

Flourish

HEALTHY BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT



What Menopause
Looks Like in 2023

An Exclusive Interview with
Andrea Donsky

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Treat It at
the Source

Is Your Man
Missing Out?

Vol. 7, No. 4 · Free
Autumn 2023

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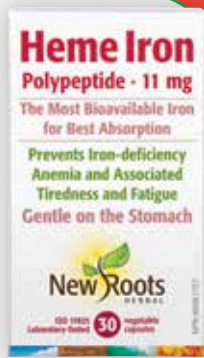
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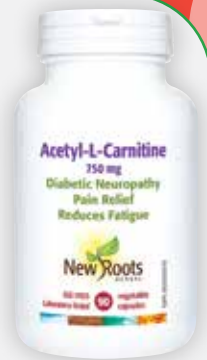
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Editor's Letter



You've probably heard the saying "the more things change, the more they stay the same." If only! Most of us wish they would actually stay the same, especially when it comes to aging. The privilege of getting older—and yes, I really do consider it a privilege—comes with a multitude of changes. Some for the better; others, not so much. We are bound to see changes in our appearance, our intellect, our health, our family units, and—for women—the big change: menopause!

In celebration of all our amazing female readers, we have gathered some great articles to help us deal with what may seem like uncharted waters. Men face their own issues as they age, so we've got some helpful information to ensure they don't miss out on the good things in life. We don't want anyone to be missing out; be it sleep due to a partner's snoring, nutrients due to picky eating, or serenity due to busy holidays. Read on and enjoy.

Wishing you all the best this holiday season and hoping you end the year with a *Flourish*!

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA
Editor-in-Chief

Flourish

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What Menopause Looks Like in 2023

An Exclusive Interview with **Andrea Donsky**

by Flourish Magazine

October is Menopause Awareness Month. It is estimated that by 2025, more than a billion women will be in menopause, which represents 12% of the population globally. With a huge community, a love for menopause research, and a goal of educating as many people as possible about this phase of life, we reached out to nutritionist Andrea Donsky to highlight her incredible work in the perimenopause and menopause space.

If you are not familiar with Andrea, she is an icon in the natural health-and-wellness industry. She has won multiple awards over the past 23 years for her work as a nutritionist, healthy living expert, media personality, and cofounder of Naturallysavvy.com. She is now known as the “Menopause Educator” and “Menopause Researcher” to her nearly 320,000+ TikTok followers. She recently launched a new company called Morphus (wearemorphus.com) with her long-time business partner, Randy Boyer, to tackle

the stigma around perimenopause and menopause, and to empower women to take control of their physical and emotional symptoms with nutrition, lifestyle, education, mindset, community, and research.

We recently had the opportunity to sit down with Andrea to talk about her work and goals.

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What inspired you to pivot your career to talk openly about perimenopause and menopause?

Andrea

Personal experience! I was sitting with my husband one day and I was in tears over how many symptoms, especially hot flashes, I was having—one right after another, with no relief. They were debilitating and I couldn’t function. I looked him straight in the eyes and said: “I need to figure out how to manage these hot flashes because this isn’t living.”

It was like a déjà vu moment for me, because nearly 20 years earlier, I was in a similar situation where I was having major stomach issues and it was at that point that I decided to go back to school to become a nutritionist. Back then, I took matters into my own hands so I could help myself—and others—and this time was no different. I learn everything I possibly can so I can share this knowledge with others who are on a similar journey.

My goal is to help as many people as possible understand this phase of life, because I knew so little about it when I was going through it. I have been working in the health-and-wellness world for decades, so it was a natural progression. I pivoted to help women navigate this time in their lives so they feel supported and validated.

Flourish

When did you first realize you were in perimenopause?

Andrea

That's a great question. I had no idea I was in perimenopause for 11 of the 14 years I went through it. I had many symptoms, but I never related it to "the change" because I didn't even know what the change meant. That was a huge shock to me because, as a nutritionist and someone who worked in the health-and-wellness world for so many years, I had zero clue about this stage of life. Nada. Nothing. So, I figured if I had no idea, then other women didn't either, and I was right!

I got my first hot flash at 47, and it was then that I asked myself: "Am I in menopause?" I didn't even know the word perimenopause existed.

I now realize I started perimenopause at 36. I had something called phantom smells (it's when you smell things that others don't). This symptom lasted for several years, and I kept going to my doctor for tests because I smelled smoke all the time. I kept getting a clean bill of health, so there was no other explanation for them.

Once my hot flashes appeared, I started putting together pieces of my life as if it were a puzzle. I wanted to learn as much as I possibly could about perimenopause and menopause so I could help myself and others.

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Tell us about your menopause research.

Andrea

I am passionate about understanding the "why" behind many of the symptoms we

experience in perimenopause and menopause. I love data and the more data we have, the more I can understand how to help women in this phase of life. Because of my love for research, we launched research surveys on our website so we can dive deep into symptomatology. We currently have multiple surveys running, including one on the signs and symptoms of menopause, one on stress and anxiety, one on sleep, one on phantom smells, one for women in the workplace who are currently working, and one for women who are not currently working outside of the home. Any woman over the age of 35 can fill them out. They are short, so they won't take long to complete.

We are trying to break barriers for women at this stage of life and help them advocate for themselves when it comes to their physical, mental, and overall health.

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What surprised you the most about going into perimenopause and menopause?

Andrea

How little I knew about it. I never spoke to my mother about her experience, I didn't speak to my doctor about it until I already knew I was in it, and when I did speak to my friends and colleagues, many of them couldn't relate because they weren't experiencing the same things I was. It was a lonely time.

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In your opinion, how can we change this for women who are approaching this phase of life or are already in it?

Andrea

By talking openly with our family members, friends, and colleagues. By learning about it in school. By asking our doctors and health-care practitioners questions. By asking our friends what their experiences are like or have been like. By following brilliant women in the menopause space who are paving the way with education and awareness. My website contains a lot of info, as do my social media videos. Everyone is free to share all my content with others.



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According to your research, what are some of the lesser-known symptoms of perimenopause and menopause?

Andrea

Some of the lesser-known but still very common symptoms include itchy ears; digestive issues like gas, bloating, constipation, and loose stools; B.O.; bruising; phantom smells; blood-sugar issues; tinnitus; and vertigo.

Flourish

What are some of the biggest myths surrounding menopause?

Andrea

Hands-down, the number one myth or misconception I hear over and over from my community is that we're too young to be in perimenopause or menopause even in our 40s and 50s. It's simply not true. Another one is that there are only 34 symptoms. Again, false. Our research shows there are 103+ symptoms, which is way more than 34! And another common one is that we are told we must suffer through the symptoms because it is a natural phase of life and there is nothing we can do to help ourselves. Again, so not true. There are many options these days including nutrition, lifestyle (exercise and stress management), supplements, mindset, and hormones.

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How do you help women on their perimenopause and menopause journeys?

Andrea

My wheelhouse is nutrition, lifestyle, supplements, and research. My team and I help women navigate through perimenopause and menopause with education and awareness.



It can be a challenging time for many of us, but when we know what to expect and we are provided with options on how to deal with it—it makes it a much smoother process. Plus, knowing we are not alone on our journey is crucial. My company, Morplus (wearemorplus.com), is committed to supporting women with community, education, laughter, research, and validation.

