



# THIS IS US

Over The Bloody Moon is a collective of menopause clinicians, practitioners, and coaches. We've pulled together this leaflet to help you identify the possible impact of certain hormones and share tools and ideas that may help to balance them. Menopause may affect different aspects of wellbeing and as a dynamic experience, it's important to have a broad toolkit. These are natural, lifestyle options to accompany hormone replacement, or as an alternative for those that can't or choose not to take medical treatment. We believe every woman has the right to take charge of her 'change'.

This leaflet does not replace the need to visit and follow-up with a healthcare professional, as not all the tools will be suitable if someone has a medical condition or allergy, is on medication, or has a pre-existing injury, disability, or condition.

Over The Bloody Moon does not accept responsibility for any subsequent injury, illness, pain, or death, as a result of practicing any of these menopause tools.

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# Over The Bloody Moon have created this document, to help people impacted by menopause

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# **PART 1: HORMONE IMBALANCES**

**Hormones fluctuate and drop during the menopause transition. It can be useful to see how these may trigger symptoms to discuss with a healthcare professional. Advocating for individualised menopause care and support is easier when armed with knowledge.**

# SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

## LOW OESTROGEN

### Potential symptoms...

- Anxiety
- Achy joints / bone loss
- Bladder leaks / overactive bladder / UTIs
- Brain fog
- Disrupted sleep
- Hot flushes / night sweats
- Low mood / mood changes
- Low libido
- Muscle loss
- Vaginal atrophy
- Weight gain

# SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

## EXCESS OESTROGEN

### Potential symptoms...

- Anxiety
- Bloating
- Cellulite
- Depression
- Endometriosis / fibroids
- Gallbladder issues
- Headaches / migraines
- Heavy periods / painful periods
- Irritability
- Mood swings/ PMS
- Tender breasts
- Varicose veins
- Water retention

# SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

## LOW PROGESTERONE

### Potential symptoms...

- Anxiety
- Bloating
- Dry skin
- Fibrous cysts
- Frequent headaches
- Heavy, painful periods
- Irregular periods
- Irritability
- Itchy skin (especially at night)
- Muscle tension
- Painful / swollen breasts
- Restless legs
- Saggy skin
- Water retention

# SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

## HIGH CORTISOL

### Potential symptoms...

- Acid reflux / indigestion
- Anxious
- Brain fog
- Excess belly fat
- Frequent colds and flu
- Hair loss
- Heart palpitations
- Irritable
- Osteopenia / osteoporosis
- Poor sleep
- Skin issues
- Sugar cravings
- Teary
- Tired yet wired

# SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

## LOW CORTISOL

### Potential symptoms...

- Afternoon energy slump
- Decreased tolerance for stress
- Depression
- Difficulty making decisions
- Dizzy upon standing
- Hard to get up in the morning
- Low blood pressure
- Low sex drive
- Salt cravings
- Severe fatigue / burnout
- Teary



## **PART 2: MENOPAUSE TOOLKIT**

**We have gathered a few tools that our collective of menopause specialists and community has shared that can be effective ways of addressing specific aspects of menopause health.**

# MENTAL HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

### Anxiety

- Emotional Freedom Tapping (EFT) can help for physical pain and emotional distress.
- Ask for a referral to IAPT or to see a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist (CBT).
- Use The Worry App / sign up to an online CBT programme e.g. Silvercloud.
- Practice paced breathing throughout the day, even when not feeling anxious.
- Watch a YouTube yoga video to calm down the nervous system. Use geranium or lavender essential oils, as a roll-on or diffuser.
- State of flow activities like crafts, jigsaw, mindful walking to switch off and reset.

### Depression / low mood

- Eat food rich in B6 (beef liver, tuna, salmon, poultry, chickpeas, leafy greens) and B12 (cheese, eggs, milk, fish). A blood test can identify if deficient in these nutrients.
- Ask for a referral to a psychologist, counsellor, or therapist.
- If unresolved trauma, see a psychologist, or non-linear movement practitioner.
- Brisk walk outdoors – put trainers next to the bed / sofa as cue for encouragement.
- Talk to friends / colleagues about how you are feeling.
- Start a gratitude diary / Take a daily picture of something that brings you joy.
- Drink Ashwagandha tea.

