



MESSA  
Wellness

# Demystifying Menopause

*Presented by:*

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# From taboo to trending

- ✓ A cultural shift is happening
- ✓ Menopause talk is no longer taboo
- ✓ Menopause-related beauty products are flooding the markets
- ✓ Celebrities are telling their stories
- ✓ Telemedicine companies are popping up everywhere

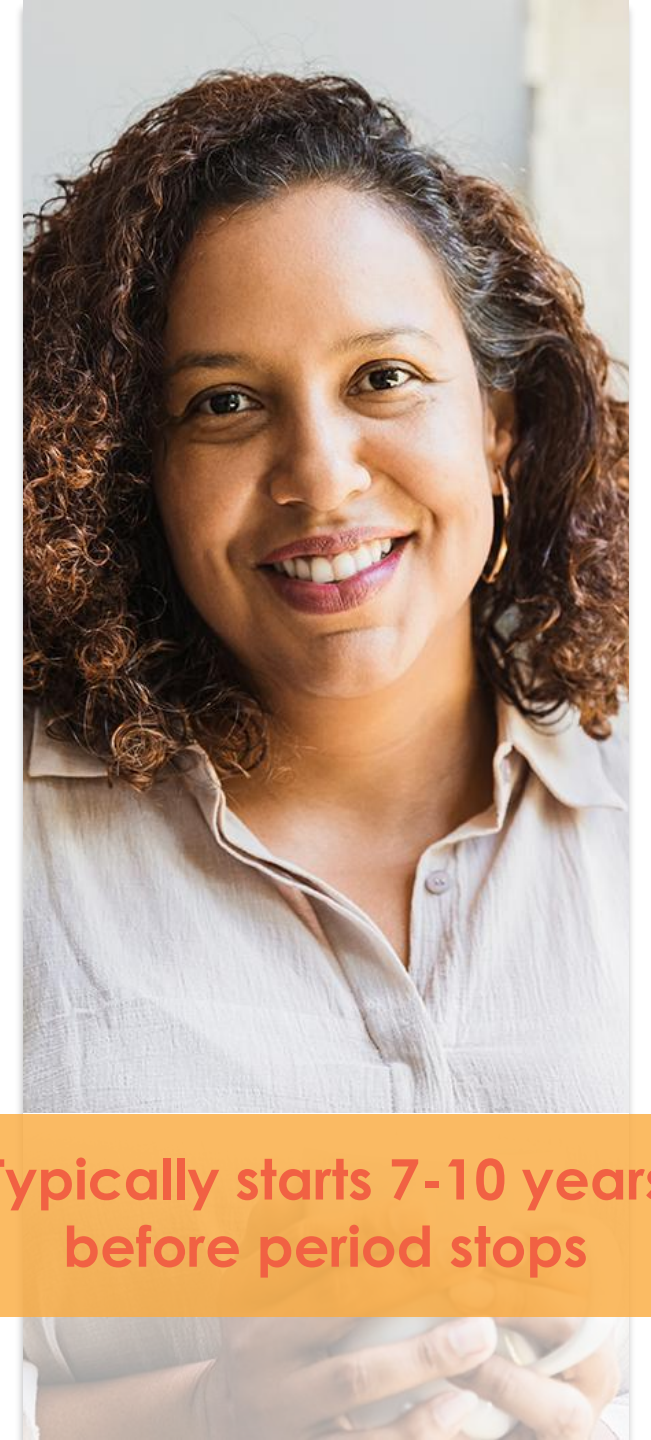
# Learning objectives

- ✓ Learn the stages
- ✓ Understand symptoms
- ✓ Discover lifestyle strategies
- ✓ Create a work environment that provides advocacy, support and resources

# MENOPAUSE 101

# What is perimenopause?

- ✓ Natural transition period leading up to menopause
- ✓ Characterized by fluctuating hormone levels and irregular periods
- ✓ Typically begins in mid- to late 40s



**Typically starts 7-10 years  
before period stops**

# What are menopause and post-menopause?

- ✓ Confirmed when periods have stopped for 12 months + 1 day
- ✓ Permanent cessation of a menstrual cycle
- ✓ Average age of U.S. women is between 51 and 52



**Menopause transition  
is a natural event**

# Terminology

## Perimenopause

Characterized by **irregular menstrual cycles** or **2 to 12 months of missed periods**

