





# Foods to Help Support Your Health During Perimenopause & Menopause



W W W . T H R I V E H E A L T H C O N C E P T S . C O M . A U

# How Nutrition Influences Perimenopause & Menopause

Perimenopause and menopause come with physiological and emotional shifts, many of which can be challenging. While hormonal changes are inevitable, the associated symptoms don't have to be unbearable.

Optimal nutrition becomes even more vital during these years. The right foods can help with common symptoms like hot flashes, mood swings, weight gain, as well as help support bone health, heart health, and cognitive function.

As estrogen levels fluctuate and eventually decline, our bodies become more susceptible to bone loss, cardiovascular disease, and metabolic changes. Therefore, targeting specific nutrients can be a natural and holistic option to ensure you thrive during this phase of life.

This guide will help you understand some foods to consider adding to your diet to help equip your body with the nutrients it needs.

Instead of viewing perimenopause and menopause as a time to fight your symptoms, use your diet as a powerful tool to find balance.





## Flaxseed

Whole flaxseeds tend to pass through the digestive system largely intact due to their hard shell, making it difficult to absorb their beneficial nutrients.

Ground flaxseed ensures better digestion and absorption of its valuable omega-3s, lignans, and fibre.

# Hormone Friendly: Flaxseeds are a rich source of lignans, which can act as phytoestrogens. These plant compounds can mimic estrogen's action in the body and may help with those fluctuating hormones during perimenopause and menopause. Healthy Weight Support: Ground flaxseed is a high-fibre food, making it fantastic for satiety. This means you feel fuller for longer,

which may reduce unnecessary snacking or overeating.

Low Cholesterol Levels Naturally: Flax seeds may help to reduce

total blood cholesterol and LDL (BAD) cholesterol levels.

**Mood Elevator**: Flaxseeds have omega-3 fatty acids, primarily in the form of ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). *Omega-3s play a role in brain health and have been associated with better mood and reduced risk of anxiety and depression*.

**Bone Health:** Flaxseed's *omega-3 fatty acids and lignans* might offer some support for bone health.

**Heart Health:** Ground flaxseed is a soluble and insoluble fibre source. **Soluble fibre can help in reducing cholesterol levels**, and that's a big benefit for heart health.

# Benefits

**Digestive Support:** The fibre content of flaxseed is also a blessing for the digestive system. It **promotes regular bowel movements and can alleviate some of those bloating issues** women often face in perimenopause and menopause.

My Help Protect Against Breast Cancer: It's thought that the lignans in flaxseed might offer some protective effects against breast cancer. This could be *due to their antioxidant properties and ability to influence hormone metabolism*.

#### How To Use Ground Flax Seed

Sprinkle in some *ground flaxseed next time you're whipping up a smoothie, oatmeal, or salad.* Your body will surely thank you for it.



## Frozen Berries

Frozen berries are a fantastic alternative when fresh local berries aren't in season or available. They're *picked and frozen at peak ripeness, preserving their nutrient content and flavour.* This means you can enjoy the health benefits and taste of berries all year round, even when they're not in season locally. They are a wonderful addition to your perimenopausal and menopausal journey nutrient needs.

# Benefits

essential nutrients.

Healthy Weight: Berries are low in calories yet bursting with flavour and nutrients. Their fibre content helps keep you full, reducing the chances of those sneaky mid-day snack attacks. Frozen berries can help curb those sweet, unhealthy cravings and are still as nutritious as fresh.

Nutrient Dense: Berries, especially blueberries, contain antioxidants like resveratrol, which could positively affect hormone health. Supports Mood: Rich in flavonoids, berries have been studied for their potential moodenhancing properties. Blending them into a smoothie or sprinkling them on a salad might give you a cheerful mood boost. **Bone Health Benefits:** Berries like strawberries contain vitamin K and manganese, essential nutrients for maintaining strong bones. As bone density concerns creep in during perimenopause and menopause, it's good to know that berries offer

Heart Health: The anthocyanins (giving berries their vibrant colours) are not just there for the looks. They've been linked to improved heart health, reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases. A berry a day keeps the heart doctor away? Worth a try!

**Digestive Divas:** The fibre in berries works wonders for digestion, helping to keep things **moving smoothly and preventing constipation**, which some of us unfortunately know all too well during these years.

**Skin Glow:** The water content and antioxidants packed in these frozen gems can help to combat dehydration and oxidative stress.