We are also putting on a live, in-person event on October 21, 2023, in Toronto. We are hosting a full-day event where 15+ expert speakers will share their experiences and knowledge on how to navigate perimenopause and menopause.

Flourish

What message do you want to leave for women who are in the throes of perimenopause or menopause right now?

Andrea

That they are not alone. They are not crazy, and there is hope. I know, because I was there. And to find a health-care practitioner who understands them and who understands how to treat women in perimenopause and menopause.

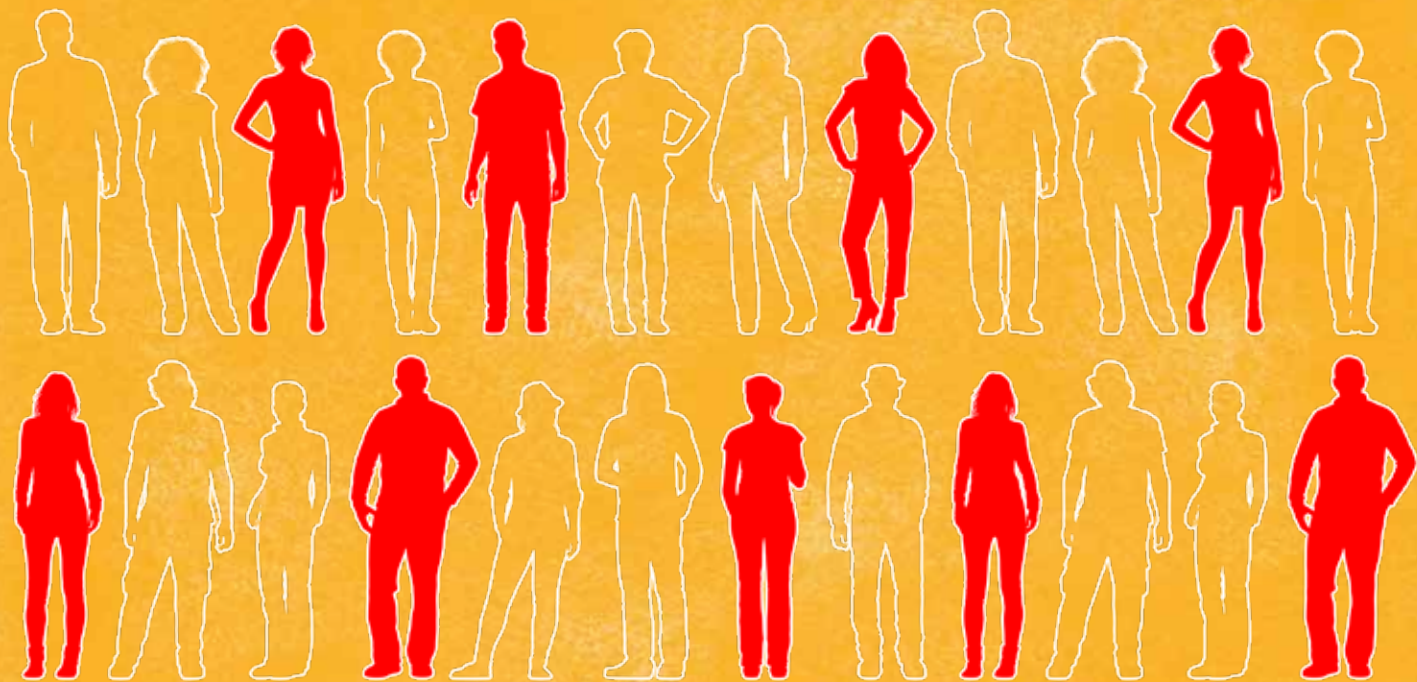
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Thank you for everything you are doing for women's health in general, and for women in perimenopause and menopause.

Andrea

Thank you for shedding light on this important topic. I appreciate you.

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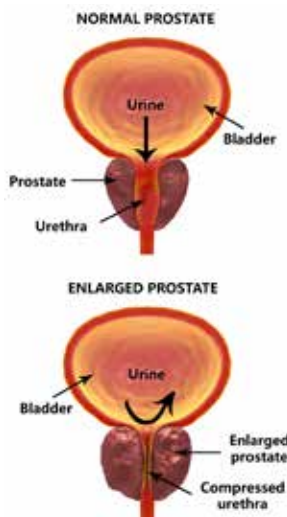


Is Your Man Missing Out?

by Ludovic Brunel, ND

Is your partner reluctant to attend activities which require prolonged sitting, losing spontaneity with intimacy, or missing some of life's precious moments due to urgent bathroom visits? The cause may be benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH).

BPH is a urological condition most men experience with aging. Surrounding the urethra, the prostate gland is essential for male reproductive function. As men age, the prostate gland can grow from the size of walnut in a man's 20s to that of a kiwi in his 60s and up. The enlarged prostate pushes up on the bladder (creating the urge to pee) and also constricts the urethra (preventing flow).



The American Urological Association has created this self-evaluation quiz for men over 40 to determine their probability of BPH.

BPH Symptom Score Index

	Not at all	Less than 1 time in 5	Less than half the time	About half the time	More than half the time	Almost always	Your score
Incomplete emptying —It doesn't feel like I empty my bladder all the way.	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Frequency —I have to go again less than two hours after I finish urinating.	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Intermittency —I stop and start again several times when urinating.	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Urgency —It is hard to wait when I have to urinate.	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Weak stream —I have a weak urine stream.	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Straining —I have to push or strain to begin urination.	0	1	2	3	4	5	
	None	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 times or more	Your score
Nocturia —I get up to urinate after I go to bed until the time I get up in the morning.	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Total AUA Symptom Score							

Total score:

0–7: Mildly symptomatic · 8–19: Moderately symptomatic · 20–35: Severely symptomatic.

The Canadian Continence Foundation reports over half of men in their 60s and 90% of those over 70 have urinary symptoms associated with BPH. How high should your man score before getting tested? Consider this: The Canadian Cancer Society reports one in seven men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Prostate cancer and BPH have many symptoms in common.

Potential Symptoms	BPH	Prostate Cancer
An urgent need to urinate	✓	✓
The urge to urinate many times during the day	✓	✓
Waking up to urinate at night (nocturia)	✓	✓
Trouble starting to urinate or having to push to release urine	✓	✓
Weak or dribbling urine stream despite the feeling of urgency	✓	✓
Intermittent urine flow	✓	✓
Feeling of bladder not fully emptied	✓	✓
Pain or burning sensation during urination		✓
Presence of blood in urine		✓
Erectile dysfunction		✓
Painful ejaculation		✓
Lower volume of semen during ejaculation		✓

Ignoring these symptoms because “it’s normal as we age” puts men at risk of not getting an early diagnosis. Get your man to man up and take the test! The PSA test, a blood test to measure levels of a protein produced by prostate cells which indicate cancer, is quick and painless and will let you both know where he stands.

BPH Can Be Good News!

Getting diagnosed with BPH means we can treat the symptoms. Prescription drugs are popular approaches for treatment of BPH within medical circles. They either relax muscles within the prostate to ease urination or act as enzyme inhibitors to shrink the prostate. But according to their own product monographs, they share a common side effect, which is impotence or erectile dysfunction (ED).

