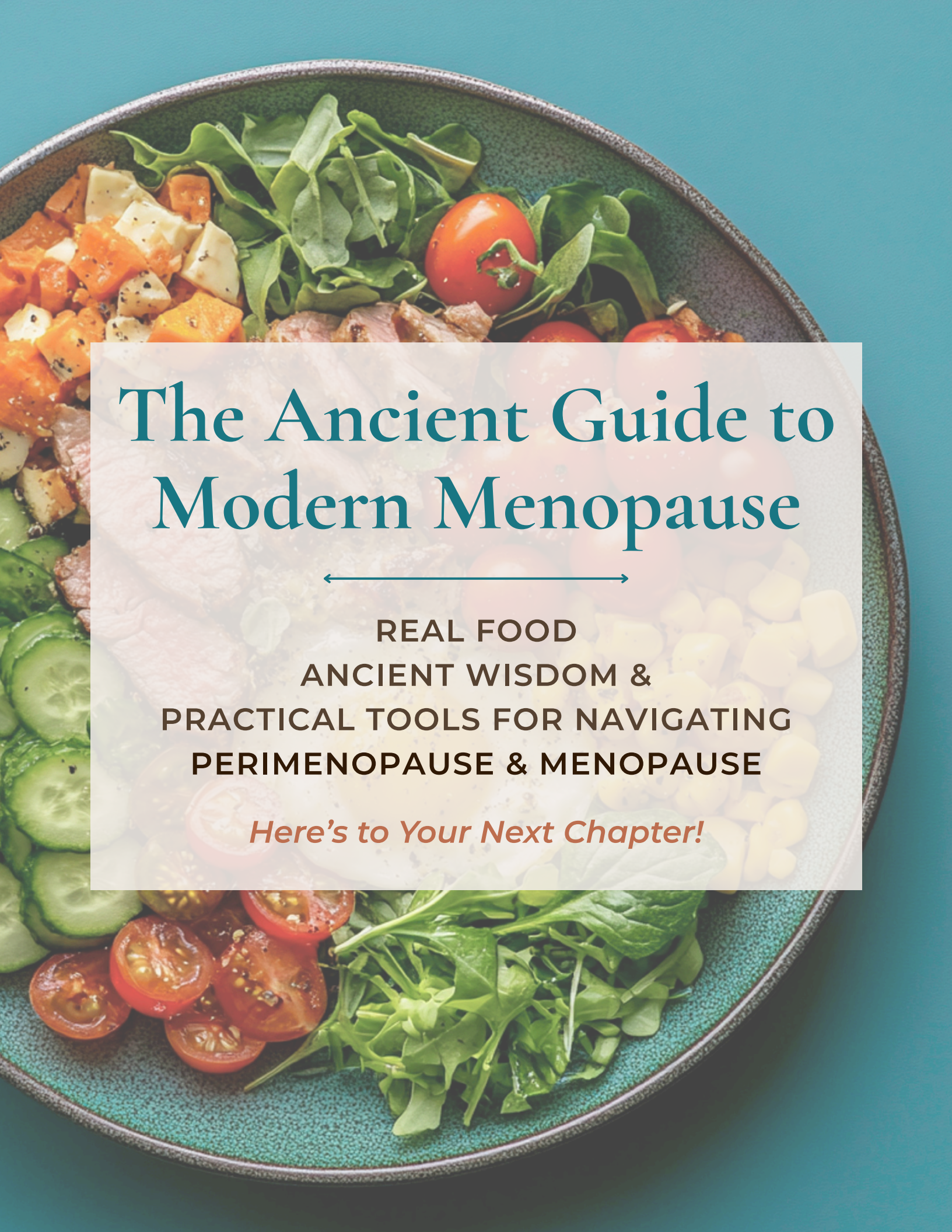




The Ancient Guide to Modern Menopause

←————→

REAL FOOD
ANCIENT WISDOM &
PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR NAVIGATING
PERIMENOPAUSE & MENOPAUSE

Here's to Your Next Chapter!

The Ancient Guide to Modern Menopause

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Disclaimer

The information in this guide is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

As a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner, I provide nutrition and lifestyle education to support overall wellness. I do not diagnose, treat, cure, or prescribe for medical conditions.

Please consult your physician or qualified healthcare provider before making changes to your diet, supplements, medications, or lifestyle, especially if you have a medical condition or are taking prescription medications or other supplements.

Sandra Heimark, NTP

Website: holisticxheimark.com

Newsletter: [Sardine Society](#)

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WELCOME!



I'm so glad you're here!

If you've been told, "Your labs are normal" or "It's just stress", yet you don't feel like yourself, you're in the right place.

Perimenopause is a natural biological transition. As hormones change, you may experience brain fog, fatigue, poor sleep, hot flashes, mood changes, or simply feel unlike yourself. It may not be you, it's your changing hormones!

At 37, I began noticing my own shifts. As a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner with a passion for Traditional Chinese Medicine, I wanted to understand what my body was asking for and treat it from the root, not cover up the symptoms.

That's why I created *The Ancient Guide to Modern Menopause*. I blend modern nutrition with ancient wisdom to help you understand your changing body through real food, lifestyle, and practical tools.

Some evolutionary scientists have proposed after their reproductive years, women shift their energy and priorities. This evolutionary theory helps explain why so many women describe this stage as a time of coming home to themselves: a season that invites them to become more aware of their own needs, more intentional with their energy, and more deeply connected to themselves.

My wish is this guide helps you feel informed, empowered, and more connected to your body because you are wise and so is your body!

Sandra Heimark

MY STORY

My love for nutrition began while I was growing up at home. My Mexican mother cooked nearly every day and we ate together as a family every night. Food was one of the ways she cared for the people she loved.

After she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2017, I began experiencing crippling anxiety, extreme fatigue, and hormonal changes from the stress. I didn't know where to start with healing my body so I worked with a functional medicine doctor who helped me understand how deeply our hormones, nutrition, lifestyle, and nervous system are connected.

That experience changed my life and inspired me to go back to school to become a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner after my mom passed away in 2020. I couldn't change her outcome, but I could help other women understand their bodies before their symptoms left them feeling lost or dismissed.

Now as I continue to navigate perimenopause at 38, I've found myself asking these same questions many women ask:

What is happening to my body and how can I support it to feel my best?

So let's begin!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide blends ancient wisdom with some modern understanding to help you navigate perimenopause and menopause, understand what's happening inside your body, and discover practical ways to support your health through this scared change.

As you read, keep these in mind:

- Be curious, not critical - symptoms are information, not failures
- Start small - one or two changes before adding more
- Listen to your body - what works for someone else may not work for you
- Not every "healthy" food suits every body - swap anything you're sensitive to
- This guide supports your health care, it doesn't replace it

No perfect path exists through perimenopause. Small, consistent changes create lasting results.

