

### 3 Essential Nutrients Every Woman Needs After Menopause



Following menopause, changes in body composition, metabolism, and various physiological functions occur. Consequently, nutritional requirements shift, making certain nutrients and supplements increasingly important during this time.

#### The importance of oestrogen

Oestrogen is extremely important and protective during the reproductive years. However, maintaining such high oestrogen levels post menopause is dangerous. Therefore, the body wisely dials oestrogen levels down once no longer needed for reproduction. But this loss of oestrogen results in changes to metabolic function, making the following nutrients even more important after menopause.

#### 1. Protein

Oestrogen is anabolic meaning that it encourages the body to build muscle. Once oestrogen is gone, muscle bulk, tone and strength also decline. For this reason it is important to boost your intake of quality protein sources such as lean meat, eggs, tofu, legumes, seeds, nuts and yoghurt. If this is difficult for you or you'd like an easier way to get more, you can always use a quality protein powder supplement. Contact me if you'd like access to quality, Australian practitioner brands of protein. For muscle building you'd want a complete protein made from either whey or pea protein if you are vegetarian.



If you are finding problems with joints, hair, skin or nail quality, then a clean, hydrolyses collagen may be your preference.

For some added support for muscle maintenance, many post menopausal women find added creatine extremely beneficial.

Protein is also important for maintaining blood sugar levels. This protects against the development of insulin resistance, another metabolic change which can occur in response to declining oestrogen and increase your risk for diabetes.

## **2. Choline**

Women's ability to make choline relies on oestrogen, so choline levels can significantly drop after menopause. Choline is great for brain function and memory and is calming on the nervous system. More importantly, it has prominent metabolism benefits in that it is a natural appetite suppressant, can reverse insulin resistance and is important for the liver. This reduction in choline post menopause is probably the reason that fatty liver and increased cholesterol levels are a common seen around menopause. Choline can help reverse fatty liver. Choline is found in egg yolk and organ meats, but most people find it easier to get from a supplement.

## **3. Bone health nutrients**

Oestrogen supports bone formation and prevents excessive bone breakdown. When oestrogen levels decline, this tips the balance in favour of bone breakdown, leading to lowered bone mineral density and increasing the risk of osteoporosis. This is why bone minerals such as calcium become more important after menopause.

However, it is not as easy as taking a calcium supplement alone. Cheap forms of calcium on their own, such as calcium carbonate, can actually deposit in soft tissues such as arteries and cause harm. Instead, you need a quality calcium form (such as hydroxyapatite), coupled with some essential nutrients to ensure the calcium is absorbed from the gut and preferentially deposited into the bone. These additional nutrients include things like vitamin K2, vitamin D, zinc and boron and are often included together in quality bone health formulas.

In addition, activities such as weight bearing and impact exercises can help support bone density. For example, jogging, bouncing, hopping, stair climbing and lifting weights. These exercises create forces on the bone which stimulate bone repair and growth.



### **Other nutrients to consider**

Some minerals such as magnesium are important at all stages of life and so should be continued before, during and beyond the transition. Thyroid function can also be disturbed through the menopause transition. For women with a history of thyroid dysfunction, foods or supplements containing nutrients and herbs important for thyroid function can be very beneficial during this time.

### **A tailored, personal approach to your menopause**

A naturopath can formulate the perfect prescription for you to breeze through the transition and support your needs into the one third of your life which will be spent in menopause.