Fortunately, we have natural products that have been studied and proven effective to deliver symptomatic relief for BPH without these drawbacks. Look for a formula containing the following potent ingredients:

Saw palmetto: Extracts from saw palmetto berries are among the most popular natural products for prostate health. Choose one with validated 95% fatty acid content, using CO₂ extraction. A panel of medical and pharmacy experts within the German health-care system, known as Commission E, has approved the use of saw-palmetto administration for early-stage symptoms of BPH, at 320 mg daily. This dosage is readily available in formulas and standalone supplements throughout Canada.



Dr. Ludovic Brunel, ND

Dr. Brunel has 15+ years of experience as a naturopathic doctor and practices in Calgary. His approach has always been to improve health outcomes by relying on the best research available.

setonwellness.com

Rye-flower pollen extract:

Studies have demonstrated supplementation with rye-flower pollen extract (known as Cernilton in Europe) benefits symptoms of BPH and chronic prostatitis.

Free plant sterols: Well-known for cholesterol lowering benefits, they have also been proven effective for the treatment of BPH symptoms. A German BPH-Phyto Study group, using 130 mg daily, found an increase in peak urinary flow rate and a decrease in postvoid residual urinary volume.

Several vitamins and minerals, including vitamins B₆ and D₃, selenium, and zinc are also recognized for prostate wellbeing.

Be wary of late-night infomercials featuring celebrity endorsers or social-media pop-up ads featuring unregulated products. Visit your local health-food store and select a product which has been thoroughly tested in an ISO 17025-accredited laboratory to ensure the identity and potency of all nutraceutical ingredients. In my practice, I have seen significant improvements in clients when they switch from a bargain brand to a premium-quality product.

Stop making pit stops at every gas station or paying a premium for aisle seats on flights. Start enjoying uninterrupted dinners, live entertainment, and bedroom escapades! Let’s ensure your guy is not missing out on the great things in life... so you don’t either!

Visit our blog for the full article including references: newrootsherbal.com/en/blog

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Top 10

Most Common Symptoms of Perimenopause and Menopause

by Andrea Donsky, RHN



What is the first symptom you think of when you hear the word “menopause”? Is it hot flashes, night sweats, or mood changes? While all three are practically synonymous with this phase of life, we know now there are 103+ confirmed symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, according to research by my company, Morphus.

At the moment of writing, our “Signs & Symptoms Survey” has received 3,082 responses, so I wanted to share our latest research findings with you.

In our “Signs & Symptoms Survey,” we break down the results into three groups: those who are unsure what stage they are in (which represented 20% of the women), those who are in perimenopause, and those who are in menopause.

Here we go, beginning with number 10: these are the most common symptoms reported.

No. 10: Loss of or Low Libido

Your sex drive can take a vacay because of insomnia, depression, fatigue, stress, anxiety, and relationship issues with your partner. Perhaps you are experiencing vaginal dryness or painful sex as your vaginal walls become thinner. Urinary leakage can make your sex drive take a dive as well.

Speak to your doctor about checking your thyroid levels (a low libido is a symptom of low thyroid) and consider vaginal moisturizers, water-soluble lubricants, or topical estrogen if dryness is an issue for you. If stress is a factor, try meditation, yoga, deep-breathing exercises, and walks in nature to help regain your balance.

No. 9: Hot Flashes

I was personally surprised when I saw where hot flashes ranked on the symptoms list, because like many of us, I thought this one would rank at least in the top 5. Of all the women who filled out our survey, 57% experience them, and it goes to show us that there are other more common symptoms that aren’t as well-known. When we broke it down by category, we found the occurrence to be 50% among women who were unsure about their menopause status, 53% among those in perimenopause, and 65% among those in menopause.

Many steps can be taken to reduce the severity and annoyance factor of hot flashes including nutrition, lifestyle (managing stress and exercise), as well as supplements and hormones. For example, include foods in your diet which contain plant estrogens (e.g., flaxseeds, sour apples, organic tempeh, and chickpeas), practice stress-reducing yoga poses, dress in layers, and practice slow, deep breathing.



No. 8: Lack of Focus

Are you having difficulty focusing on conversations, work, reading, or other tasks? If you answered yes, you are not alone. The women who reported experiencing this side effect were 56% among women who were unsure what stage they are in, 58% among those in perimenopause, and 55% among those in menopause.

Focus is defined as where you choose to concentrate your attention. Therefore, it involves willpower and discipline. If you are reading and someone comes into the room and turns on the TV, focus is your will to pinpoint your attention on your book rather than on the TV. Lack of focus is an inability to reach or maintain the discipline it takes to stay focused. Some tips on how to maintain focus include keeping your blood sugar in balance, getting sufficient sleep, avoiding multitasking, practicing deep breathing throughout the day, and meditating.

No. 7: Lack of Concentration

Concentration is a critical ability because it helps to keep us safe and to learn, to analyze, and to enjoy life overall. It involves taking in information, processing it, and making decisions about how to act on it. When this process becomes challenging, it can be frightening and fill you with anxiety.

You can improve your ability to concentrate by incorporating a few habits into your lifestyle. For example, listen to white noise when performing tasks that involve concentration, get sufficient sleep (at least seven hours a night), eat foods containing phytoestrogens (e.g., yams, flaxseed, chickpeas, sesame seeds), minimize distractions, and keep a notebook or your device handy to take notes.

No. 6: Joint Pain

When two or more bones rub together or connect in some way that results in pain, it's known as arthralgia. Any joint can fall into this category, but the most common one is the knee. As the levels of estrogen and other

hormones decline, the chances of experiencing joint pain increases. Don't let the pain and discomfort get you down!

Several lifestyle modifications can help you manage and even eliminate joint pain. Try following an anti-inflammatory diet (e.g., Mediterranean and dietary approaches to stop hypertension [DASH] are helpful), include turmeric or ginger in your food or as supplements, and try swimming, which is great exercise with minimal stress on your joints.

No. 5: Anxiety

Nearly 60% of respondents reported anxiety as a common symptom for them. Anxiety can be characterized by both emotional and physical symptoms, including sweating, high blood pressure, and elevated heart rate, along with heightened uneasiness, tension, worrying, and overwhelming apprehension. For many of us, anxiety can appear at this stage, or it can become heightened.



Although anxiety can sometimes feel overwhelming, many things can be done to bring these feelings under control. This could include daily meditation, gentle yoga, one to two minutes of deep-breathing sessions throughout the day, getting sufficient sleep, whole-food nutrition, setting boundaries, and practicing affirmations every day.

No. 4: Memory Lapse

Do you walk out of a room and forget what you were going to do? Do you misplace your keys, handbag, or cell phone, or forget where you parked your car? Do you sometimes have to reread a paragraph several times? Forget your friend's name? Yep, all these situations and scores happen more to women in menopause, as you have told us! In fact, 62% of women in perimenopause and menopause report having this symptom.

The good news is that memory hiccups are usually temporary. In fact, once the fluctuating and declining estrogen levels even out, you will likely return to your premenopausal memory activity. However, you can do some things to exercise your memory to reduce those lapses: get sufficient sleep; eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids; take an omega-3 supplement; and incorporate relaxation techniques into your lifestyle, such as yoga, meditation, spending time with people you love, and deep breathing.



No. 3: Sleep Problems

Morphus readers reported different reasons for their sleep issues. Overall, nearly two-thirds (66%) talked about difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, waking up multiple times, waking up feeling tired, and more. The number one reason women wake up during the night is because of stress, so managing it is crucial for getting a better night's sleep.