Throughout the guide you'll find practical worksheets to help you apply what you're learning:

- Symptom Detective
- Body Timeline
- What Is My Body Telling Me?
- Body Clock Tracker
- Kitchen Audit
- Grocery List
- Symptom → Support Match

There's not right way to do this. Work through every exercise or just the ones that speak to you!

Menopause Around the World

The story we tell about menopause matters. While modern culture focuses on what women are losing, other cultural perspectives remind us of what this season can bring: wisdom, freedom, renewal, and a deeper relationship with ourselves.

China: Second Spring

An empowering TCM-inspired view of menopause as a new season of renewal, wisdom, and changing needs

Japan: Kōnenki

The “renewal years” surrounding menopause, describing a broader period of midlife change and transition rather than an end

New Zealand, Māori: Ruahinetanga

The postmenopausal stage of life, associated with growing into wisdom, knowledge, elderhood, and leadership

India, Sikh: Natural Transition

A natural life transition that may bring freedom from menstruation and greater focus on spirituality

Native American: Wisdom & Changing Roles

Later life is associated with greater maturity, wisdom, respect, and evolving roles within the community

Animals Experience Menopause, Too

True menopause is incredibly rare in the animal kingdom, but some mammals do have periods and menopause-like reproductive hormonal changes!

- Whales (killer, orca, narwhal)
- Chimpanzees
- Giraffes
- Elephants

Meet the Orca Grandmothers

Female orcas may stop reproducing decades before the end of their lives. But their role in the family is far from over. Older females can help their pods by sharing food, leading family members to feeding grounds, and passing along valuable knowledge that can help younger generations survive. One evolutionary theory suggests that living beyond the reproductive years may allow females to invest their experience and resources in their children and grandchildren without competing with younger females for reproduction.

Do whales get hot flashes?

We don't know! Scientists can study reproductive and hormonal changes in whales, but we can't ask an orca if she woke up sweaty at 3am.

Just like in some cultures around the world, the end of reproduction doesn't mean the end of a female's value with menopausal animals. The years that follow may bring knowledge, leadership, family, and helping the next generation thrive.

What is Perimenopause?

Natural transition leading up to menopause

Your brain is communicating with your ovaries, trying to get them to respond. But the ovaries become gradually less responsive and ovulation happens less regularly. As a result, they produce *less estrogen and progesterone*, causing hormone levels to fluctuate. These changes *can begin 8-10 years before menopause* while you're still having regular periods.

Because hormones don't decline in a straight line, symptoms can come and go from month to month or even week to week. You might notice changes in your cycle, sleep, mood, energy, or body temperature long before your periods stop completely.

Timeline

Between late 30s-40s → hormones begin to fluctuate

Common Symptoms

- Hot flashes or night sweats
- Mood changes
- Brain fog
- Poor sleep
- Irregular periods

Did you know?

There are *30+ recognized symptoms* associated with perimenopause, affecting everything from your brain and mood to your joints, skin, and digestion, etc.

What is Menopause?

Natural milestone after 12 months without a period

This marks the end of your reproductive years. Although many people use the word 'menopause' to describe this entire stage of life, menopause itself is actually one point in time. You've reached menopause *after* 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period. The years of hormonal changes and symptoms you may be feeling now leading up to that point is considered late perimenopause.

Unlike perimenopause where hormones fluctuate, hormone levels after menopause are *generally lower and more stable*. While some symptoms improve over time, others may continue as your body adjusts to this new hormonal balance.

Timeline

Between 45-55 (average is 51) → genetics, smoking, certain medical treatments, surgery, nutrition, lifestyle, and environment can all influence when perimenopause begins

Symptoms you may notice

- Hot flashes or night sweats
- Vaginal dryness or discomfort during sex
- Lower libido
- Sleep disturbances
- Joint aches or stiffness

Did you know?

Menopause lasts just *one* day. Once you've hit the 12-month mark without a period, you've officially reached menopause. The very next day, you're considered *postmenopausal*

What's Happening to Your Hormones?

They are changing, not disappearing

As your ovaries slow hormone production, estrogen and progesterone decline. These hormones do much more than regulate your menstrual cycle. They also support many systems throughout your body, which is why menopause can affect you in different ways.

Estrogen supports

- ❤️ Heart health
- 🦴 Bone strength
- 🧠 Brain function, memory, and mood
- 💧 Skin elasticity and collagen
- 🌸 Vaginal and bladder health
- 🌡️ Body temperature regulation

Progesterone supports

- 😴 Restful sleep
- 😊 A calm mood
- 🧠 Nervous system balance
- 🩸 Ovulation and menstrual cycle

Did you know?

Estrogen receptors are found throughout the body, not just in the reproductive organs. That's why menopause can affect your brain, bones, skin, heart, bladder, and more

Understanding Your Symptoms



Brain & Nervous System

- Brain fog
- Anxiety
- Mood changes
- Poor sleep or insomnia



Temperature Regulation

- Hot flashes
- Night sweats



Reproductive & Bladder Health

- Vaginal dryness
- Pain during sex
- Lower libido
- Urinary urgency
- Frequent UTIs



