

The

Menopause

School

A 360 APPROACH

Joining the dots



HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

Use the following pages to identify which symptoms you are noticing now or in the past. Make note of sensations or physical changes you've noticed that may not be on the suggestion list. This additional information will be helpful during any discussion with regards to symptom management and consequences.

The symptom and tracker pages are particularly helpful for perspective, and if you're just starting out on identifying how you feel. Once you have a bench mark and recognise the differences you may find the food & mood diary enough to keep a track of your hormone highway experience.

Symptom list.

Symptoms can be vast, but they are also relevant to you. There are physical and psychological symptoms and quite often we use different words to explain how we are feeling, compared to the person next to us. Add as much detail as you can and in the notes include words that suit you. Add your own symptoms too, there could be some we haven't even thought of! They may not be related to hormonal decline but still worth adding, because this is all about YOU.

Daily tracker & Weekly overview

Tune into you. On a daily basis how many symptoms do you think you felt?

Was there a standout sensation on a certain day? How was the week overall?

As you complete the tracker week on week, you will be able to reflect on how things change, for better or worse.

Patterns are really helpful to develop your own menopause tool-kit. There may be things that work one month, but don't the next. That's fine. Remember menopause is a dynamic process and we have a metabolic flexibility at this time in our lives. Heck, it may well be the only thing that is flexible!

The bigger picture

Awareness and perspective are huge mindset assets to empower you on this journey. Additionally the choices you make now will support you in the future. Some weeks it may be the simplest things that make a big difference. It's important to hold on to the fact that you **are** taking action and you **are** stepping into this. The charts are not there to highlight flaws, but more to **shine a light on your progress.**



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hot flushes and night sweats | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue | <input type="checkbox"/> Joint aches and pains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia | <input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings | <input type="checkbox"/> Low mood/sad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Hair loss | <input type="checkbox"/> Palpitations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bloating | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight gain | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra facial hair | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of libido |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tinnitus | <input type="checkbox"/> Weak bladder | <input type="checkbox"/> Memory lapses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irregular periods | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy periods | <input type="checkbox"/> Itchy skin | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brittle nails | <input type="checkbox"/> Digestive problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Cystitis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tender breasts | <input type="checkbox"/> Vaginal dryness | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional |

Notes:



Change in body odour

Burning tongue/mouth

Electric shocks

Tingling extremities

Allergies

Panic attacks

Dental problems

Muscle tension

No energy

Unexplained fear

Loss of confidence

Irrational responses

Body shape change

Skin breakouts

Dull skin

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Notes:

symptom tracker

WEEK OF _____

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

TRIGGERS

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-
-
-

WHAT FELT BETTER?

NOTES:

HOW DOES A FOOD & MOOD DIARY HELP?

Keeping a food mood diary is useful resource, primarily for your self, but also for anyone you seek support from. Recording feelings, activities and blood flow gradually builds your own journey blueprint.

When people ask "**how long will this last?**" or "**where am I on the journey?**", initially we need to act as hormone detectives. The only thing we know for sure is that your periods will stop - but we can't be sure when. However joining a few familiar dots will enable us to draft a possible pathway, past, present and future. It may sound strange, but lots of what happens next will be based on retrospective indicators.

Perspective is a great mindset tool.

Symptoms can be so varied and persistent that we become overwhelmed. These sensations can add anxiety to an already challenging situation. You will probably find patterns and sequences that will ease your mind and hopefully show that most symptoms are NOT there all the time. This alone can be a huge relief and boost your meno-morale. Relative comparisons week or week, month on month will also help gauge treatment options, management and adaption of the next steps for YOU.

How to fill in

Print out copies, or include the headings in your own journal. I use a marks out of 5 annotation for each category of food, mood, movement and sleep. If you prefer use words. Whichever way you find easiest the purpose is to see at a glance if it was a good day or a not so good day, in relative terms. Which part of the meno-tool kit are you finding hard to do? Which bits are coming easily and helping? What steps can you take to make it all work better?