Fortunately, in addition to managing stress levels, we can offer many suggestions on how to best deal with and overcome those sleep problems. Since adequate sleep is such a critical part of good health, it's important to make sleep a priority and focus on sleep hygiene. This could include taking a magnesium-bisglycinate supplement before bed; practicing relaxation techniques in the evening such as deep breathing, meditation, progressive relaxation, or visualization; and drinking passionflower or chamomile tea before going to bed, if you can tolerate liquids in the evening.

No. 2: Brain Fog

Just like foggy weather is characterized by mistiness and difficulty seeing or understanding what you are seeing, brain fog is a condition that involves difficulty with mental clarity, memory, concentration, and focusing. Fortunately, in most cases, brain fog, like foggy days, eventually dissipates and thinking becomes clearer and normal.

Brain fog is caused by changes in levels of estrogen, progesterone, follicle-stimulating hormone, and luteinizing hormone. When the levels fluctuate, so can your cognitive abilities. If brain fog is moving in on you, try some coping techniques. For example, incorporate more physical activity into your lifestyle to boost blood flow in your brain, learn new skills or solve puzzles, and focus on whole foods and omega-3 fatty acids, which nourish the brain.

No. 1: Fatigue, No Energy

Feeling like you lost your mojo? Has your get-up-and-go gone away? Are you dragging your feet all day? The number one complaint among Morpheus readers and followers is fatigue and lack of energy. It is more common in perimenopause than menopause, as our bodies are going through the transition.

Fatigue is a symptom that seems to creep into your bones and take over your life, leaving you to feel like a "wet rag," according to some readers who took our survey. The good news is that it usually doesn't last forever and that there are numerous natural ways to remedy it.



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In some cases, you should probably talk with your health-care practitioner if various attempts to relieve your persistent tiredness don't work. However, here are some ways to bring fatigue under control: get adequate sleep (7–8 hours nightly); meditate to help reduce stress and fatigue; consider adaptogenic herbs such as ashwagandha; stay well-hydrated throughout the day; and reduce stress by practicing deep breathing, yoga, or meditation.

Bottom Line

Always speak to your doctor if you feel like something is off or unusual. Once you get a clean bill of health, you can look to nutrition, lifestyle, and supplements to help you manage your symptoms. If you have not already filled out our survey, please do so by going to wearemorphus.com/menopause-research.



Andrea Donsky, RHN

Andrea Donsky is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist and founder of NaturallySavvy.com—a multiple award-winning website. She has 21 years of experience in the health and wellness space, and is a multiple award-winning influencer. Her newest venture—wearemorphus.com—helps women in perimenopause and menopause. Follow Andrea on TikTok and Instagram @andreadonsky.

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Snoring

Treat It at the Source

by Wendy Presant, RHNC, CFMP



Picture the dawn of time. Caveman Ugg is curled up by the fire, his family sleeping soundly around him. Suddenly, a sound like a snorting aurochs fills the room. The baby screams. Emm wakes up and pushes Ugg over onto his side. Blissfully, the noise stops and the family returns to their slumber. Did Emm ever wonder why Ugg made that horrible noise, and how she might stop it from happening again?

Awake or asleep, our breathing is normally quiet. Snoring is the sound we make when we breathe through a partially obstructed airway. There may be several reasons for this obstruction, ranging from anatomical variations to inflammation. Find the cause of the snoring, and you have the key to solving the problem.

It's not unusual for us to snore for a short time if we have a cold or if our seasonal allergies are acting up. Snoring is much more of a concern if you snore regularly, especially if your partner has noticed brief periods when you stop breathing through the night. Your first step in tackling your snoring needs is to make an appointment with your health-care practitioner.



One reason for snoring is a serious condition called obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). OSA leads to oxygen deprivation, which can result in various chronic diseases. More than 1 in 5 Canadians have either been diagnosed with OSA or are at very high risk of it. The only way to diagnose OSA is through a sleep study. This is a painless procedure, ordered by your doctor. It is usually performed in a sleep laboratory in a hospital, where you are monitored through the night. In some cases, a home sleep study might be done instead. Treatment of OSA is using a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device, which helps you breathe more effectively by preventing the soft tissue at the back of your throat from collapsing.

A doctor can also examine your nose and throat to see if there are any anatomical problems such as a deviated septum, nasal polyps, or enlarged tonsils which might be contributing to snoring. Review your medications with the doctor

as well. Medications that relax muscles, such as benzodiazepines, can also relax the back of the throat, resulting in snoring. Alcohol, especially taken close to bedtime, has the same effect. Smoking tobacco or cannabis can contribute to snoring by inflaming and irritating the airway. In fact, bad air of any kind (think wildfire smoke, mold, smog, and pet dander), can increase the chance that you will snore.

If you do not have sleep apnea, your airway anatomy is normal, and the air you breathe is pristine, then there may be another medical reason for snoring. Chronic sinusitis, allergies, or gastrointestinal reflux disease (GERD) can all cause swelling in the airway, impeding the airflow. A large neck circumference, often resulting from overweight or obesity, can put pressure on the tissues of the airway, interfering with the flow of air.



While you are waiting for specialist appointments, here are a few things you can try yourself to get some relief from snoring:

1. If your thick neck is due to increased weight, then losing weight may be helpful in reducing snoring and decreasing your OSA risk.
2. To help with acid reflux, avoid eating a few hours before bed. Consider trying probiotics or digestive enzymes to help with digestion. Raise the head of your bed by using blocks of wood under the legs. Sleeping on a wedge pillow may also be helpful.
3. If your nose is congested at night, try using a saline rinse before bed. This helps wash away pollen, dust, and bacteria from the nasal passages, and the salt in the solution causes the tissue to shrink, reducing inflammation.
4. Snoring is worse in damp homes with high pollution. Get a good air purifier, take care of mold issues, and keep pets out of the bedroom.
5. Lying on your side should help you breathe better. There are special vests you can buy that prevent you from rolling onto your back, or you can simply sew a piece of pool noodle to the back of your pyjama.

We can't solve the problem of Ugg's snoring for Emm. It might have been anything from the smoke of the fire irritating his throat to the reflux from that last large aurochs' leg he polished off before falling asleep. You, however, now have a few more ideas to figure out your own snoring, and some possible solutions. Good luck and here's to sleeping like a (nonsnoring) baby!



Wendy Present, RHNC, CFMP

With a background in nursing, naturopathic, and functional medicine, Wendy Present is currently registered as a health-and-nutrition counsellor. She provides virtual coaching services to individuals looking to optimize their health.

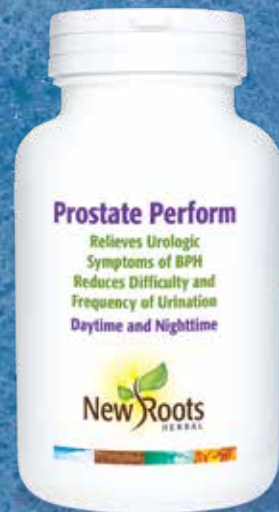
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Digestive Health and Menopause

A Natural Approach

by Annick Moffatt, ND



We don't always realize the importance or benefits of some things until they are gone. That can be true of estrogen, a hormone whose levels decline in perimenopause and menopause and have a significant impact on digestive health. In fact, this hormone has been associated with a wide range of digestive-health issues such as bloating and gas, abdominal pain, heartburn, constipation, acid reflux, inflammatory bowel disease, and more. Progesterone also has a role in digestive health.