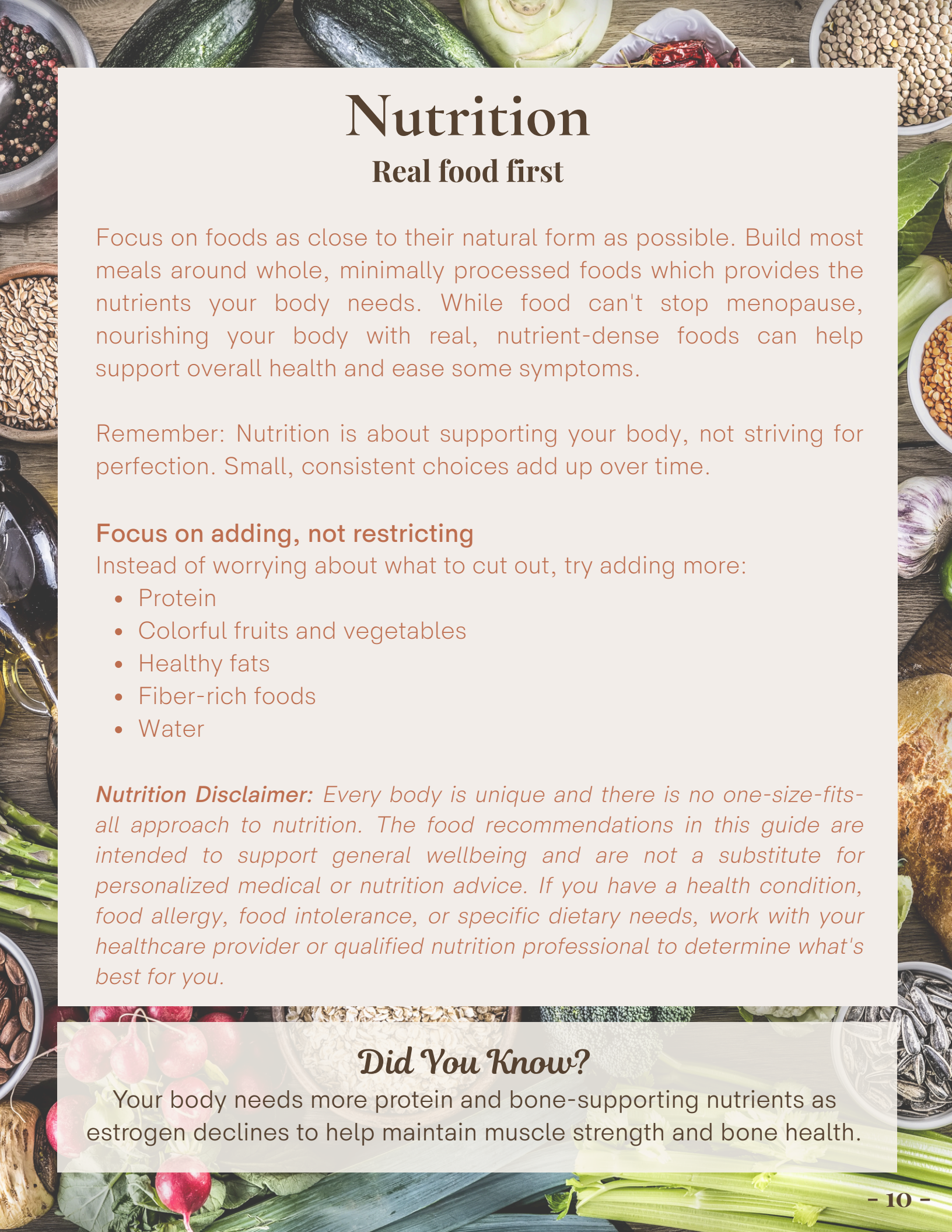
Muscles, Bones & Joints

- Joint pain or stiffness
- Muscle aches
- Increased risk of bone loss



Skin & Hair

- Dry skin
- Hair thinning
- Brittle nails



Nutrition

Real food first

Focus on foods as close to their natural form as possible. Build most meals around whole, minimally processed foods which provides the nutrients your body needs. While food can't stop menopause, nourishing your body with real, nutrient-dense foods can help support overall health and ease some symptoms.

Remember: Nutrition is about supporting your body, not striving for perfection. Small, consistent choices add up over time.

Focus on adding, not restricting

Instead of worrying about what to cut out, try adding more:

- Protein
- Colorful fruits and vegetables
- Healthy fats
- Fiber-rich foods
- Water

Nutrition Disclaimer: Every body is unique and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to nutrition. The food recommendations in this guide are intended to support general wellbeing and are not a substitute for personalized medical or nutrition advice. If you have a health condition, food allergy, food intolerance, or specific dietary needs, work with your healthcare provider or qualified nutrition professional to determine what's best for you.

Did You Know?

Your body needs more protein and bone-supporting nutrients as estrogen declines to help maintain muscle strength and bone health.

Build Your Plate

A simple guide, not a rule. Adjust portions based on your hunger, activity level, and individual needs. Build your plate around protein first then fill the rest of your plate with healthy carbs and fats. The foods listed are examples, not a complete list. Aiming for a balanced plate helps support balanced blood sugar, steady energy, and lasting fullness.

$\frac{1}{3}$ **plate** = protein (chicken, turkey, beef, bison, lamb, fish, eggs)

$\frac{1}{3}$ **plate** = colorful vegetables & fruit

$\frac{1}{3}$ **plate** = starchy vegetables, legumes, grains (beans, lentils, potatoes, pumpkin, squash, plantains, rice, quinoa, oats)

Add healthy fats = extra virgin olive oil, avocado, nuts & nut butters, seeds (chia, flax, pumpkin), fatty fish (salmon, sardines), eggs

For example:

Breakfast

- Scrambled or fried eggs
- Sweet potato
- Avocado

Lunch

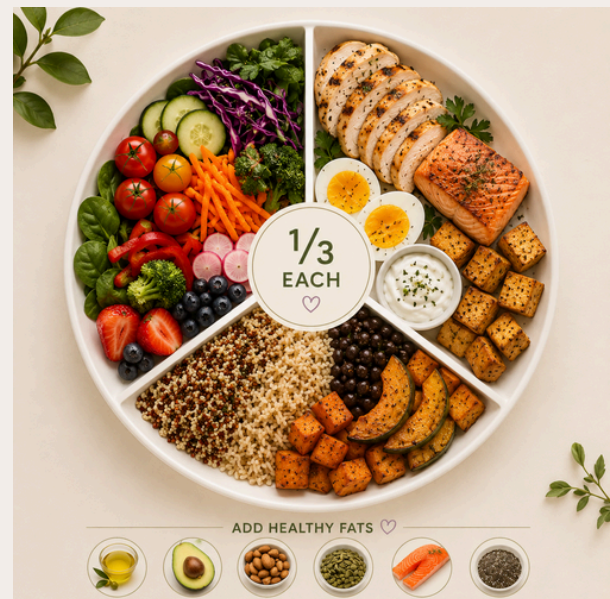
- Beef stir-fry
- Brown rice
- Broccoli & carrots

Dinner

- Salmon
- Sweet potato
- Roasted broccoli

Snacks

- Beef, turkey, or chicken sticks
- Boiled eggs (soft, medium, hard)
- Greek yogurt (berries, pumpkin seeds)
- Hummus (carrots, cucumber)



Key Nutrients

In addition to protein, healthy carbohydrates, and fats, calcium, magnesium, and vitamin D are also essential.

NUTRIENT	WHY IT MATTERS	FOODS TO INCLUDE
 Protein	Supports muscle maintenance, bone health, immune function, and helps you feel full.	Eggs, Greek yogurt, chicken, fish, tofu, beans 
 Healthy fats	Supports brain health, hormone production, heart health, and helps your body absorb nutrients.	Avocado, olive oil, nuts, seeds 
 Fiber	Supports healthy digestion, balanced blood sugar, cholesterol levels, and feeds beneficial gut bacteria.	Vegetables, fruit, oats, legumes 
 Calcium	Essential for strong bones and teeth, muscle function, and nerve signaling.	Yogurt, cheese, tofu, sardines, leafy greens 
 Magnesium	Supports relaxed muscles, better sleep, stress management, energy production, and bone health.	Pumpkin seeds, almonds, spinach, dark chocolate 
 Vitamin D	Supports immune function, mood, calcium absorption, and bone health.	Fatty fish, eggs, fortified dairy (plus sunlight) 



These are examples, not an exhaustive list. Choose a variety of whole foods that work for you.