**Breast Cancer:** Some berries, especially black raspberries, have been researched for *potential protective effects against breast cancer*. Anything that adds a layer of protection and peace of mind is a welcome addition to our diets during perimenopause and menopause.

#### How To Use Frozen Berries

Add frozen berries to *salad dressings*, *smoothies*, *oatmeal and smoothie bowls* for vibrant colour, flavour and nutrients.



# Eggs

Eggs are more than just a breakfast staple. For women in perimenopause and menopause, eggs offer a unique combination of proteins, healthy fats, and essential vitamins that can be especially beneficial.

From supporting hormonal health to bone health and mood regulation.

From supporting hormonal health to bone health and mood regulation, eggs might just be the unsung heroes of your dietary toolkit for some.



# Benefits

Hormone Health: Eggs, *rich in protein and essential fats*, can help to support hormone health.

**Mood Elevator:** With choline and omega-3 fatty acids, **eggs can affect brain health and mood regulation.** 

**Bone Support:** Vitamin D found in eggs is a *crucial vitamin for calcium absorption*, giving your bones the love they deserve during these transformative times.

Weight Management: The protein in eggs can make you feel fuller, reducing those sudden hunger pangs. Plus, starting your day with eggs might help balance blood sugar levels, preventing those energy crashes later in the afternoon.

#### How to Use Eggs

Whether you like them boiled, scrambled, or poached, embrace eggs and all the nourishing goodness they bring to your menopausal journey!



Please Note: It's always a good idea to consult your healthcare professional regarding individual dietary needs, especially if specific health concerns or conditions exist. For most people, enjoying eggs is part of a balanced diet.

# Balsamic Vinegar

Balsamic vinegar has a rich flavour profile and has a host of health benefits during perimenopause and menopause, including digestive health, blood sugar balancing and satiety.

# Benefits

**Digestive Health:** Its acidic nature can stimulate the production of digestive enzymes, making meal breakdown a little easier. **This may help to reduce**post-meal bloat!

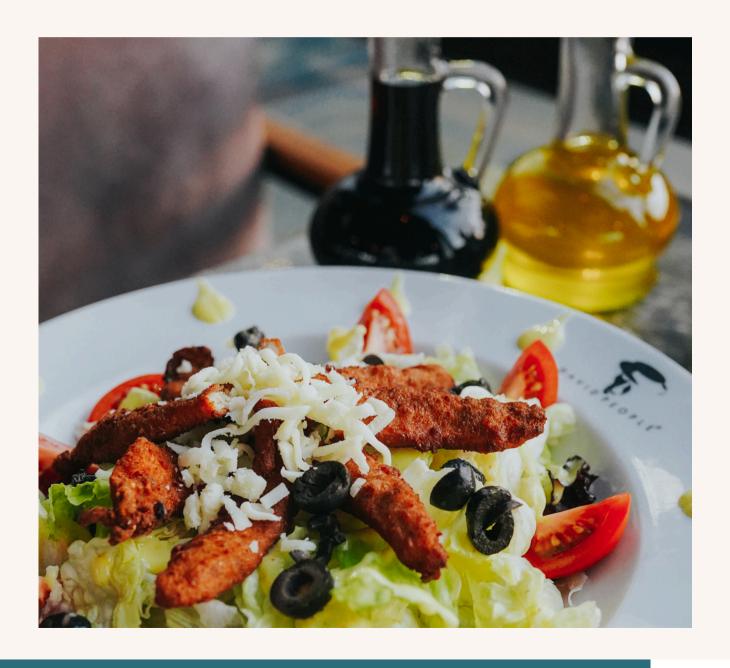
Blood Sugar Balance: Balsamic vinegar has been shown to improve insulin sensitivity, which can benefit those watching their blood sugar levels.



Reduce Cholesterol Levels: One of the benefits of balsamic vinegar is its positive impact on cholesterol levels. Rich in antioxidants, balsamic vinegar may actively address harmful "scavenger cells" that elevate LDL (bad cholesterol).

#### How To Use Balsamic Vinegar

Use it as a *glaze*, *salad dressings*, *marinades*, *desserts or drizzle* over roasted vegetables.





Packed with Nutrients: During perimenopause and menopause, your body changes significantly. Leafy greens like spinach, rocket (arugula), and Swiss chard come to the rescue by being rich in essential vitamins and minerals. These micronutrients can help ensure you get the nourishment your body craves during this transition.