Hormones and Digestive Health in Menopause

Estrogen is known to have a promotility effect on the gastrointestinal tract. As levels of estrogen and progesterone decrease in perimenopause and menopause, it can take longer for food to travel through the gastrointestinal system, which can result in digestive issues such as gas, bloating, abdominal pain, and constipation.

Estrogen also has a calming effect on the body, potentially tempering the release of cortisol in stressful situations. When estrogen levels decrease, women might encounter elevated cortisol levels, leading to heightened stress and reduced stress-coping abilities. This reaction arises from the close interconnection between the gastrointestinal system and the brain, also known as the gut-brain connection or gut-brain axis. As cortisol levels rise, they can impact the digestive system by reducing stomach acid, thus slowing the movement of digested food into the small intestine, resulting in gas, bloating, and constipation.

Fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone levels also influence the secretion of bile, a fluid produced and released by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. Estrogen also influences the tone of the gallbladder and its ability to contract, potentially affecting the storage and release of bile. Bile and bile salts perform several essential functions for the digestive system:

- Help to break down fats into fatty acids
- Involved in the absorption of fat and fat-soluble vitamins
- Assist in removing excess cholesterol and detoxifying byproducts from the liver, which are expelled through the intestines
- Stimulate bowel movement

Bile's alkaline properties counteract the acidity of stomach contents, creating an environment that is conducive for the digestive enzymes to do their work in the small intestine.



Natural Management of Digestive Health in Menopause

Women can turn to several foods and natural supplements to help improve digestion and digestive health in menopause.

Prebiotics

These unique plant fibres, classified as carbohydrates, nourish beneficial gut bacteria, aiding digestion. Prebiotics are found in many fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, including apples, asparagus, bananas, barley, berries, cocoa, flaxseed, garlic, green vegetables, legumes, onions, and tomatoes. They are also available as supplements.

Probiotics

Commonly referred to as “friendly” or “helpful” bacteria, probiotics are primarily bacteria and some live yeasts that aid in digestion. These beneficial microorganisms can be sourced from certain foods like yogurt, kefir, some cheeses, miso, sauerkraut, and kimchi. They are also available in supplement form. If opting for probiotic supplements, allow several weeks for potential digestion improvements to become noticeable. Prioritize refrigerated brands featuring an enteric coating, ensuring the beneficial bacteria reach the gut for optimal proliferation.

Enzymes

Digestive enzymes are proteins responsible for breaking down the food you eat. The digestion journey begins in your mouth, with salivary enzymes initiating this process. These digestive enzymes are produced in the stomach, small intestine, and pancreas, with the pancreas housing key enzymes. Notably, amylase disintegrates complex carbohydrates, protease tackles proteins, and lipase targets fats. In addition, the small intestine produces lactase for lactose breakdown and sucrase for sucrose digestion. Look for digestive-enzyme supplements that contain one or more of the mentioned enzymes.

Herbs

Although the body naturally produces enzymes, bile, and acid to aid digestion, extra support, especially during menopause, can be beneficial.

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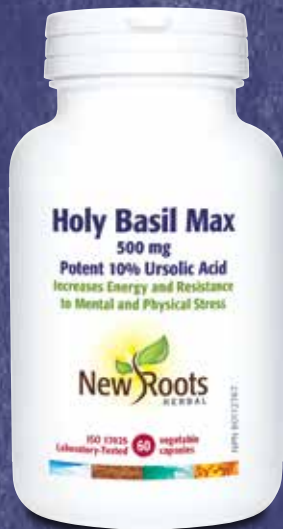
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Several herbs are known for their digestive help, including artichoke, which stimulates bile; dandelion root and leaves, which promote digestion; ginger has anti-inflammatory powers and is a natural heartburn remedy; slippery elm has calming qualities, eases indigestion, and neutralizes acidity; milk thistle contains silymarin, which neutralizes toxins and relieves indigestion; and peppermint also relieves indigestion as well as bloating, cramps, and spasms.

Magnesium

Digestion is supported by magnesium in several ways. It helps muscle function in the digestive tract, activates certain enzymes for nutrient breakdown, regulates stomach acid, relieves constipation, and promotes nerve communication which impacts digestion. Add foods rich in magnesium such as leafy greens, avocados, bananas, salmon, pumpkin and chia seeds, sweet potatoes, whole grains, figs, and magnesium supplements to improve digestion.

Other Digestion Tips

Here are a few other tips to improve your digestive experience.

- 1. Chew your food thoroughly.** Remember: Chewing and the introduction of digestive enzymes in your mouth mark the first step in the digestive process, so make it count! Chew food particles until they are nearly liquid.
- 2. Eat slowly.** Put your spoon or fork down after each bite. Savour your food. Eating in a hurry can trigger a stress cascade that can result in indigestion, gas, and bloating.
- 3. Stop before you feel full.** If you practice the former two tips, you will begin to feel satisfied in a more gradual way, which will allow you to stop eating before you are full. This will help the digestive process and overall health.
- 4. Allow for healthy digestion.** A short, moderate walk after eating can aid digestion and reduce the risk of constipation. Do not lie down after eating.

Experience relief from bothersome symptoms like heartburn, gas, indigestion, and bloating, which are common among women during perimenopause and menopause, by exploring these natural remedies and suggestions. Always consult your health-care practitioner if symptoms persist or become chronic.



Annick Moffatt, ND

With more than 20 years of experience in the health domain, first in psychology, then as a naturopathic doctor, she brings a holistic approach to health problems.

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Getting through the Holidays

by Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

The holidays can be a magical time of traditions, connecting with loved ones, and enjoying meals together. They can also be a busy time where stress, overindulgence, change in routine, and high expectations can lead to poor sleep, digestive issues, and feeling overloaded. Fortunately, there are some great ways to help manage the overwhelming nature of the holidays and support your body so that you are left to enjoy some of the holiday magic.

First, Let's Talk about Expectations

From gift-giving to hosting parties and family gatherings, the holidays can often come with a lot of expectations. These can sometimes lead to feeling overburdened as you try to meet them all. A great way to manage these expectations is to incorporate some mindful intention. Try starting the holiday season by taking some time to assess what is most important to you and ensure that your list of holiday to-dos aligns with your values and priorities.

Even after you have shortened your to-do list to include only the tasks that are truly important to you, there can still be a lot of stress around the holidays. The change in usual routine, emotions around the holidays, and navigating family relationships and dynamics can often cause stress for many people. It is important to ensure that you are well-taken care of so that you have the capacity and resilience to adapt. Some great ways to support your body, mind, and spirit during this time are ensuring you are getting adequate sleep, managing your body's

stress response, eating well, supporting digestion, and incorporating mindful presence.

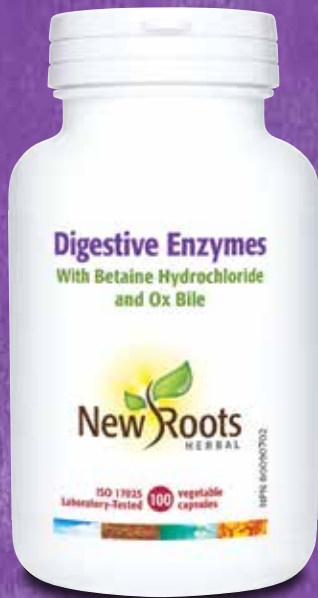
Getting Enough Sleep

Whether it is racing thoughts keeping us up at night or simply not prioritizing rest, sleep is often one of the first things to go when we are under stress. Unfortunately, not getting enough sleep often leads to more stress, as it prevents us from functioning at our best throughout the day.