What is a 5 compared to a 1?

Food - quality of calories, not quantity of calories.

5 = was it real food, did it fuel you well, did it have a rich source of nutrients.

1 = was it fake food, was it poor quality fuel (processed), low nutrient value.

Mood - subjective to you clearly, but really tune into feelings such as happy/sad/OK/good etc

Movement - it may be as simple as did you actually move today or not?

Sleep - how was last nights sleep? Peaceful, disturbed, short, long etc

Water/Caffeine/Alcohol

Tick or colour in the water drop if you drank enough fluid (1L minimum). Plain water is best (no bubbles), but also count herb teas. Caffeine may be a trigger for symptoms so record whether it was a little or lot that day. And do try and keep all caffeine consumption to before 12pm. Alcohol may trigger symptoms, and too much will overload the liver, when it's already working hard to keep us alive.



WEEK OF _____

MONDAY

FOOD 
 MOOD 
 MOVEMENT 
 SLEEP 

TUESDAY

FOOD 
 MOOD 
 MOVEMENT 
 SLEEP 

WEDNESDAY

FOOD 
 MOOD 
 MOVEMENT 
 SLEEP 

THURSDAY

FOOD 
 MOOD 
 MOVEMENT 
 SLEEP 

FRIDAY

FOOD 
 MOOD 
 MOVEMENT 
 SLEEP 

SATURDAY

FOOD 
 MOOD 
 MOVEMENT 
 SLEEP 

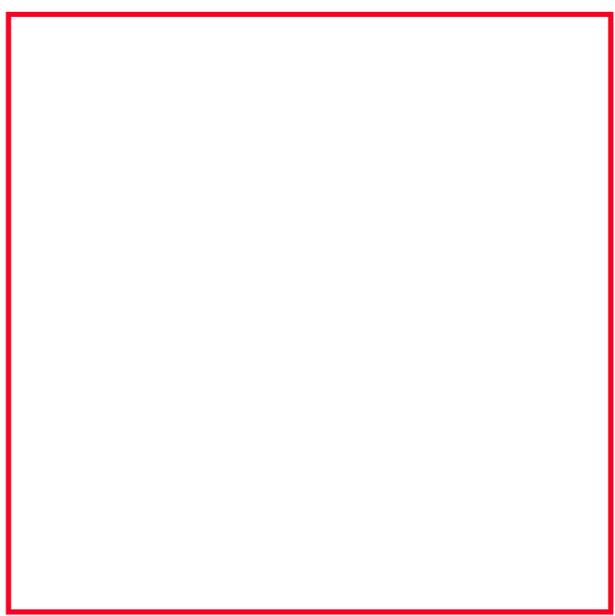
SUNDAY

FOOD 
 MOOD 
 MOVEMENT 
 SLEEP 

BEST BITS OF THE WEEK

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HARD BITS THIS WEEK



MENSTRUATION AWARENESS

I cannot stress the importance of being fully aware of your menstruation. Length of cycle and blood flow are, in fact, vital signs of health, long before perimenopause. If you can think back to when your periods were regular then make a note of mood, flow and duration that you typically experienced. The more pieces of your hormone jigsaw we have, the easier it will be to adapt the plan. Knowing your 'normal' is a great starting point in any conversation around menopause.

Frequency, duration of bleed and flow variation

Regularity of periods is most often a key feature of menopause transition, so understanding the time stamps of when and how long can be a good indicator of where you are on the journey. The periods rarely become softer, gradually more infrequent and then stop. It's more a case of getting worse before better. However, if the flow is heavy and 'flooding' in an a very unpredictable way you may want to consider seeking medical advice. By recording it you know, it's not guess work. Perimenopause can overlap with other additional challenges, so if you have as much data on yourself as possible, rather than 'think so' or 'maybe' the concerns can be addressed more effectively.

How you feel before and after bleeding?