Magnesium: Feeling those muscle cramps or struggling with sleep? The magnesium in these greens may help. *This vital mineral can aid in muscle relaxation and potentially improve sleep patterns*, both of which can sometimes be challenging during menopause.

**Digestive Support:** Constipation or bloating got you down? Adding these leafy veggies to your diet can easily *increase your fibre intake*, assisting in regular bowel movements and helping to prevent uncomfortable digestive issues like bloating. Plus, a happy gut often means better overall well-being.

Cognitive Benefits: Menopause can sometimes come with its set of brain fog moments. Greens like spinach are rich in nutrients such as lutein, vitamin K, folate, and beta-carotene. These are linked to supporting brain health and could potentially act as a buffer against cognitive decline.

# Benefits

small packages!

**Hormone Health:** Cruciferous veggies, like kale, arugula, and mixed greens, *can help support liver function*, aiding in detoxifying excess hormones.

**Mood Improvement:** Let's face it, mood swings can sometimes be part and parcel of this life phase. But the folate found in leafy greens might offer a gentle lift. *Folate plays a role in producing neurotransmitters that regulate mood*, making these greens a natural ally in maintaining emotional equilibrium.

#### **How To Include Greens**

Incorporate greens effortlessly into your diet by adding a handful to smoothies, tossing them into salads, or sautéing them for a quick, nutritious side dish. Including greens of all sorts in your diet will *help to* support overall health during perimenopause and menopause.



# Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are packed with *essential nutrients and are the perfect addition* to cater to your body's unique needs during perimenopause and menopause. They might be tiny, but they offer many benefits for overall health and can be

easily added to mealtimes.

# Benefits

**Digestion:** Chia seeds are your tummy's best friend! Rich in fibre, they help to keep things moving smoothly, helping to *reduce bloating and bowel irregularities.* Your gut will thank you for including these in your diet!

**Satiety:** These seeds absorb up to 12 times their weight in liquid, making you *feel satiated. This may help to curb hunger and cravings.* 

Hormonal Health: Omega-3 fatty acids in chia seeds can be quite helpful during perimenopause and menopause and have several benefits, including heart and brain health. Their fibre, omega-3s, and antioxidants work together for overall hormonal health.

Mood: Besides harmonising hormones, the *Omega-3s in chia seeds can help uplift mood* and ward off those occasional blues



**Stronger Bones:** Who knew? These tiny seeds are packed with calcium, which is vital for bone health. *This is especially key as you navigate this stage*, where maintaining bone density becomes all the more essential.

**Brain Health:** Those Omega-3s don't stop! They're great for heart health, and mood and play a part in *keeping your brain sharp and agile*.

**Better Sleep:** Ever had one or many sleepless nights? Chia seeds have **tryptophan, an amino acid that promotes better sleep.** Just what you need during perimenopause.

#### How To Add Chia Seeds To Your Diet

The next time you make a delicious smoothie, remember to throw in a generous spoonful of chia seeds. Alternatively, add them, make a variety of *chia puddings*, *and use them as a topping to cereal*, *smoothie bowls and salads*.



# Hemp Seeds

During perimenopause, it's crucial to support the body with nutrient-rich foods, and hemp seeds can be an excellent addition to the diet.



# Benefits

**Heart Health:** Hemp seeds contain *arginine and gamma-linolenic acid*, which are linked to a decreased risk of heart disease.

**Healthy Fats:** Skin can become incredibly itchy, sensitive and dry during perimenopause and with a balance of omega-6 to omega-3, *hemp seeds may benefit skin health.* 

**Rich in Protein:** Approximately 25% of the calories in hemp seeds come from protein. They contain all the *essential amino acids, making them a complete protein source.* 

Mineral Content: They are an *excellent source of essential minerals*, including vitamin E, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, iron, and zinc.

Menopause Symptom Relief: The gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) in hemp seeds might help alleviate certain *menopausal symptoms like hot flashes and morning* stiffness.

**Digestive Health:** Whole hemp seeds are high in both soluble and insoluble fibre, promoting digestive health However, it's worth noting that **shelled hemp seeds** have a reduced fibre content.