### Rage / irritability

- Be curious about what's beneath the rage and think how to positively address it.
- Introduce adult Time Out by taking yourself off to a quiet space and breathe.
- P.L.A.C.E: Pause / Listen / Acknowledge different opinion / Compassion / Empathise.

# COGNITIVE HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

### Sleep

- Introduce mini-breaks every hour and avoid screens (try to get outside).
- Listen to a guided meditation with apps like Insight Timer, Clarity and Balance.
- Do a bedroom audit to ensure objects that aren't associated with sleep are removed (e.g. electronic devices, work items).
- Reduce alcohol and caffeine intake.
- Go for an early morning walk avoid high impact exercise after late afternoon.

### Forgetfulness

- Set reminders and notifications on mobile, or leave post-its, somewhere noticeable.
- Create anchors (always the same place) to leave items that are commonly mislaid.
- Eat Omega 3's found in oily fish, avocado, walnuts, flax seeds, chia seeds.
- Introduce neurobic exercises: read backwards, do things with less dominant hand.
- Download productivity / scheduling apps such as Brilll, HabitBull and Tiimo.

### Hard to concentrate

- Keep hydrated: aim for 8 glasses of still water a day and add infusions.
- Work in a quiet space or wear noise-cancelling head phones.
- Reasonable adjustments: hours of work, type of work, work load, delegate.
- Cardio exercise: if you can go for brisk walk and build up to a jog.
- Citrus and aromatic therapeutic essential oils.

# PHYSICAL HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

**Hot flushes / night sweats or chills**

**Joint pain**

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

- Ensure you have access to ventilation and a portable fan.
  - Reduce alcohol and caffeine. Cut out nicotine, processed foods and sugar.
  - Cut back on eating spicy food (chilli, pepper).
  - Practice a cooling visualisation.
  - See a qualified NIMH / CPP herbalist: Red clover, clary sage, black cohosh, maca.
  - Wear natural, layered clothing or anti-flush clothing e.g. Become.
  - Cooling essential oils: peppermint, eucalyptus, pink grapefruit.
  - Chill gel pad to sleep on / cool pads in bra / put spare PJs in the freezer.
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- Eat leafy greens high in magnesium / take magnesium glycinate supplements.
  - Regularly exercise, including resistance training.
  - Keep hydrated by drinking 8 glasses of water a day. Can make own infusions.
  - Listen to a body scan meditation.
  - Choose a high quality turmeric or curcumin with black pepper supplement.

# PHYSICAL HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

### Weight management

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

- Swap simple carbs to complex carbs. e.g. wholegrains, beans, lentils, broccoli.
- 'Rest and digest' by focusing solely on eating and noticing all the senses.
- Cut down on sugar and processed foods which put hormones under stress.
- Avoid over eating, dieting or exercising which cause hormone imbalance.
- Create a meal plan and shop to that to ensure strategic healthy eating.
- Intermittent fasting / restrict times of eating to 8-10 hours, if no medical conditions.
- Eat natural protein to keep fuller for longer. e.g. Greek yoghurt, cottage cheese, eggs, fish, seafood, poultry and lean meats.
- Eat fibre to absorb excess oestrogen e.g. beans, wholegrains, fruit and vegetable skin.
- Eat the rainbow on your plate: the more colours, the more nutrients.
- Strength / muscle-building movement, twice a week to boost metabolism.
- Moderate to high impact cardio, depending on ability, stress and body fitness.

# SKIN HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

**Itchy or dry skin**

- Keep hydrated: drink eight glasses of water a day.
- Moisturise daily, using paraben-free and fragrance-free products.
- Hyaluronic acid helps skin retain water.
- Eat foods rich in selenium e.g. pork, beef, turkey, shellfish.
- Introduce natural progesterone. e.g. beans, broccoli, cabbage, kale, pumpkin.