If it is simply a matter of not prioritizing sleep, prioritize it! Try setting a bedtime alarm, reminding yourself that whatever did not get completed today will probably be done more efficiently tomorrow when you are well-rested. Having a bedtime routine can also be helpful.



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Research has shown that having a warm bath or shower before bed can help improve sleep quality and efficiency. You can even add calming essential oils like lavender or some Epsom salts to your bath. If racing thoughts are keeping you up at night, try a relaxing chamomile tea and write those thoughts down to be addressed later. If that is not enough, consider a relaxing or sleep-inducing supplement like passionflower or kava.

Managing Stress

Stress can take its toll on the body, impacting our immune system and our ability to cope well with daily tasks. If you take the holidays as an opportunity to rest, recover, and reconnect with loved ones, they can be a great time to change your pace and perspective and take a welcome reprieve from the everyday stress you may be experiencing. Take some time before the hustle-and-bustle of the holiday season starts to check in with yourself. Is there anything you can be doing to help support your body, mind, and spirit? There is nothing wrong with asking for help or setting boundaries to manage uncertainty. Perhaps incorporating a daily meditative or spiritual practice. You could even try incorporating some adaptogenic herbs like holy basil or ashwagandha to help your body cope with stress. Ensuring you are getting enough B vitamins is another helpful way to support your body in managing stress.



Eating Well and Supporting Digestion

The holidays are a great time to indulge in good food and time with family. If we are mindful and take time to enjoy the food that we are sharing with friends and family, it can make it a little more difficult to overindulge.

Supporting digestion during this time can help you get the most from what you are eating and minimize concerns like bloating or acid reflux, especially if you find yourself having foods that you may not be used to eating. Drinking warm water with meals can be a great, simple way to support the digestive system by increasing circulation to the digestive tract. Bitter herbs like dandelion root, gentian, or even grapefruit seed extract before meals can also help increase digestive secretions to help you digest the meal you are about to enjoy.



Incorporating Mindful Presence

Taking some time out to meditate, connect with nature, and connect with yourself can help keep the holidays a magical time, helping you to manage stress and avoid getting caught up in the busyness of the season. Plan some quiet time each day. Perhaps play some music, light a candle, or diffuse your favourite essential oil to create a calm, serene place to recharge each day. Or try going for a little walk and observe the change of season and what is happening around you.

Final Words

The holidays truly can be a magical time to rest, recharge, and connect. Getting enough sleep, managing stress and expectations, eating well and supporting digestion, and remembering to stay mindful and present can help you make the most of the season and actually enjoy the holidays.



Dr. Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

A graduate of the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM) in Toronto, her goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey to help move others forward on their health journeys.

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Tips, Tricks, and Nutrition Considerations for Picky Eaters

by Angela Wallace, MSc, RD



Fussy eating can be a normal part of childhood, but picky eating is different (note some of the differences below). Feeding your family can be stressful, and having to navigate picky eating on top of that can make everything more challenging.

Normal Childhood Fussy Eating Behaviours	Picky Childhood Eating Behaviours
Only tries new foods once in a while	Only eats a few foods
Doesn't want to eat vegetables often	Hasn't tried a new food in a long time
Meats or other proteins aren't their favourite food	Not eating entire food groups (for example, no meat or protein)
One day they like a food and the next day or week, they don't	Battles at every meal, mealtime stress
Doesn't like eating mixed dishes (common in young children)	Only eats certain textures
	Won't eat in social settings (for example, birthday parties)
	Foods need to be prepared in a certain way

I am going to be highlighting what nutrients a picky eater might be missing, and tips and tricks to help expand their food choices. My hope is that it provides you with some new strategies to try and lessen mealtime stress.



If you have a picky eater, they may be missing out on some of the following key nutrients.

Protein

It is common for picky eaters to avoid protein-rich foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and legumes. Not getting enough protein can impact growth and immune performance.

What to Do: Offer protein sources you know they like at least once daily. You can also try higher-protein products such as fortified pancakes or breads that have higher protein content (looking for 5–6 g per serving). Dairy is also rich in protein. If your child enjoys milk, yogurt, or cheese, they will be getting decent amounts of protein through those sources. Soy options are also high in protein.

The Good News: Small children don't need as much protein as you might think. For example, a toddler of 2–3 years of age only needs approximately 13 g of protein each day. They could obtain that from ½ cup yogurt (7 g) and 1 egg (7 g).

Iron

Iron is important for healthy blood production and oxygen transport in the body. If your child avoids iron-rich foods like red meat, spinach, and beans, they might be at risk of iron deficiency. In addition, if they are dairy lovers, the high calcium intake can play a role in inhibiting iron absorption.

What to Do: Monitor your child for signs of iron deficiency which include fatigue, weakness, difficulty sleeping, pale skin colouring, reduced immune function, and impaired cognitive function. Try offering iron-rich foods at least twice a day, and ensure they are consumed alongside vitamin C, as it enhances absorption—for example, meatballs and tomato sauce. If you feel they might be low in iron, discuss options with their health-care practitioner or nutrition expert. A supplement might be necessary here. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) for iron is 8–10 mg depending on the age group.

Calcium

Calcium is essential for building strong bones and teeth. If your child doesn't like dairy products, they might not be getting enough calcium. Calcium-rich alternatives like fortified plant-based milks, dark leafy greens, or tofu could be options.

What to Do: If your child is not eating any of the foods mentioned above, you may want to consider a multivitamin containing calcium to ensure they are meeting the minimum requirements to support healthy growth.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is crucial for calcium absorption, bone health, and immune function. Picky eaters who avoid fortified dairy or fatty fish (e.g., salmon) and spend limited time outdoors (in direct sunlight) may be at risk for vitamin D deficiency.

What to Do: Spend time outdoors in the sunshine (when possible, for at least 15–20 minutes each day without sunblock). I highly recommend a supplement for all Canadian children, especially over the fall and winter months, where direct sun exposure is minimal. Depending on the age, the dosage would range from 400 to 1,000 IU per day.



Omega-3

Omega-3 fatty acids are beneficial for brain health, cognitive function, and inflammation regulation. Children who avoid or eat limited quantities of fish, walnuts, flaxseed, and chia seeds may not be consuming enough of these essential fats.

What to Do: Try adding flaxseed oil to their yogurt, smoothies, oatmeal, or something else they enjoy eating—it is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and an easy way to get it in. You can also try a fish-oil supplement (there are many different products on the market including chewable, liquid, and gummies).

Fibre

Picky eaters may have an inadequate fibre intake if they are avoiding or eating minimal fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Fibre is important for supporting cardiovascular health, maintaining a healthy digestive system, and preventing constipation.

What to Do: Encourage your child to eat whole-grain bread as well as fruits and vegetables, preferably with the peel. If they have vegetable or fruit preferences, be sure to offer those alongside new foods to ensure they are getting the fibre their bodies need.

If you are concerned about your child's nutrient intake and want to consider supplements or additional nutrition support, I highly recommend reaching out to a nutrition expert who can help guide you on what is best for your child and their specific needs.