If you are symptom tracking or using the food & mood diary you will probably be able to join the dots between the times before and after periods. For example, do you notice night sweats coincide with the time prior to bleed? Does your insomnia ease off at certain times? Are you more or less energetic? There could be a very subtle difference as to when you experience fatigue or digestive issues for example.

How does this help?

Nutritional variations and changing the way you move at certain times of the cycle can be very beneficial to synchronise with the hormone ebb & flow. When weight gain is such a challenge at this time, knowing that sometimes you just simply need to carb-up to support your hormones and at times you **will** find fat burn, can go a long way toward your menomindset and shape-shifting evolution.

During the bleed limit your intake of fatty and salty foods, and drink herbal tea like chamomile to soothe cramps. Depending on how heavy your flow is, you may also benefit from increasing your iron intake around this time.

After bleeding oestrogen starts to rise again and energy increases. Your body is actually more receptive to activities like strength training, so it's a great time to focus on fitness.

The Ovulation phase is when your estrogen levels reach their peak and start to balance out again when your body releases an egg. You will want to eat foods that support your liver, as these offer health benefits that can protect against environmental toxins known to impact hormones. Anti-inflammatory foods such as whole fruits, vegetables, and almonds will do the trick.

Next the luteal phase is the time before your period when you will benefit from eating healthily and steering clear of foods that can trigger period cramps, so this is the best time to avoid caffeine, alcohol, added salt, and carbonated drinks.



MONTH _____

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■

NOTABLE CHANGES

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WHAT WILL YOU PUT IN YOUR MENO-TOOLKIT?

Knowing and doing are two different things. Now we need to take the data and turn it into simple, sustainable actions. What do you want and **need** to add to your menopause toolkit?

Stress reduction

The connection between stress and symptoms is undeniable. So, even before we look at supporting hormonal decline using nutrition, movement, or hormone replacement therapy, dialing down your cortisol levels is a **MUST DO**.

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The simplest way is to add some Vitamin O aka Oxygen. I've added 'breathe and be still' as the top stress reduction goal as that is non-negotiable.

Movement

I know how it feels to wake up and not want to move. I know how it feels to ache when you walk downstairs. I know you will not want to add a movement goal but again it's a **MUST DO**. Even a gentle walk will help. Focus on mobility and movement, then upgrade to exercise when you're ready. 10,000 steps a day is a good activity goal, and strength training to maintain muscle mass is also highly recommended.

Nutrition

Eat real food. Start with anything you can grow, catch or kill as your starting point. Processed foods, vegetable oil, seed oils and sugar are going to increase inflammation. This is not good. Your primary objective with nutrition is to fuel your body with as many nutrients on one plate as possible. Nature not number of calories counts. Fibre is also important but should come from vegetable sources rather than grains, when possible. Seeds, nuts and berries are great, but in small quantities. Dairy needs to be 'normal' and not low fat. Fruit is full of nutrients but sometimes the natural sugar can also be inflammatory and may pose a challenge with weight management. Time restricted eating, with 3-4 meals spaced out for example in a 10 hour eating window, and no eating for 14 hours, supports a midlife body in all sorts of beneficial ways. e.g breakfast 8am, lunch at 12pm, snack 3pm last meal 6pm.

Menopause Feng-shui

What else needs to change? How can you improve the energy flow in your day, house, work, relationships?

Sometimes even after adding various tools to your kit some symptoms simply need to be managed, such as hot flushes and night sweats. If they are one of your regulars then perhaps you can try different clothes, fans, locations in the house to sleep etc.

A pragmatic approach may be the best solution.

Vitamin L

Laughter is the best medicine. Finding joy, fun and social connections is a deep-rooted desire and need for humans. However, during this transition we can become distant and remote. Look out for opportunities to generate some Vitamin L and grab them when you can. You will be surprised how much better you feel, even if everything hurts.



STRESS REDUCTION GOALS

- *breathe and be still*
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MOVEMENT GOALS

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-

NUTRITION GOALS

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-
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NEXT STEPS

FUN GOALS

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