#### How To Include Hemp Seeds

Incorporating hemp seeds into meals, whether by adding them to dishes or consuming them on their own, can offer numerous health benefits during perimenopause. **Sprinkle them onto salads, into smoothies, yoghurt or baking.** 



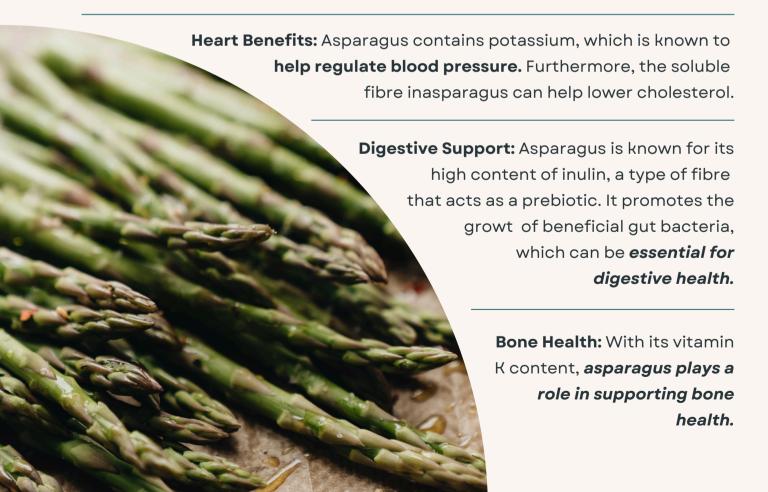
# Asparagus

Packed with vital nutrients, asparagus doubles as a powerful prebiotic that nurtures the good bacteria in your gut. After eating asparagus, you might detect a distinct smell in your urine. This is because of a substance in asparagus called asparagusic acid, which our bodies break down into compounds that contain sulfur, giving it that recognisable aroma.

Please Note: Our bodies digest foods differently, and some individuals may not pick up on the unique scent at all.

# Benefits

Nutrient Content: Asparagus is packed with vitamins A, C, E, K, and B vitamins, along with essential minerals like copper, iron, and calcium.



**Natural Diuretic:** Asparagus can help rid the body of excess salt and fluid, making it a *natural diuretic. This can be beneficial for women experiencing* water retention.

Antioxidant Properties: Packed with antioxidants, asparagus can help combat oxidative stress in the body.

Immune Boost: The vitamin E content in asparagus can help strengthen the immune system.

#### How To Include Asparagus

Asparagus can be used in various ways, including *roasted*, *as a side dish*, *in stews*, *casseroles*, *soups and salads*.



# Lentils come in various colours, from green, brown, and red, and have become a staple in many global cuisines, especially in the Mediterranean. They are a nutritional powerhouse packed with protein, fibre, and essential minerals. They provide a hearty base for soups, stews, salads, and more, making them a versatile and nourishing addition to any diet.

# enefits

**Rich in Nutrients:** Lentils are an *excellent source of B vitamins, iron, magnesium, potassium, and zinc.* They're also a great source of plant-based protein and fibre.

**Heart Health:** The fibre, folic acid, and potassium in lentils all **support heart health.** Including them in your diet can help to reduce the risk of heart disease and maintain healthy blood cholesterol levels.

**Digestion:** The *dietary fibre found in lentils helps to prevent chronic constipation and promotes regular bowel movements.* This can be particularly helpful, as many women experience digestive issues during perimenopause.

**Stabilise Blood Sugar:** Due to their fibre content, lentils can help **stabilise blood sugar levels**, making them an ideal food for those with cravings, mood swings or general fatigue.

Weight Management: Lentils are *low in calories but high in nutrients*, making them an excellent addition to a weight management diet. Their protein and fibre content helps to satiate hunger, potentially reducing overall caloric intake.

Bone Health: As women approach menopause, bone health becomes increasingly crucial due to a decline in estrogen. Lentils provide a good amount of calcium and magnesium, which are vital in maintaining bone structure and strength.

Mood Regulation & Energy Production: Lentils are rich in B vitamins, especially folate and B6. These vitamins play a vital *role in mood* regulation and energy production. This can be particularly beneficial as mood fluctuations and fatigue are common concerns during perimenopause.

Red Blood Cell Formation: The *iron in lentils supports red blood cell formation* and helps to prevent conditions like anaemia.

#### How To Use Lentils

Lentils are a versatile food, effortlessly fitting into many dishes. Their mild flavour absorbs other tastes well, making them perfect for **soups**, salads, and even as a meat substitute in dishes like tacos.