Tips and Tricks to Help Expand Your Child's Food Choices

Change takes time; be patient. Try implementing one or two of the strategies suggested below and give that change two or three weeks. Allow your child some time to respond to the new approach you are taking.

- 1. Small changes over time;** this might include changing the brand of food they like or changing the food item itself. What's most important is taking it slow and make small changes over time. Once they accept a change, try slowing progressing to more change. For example, from their favourite take-out French fries, try French fries from another take-out spot, then homemade French fries, and finally, sweet-potato fries (change of the potato).
- 2. Repeated exposure;** just keep offering. It can take your child 12–15 times of being exposed to a food before they decide they want to *try* it. This doesn't mean *eat* it, but simply *try* it. Practice patience and keep offering—they might surprise you one day!
- 3. Have your child interact with foods you want them to eat.** Try getting them smelling the food, touching the food, perhaps adding it to your plate for you. Interaction with food will eventually lead to eating the food—or at least trying it.
- 4. Avoid pressure.** This is the hardest part when it comes to picky eating, as parents always have the best intentions for their child or they are pressuring because they are concerned about lack of intake, growth, etc. Pressure can take many forms, and over time, pressure will likely create more mealtime stress and battles.



Angela Wallace, MSc, RD

A registered dietitian with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family food expert who specializes in women and child nutrition and fitness, she loves helping families get healthy together.

eatrightfeelright.ca

Different forms of pressure include “I made this just for you,” “if you don't eat this, there is no TV later,” “if you don't eat this, there is no dessert later,” or “just one more bite.”

Next time you are feeling inclined to say one of the above statements or to apply pressure, try stepping away and letting the situation be. Having a neutral stance on what they are eating will help reduce the stress of mealtime (for both you and your child).

- 5. Offer a “safe” food.** Put a food item on their plate that you know your child loves and will eat. This isn't about creating an entirely separate meal for them, but simply including an item you know they will eat alongside new foods or your family meal. This item could be some fruit they love or a piece of cheese you know they will eat.
- 6. Get them involved.** Have fun together in the kitchen, try new recipes, have them pick out new items they want to try in the grocery store, and ask them for help.

Tip: Provide choice between two items. For example: “Do you want this fruit or this fruit?” Ultimately, you are choosing that they are eating fruit, but they have some choice as to which kind.

Wishing you and your family enjoyable mealtime moments ahead!

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Celiac v. Gluten-Free

by Kaitlyn Zorn, HBSc, ND



“Gluten” has become a buzzword over the past several years, causing some confusion between what eating gluten-free means and who needs to be eating that way. The most common reason for eating gluten-free is due to celiac disease, followed by having a nonceliac gluten sensitivity/intolerance, then just personal preference. It is important to properly determine the cause of gluten issues through a health-care practitioner, as celiac disease and gluten sensitivity require different treatment approaches.

Celiac disease is a chronic auto-immune disorder triggered by gluten ingestion. It leads to damage of the intestinal lining villi, which causes symptoms of diarrhea, fatigue, weight loss, bloating, and anemia. In some individuals, it may also be linked to infertility. The signs and symptoms may vary between children and adults. Mild cases do not show any symptoms and may be diagnosed later in life.

The only way to manage this condition is to follow a strict gluten-free diet.

Having one auto-immune disease increases your risk of developing others, so it is important to manage this condition properly.

Gluten sensitivity is a reaction to the protein gluten (found in wheat, ancient grains, and barley) that can cause a wide range of symptoms such as gastrointestinal issues, headaches/migraines, brain fog, joint pain, and mental-health concerns. People with gluten sensitivity have problems digesting gluten; however, it is milder than celiac disease and does not produce an auto-immune reaction. Some individuals may have higher immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibodies to gluten on food-sensitivity testing. This is linked to the weakening of tight-cell junctions in the small intestine, causing food and immune particles to circulate through the bloodstream, leading to “leaky gut.”

Debunking “Gluten-Free”

Can We Self-Diagnose Gluten Intolerance and Celiac Disease?

Celiac disease can be tested through blood serum. People with celiac disease who eat gluten have higher-than-normal levels of certain antibodies in their blood. The measure used for this is IgA antitransglutaminase antibody. Genetic testing and an intestinal biopsy can also confirm this diagnosis. For this to be accurate, the patient must consume gluten daily for at least two weeks before the test is taken.

Diagnosing gluten sensitivity involves using an elimination diet, in which a person removes gluten from their diet, monitors their symptoms, and slowly reintroduces gluten to see if their symptoms return. In addition to this, IgG (immunoglobulin G) food-sensitivity testing may reveal a sensitivity to gluten if elevated. A combination of both subjective symptoms from an elimination diet, food sensitivity testing, and ruling out celiac disease through blood testing suggest nonceliac gluten sensitivity.

An allergist may test for a wheat allergy, but not gluten. Allergy testing assesses an IgE reaction, which is different from IgG (food sensitivity).

Is There a Difference Between Wheat and Gluten?

Gluten is a protein found in many grains, including wheat. Wheat is simply a grain that contains gluten. Not all grains contain gluten, and wheat is not the only grain that has gluten. Some individuals may be sensitive to the wheat grain, which means they tolerate ancient grains such as spelt and kamut; these grains do still contain gluten. Both gluten and wheat sensitivity may be tested on through an IgG food-sensitivity panel.



Why Would Some Rice and Oats Products State “Gluten-Free”?

Rice and oats are naturally gluten-free; however, they can get cross-contaminated during processing and may end up containing trace amounts of gluten. If you are celiac, you could react, and you should consider purchasing certified gluten-free products. In Canada, the Canadian Celiac Association (CCA) has a certification program called the Gluten-Free Certification Program (GFCP). The GFCP is a voluntary program that verifies that products meet strict gluten-free standards.

Can Beer Be “Gluten-Free”?

For celiacs, gluten-free beer is an alternative to regular beer. Some beers are rice-based and may cause confusion in the gluten-free community. Rice-based beers do contain less gluten since they are not wheat-based, but also consist of barley which contains small amounts of gluten. Someone with a gluten sensitivity may be able to tolerate these beers.



Dr. Kaitlyn Zorn, HBSc, ND

A Guelph naturopathic doctor who uses a blend of modern science and traditional healing therapies to treat the whole person. Her journey has helped her develop an interest in brain health, pain management, and critical illness relief.
drkaitlynzornnd.wixsite.com

Can You Become Nutrient-Deficient by Consuming a Gluten-Free Diet?

Yes, it is possible to become nutrient-deficient on a gluten-free diet. Nutritional deficiencies can occur in individuals with celiac disease and gluten-sensitivity because of both low intake and poor absorption. Once the intestine has had a chance to heal, nutrient absorption improves, but intake may remain a problem. A review of the literature indicates several nutrient inadequacies associated with a gluten-free diet. These include B vitamins (as wheat is often fortified), vitamin A, magnesium, calcium, iron, and fibre. It is important to consult with a qualified health-care practitioner versed in nutrition to ensure that you are consuming the proper amounts of nutrients, or supplementing in the form of vitamins (ex. B-complex, multivitamin).

Adopting a gluten-free lifestyle may come with benefits such as improved energy, focus, weight loss, and better digestion. However, it is important to determine the reason for doing so to ensure sustained health. Working with a naturopathic doctor can help you discover the causes of your gluten issues, so you can feel better over the long term.