Hydration

Quality matters

Your kidneys play a major role in maintaining fluid and electrolyte balance. We often focus on how much water we drink and overlook the *quality*. Water works best when it contains electrolytes: minerals that help your body absorb and use fluids effectively. As estrogen declines, your body may become more prone to dehydration. Staying well hydrated can help support *many of the symptoms* experienced during perimenopause and menopause.

Electrolytes (*sodium, potassium, magnesium, calcium*) are important for

- Fluid balance
- Muscle function
- Nerve function
- Heart health
- Energy production

Hydration helps support

- Energy levels
- Temperature regulation
- Healthy digestion
- Joint lubrication
- Skin health
- Bladder function
- Brain function and concentration

Hydration

Easy Ways to Drink More Electrolyte-Rich Water

- ✓ Start your morning with warm/hot water (this also gets digestion moving)
- ✓ Carry a reusable water bottle
- ✓ Flavor water with lemon, cucumber, berries, or mint
- ✓ Eat water-rich foods like cucumber, watermelon, oranges, strawberries, and celery
- ✓ Sip fluids consistently throughout the day instead of all at once

Herbal Teas (caffeine-free)

An easy way to increase your fluid intake

- Lemon balm
- Peppermint
- Ginger
- Rooibos

Disclaimer: If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, or take medications, check with your healthcare provider before using herbal teas regularly, as some herbs may not be appropriate for everyone.



Did you know?

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), warm food and drinks are believed to support the body's digestive "fire," while very cold may slow digestion. Notice how your body feels after drinking something iced compared with something warm or room temperature. Some people may feel best with warm.

Lifestyle

Small daily habits create lasting change

Nutrition is a powerful foundation, but it's only one piece of the puzzle. How you sleep, move, manage stress, hydrate, and spend your day all influence your hormones, energy, mood, and overall wellbeing.

During perimenopause and menopause, your body is adapting to natural hormonal changes. Rather than fighting these changes, you can support them by creating simple daily habits that nourish your body and calm your nervous system.

You don't have to do everything perfectly. Small, consistent choices made over time often have the greatest impact.

Lifestyle pillars

-  Sleep – Restore and recover
-  Movement – Build strength and support your body
-  Circadian Rhythm – Support your body's natural rhythms
-  Stress – Calm your nervous system
-  Environment – Make swaps to reduce unnecessary chemical exposure and support your body's natural hormone balance
-  Ancient Practices – Learn from traditions that have supported women for generation

Sleep

Your body repairs while you rest

Hormonal changes can make it harder to fall asleep, stay asleep, and wake feeling refreshed. Healthy sleep habits can help support your energy, mood, memory, and overall wellbeing.

Better Sleep Habits

- 🌙 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night
- 🕒 Keep a consistent sleep schedule
- ❄️ Keep your bedroom cool to help reduce overheating and night sweats
- 🌑 Keep your room dark by using blackout curtains or a comfortable eye mask
- 🟡 Wear blue light blocking glasses after sunset to help support natural melatonin production
- 📱 Limit screens before bed, especially 30-60 minutes prior
- ☀️ Get morning sunlight within the first hour of waking to support your body's natural sleep-wake cycle (expose your arms and legs when possible for vitamin D production later in the day when UVB rays are strong)

Did You Know?

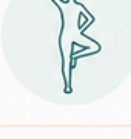
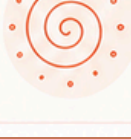
Poor sleep can worsen hot flashes, mood changes, brain fog, and cravings

Movement

Choose what's best for you

Regular movement is one of the most effective ways to support your body during perimenopause and menopause.

Movement Disclaimer: The movement suggestions in this guide are intended for general educational purposes and should be adapted to your individual needs and abilities. Listen to your body, move within your comfort level, and consult your healthcare provider before beginning a new exercise, particularly if you have an injury, chronic health condition, or other medical concerns.

MOVEMENT	WHY IT MATTERS
 <p>WALK DAILY to support heart health, blood sugar, mood, and stress</p>	 <p>Supports heart health, helps regulate blood sugar, boosts mood, and reduces stress.</p>
 <p>STRENGTH TRAIN 2–3 times per week to support muscle, bone health, and metabolism</p>	 <p>Builds and maintains muscle, strengthens bones, supports metabolism, and helps your body stay strong as you age.</p>
 <p>PRACTICE MOBILITY to keep your joints moving comfortably</p>	 <p>Improves joint function, prevents stiffness, and supports everyday movement and independence.</p>
 <p>STRETCH REGULARLY to reduce stiffness and improve flexibility</p>	 <p>Relieves muscle tension, improves flexibility, enhances circulation, and promotes relaxation.</p>
 <p>CHALLENGE YOUR BALANCE with yoga, tai chi, or single-leg exercises to help prevent falls as you age</p>	 <p>Improves stability and coordination, strengthens core and lower body, and helps prevent falls.</p>
 <p>SOMATIC EXERCISES such as breathwork, body scans, shaking, or gentle tapping to release tension</p>	 <p>Regulate your nervous system, release stored tension, reduce stress, improve body awareness, and support emotional resilience and hormone balance.</p>

Circadian Rhythm

Your body's internal clock

It helps regulate when you feel awake, sleepy, hungry, and energized. Consistent daily habits help keep this rhythm in sync, supporting better sleep, hormone balance, energy, and overall wellbeing.

Support Your Internal Clock

- Get morning sunlight within the first hour of waking
- Eat breakfast within 1-2 hours of waking and aim to finish your last meal 2-3 hours before bed to support digestion and your natural daily rhythm
- Dim lights after sunset to encourage natural melatonin production
- Keep consistent sleep and wake times every day, even on weekends

Did You Know?

Your body responds to light more than the clock. Morning light signals it's time to wake up while darkness tells your brain it's time to prepare for sleep

Stress & Nervous System

A hot topic

We can't fully remove stress, but evidence shows we can build resilience in how you respond to it. As estrogen declines, many women become more sensitive to stress, making it easier to feel overwhelmed, anxious, or emotionally drained.

Chronic stress can contribute to

- Poor sleep
- Brain fog
- Fatigue
- Mood changes
- Increased cravings
- Muscle tension
- Hot flashes (for some women)

Support Your Nervous System

- Deep breathing – Signals your body to relax
- Spend time in nature – Fresh air and green spaces can reduce stress and improve mood
- Journal – Write down your thoughts to help process emotions and clear your mind
- Prayer or meditation – Create moments of gratitude & stillness
- Stay connected – Spend time with supportive friends, family, or community
- Prioritize rest – Rest is productive!

Did You Know?

