for general magnesium supplementation.
MAGNESIUM OXIDE	Contains the highest amount of elemental magnesium per dose , but it's often not absorbed as well as other forms. Therefore, it can be less effective in increasing blood levels than other forms .

TYPES OF MAGNESIUM	
MAGNESIUM GLYCINATE	This is magnesium bonded with the amino acid glycine and is often recommended for those who want to boost their magnesium levels <i>without the laxative effect. It's gentle on the stomach and is absorbed well</i> , making it beneficial for individuals with magnesium deficiency. It's a popular choice to use for individuals who want <i>help relieving symptoms of anxiety, poor sleep, insomnia and depression.</i>
MAGNESIUM CHLORIDE	Available in oral supplements and cream/ointments to be applied to the skin. Applying it on the skin can help muscle soreness but will not effectively raise blood magnesium levels. Magnesium chloride in supplement form is well absorbed and may also help relieve heartburn and constipation and increase blood levels.
MAGNESIUM MALATE	It is often recommended for individuals with fatigue (but more research is needed to support this), but it might also benefit those experiencing muscle pain. Moreover, <i>it is easily absorbed and does not have the same laxative effect on bowels as other forms.</i>
MAGNESIUM TAURATE	A combination of magnesium and the amino acid taurine is thought to help support the cardiovascular system, improve sleep and possibly reduce anxiety. It is thought that <u>taurine and magnesium</u> positively affect blood sugar and help support blood pressure.
MAGNESIUM L-THREONATE	A newer form of magnesium that's chelated (bound) to L-threonic acid, which has been researched for its potential to improve cognitive functions, as it may have better <u>penetration through the blood-brain barrier</u> . It's thought to help with conditions like <i>depression, although more research is needed.</i>
MAGNESIUM SULPHATE	<i>Also known as Epsom Salts</i> , is popular to use in bath water to help relieve sore muscles and reduce stress and anxiety. There is little evidence to suggest that applying this form of magnesium to the skin is an effective way to raise magnesium blood levels.

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VITAMIN D3

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin. **Vitamin D3, also known as cholecalciferol**, is usually made by our skin when exposed to sunlight, and it can also be found in certain animal-based foods like fish and egg yolks.

Vitamin D is crucial for bone health and may also have anti-inflammatory effects, which is especially helpful for joint pain in perimenopause and menopause.

Unfortunately, Vitamin D deficiency is relatively common, either caused by inadequate dietary intake or less commonly through a lack of sun exposure. This latter element is more common potentially in Northern climates with less sun and more clothing, and in those who may have little skin exposure for religious or cultural reasons.

Vitamin D deficiency can be common in perimenopausal, menopausal and postmenopausal women. Therefore, supplementation is often recommended, especially for those with weakened bone health due to hormonal declines.

**KEY FEATURES:**

- Bone health support
- Immune system
- Mood regulator

**BENEFITS:**

Vitamin D is now gaining attention for its broader health benefits, especially in menopausal women and in osteoporosis.

In addition, it's thought to influence skeletal muscle, cardiovascular disease, and emotional symptoms.

Health issues that can be linked to insufficient levels of vitamin D include:

- Alzheimer's disease
- Anxiety & depression
- Cardiovascular disease
- Elevated blood pressure
- Emotional fluctuations
- Frequent illnesses or infections (especially urine infections (UTI's))



- Impaired cognitive function
- Increased risk of cancer
- Increased likelihood of bone fractures - osteoporosis
- Loss of hair and weakened bones
- Pain in bones, joints, and the back
- Skin conditions like psoriasis
- Tiredness or severe fatigue
- Weakness and discomfort in muscles



CONSIDERATIONS

Vitamin D use may rarely lead to toxicity, as this fat-soluble vitamin can accumulate in the body if taken in excess. Therefore, it's highly recommended to consult your doctor and ***check your blood levels BEFORE supplementing. This blood test is - 25-hydroxyvitamin D.***



DOSAGE

Given its affordability and numerous potential benefits, Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) **is recommended for supplementing** and should be in an oil-based carrier, as this fat-soluble vitamin relies on fats for effective absorption and utilization.



OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Fish oils are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, whose anti-inflammatory effects may help reduce joint pain.



KEY FEATURES:

- Reduces inflammation
- Supports heart health
- Brain health
- Joint pain

TYPES OF OMEGA-3s	
ALA (Alpha Linolenic Acid)	Found in plants
EPA (Eicosapentaenoic Acid) and DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid)	Primarily found in animal products like fish, grass-fed beef, and some algae species.
	Benefits of EPA and DHA: • Menstrual cramps and joint pain. • Heart health. • Mood and brain health • May offer protection against certain types of cancer.

These fatty acids are particularly advantageous for perimenopausal and menopausal women, offering protection for heart, breast and bone health and mood stabilisation.

In menopausal women, declining estrogen levels can lead to issues such as osteoporosis, heart disease, and vaginal dryness. A deficiency in omega-3s can exacerbate these problems due to increased low-grade inflammation. Therefore, consuming more omega-3s through supplements or food sources may mitigate this inflammation.



SPECIFIC BENEFITS OF OMEGA-3S IN MENOPAUSE

- **Night sweats:** Some studies suggest that omega-3s may help with night sweats. However, more definitive research is needed.
- **Osteoporosis:** May help prevent osteoporosis.
- **Mood and Memory:** Omega-3s are associated with a more positive outlook and reduced risk of memory loss in ageing.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** They can lower triglyceride levels and increase HDL (good) cholesterol, providing dual cardiovascular protection.
- **Longevity:** Research suggests that DHA, a type of omega-3, may help to lower heart rate.



CONSIDERATIONS

Too much Omega-3 can thin the blood, **leading to bleeding issues** for some individuals. It can also interact with anticoagulant medications.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT OMEGA-3 SUPPLEMENT

Quality varies among omega-3 supplements. Choose a product sourced from smaller fish from unpolluted waters, and confirm its purity through third-party certificates of analysis for elements like lead and mercury.

Choose a supplement containing EPA and DHA; ***opt for algae rather than flax if you prefer a vegan supplement.***

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ASHWAGANDHA

Known as an adaptogen, ashwagandha is thought to help improve menopausal symptoms.

This **small study** suggests that ashwagandha root extract may be a safe and effective option to relieve mild to moderate symptoms during perimenopause.



KEY FEATURES:

- Stress and anxiety reliever
- Enhances stamina and endurance
- Promotes hormonal health



BENEFITS:

Ashwagandha, scientifically known as *Withania somnifera*, is a revered herb in traditional Ayurvedic medicine, which aims to harmonize the body's stress response and fortify the immune system.



BENEFITS FOR MENOPAUSAL WOMEN:

Women going through menopause and perimenopause have begun to explore ashwagandha to address issues like:

- Sleep disturbances
- Anxiety and stress
- Hot flashes
- Weight management
- Fatigue
- Hormonal imbalances
- Low libido





CONS:

Generally, ashwagandha is well-tolerated, but potential side effects may include:

- Nausea
- Drowsiness
- Diarrhea



CONTRAINDICATIONS:

- Thyroid conditions
- Certain medications like thyroid-altering drugs or hormonal treatments
- Preparing for surgery



DOSAGE:

Consult a healthcare professional for personalized advice.



CAUTION:

Ashwagandha can interfere with thyroid medications.



Ashwagandha may offer a natural way to alleviate symptoms of menopause, such as stress, sleep issues, hormonal imbalances, and fatigue. ***However, more research is needed.*** Quality matters, so choose organic forms of the herb from trusted sources and consult your doctor before beginning supplementation.