**Acne**

- Leafy greens to reduce inflammation e.g. kale, spinach.
- Benzoyl peroxide dries out spots and pimples.
- Salicylic acid or glycolic acid to balance skin.

**Pigmentation / ageing skin**

- Encourage sun cream of at least factor 30 for face and body.

**Ageing skin**

- Build up muscle tightness with strength and resistance exercises.
- Cut back on processed and refined foods and unhealthy fats.
- Eat foods rich in selenium e.g. wholegrains, seafood, garlic, eggs.
- Eat foods rich in Vitamin C. e.g. kiwi, blueberries, mango, avocado.
- Vitamin E rich foods e.g. almonds, sunflower seeds, olive oil to boost cell repair.

# HAIR HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

### Thinning hair

### Shedding hair

### Coarse / damaged hair

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

- Refer to a dermatologist or hair loss specialist.
  - Use Regaine daily e.g. topical minoxidil which can be given on prescription.
  - Avoid products with polyethylene glycols (PEGs).
  - Try a menopause shampoo.
  - Eat foods rich in zinc and iron, iodine, Vitamin D3 and B6.
  - Eat foods rich in Omega 3s. e.g. avocado, oily fish, flaxseeds.
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- Ask GP for ferritin blood test to see if daily iron supplements will help.
  - Avoid tight hair styles and wear hair loose.
  - Wash hair less regularly (once a week).
  - Invest in a soft hair brush.
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- Avoid high heat styling tools / hair dryer.
  - Use a conditioner but avoid ones that contain parabens and sulphates.
  - Coconut oil is a natural conditioner.

# INTIMATE HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

**Low libido**

**Painful sex, sore  
or irritated skin  
around the vulva**

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

- Refer to a sexologist, sexual wellbeing specialist, or qualified relationship coach.
- Identify the root cause and reflect on how this might be resolved.
- Acceptance that this is common and part of the ageing / menopause process.
- Look at other ways to build intimacy through 'sensate' exercises.
- Use sex toys to stimulate arousal (not all are suitable with vaginal atrophy).

- Ask doctor for topical oestrogen, such as a vaginal tablet or pessary.
- Practice a daily 'vacial', using a menopause-friendly moisturiser.
- Dab dry when using a towel or toilet paper, rather than rubbing.
- Avoid using any bodywash, soap, or intimate washes that contain fragrance, parabens, or don't specify that they are pH balanced .
- Use a menopause-friendly lubricant that is PH balanced with no glycerine, fragrances, flavours, or parabens.
- Use a dilator set to gently stretch the vagina, for vaginismus or painful sex.



# PELVIC HEALTH

## SYMPTOMS

### Urge incontinence

### Bladder leaks

## POTENTIAL TOOLS

- Ensure bladder is emptied completely when going to the loo.
  - Try to hold on / stretch the time out, before visiting the toilet to train the bladder.
  - Avoid drinking (especially alcohol) an hour before bedtime / leaving the house.
  - Consider cutting out fizzy drinks to see if that helps.
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- Ask doctor for a referral to a Bowel or Bladder specialist.
  - Download the NHS 'Squeezy' app to practice fast and slow twitch exercises, daily.
  - Consider leakproof products like Become underwear that are skin-kind.
  - Strengthen core with pilates and yoga (free videos on YouTube).
  - Practice KNACK e.g. squeeze before you sneeze.
  - Use a pelvic trainer with bio feedback app, or kegel eggs, daily.
  - A pessary / ring might help for more severe cases. e.g. Contrelle or Contiform
  - Avoid carrying more than 1kg and high impact activities e.g. jumping, burpies.

# FURTHER SUPPORT

For more inspiration on how to use lifestyle tools to alleviate symptoms and balance hormones, visit our website: [www.overthebloodymoon.com](http://www.overthebloodymoon.com) to join OTBM Club!, a free menopause hub.



We also sell a box set of 52 weekly “Own Your Menopause” challenge cards. These have been designed to help introduce a new healthy habit each week and are a range of evidence-based tools to enhance menopause wellbeing for sleep, body, mood, stress and mojo.