Your nervous system responds to small, consistent moments of calm throughout the day. Even 5–10 minutes of deep breathing, a short walk outside, or quiet reflection can make a difference

Environmental Toxins

Create a healthier home

We're exposed to hundreds of chemicals every day through the products we use, the food we eat, and the water we drink. Some of these chemicals, known as endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), may interfere with the body's hormone signaling. Think of it like filling a bucket: Stress, poor sleep, nutrient deficiencies, inflammation, and environmental exposures can all add to your body's "load" and when that load overflows the bucket, that's when symptoms start to show up.

Ingredients to Limit "Load"

These ingredients have been studied for their potential to interfere with hormone function:

- Phthalates (in food packaging, household products, fragrance)
- Parabens (in beauty and skincare products)
- Bisphenols (BPA, BPS, BPF in food packaging and plastic containers)
- PFAS ("forever chemicals" in nonstick cookware and floss)
- Triclosan (less common today but still in antibacterial & antimicrobial products)

Did You Know?

The word "fragrance" (or "parfum") on an ingredient label can be a *mixture of dozens to hundreds of individual chemicals*. In many countries, companies aren't required to disclose the specific ingredients because they're considered proprietary trade secrets

Check your products - besides plastics, this is the next environmental toxin I recommend swapping out!

Environmental Toxins

Fragrance, plastics, and teflon are common sources of chemicals that may disrupt hormone signaling. During perimenopause, your bucket may already be closer to full because of changing hormones. Reducing chemicals is a major way to lighten that load and give your body more room to adapt.

Simple changes for a *healthier* home and a *happier* body.

INSTEAD OF		I LOVE THIS	
	Plastic food storage containers	→	 Glass food storage containers 
	Single-use plastic water bottles	→	 Stainless steel water bottle 
	Non-stick cookware	→	 Cast iron or stainless steel cookware 
	Dryer sheets	→	 Wool dryer balls instead 
	Detergents with fragrance	→	 Fragrance-free laundry detergent 
	Scented hand soap	→	 Unscented hand soap 
	Plastic wrap	→	 Beeswax wraps instead 

Supplements

Natural support when you need it

Food and lifestyle are the foundation of health with supplements serving as additional support when appropriate. Individual needs vary, so what benefits one woman may not be necessary for another. Before starting any new supplement, consult your healthcare provider and get your blood tested.

Below are supplements that have been researched for their potential benefits during perimenopause:

Supplement	Recommended Brands	Why I Like Them
 Vitamin D3 (with K2 best absorbed)	Integrative Therapeutics Designs for Health (Synergy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Third-party testedMinimal ingredientsProfessional-grade
 Magnesium (Glycinate)	Pure Encapsulations Nordic Naturals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Well absorbedGentle on the stomachMinimal fillers
 Calcium (with vitamin D3 best absorbed)	Theralogix (TheraCal) Pure Encapsulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Uses well-absorbed formsClean ingredient lists
 Omega-3 Fish Oil	Nordic Naturals mindbodygreen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Third-party testedPurityHeavy metal testedResponsibly sourcedHigh quality ingredients
 Creatine Monohydrate (Optional)	Klean Athlete Momentous Creapure® brands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Third-party testedCreapure® is the highest purity standardEffectiveTrusted by professionals

Supplements are intended to supplement a balanced diet, not replace. Your individual needs may vary. Get your blood tested or speak with your healthcare provider before starting any new supplement.



Supplements

Helping you choose supplements with confidence

I've created a curated Fullscript dispensary featuring many of the supplements and brands I trust. While not every recommendation in this guide is available through my dispensary, you'll find many of my go-to products there. You can also explore additional supplement recommendations on my website organized by health category.

Links below:

[Browse My Dispensary](#)

[View My Website](#)

***Supplement Disclaimer:** Supplements are intended to complement a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle, not replace them. Your individual needs may vary. Whenever possible, have your nutrient levels tested and consult with your healthcare provider before starting any new supplement.*

Ancient Wisdom

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a holistic system rooted in thousands of years of observation of the body, nature, and patterns of health. It has been used to support women's health by encouraging balance and overall well-being. Rather than viewing menopause as something to fear or "fix", TCM sees it as a natural transition into a new season of life.

It's often viewed as "woo-woo", but how do people think modern medicine developed? Long before labs and clinical trials, humans learned about health in one fundamental way: *observation*

We observed the body. We noticed patterns. Instead of treating individual symptoms, this ancient philosophy looks at the whole person (considering sleep, digestion, emotions, energy, lifestyle, and environment) to understand what the body may be asking for. We experimented with plants, foods, movement, touch, rest, and other practices and passed what we learned from one generation to the next.

Modern medicine grew from observation, but today it gives us something our ancestors didn't have: the ability to test those observations through scientific research and change our recommendations when better evidence emerges. Science is constantly evolving.

That doesn't mean every ancient practice is scientifically proven. It means we can remain curious about traditional wisdom while also asking, *What does the evidence tell us today?*

We don't have to choose between ancient or modern. We can learn from the past while using modern science to help us decide what deserves a place in our lives today.

Yin & Yang

Balance, not perfection

TCM views menopause as the natural decline of kidney yin, not just estrogen deficiency. Kidneys provide the body with cooling and also take care of aging, fertility, bones, hair, hearing, and longevity. When yin (cool) declines, yang (heat) may feel stronger, which TCM associates with night sweats, dryness, and restless sleep.

We need a balance between yin and yang. Both are essential and constantly work together to keep the body in harmony. They are complementary forces that naturally shift throughout life.

Yin ☾

Cooling • Nourishing • Restful • Hydrating • Feminine energy

Yang ☀️

Warming • Energizing • Active • Transformative • Masculine energy

Support your kidney yin:

- 💧 Stay well hydrated
- 🍲 Eat whole, cooked foods
- 😴 Prioritize quality sleep
- 🧘 Slow down with restorative movement or mindfulness
- 🌿 Create moments of rest throughout the day

Qi

Body's vital energy

Qi (pronounced "chee") is considered the body's vital life force. It flows throughout the body and is believed to support physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. When qi flows smoothly, we tend to feel energized, resilient, and balanced.

Qi supports

- ⚡ Energy
- 🍴 Digestion
- ❤️ Circulation
- 🛡️ Immunity
- 😊 Emotional wellbeing

Support Healthy Qi

- 🥗 Nourish your body with real, whole foods
- 😴 Prioritize quality sleep and rest
- 🧘 Practice deep breathing or meditation
- 🚶 Move your body regularly
- 🌿 Spend time outdoors and connect with nature

Think of qi as the energy that helps your body function at its best. Small, consistent habits that nourish both body and mind are believed in TCM to help keep qi flowing smoothly.

Seasonal Living

Flow with the changing seasons

Just as nature changes with the seasons, so do our bodies. Menopause is another season of life; one that invites us to embrace new rhythms with compassion. In TCM, each season invites us to adjust how we eat, move, and care for ourselves.