# Kimchi

Kimchi is a traditional Korean dish made of fermented vegetables, primarily napa cabbage and radishes, combined with a mix of seasonings like chilli pepper flakes, garlic, and ginger. Beyond its tangy and spicy flavour, kimchi is also renowned for its health benefits. Rich in vitamins, minerals, and beneficial probiotics from the fermentation process, kimchi has been hailed as a flavorful condiment and a powerful ally for gut health and overall well-being. Buy kimchi from a reputable source, and ensure it is from the refrigerator section in the store and not off the shelf.

# Benefits

**Gut Health:** Kimchi is loaded with *beneficial probiotic bacteria* as a Traditional fermented food. These help to improve digestion and maintain a healthy balance of gut flora.

Boosting Immunity: A balanced gut is directly linked to overall health and immunity. The beneficial bacteria in kimchi help strengthen the gut barrier, which may help to reduce perimenopausal symptoms like chronic inflammation.

Nutrient Absorption: The lactic acid bacteria in kimchi can enhance the bioavailability of nutrients. This means better digestion and absorption of vitamins and minerals.



**Anti-inflammatory:** Kimchi has anti-inflammatory properties, which can help reduce inflammation in the body, potentially easing symptoms related to *inflammatory conditions like joint pain.* 

Vitamin Rich: A good source of essential vitamins like vitamins A, C, and B's.

**Heart Health:** Kimchi might have heart-protective properties. Some studies suggest it can *help reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and boost HDL (good) cholesterol.* 

#### **Using Kimchi**

While the benefits of kimchi are numerous, *it's important to start with small amounts*, *especially if you're new to fermented foods*. Introducing too much probiotic food too quickly can lead to temporary digestive issues, such as bloating, gas, or an upset stomach. Gradually increasing your intake allows your gut to adjust and can help prevent these symptoms. Remember, it's always a good idea to consult with a healthcare provider or nutritionist when making significant dietary changes.



# Soy

Soy products come in various forms, including tofu, tempeh, soy milk, and edamame. They are rich in essential nutrients like protein, fibre, vitamins, and minerals.

Moreover, soy contains phytoestrogens, which are *estrogen-like compounds* derived from plants - isoflavones. These may mimic the effects of estrogen in the body, potentially offering relief from certain perimenopausal symptoms.

When purchasing soy products, choose organic, non-GMO soy products to reap the maximum benefits.

# Benefits

Hormone Health	The phytoestrogens in soy may help with hormone health, which can be particularly beneficial during perimenopause when estrogen levels fluctuate.
Bone Health	Soy isoflavones may help maintain bone density, potentially reducing the risk of osteoporosis, a common concern during perimenopause.
Heart Health	Consuming soy protein may help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels.
Protein Source	Soy is a good source of protein, which is essential for muscle maintenance and overall body function.
Reduced Hot Flashes	Some studies suggest that soy isoflavones can help reduce the frequency of hot flashes, a common symptom of perimenopause.

#### **Cautions**

# Soy foods include:

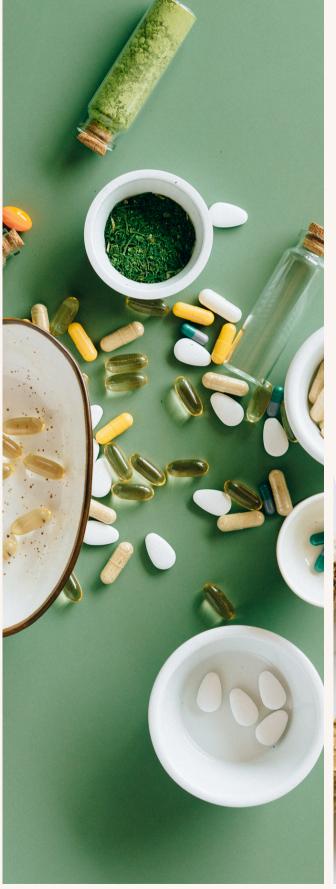
- Edamame
- Miso paste
- Tempeh
- Tofu
- Soy milk

Thyroic Functio	
Allergie	Soy is a common allergen. If you have a soy allergy or sensitivity, it's <b>best to</b> avoid soy products.
Breast Cancer Concerr	healthcare provider if you have a  history of breast cancer or other

#### **Using Soy**

Incorporating soy into your diet can be beneficial, **but moderation is key.** It's advisable to start with small amounts and observe how your body reacts, especially if you're new to soy products. As with any dietary change, consulting with a **healthcare provider or nutritionist is wise to ensure it aligns with your personal health needs and conditions.** 





# Nutrition Supplements to Consider





# Matcha Powder

Matcha is a bright green tea powder originating from Japan. It contains antioxidants to provide health benefits and may be helpful in combatting perimenopause symptoms.