## Menopause

**12 months + 1 day after** last menstrual cycle

## Post-menopause

**Time period after** the cessation of menstrual cycle; absence of periods

## Surgical menopause

**Removal** of ovaries

## Medical menopause

Induced by **estrogen-blocking drugs** or **chemotherapy**

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# Three types of estrogen

The primary form of estrogen that your body makes **after menopause**

**Estrone (E1)**

The primary form of estrogen during your **reproductive years**, and the most potent form of estrogen

**Estradiol (E2)**

The primary form of estrogen during **pregnancy**

**Estriol (E3)**

# Hormonal changes

## Decreased

- Estrogen
- Progesterone
- Testosterone
- DHEA
- Melatonin



## Increased

- FSH
- LH

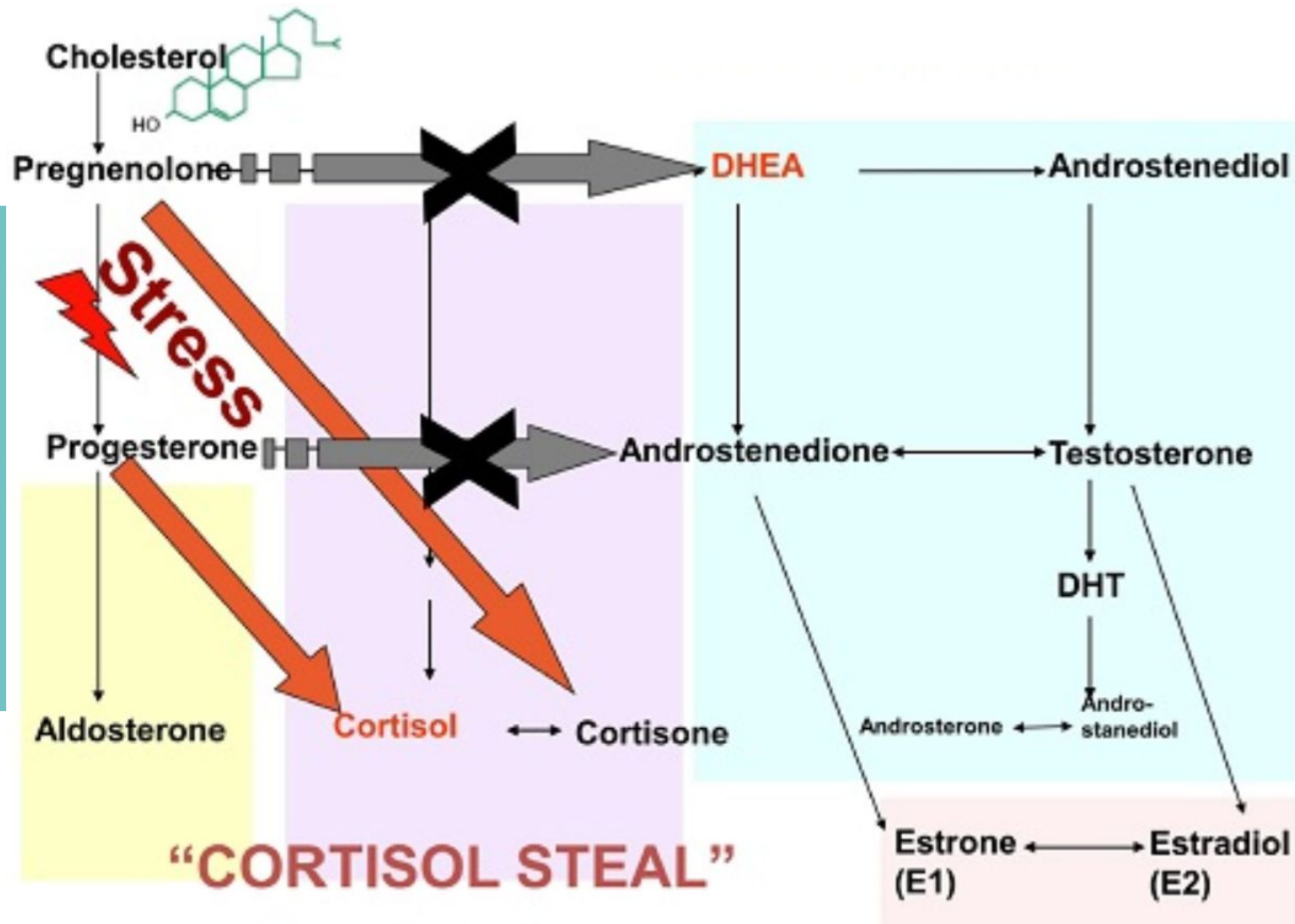


## Imbalanced

- Thyroid (T3, T4)
- Cortisol
- Insulin



# Cortisol steal



# Classic symptoms

- ✓ Menstrual cycle changes
- ✓ Hot flashes and night sweats
- ✓ Change in weight distribution (*menopause belly*)
- ✓ Vaginal symptoms
- ✓ Sleep disturbances
- ✓ Mood changes, depression, anxiety