Spring: Renew

Growth, fresh starts, and gentle movement

Foods: Leafy greens, sprouts, fresh herbs, citrus

Movement: Walking, hiking, yoga, cycling

Self-Care: Declutter your space, spend time outdoors, try something new



Summer: Energize

Embrace warmth, connection, and activity

Foods: Berries, tomatoes, cucumber, watermelon, cooling herbs

Movement: Swimming, morning walks, outdoor activities

Self-Care: Stay hydrated, embrace social connection, express joy



Autumn: Slow Down

Simplify, reflect, and prepare for rest

Foods: Apples, squash, sweet potatoes, soups

Movement: Strength training, stretching, nature walks

Self-Care: Create calming routines, journal, prioritize sleep



Winter: Restore

Rest, nourish, and replenish your energy

Foods: Broths, stews, root vegetables, warming spices

Movement: Gentle yoga, mobility, leisurely walks

Self-Care: Rest more, embrace cozy rituals, continue a slow pace

Warming & Cooling Foods

Nourish with intention

It has been observed that foods are believed to have different energetic properties. Some are considered warming while others are cooling. These qualities refer to how foods are thought to affect the body, not whether they're served hot or cold. Some women experiencing hot flashes or night sweats can incorporate more cooling foods, while those who often feel cold or fatigued may prefer warming.

 COOLING FOODS	 WARMING FOODS
 Cucumber	 Ginger
 Watermelon	 Cinnamon
 Celery	 Garlic
 Lettuce	 Onions
 Spinach	 Sweet potatoes
 Zucchini	 Pumpkin
 Tomatoes	 Carrots
 Broccoli	 Beets
 Asparagus	 Oats
 Pears	 Brown rice
 Apples	 Chicken
 Berries	 Beef
 Citrus fruits	 Eggs
 Kiwi	 Salmon
 Mint	 Bone broth
 Green tea	 Soups & stews
 Coconut water	 Turmeric
 Tofu	 Black pepper

Chinese Body Clock

Notice patterns

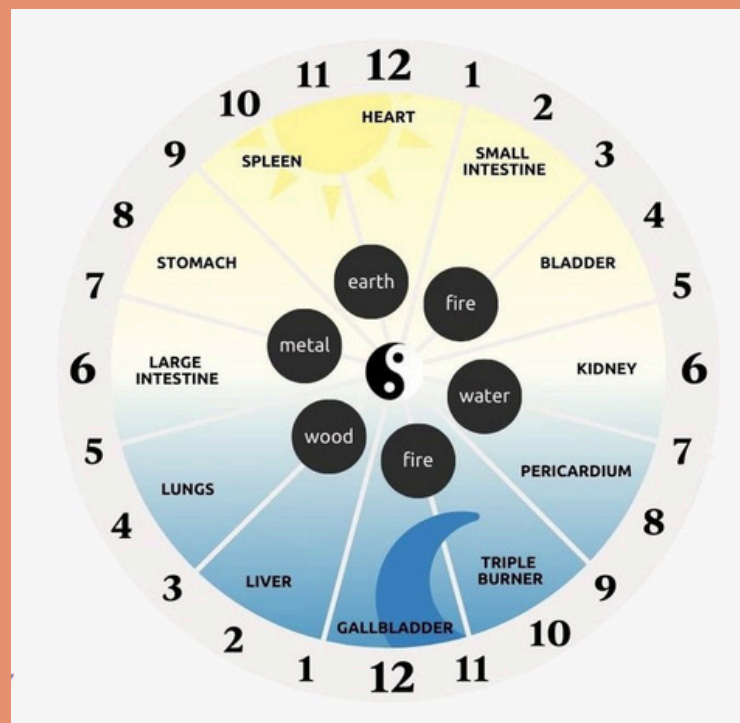
The Chinese Body Clock suggests that qi (energy) flows through different organ systems at specific times of the day, with each system having a roughly two-hour period when its energy is considered *most active*.

While this is a traditional TCM concept rather than conventional medical science, many people use it as a guide for creating mindful daily habits and noticing patterns in their health.

Some TCM practitioners believe that consistently waking during the same two-hour window may suggest that the corresponding organ could benefit from additional attention.

For example:

If you consistently wake between 3-5am (lungs), TCM interprets this as a sign your lung system needs extra care. Supportive practices might include deep breathing, breathwork, spending time outdoors, or other activities that promote healthy lung function and relaxation.



Gua Sha & Acupressure

Simple rituals to promote relaxation

Ancient healing practices remind us that caring for our bodies doesn't require complicated routines. Gentle therapies like gua sha and acupressure have been used for generations to encourage relaxation and support overall wellbeing. Both can be easily done at home. Gua sha tools are available from many online retailers.

How to Use: Apply gentle, comfortable pressure to each point for 30-60 seconds while taking slow, deep breaths. Repeat on both sides of the body where applicable.

POINT	LOCATION	MAY HELP SUPPORT
 <p>YINTANG (THIRD EYE)</p>	 <p>Between the eyebrows</p>	 <p>Relaxation, stress, restful sleep</p>
 <p>PC6 (NEIGUAN)</p>	 <p>Three finger-widths below the wrist crease</p>	 <p>Calmness, nausea, anxiety</p>
 <p>LV3 (TAICHONG)</p>	 <p>Top of the foot between the big and second toe</p>	 <p>Stress, irritability, tension</p>
 <p>KD1 (YONGQUAN)</p>	 <p>Center of the sole of the foot</p>	 <p>Grounding, relaxation, calming the mind</p>

Want to explore further? If budget and access allow, working with a licensed acupuncturist can offer you a more personalized approach based on your unique patterns and needs.

Listening to Your Body

Awareness is key

One of the greatest lessons TCM offers is to be curious about your body's signals rather than fighting them. Symptoms aren't something to ignore or fear; they're invitations to slow down, pay attention, and offer yourself the care you need.

As you move through perimenopause and menopause, remember your needs may change from day to day and season to season. Some days you may need more rest while other days you may feel energized and ready to move. Learning to listen to your body is one of the most powerful forms of self-care.

Ask Yourself

- ✨ How is my energy today?
- 💧 Am I hydrated and nourished?
- 😴 Did I get enough restorative sleep?
- 🌿 What does my body need more of today, rest or movement?
- ❤️ How can I care for myself with kindness today?

Every small choice to nourish, move, rest, and listen to your body is a step toward feeling more balanced and supported!

Your Menopause Workbook

These following worksheets are designed to help you notice patterns, celebrate progress, and better understand what your body is communicating. There are no perfect answers or right way to complete them, only opportunities to become more connected to yourself with curiosity and compassion.

