

Hot Flushes: Reducing Risk and Treatment

Lifestyle Factors to Consider

- Regular physical **activity**.
- Exposure to early morning or late afternoon **sunlight** without sunscreen.
This ensures adequate levels of vitamin D. Deficiencies are associated with increases in LH and FSH production which affect flushes.
- Wear natural fibres, light loose fitting **layers**. If necessary sleep on a towel.
- Investigate **emotional issues** involving unresolved anger, or suppressed desires.

Dietary Factors to Avoid or Reduce

- Reduce **caffeine** and **alcohol**, especially red wine.
- Some women find hot, **spicy** foods including ginger tend to aggravate. Some women find that spices help.
- Eliminate hormonally treated **meats** and **dairy** foods.

Dietary Factors to Increase

- **Phytoestrogens** especially flaxseeds, plus nuts (not peanuts or macadamia) and seeds (see below).
- Purified or spring **water** if your intake is low.
- **Sage**.
Recipe for sage tea (for 1-3 days supply) – 2 tablespoons of finely chopped fresh leaves or 1 tablespoon of dried leaves in 500ml tepid water with the juice of one lemon. Put in covered jar overnight. Strain, keep in fridge. Drink straight or in a little juice as needed.
- **Magnesium-rich foods** such as sea vegetables, wheat bran, wheat germ, whole grains, dry brans, nuts, bananas, dark leafy green vegetables, molasses, brewers yeast, rye.
- **Potassium-rich foods** including sea vegetables, bananas and other fruits, beans, whole grains and sunflower seeds.

Foods Containing Phytoestrogens

High levels

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|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| • Celery seeds | • Parsley | • Sprouts |
| • Fennel | • Sage | • Raspberry leaf |
| • Flaxseeds (linseeds) | • Soy beans | • Red clover |

Others

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|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| • Apples | • Corn | • Plums |
| • Barley | • Cucumber | • Potatoes |
| • Berries | • Cumin | • Pumpkin |
| • Broccoli | • Eggplant | • Rhubarb |
| • Cabage | • Garlic | • Rice |
| • Capsicum | • Green beans | • Rye |
| • Carrots | • Legumes | • Seeds |
| • Cauliflower | • Oats | • Squash |
| • Celery | • Olives/olive oil | • Tomatoes |
| • Cherries | • Papaya | • Whole grains |
| • Chickpeas | • Peas | • Yams |

Hormone Balancing Eating Plan

Basic Principles

- Small frequent meals: 3 to 5 meals a day. Include a 4pm snack.
- Always eat breakfast.
- Protein at each meal- eggs, fish, lean hormone-free meat, dairy, legumes, seeds, nuts, tofu.
- A good balance is 30-45% protein, 30-40% carbohydrates, 15-25% good fats. If vegetarian, eat complimentary proteins: legumes/pulses with grains/seeds; legumes/pulses with nuts; grains/seeds with nuts
- Eat unrefined whole foods that are low to moderate glycemic index (GI) foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains. Limit high GI foods (over 70), especially alcohol, starchy, sugary foods and refined, processed foods (see below)
- Increase Omega 3 fats, especially DHA. Oily fish or fish oil supplements, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, flaxseeds, nuts.
- Avoid trans fats as found in margarine and shortening. Avoid hydrogenated oils.
- Eat phytoestrogens.
- If hypoglycemic avoid all sugar, honey, fruit juice and dried fruit, especially in the first 3 weeks. After that a little honey and dried fruit and small quantities of unsweetened dilute fruit juice is allowed.
- Use stevia powder or honey, no artificial sweeteners
- Avoid alcohol and cigarettes
- Decrease caffeine – no more than 2 weak cups of tea or coffee a day
- Five or more servings of vegetables per day
- **Exercise is critical for hormone balance** – 20-30 minutes at least 3 times a week

From 'Managing Menopause Naturally', by Kathy Harris

Glycemic Index

The glycemic index (GI) is a ranking of carbohydrates on a scale from 0 to 100 according to the extent to which they raise blood sugar levels after eating. Foods with a high GI are those which are rapidly digested and absorbed and result in marked fluctuations in blood sugar levels. Low-GI foods, by virtue of their slow digestion and absorption, produce gradual rises in blood sugar and insulin levels, and have proven benefits for health. Low GI diets have been shown to improve both glucose and lipid levels in people with diabetes (type 1 and type 2). They have benefits for weight control because they help control appetite and delay hunger. Low GI diets also reduce insulin levels and insulin resistance.

	Low GI	Intermediate GI	High GI
Breads	Burgen® breads	Hamburger bun, rye bread, croissant, light rye, crumpet	White and wholemeal bread, bagel, blackbread, Wonder white®, gluten-free bread
Breakfast cereals	All Bran fruit'n oats®, All Bran®, Guardian®, porridge, Special K®, Rice Bran	Oatbran, untoasted muesli, Just Right®, Nutri Gran®, Sustain®, Weet-Bix®	Sultana Bran®, Bran Flakes®, Coco Pops®, Puffed Wheat® Rice Bubbles®, Cornflakes®
Grains	Barley, pasta (all types), noodles, bulgar, semolina	Basmati rice, wild rice, Sunrice, Doongara® rice, cousous, cornmeal, tapioca	Brown rice, calrose rice, jasmine rice
Legumes	All beans (eg: kidney, soy, baked beans) peas, and lentils		Broad beans
Starchy Vegetables	Sweet potato, taro, sweet corn	New potato	Other potatoes, parsnip, french fries, kumara
Fruit	Grapefruit, peach, dried apricots, apple, pear, plums, orange, grapes, kiwi fruit, banana	Sultanas, raw and canned apricots, mango, paw paw, raisins, rockmelon, pineapple	Watermelon, dates
Dairy Foods	Milk, So Good® soy drink, low fat fruit yoghurt, custard, low fat ice cream, Norco Prestige light	Full cream ice cream	
Biscuits	Oatmeal, Arnott's Full O'Fruite®, Spicy Fruit Roll®, Snack Right Fruit Slice®	Digestives, Shredded Wheatmeal, Milk Arrowroot	Morning Coffee

Information provided by Diabetes Australia