TURMERIC (CURCUMIN)

Turmeric contains an active compound called curcumin, known for its potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. ***It may help reduce joint pain and inflammation.***



DOSAGE:

Dosage will vary from person to person. ***Taking it with black pepper is often recommended to enhance absorption.***



CAUTION:

It is advised AGAINST using turmeric supplements for individuals with the following conditions:

- **Gallbladder Disease:** Some past studies indicate that turmeric might lead to gallbladder contractions, and, thus, worsening symptoms.
- **Kidney Stones:** Turmeric is rich in oxalate, which can combine with calcium and lead to the formation of kidney stones.
- **Bleeding Disorders:** Turmeric might delay blood clotting, potentially aggravating bleeding issues.
- **Diabetes:** There's a risk that turmeric could reduce blood sugar levels.
- **Iron deficiency:** Turmeric usage might disrupt the absorption of iron.
- **Digestive upset:** Turmeric can be associated with loose or frequent bowel movements.



Please Note: Always consult with your **healthcare physician/practitioner** when introducing turmeric supplements.

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PROBIOTICS

Probiotics are friendly bacteria that can help keep your gut healthy, and this is **especially beneficial during perimenopause and menopause**. They're found in some foods like yoghurt and are also available as supplements.

Even though they are widely discussed for their benefits, it's essential to know that **probiotics are still a topic of ongoing research, and their effects can vary from person to person**.



Probiotics and Menopause:

As you approach menopause, your body goes through many changes. Probiotics might help manage some of these changes by supporting your digestive and vaginal health.



SPECIFIC BENEFITS OF PROBIOTICS IN MENOPAUSE:

- **Urinary Health:** They might help reduce recurring urinary infections.
- **Gastric Symptoms:** Might ease digestive issues like diarrhea and constipation.
- **Immunity:** Could give your immune system a boost.
- **Digestion:** May help your body absorb nutrients better.
- **Sleep:** May help you have better sleep.



POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS:

Probiotics can cause some digestive issues, especially when you first start taking them. These can include:

- Gas
- Bloating
- Diarrhea
- Upset stomach
- Cramping

Please note: Some probiotics can increase histamine levels.



DOSAGE

It's important to start with a lower dose of probiotics and gradually increase to the recommended dose to see how your body reacts. Furthermore, **consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new supplement regimen**, especially if you have existing health conditions or are taking medications.



CONSIDERATIONS

Not all probiotics are the same, and they will not work the same way for everyone. Talk to your doctor or nutrition expert before adding probiotics to your diet, especially if you have other health conditions or are taking medications.





For many women transitioning through menopause, ***the complex hormonal shifts, most notably the decline in estrogen levels, often lead to many physical and emotional symptoms.***

Given the pervasive nature of many of these symptoms, women at this stage of life find themselves at a crossroads of seeking relief, yet often finding confusing or conflicting advice or guidance. In turn, ***this often challenging position makes them a prime target for marketers and advertisers.***

The market is saturated with products – from supplements to gadgets – each claiming to be the “cure” for menopausal discomforts. The sheer volume of “promised solutions” can be overwhelming and misleading.

While some products may indeed offer genuine relief, others might merely be ***capitalising on the desperation many women feel during this transition.***

In the maze of online information, partnering with a knowledgeable health professional is invaluable and not only offers tailored support, but also helps distil the vast sea of potential information into actionable, personalised strategies.

Whether it’s fine-tuning ***nutrition, adapting exercise routines, considering supplements, managing stress, or optimising sleep patterns,*** the journey can become more manageable and effective with a trusted companion by your side.

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A WORD FROM....

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A functional health approach to managing perimenopause and menopause focuses on addressing the root causes of hormonal imbalances. The best way to do this is by supporting the body's natural transition with targeted nutrition, lifestyle changes, and individualized use of supplements and herbs. Key botanicals such as black cohosh, and maca, along with nutrients like magnesium, B vitamins, and adaptogens like ashwagandha, are used to help balance hormones, reduce symptoms like hot flashes, mood swings, and fatigue, and support adrenal and thyroid function for overall well-being during this life stage.

The goal is to restore hormonal harmony, reduce inflammation, and support the body's natural transition through lifestyle, nutrition and herbal support.

Dr. Lisa James