- Symptom Detective
- Body Timeline
- What Is My Body Telling Me?
- Body Clock Tracker
- Kitchen Audit
- Grocery List
- Symptom → Support Match

SYMPTOM *Detective*

Your symptoms are not random.
They are messages. Let's explore the patterns together.

WHAT SYMPTOMS HAVE YOU BEEN EXPERIENCING?

WHEN DO THEY SHOW UP MOST?

☐ Morning	☐ After certain foods
☐ Afternoon	☐ After caffeine / alcohol
☐ Evening	☐ During stress
☐ Night	☐ Other: _____
☐ Around my period	

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE INTENSITY?

Intensity refers to how strong or noticeable
the symptom feels to you.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Very mild

Very severe

- 1 = Very mild – barely noticeable
- 2 = Mild – noticeable, but manageable
- 3 = Moderate – disruptive at times
- 4 = Strong – difficult to manage
- 5 = Very severe – significantly affecting daily life

WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT YOUR SYMPTOMS? ANY PATTERNS OR TRIGGERS?

WHAT ELSE WAS HAPPENING?



Food: _____



Sleep: _____



Stress / Emotions: _____



Movement: _____



Other: _____



ONE SMALL INSIGHT I'M TAKING WITH ME:



BODY TIMELINE

Reflect on your journey. Your story matters.



Think about key life stages, events, and changes that have impacted your health, hormones, and overall well-being.

There are no right or wrong answers—just your story.

LIFE STAGE / AGE		WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN MY LIFE?	HOW I FELT	HOW IT IMPACTED ME
 Childhood Years (0–12)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
 Teen Years (ages 13–19)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
 20s (ages 20–29)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
 30s (ages 30–39)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
 40s (ages 40–49)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
 Perimenopause Years (ages 35–55+)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
 Post-Menopause Years (50s and beyond)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
 Today (current age)	○	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

What are unresolved emotions that I need to process and/or get out of my body?



WHAT IS MY BODY TELLING ME?



INSTEAD OF “FIXING” SYMPTOMS.



Your body is always communicating with you.
This worksheet will help you slow down, listen closely,
and uncover the deeper message behind your symptoms.

 TODAY I NOTICE...	 MY BODY MIGHT NEED...
 I'm exhausted	 More rest or protein
 I'm irritable	 Time to slow down
 I'm hungry all day	 More balanced meals
 My sleep was poor	 Earlier bedtime
 I'm craving sugar	 More protein or hydration

REFLECTION

What do I think my body is asking for today?

BODY CLOCK

Tracker



In Traditional Chinese Medicine, each organ has an optimal time of day when its energy is strongest. Use this tracker to notice patterns, support your body's natural rhythm, and create more balance in your day:

TCM BODY CLOCK GUIDE

TIME	ORGAN (TCM)	POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS (Perimenopause & Menopause)	EMOTION	SUPPORT / RELEASE
 11 p.m. – 1 a.m.	Gallbladder	Waking between 11pm–1am, night sweats, irritability, bitter taste, restless sleep	Indecision	Journaling • Gentle stretching Deep breathing • Reduce evening alcohol Create a cool sleep environment
 1 – 3 a.m.	Liver	Waking 1–3am, PMS, headaches, mood swings, irritability, breast tenderness	Frustration • Anger	Stretch • Walk • Deep breathing Grounding • Reduce alcohol
 3 – 5 a.m.	Lungs	Waking 3–5am, cough, shortness of breath, low immunity, allergies	Grief • Sadness	Deep breathing • Fresh air Steam • Immune-supportive foods Hydration
 5 – 7 a.m.	Large Intestine	Constipation, bloating, skin breakouts, dry skin	Letting go	Hydrate • Journal • Release Fiber-rich foods • Sip hot water
 7 – 9 a.m.	Stomach	Nausea, indigestion, heaviness after eating, acid reflux	Worry	Eat breakfast • Slow down Ginger • Digestive-friendly foods Mindful eating
 9 – 11 a.m.	Spleen	Bloating, fatigue after meals, brain fog, sugar cravings, weight gain	Overthinking	Nourish • Ground yourself Protein • Warm foods Root vegetables
 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Heart	Anxiety, restlessness, palpitations, poor focus, hot flashes	Joy • Connection	Laugh • Connect • Deep breathing Time in nature • Mindful breaks
 1 – 3 p.m.	Small Intestine	Bloating, gas, abdominal pain, poor nutrient absorption, food sensitivities	Discernment	Pause • Simplify • Peppermint Bone broth • Cooked vegetables
 3 – 5 p.m.	Bladder	Urinary urgency, incontinence, low back pain, fatigue, water retention	Fear • Tension	Hydrate • Stretch • Pelvic floor care Cranberry • Cucumber Water-rich foods
 5 – 7 p.m.	Kidneys	Lower back pain, hair thinning, hearing changes, fatigue, bone loss	Fear • Insecurity	Rest • Nature • Sea minerals Warm feet • Mineral-rich foods Bone-supportive foods
 7 – 9 p.m.	Pericardium	Anxiety, tight chest, overwhelm, difficulty winding down, emotional sensitivity	Relationships	Connect • Unwind • Meditation Gratitude • Magnesium Read • Limit screens
 9 – 11 p.m.	Triple Burner (San Jiao)	Hormonal imbalance, night sweats, irregular cycles, restless sleep, temperature dysregulation	Balance • Stress	Calm evening routine • Breathwork Lower caffeine • Dim lights Consistent bedtime

DAILY TRACKER

DATE	TIME I WOKE / NOTICED SYMPTOMS	HOW I FELT	WHAT WAS HAPPENING?	WHAT MIGHT MY BODY NEED?

KITCHEN

Audit



Your kitchen is part of your self-care.
Take inventory of what's nourishing you, what's not,
and what you're ready to swap for better balance.



NOURISHING FOODS

Foods that support your energy,
hormones, and overall well-being.

CATEGORY	ITEMS I HAVE (List examples)
PRODUCE (Fresh, frozen, or dried fruits & vegetables)	
PROTEIN (Meats, fish, eggs, plant-based proteins)	
WHOLE GRAINS & STARCHES (Rice, oats, quinoa, sweet potatoes, etc.)	
HEALTHY FATS (Oils, nuts, seeds, avocado, etc.)	
PANTRY STAPLES (Beans, lentils, broths, herbs, spices, etc.)	
BEVERAGES (Tea, water, herbal infusions, 100% juices)	
SUPPLEMENTS & WELLNESS ITEMS (Vitamins, minerals, herbs, powders)	



FOODS TO ENJOY LESS OFTEN

Foods or items that may drain your energy,
disrupt hormones, or cause imbalance.