Symptoms  
can be highly  
disruptive at  
work and  
home

There is no  
one universal  
menopause  
symptom



# Other symptoms

- ✓ Cognitive concerns:
  - Memory
  - Concentration
  - Brain fog
- ✓ Joint pain
- ✓ Palpitations
- ✓ Dry eyes



# Health risks of menopause

- ✓ Bone loss
- ✓ Osteoporosis
- ✓ Muscle loss
- ✓ Coronary artery disease
- ✓ Insulin resistance, prediabetes, diabetes
- ✓ Neuroinflammation
- ✓ Visceral fat gain



# What leaders might notice

- ✓ Changes in energy or consistency
- ✓ Increased stress sensitivity or irritability
- ✓ Brain fog or slower processing under pressure
- ✓ Sleep-related fatigue
- ✓ Strong performance with higher recovery needs

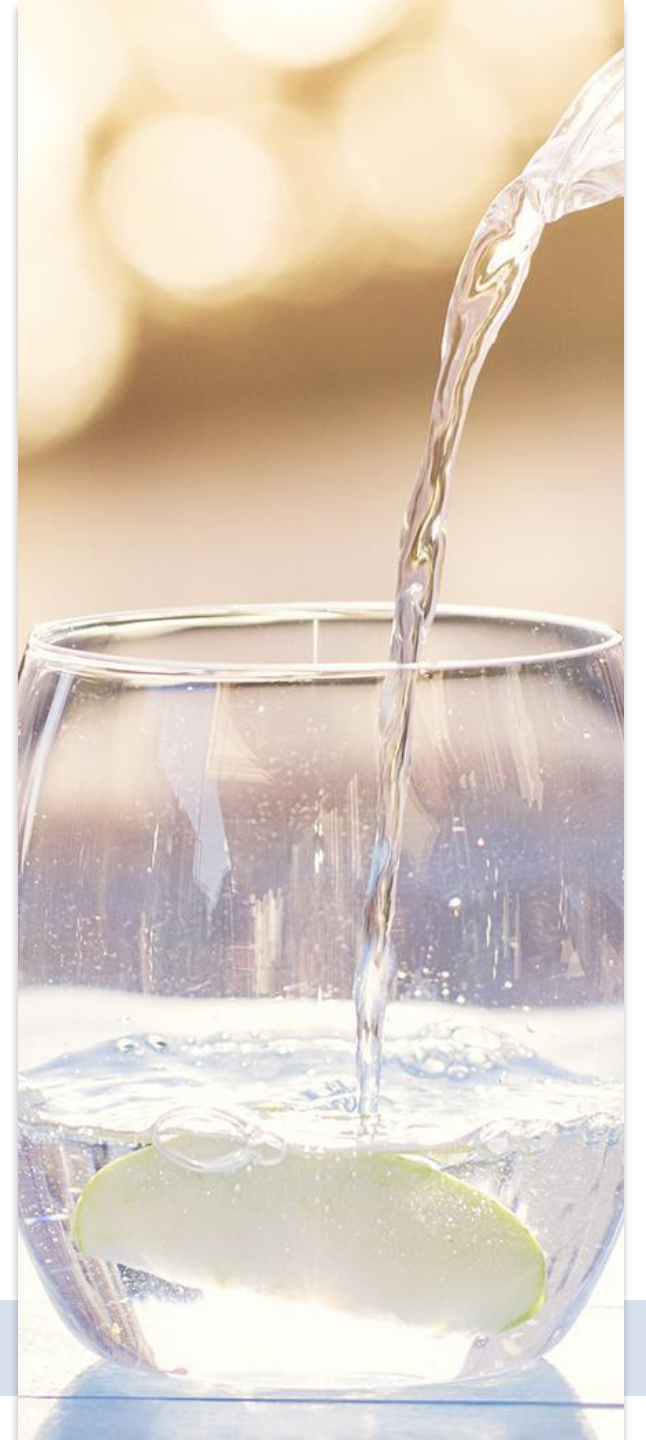


**Key reminder:**  
**These are physiological stress responses — not disengagement.**

# MENOPAUSE NUTRITION

# Hydration

- ✓ Studies highlight the crucial role of hydration, as well as the negative effects of dehydration:
  - Hot flashes and night sweats
  - Bladder function
  - Skin health
  - Cognitive function
  - Exercise performance
  - Mood, concentration and memory



# Protein

- ✓ You need more than you think
- ✓ Aim for 1.0 – 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day.