# Benefits

Reduced Stress & Anxiety: Matcha is rich in L-theanine, a unique amino acid that promotes relaxation. This means matcha powder may be a natural way to find calm amidst the perimenopause and menopause storm.

**Lower Cholesterol:** As we age, keeping an eye on cholesterol becomes more crucial. Matcha may help with its *natural compounds that assist in reducing LDL (the "bad" cholesterol)*.

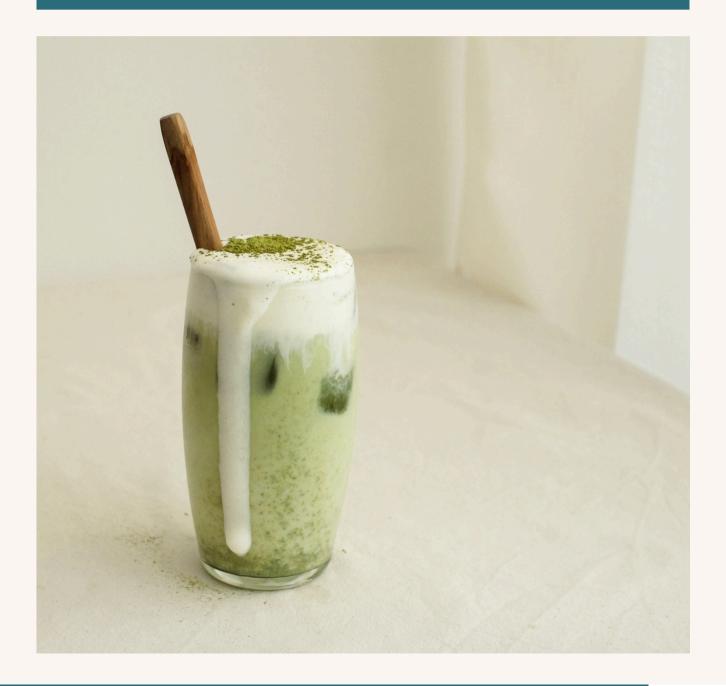
Improved Concentration & Memory: Ever walked into a room and forgotten why? Or misplaced those keys again? *Matcha's combination of caffeine* and L-theanine provides a balanced energy boost, helping with focus and clarity.

Improved Cognitive Abilities: Beyond just concentration, the antioxidants in matcha may *help protect against neural damage*, ensuring better overall cognitive function.

**Increased Energy:** Wave goodbye to those mid-afternoon slumps! Matcha provides a *sustained energy boost* without the jitters or crashes of other caffeine sources.

#### How to Enjoy Matcha

It can be enjoyed as a hot or cold beverage, including *latte*, *smoothies*, *iced tea*, *energy balls*, *and even baking*.



# Acai Berry Powder

Acai berry powder comes from the acai palm tree in South America. This dark purple fruit is dried and turned into powder, packed with antioxidants, essential fatty acids, and fibre. It's often added to smoothies, yoghurt and oatmeal. Besides its unique taste, acai powder is recognised for its health benefits, which include helping support heart health and weight management, making it a beneficial supplement addition during perimenopause. An alternative would be to use goji berries or pomegranate seeds.

# Benefits

**Rich in Antioxidants:** Acai berries are incredibly *rich in antioxidants*, especially anthocyanins, which help to fight free radicals in the body.

**Weight Management:** Acai berry powder may help suppress appetite, boost metabolism, and reduce fat deposits, but *more substantial research is needed for this area.* 

**Brain Health:** The compounds in *acai might protect the brain from damage* as it ages and influence cognition and memory.



**Energy Boost:** Some people report a burst of energy after consuming acai, which could benefit those experiencing fatigue. However, this affects every person differently.

Hormone Health: Some preliminary studies suggest that acai might benefit hormone health, though more research is needed.

#### How To Use Acai Berry Powder

Mix it into smoothies, yoghurt bowls, baking and oatmeal.





# Collagen Powder/Liquid

Collagen is the most abundant protein in our body, crucial for skin elasticity, joint health, and other bodily functions. As we age, collagen production decreases, resulting in noticeable wrinkles, joint pain, and other age-related issues.

Collagen powder is derived from animal connective tissues and hydrolysed to improve its digestibility.