CATEGORY	ITEMS I HAVE (List examples)
SUGARY FOODS (Candy, cookies, soda, etc.)	
REFINED CARBS (White bread, pastries, crackers, etc.)	
PROCESSED FOODS (Packaged meals, frozen dinners, fast food, etc.)	
UNHEALTHY FATS (Fried foods, trans fats, hydrogenated oils)	
EXCESS CAFFEINE & ALCOHOL (Coffee, energy drinks, alcohol)	
ARTIFICIAL INGREDIENTS (Additives, dyes, preservatives, sweeteners)	
OTHER (Items I know don't support me)	

REFLECTION

- What area of my kitchen feels the most aligned?
- What area needs the most support?
- What patterns or habits do I notice?
- How does the food in my kitchen make me feel?

ACTION PLAN

Choose 1–3 changes I can make this week.

-
-
-

NOURISH YOUR *Beautiful Self* ♥

Real foods. Simple choices. Deep nourishment.

A GROCERY LIST TO SUPPORT HORMONE BALANCE
DURING PERIMENOPAUSE & MENOPAUSE



VEGETABLES ♥

- ☐ Leafy greens (kale, spinach, arugula)
- ☐ Broccoli
- ☐ Cauliflower
- ☐ Brussels sprouts
- ☐ Cabbage
- ☐ Carrots
- ☐ Beets
- ☐ Sweet potatoes
- ☐ Zucchini
- ☐ Bell peppers
- ☐ Asparagus
- ☐ Green beans
- ☐ Mushrooms
- ☐ Onions
- ☐ Garlic
- ☐ Fresh herbs (parsley, cilantro, basil, mint)



Aim for color, variety & abundance.



FRUITS ♥

- ☐ Berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries)
- ☐ Apples
- ☐ Pears
- ☐ Citrus (lemons, limes, oranges, grapefruit)
- ☐ Kiwi
- ☐ Pomegranate
- ☐ Bananas
- ☐ Papaya
- ☐ Mango
- ☐ Pineapple
- ☐ Grapes



Choose seasonal & organic when possible.



PROTEINS ♥

- ☐ Wild salmon
- ☐ Sardines
- ☐ Eggs (pasture-raised)
- ☐ Organic chicken
- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Grass-fed beef
- ☐ Lentils
- ☐ Chickpeas
- ☐ Black beans
- ☐ Tempeh
- ☐ Tofu
- ☐ Edamame
- ☐ Plain Greek yogurt or kefir



Balance your plate with protein at every meal.



HEALTHY FATS ♥

- ☐ Avocados
- ☐ Extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ Coconut oil
- ☐ Flaxseeds
- ☐ Chia seeds
- ☐ Walnuts
- ☐ Almonds
- ☐ Pumpkin seeds
- ☐ Sunflower seeds
- ☐ Tahini
- ☐ Olives



Healthy fats support hormones, brain & glowing skin.



PANTRY STAPLES

- ☐ Quinoa
- ☐ Brown rice
- ☐ Oats (gluten-free if needed)
- ☐ Buckwheat
- ☐ Sweet potato (or other)
- ☐ Almond flour
- ☐ Coconut flour
- ☐ Nut butters (almond, tahini)
- ☐ Canned tomatoes (BPA-free)
- ☐ Coconut milk (full fat)
- ☐ Bone broth or broth
- ☐ Extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ Apple cider vinegar
- ☐ Hummus
- ☐ Coconut aminos
- ☐ Pure maple syrup
- ☐ Herbal teas
- ☐ Dark chocolate (70%+)



HERBS & SPICES

- ☐ Turmeric
- ☐ Ginger
- ☐ Cinnamon
- ☐ Cumin
- ☐ Coriander
- ☐ Rosemary
- ☐ Thyme
- ☐ Oregano
- ☐ Basil
- ☐ Black pepper
- ☐ Sea salt



A FEW REMINDERS

- ✓ Shop the perimeter of the store.
- ✓ Read labels & choose simple ingredients.
- ✓ Stay hydrated
Drink water throughout the day.
- ✓ Plan ahead & prep when you can.
- ✓ Honor your body & enjoy the process.



SYMPTOM → SUPPORT MATCH

Listen. Understand. Support. ♥



Your symptoms are messages, not problems.
Use this page to tune in and match what your body
might be asking for with supportive foods, lifestyle,
and Traditional Chinese Medicine practices.



There is no
one-size-fits-all.
Trust your body
to guide you.



 WHAT I'M EXPERIENCING (Symptoms)	 WHAT MY BODY MIGHT BE ASKING FOR (Possible Root Need)	 NOURISH & SUPPORT (Foods & Nutrients)	 LIFESTYLE & TCM SUPPORT (Practices that Help)
<i>Example:</i> Hot flashes	Cooling, hydration, hormone balance	Cucumber, leafy greens, flaxseeds, tofu, berries, spearmint tea, electrolytes	Cooling foods, stay hydrated, acupressure (PC6, LI11), gua sha, deep belly breathing, reduce alcohol & caffeine
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HOW TO USE THIS PAGE

- ✓ Write down a symptom you're experiencing.
- ✓ Tune in: What might your body be asking for?
- ✓ Choose foods, nutrients, and practices that support you.
- ✓ Experiment gently and notice what helps.

Small shifts. Big impact. ♥



REMEMBER

- ♥ Be curious, not critical.
Your body is always on your side.
- 🌱 Progress comes from consistency,
not perfection.
- ☀️ Support your whole self—
mind, body, and spirit.



REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

Curious to keep learning? These books and trusted resources offer further reading on menopause, women's health, and Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Menopause & Women's Health

Gilberg-Lenz, Suzanne, MD.

Menopause Bootcamp: Optimize Your Health, Empower Yourself, and Flourish as You Age

An integrative look at menopause, lifestyle, and thriving through midlife

The Menopause Society

Evidence-based education on perimenopause, menopause, symptoms, treatments, and finding qualified menopause practitioners
menopause.org

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

Medically reviewed information on perimenopause, menopause, hormone therapy, bone health, and healthy aging
acog.org/womens-health/healthy-aging/menopause

National Institute on Aging (NIA)

Research-based information about menopause, hot flashes, sleep, sexual health, and healthy aging
nia.nih.gov

REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

Traditional Chinese Medicine & Ancient Wisdom

Maciocia, Giovanni.

The Foundations of Chinese Medicine

A comprehensive reference on foundational TCM concepts including Yin and Yang, Qi, Five Elements, and the traditional organ systems.

Maciocia, Giovanni.

Obstetrics and Gynecology in Chinese Medicine

An in-depth exploration of women's reproductive health, menstrual changes, and menopause through a TCM framework.

Kaptchuk, Ted J.

The Web That Has No Weaver: Understanding Chinese Medicine

An approachable introduction to the philosophy, patterns, and traditional framework of Chinese medicine.

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)

Research-based information on complementary health practices, including acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine

nccih.nih.gov