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Curried Butternut Squash Soup

Presenting a soup with a bit of a curried twist. Coconut milk and Eastern spices transform this soup into a creamy and flavourful bowl packed with vitamins, minerals, and tons of fibre. If you are not interested in the different madras spices, just add turmeric to get some extra polyphenols bringing extra colour therapy to this anti-inflammatory dish.

Ingredients

- 1 medium to large butternut squash
- 2 cups of sliced carrots
- 2 cups of sliced celery
- 1 medium yam or sweet potato (can use regular potato too)
- 1 medium to large white or yellow onion
- 2-3 cloves of garlic
- 1 can coconut milk
- 2 tbsp. Heart Smart Sunflower Oil
- 1 tsp. madras curry powder
- 1 tsp. New Roots Herbal's Fermented Turmeric
- ½ tsp. each thyme, rosemary, oregano
- Salt/kosher salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

Sauté onion, celery, and garlic with sunflower oil in a large pot on medium heat until almost translucent, then add in the carrots, your choice of chopped-up yam, sweet potato or regular potato, and of course your chopped butternut squash. Fill the pot with water or broth to cover all the veggies and add your spices.

As the vegetables cook in the pot (20 to 30 minutes), gather either a blender or food processor. Vegetables should be soft enough to blend; add the coconut milk to the pot then set aside to cool down a little before blending.

Blend or purée your soup to your desired consistency. Add raw garlic in the blender for a bolder taste. Pour the soup back in the pot to keep warm, and enjoy!



Megan Luder, CNP

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Roasted Salmon with Brazil Nut Parmesan

Vegan-inspired Brazilian parmesan lends a subtle, nutty profile to baked salmon or any Italian dish. Keeps well for several days in the refrigerator, or can be stored with resealable bags in the freezer for several months.

Ingredients for Salmon Fillets

- 4 salmon fillets, 85 to 115 g (3–4 oz.) each (approximately the size of a deck of cards)
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 2 tsp. chili flakes
- 1 tsp. New Roots Herbal's Heart Smart Sunflower Oil

Ingredients for Brazilian Vegan Parmesan

- 1 cup Brazil nuts
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tbsp. nutritional yeast
- ½ tsp. Himalayan or sea salt

Instructions

Season each salmon fillet with a pinch of both the paprika and chili flakes, then lightly drizzle the Heart Smart Sunflower Oil over them.

Bake in convection oven or air fryer at 205 °C (400 °F) for 10–12 minutes. Test with a fork for readiness; the fish should flake off.

While the fish is roasting, prepare the Brazilian vegan parmesan. In a blender, combine the Brazil nuts, garlic, nutritional yeast, and salt. Pulse until you have a uniform consistency.

As you plate the salmon, sprinkle the Brazilian parmesan over top.

This dish goes great with roasted sweet potatoes—we used a melon baller to make the ones pictured here. Preheat oven to 235 °C (450 °F). Place all your sweet potato balls on a baking sheet. Sprinkle your favourite seasoning (like salt and pepper), and drizzle some Heart Smart Sunflower Oil. Bake for 25–30 minutes, tossing them halfway through.



Gordon Raza, BSc

A graduate in biology from Acadia University, Gord serves as the supplement specialist for *Flourish* where he shares his unique perspective on natural health products, nutrition, and active living.

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Pumpkin Protein Overnight Oats

This recipe gives all the fall vibes; it truly tastes like fall in a bowl. These overnight oats are delicious and rich in protein. Having a protein-rich breakfast helps balance blood sugars and promotes fullness; this will lead to less cravings throughout the day and sustained morning energy.

Ingredients

- 2 apples, cored and diced
- 1 cup yogurt (Greek, Icelandic, coconut, etc.)
*Note: if you use plain, I recommend adding in some maple syrup for flavour
- ½ cup rolled oats
- 2 tbsp. New Roots Herbal's Pumpkin Seed Powder
- ½ cup milk of choice
- 2 tbsp. maple syrup, divided
- 1 tbsp. butter or coconut oil
- 1 tsp. cinnamon, divided

Instructions

Slice and dice apples (option to remove the peel).

In a small pan, heat coconut oil or butter. Add diced apples, ½ tsp. cinnamon, and 1 tbsp. maple syrup (optional). Stir and cook until apples are softened (5–6 minutes).

Mix together oats, milk, yogurt, ½ tsp. cinnamon, 1 tbsp. maple syrup, and half of the cooked apples.

Place mixture in an airtight container and store in the fridge overnight. Keep the other half of the apples for a topping to your oatmeal.

The next morning, enjoy topped with cooked apples, soft or slivered nuts, or any other topping of choice.

Note: You can warm the overnight oats up in the morning if you prefer a warm bowl (I know I do).

Makes 2 servings.



Angela Wallace, MSc, RD

A registered dietitian with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family food expert who specializes in women and child nutrition and fitness, she loves helping families get healthy together.

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AskGord



I have two kids in elementary school. Do you have any suggestions for strengthening their immune systems?

Good timing! Flu activity increases come October and—when combined with cold viruses—it can become the perfect classroom storm for kids returning from school with more than homework.

Start with a diet rich in vitamin C. Add more citrus fruits, apples, red and yellow peppers, broccoli, and get your kids' taste buds accustomed to onions and garlic!

Several supplements are effective and affordable: a good multivitamin, and the immune-boosting activity of at least 400 IU per day of vitamin D₃ are excellent.

Emerging research has also confirmed a strong correlation between gut health and immunity. A broad-spectrum probiotic works wonders for immune health. If kids can swallow a capsule, choose one with enteric coating. Powdered probiotics served with food will help until they're mature enough for capsules.

Elderberry is another favourite of mine. In the form of tinctures, dried berries, and juice powders, it's a naturally versatile way to support immune status for kids and adults alike.

I'm closing in on 60; what type of collagen should I consider?

Collagen ranks second only to water in terms of its significance to our body's composition, so it's definitely not something we want to become deficient in. As we age, our bodies produce less of it, making supplementation beneficial in many ways. There are 5 types of commercially available collagen; these different types have varied functions, but collectively, they work to hold your skin, bones, and every connective tissue together.

Types I, II, and III comprise 90% of your body's collagen; therefore, you should prioritize these forms. Types I and III are frequently found together; they provide strength and structural support for bones, tendons, ligaments, and skin, as well as flexibility

mainly for skin and blood vessels. Type II is primarily found in cartilage, eyes, and inner ears, where it contributes to their structure and function. Types V and X are more specific: type V is essential for cell surfaces and hair formation, while type X is mainly linked to the growth and upkeep of cartilage, especially in the growing parts of long bones as our skeleton develops.

Look for collagen supplements in peptide form, known as collagen peptides or hydrolyzed collagen. These smaller molecules are readily digested and efficiently absorbed into the bloodstream, making them a popular choice.

Here's to looking good and feeling great!

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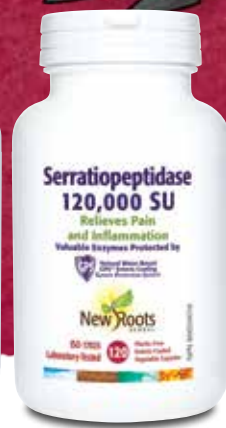
You have a question you would like answered about your health and supplements? Gord would be happy to answer them! We could even feature them in this page if others could benefit from the information.

Reach out to him at [facebook.com/newrootsherbal](https://www.facebook.com/newrootsherbal) or call 1 800 268-9486 ext. 237

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