

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

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Women today have many options for minimising the symptoms of menopause. Not all women are suitable for MHT. Growing evidence shows that a healthy lifestyle can help reduce the symptoms of perimenopause and menopause and prevent long-term conditions such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

Healthy diet: Eating a healthy and balanced diet, reducing alcohol consumption, and smoking cessation can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia and cancer. A healthy diet includes vegetables, fruits and whole grains. Limit saturated fats, oil, processed meats and sugars. Your doctor can advise if you need additional supplements such as vitamin D, calcium and vitamin B12.

Exercise: The Australian physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines for adults aged 18–64 years recommend physical activity for all adults at all ages, including women, during and beyond menopause. The recommendation is for people to do either 2.5 hours of moderate-intensity physical activity weekly or 1.25 hours of vigorous-intensity physical activity weekly. Regular exercise can help maintain weight. Weight gain can make menopausal symptoms worse.

Exercise has many additional health benefits, such as reducing the risk of several cancers, heart disease, and osteoporosis. It can also increase your energy levels, increase concentration, improve bone mineral density, increase muscle strength, and improve your sleep and mental health.

Reformer Pilates: Regular reformer Pilates exercise/resistance training can lead to reduced body fat, strengthening of muscles, more efficient burning of calories, flexibility, and balance, which, in turn, improve posture, movement and mental health.

Yoga: There is evidence that yoga can help reduce menopausal symptoms. Yoga and meditation are good strategies for managing stress, improving strength, balance, flexibility, sleep, and maintaining your wellbeing.

Acupuncture: There is evidence that acupuncture may reduce the frequency or burden of hot flushes.

Cognitive behaviour: Cognitive behaviour is a form of psychological treatment. Evidence has shown that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) significantly improved hot flushes, depression, sleep disturbances, and sexual concerns, although little improvement was seen in anxiety.

Avoiding triggers: Hot flushes can be triggered in certain situations. Stress, hot drinks such as tea and coffee, alcohol (in particular red wine), spicy foods, hot showers, smoking, and hot weather should be minimised or avoided.