# Benefits

It may help with skin hydration and elasticity. It is also thought to help reduce the appearance of fine lines/wrinkles and improve hair and nail strength.

Skin Health: Regular intake can support skin hydration and elasticity.

Bone and Joint Health: It may help with bone health and relieve joint pain, but more research is needed.

Hair and Nails: May promote stronger nails and hair, which can become brittle or thin during perimenopause.

Gut Health: Some believe it can support a healthy gut, but more research is needed.

#### How To Use Collagen Powder

It dissolves easily therefore, you can add it to your morning coffee, soups, smoothies, or even in baking recipes.



## Protein Powder

**Protein intake is vital during perimenopause** to support muscle mass, bone health, metabolism, weight and overall health.

Protein powders are available from ingredients like whey, soy, pea, or hemp. They **offer a convenient way to supplement your protein intake**, especially if you struggle to meet your daily protein requirements.

Whey Protein is considered a complete protein, which means it contains all nine essential amino acids the human body cannot produce on its own. These essential amino acids are:

- Histidine
- Isoleucine
- Leucine
- Lysine
- Methionine
- Phenylalanine
- Threonine
- Tryptophan
- Valine

Having all of these in a quality protein powder ensures optimal muscle repair, growth, and overall health benefits, which are ALL particularly important during perimenopause and menopause.



#### **Vegan/Plant-Based Protein Powders: What to Check**

Not all vegan or plant-based protein powders are complete proteins, meaning they don't always contain all nine essential amino acids.

Most plant sources lack one or more of the essential amino acids, but this doesn't mean they're inferior. However, it does mean that *if you rely solely on a single plant source* for protein, you might not get all the essential amino acids your body requires.

When choosing vegan or plant-based protein powders, it's not just the protein content that matters. *Texture and flavour can also play significant roles* in ensuring you have an enjoyable and beneficial protein experience.

#### Here's what to look out for:

Combination of Plant-Based Sources	Many quality plant-based protein powders combine different plant sources to ensure they provide a complete protein profile. For example, a pea and rice protein mix often offers a complete amino acid protein powder.
Check The Label	If unsure, you can often find the amino acid profile on the product's nutritional label. This will show the amount of each amino acid, helping you determine if all nine essential amino acids are present.
Fillers and Additives	Some protein powders may contain unnecessary fillers, artificial flavours, or additives. It's always a good idea to check the ingredient list to ensure you're buying a clean product.
Allergens	Plant-based protein powders can come from a variety of sources. If you have allergies, it's essential to ensure that the powder isn't derived from or processed in a facility that handles allergenic substances.
Digestibility	Some plant proteins can be harder to digest for certain individuals. It might be worth considering a powder that includes digestive enzymes, which can help absorb and digest the protein.

Texture	One common critique of vegan protein powders is the difference in texture and flavour compared to dairy-based proteins like whey. Some plant-based powders can have a grainy or chalky texture. It's always good to sample different brands or look for reviews focusing on texture and taste.
Third-Party Tested	Look for third-party testing to ensure the product is what it states on the label, and always buy from trusted sources.

While whey is naturally a complete protein, it might not always be the best option for everyone. Many women, especially during perimenopause, experience bloating or digestive issues related to dairy products.

Therefore, when buying protein supplements, it's crucial to consider the ingredients, amino acid profile, potential sensitivities, and the product's flavour and texture. Whether you choose whey, plant-based, or soy, the key is finding a supplement that aligns with your nutritional needs and personal comfort. Always listen to your body and consult a healthcare professional or nutrition expert to ensure you make the best choice for your unique situation.

# Benefits

Muscle Health: Supports the maintenance and growth of muscle mass, which tends to decrease with age.

Bone Health: Adequate protein intake can support bone health, which is especially crucial as the risk of osteoporosis increases during perimenopause.

Weight Management: Protein can help you feel full longer, potentially helping you with weight management during a time when metabolism can slow down.

Mood and Energy: Proper protein intake can assist in stabilising blood sugar levels, potentially influencing mood, energy, cravings, exercise and sleep.

#### How To Use Protein Powder

Incorporate into **smoothies**, **oatmeal**, **homemade energy bars**, or simply mix with water or milk for a post-workout boost.





Disclaimer: The information provided herein is for informational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice or recommendations. Always consult with a healthcare professional, nutritionist, or dietitian when considering supplements or making significant changes to your diet.