## Do the math:

Divide your weight in pounds by 2.2 to get your weight in kilograms.

Multiply that number by 1.0 (or up to 1.2 if you're active or trying to lose weight).

## Example:

- ✓ 150 lbs = about 68 kg
- ✓ Multiply 68 by 1.0 – 1.2
- ✓ You need around 68 – 81g of protein daily

# Protein

- ✓ Shuts off hunger signals in the brain
- ✓ Helps maintain focus
- ✓ Facilitates serotonin and dopamine levels
- ✓ Helps control sugar cravings
- ✓ Necessary for building lean muscle
- ✓ Necessary for protecting bone density
- ✓ Necessary for getting quality sleep



# Amino acids

*Fundamental components of proteins*

**Leucine**

**Essential amino acid**

*(body cannot produce its own)*

Must be obtained  
through diet

Leucine is particularly  
important for **muscle  
growth and repair**



# Leucine-rich protein sources

- **Meat:** Beef, chicken and pork
- **Fish:** Tuna, salmon and cod
- **Dairy:** Cottage cheese and yogurt
- **Eggs**

## Animal-based

- **Legumes:** Lentils, black beans, chickpeas, soybeans (tofu and tempeh)
- **Nuts and Seeds:** Peanuts and pumpkin seeds
- **Grains:** Brown rice

## Plant-based

- **Whey protein powder:** Whey-based protein powders are generally high in leucine, with some plant-based options also offering significant amounts

## Whey protein

# Carbohydrates

- ✓ Insulin resistance rises as estrogen declines, making it important to monitor carbohydrate intake.

## Fresh Veggies and fruit

*(low glycemic)*

- Avocados
- Sweet potatoes
- Yams
- Artichokes

## Fermented veggies

- Sauerkraut
- Kimchee

## Grains

- Lentils
- Brown rice
- Quinoa

## Cruciferous veggies

*(diindolylmethane – DIM)*

- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cauliflower

# Fiber

- ✓ The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends women consume **at least 25 grams** of fiber each day.

## Soluble fiber

- Dissolves in water, slows down carb digestion
- Makes you feel full longer
- Supports normal blood sugar levels
- Sources: bananas, apples, pears, beans, potatoes, oats

## Insoluble fiber

- Retains water, helps move food through digestive system
- Assists with bowel movements
- Also called “roughage”
- Sources: berries, nuts, carrots, whole grains

# Why is fiber important?

- ✓ Helps maintain regular bowel movements and aid digestion
- ✓ Assists with weight management
- ✓ Supports normal blood sugar levels
- ✓ Improves heart health



**Pro tip: Track your fiber intake**

# Fat

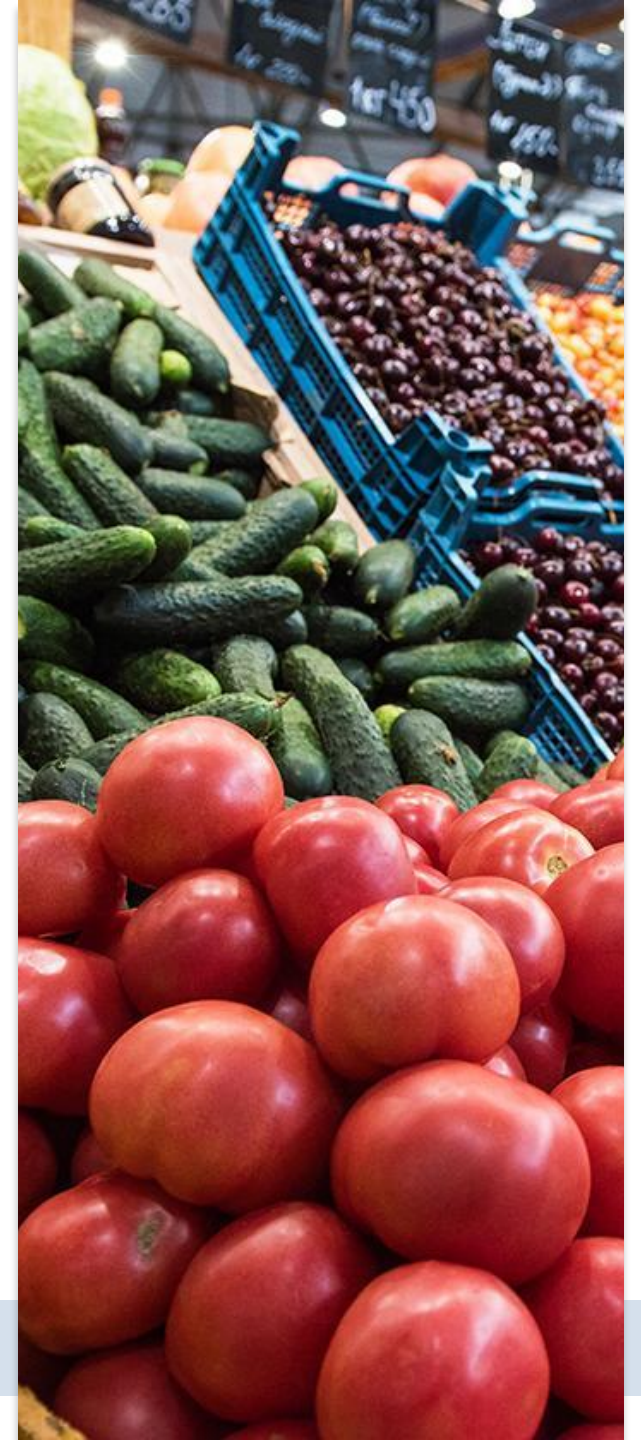
✓ Healthy fats are necessary for:

- Vitamin absorption
- Brain function
- Hormone production
- Immune system support
- Reducing inflammation
- Cell structure
- Organ protection
- Joint cushioning

- **Flax**
- **Avocado**
- **Ghee**
- **Olives**
- **Organic virgin coconut oil**
- **Medium chain triglycerides**
- **Raw, organic nuts and seeds**

# Fruits and vegetables

- ✓ Eat the rainbow
  - High in nutrients, low in calories
    - Glutathione
  - Beneficial, zero-calorie fiber
  - Maintain a healthy weight
  - Phytochemicals



# The rainbow of foods

## IMMUNE HEALTH

**Roots, fruits, legumes**

*Polyphenols, lycopene*

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

**Fruits, squashes, roots**

*Carotenoids*

## DIGESTIVE HEALTH

**Roots, starches, tubers**

*Fibers, enzymes*

## HEART HEALTH

**Leaves, crucifers**

*Nitrates, folates*

## THYROID HEALTH

**Sea plants**

*Minerals*

## BRAIN HEALTH

**Fruits, vegetables**

*Anthocyanins*

## WHOLE HEALTH *(white food)*

**Bulbs, roots, fruits**

*Flavonoids, allicin*

*Informational purposes only.*

# Rx for middle age nutrition

## *The basics*

- ✓ Adequate protein
- ✓ Limit sugar
- ✓ Eat vegetables and fruit
- ✓ Adequate fiber



# Rx for middle age nutrition

## *Beyond the basics*

### ✓ Micronutrients

- Calcium, magnesium, Vitamin D, Vitamin K, boron
- Omega 3 fatty acids: salmon, anchovies, flax seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds
- Vitamin C
- B Vitamins



# Rx for middle age nutrition

## *Beyond the basics*

- ✓ Phytoestrogens
  - Flax seeds, sesame seeds
  - Berries
  - Alfalfa
  - Apples
  - Pomegranate
- Lentils, barley
- Carrots



# Practice mindful eating



**Before you begin eating, have a mindset of gratitude.**

**Bring awareness to your surroundings.**

**Notice the flavors, texture and temperature.**

**Stay mindful of each mouthful and eat slowly.**

# MENOPAUSE MOVEMENT

# Movement

## Aerobic activities

**Walking**  
*(12,500 steps)*

**Jogging**

**Swimming**

**Biking**

## Flexibility and stability

**Pilates**

**Stretching**

**Tai chi**

## Everyday activities

**Gardening**

**Climbing stairs**

**Cleaning**

*Stay consistent with your exercise routine*

# Movement

## Strength training

Lifting weights

Resistance bands

Bodyweight workouts

## High-intensity interval training

Short sprints of 20-30 seconds with 2-minute rests can be especially effective

## Jump training

Multi-directional stress on the bones

10 minutes three times a week

Can increase bone density

## Sprint interval training

80% or more of max heart rate

Start with one day and gradually work up to 3 days

*Excess exercise without proper rest and recovery can lead to adrenal and thyroid dysfunction*

# Resistance training

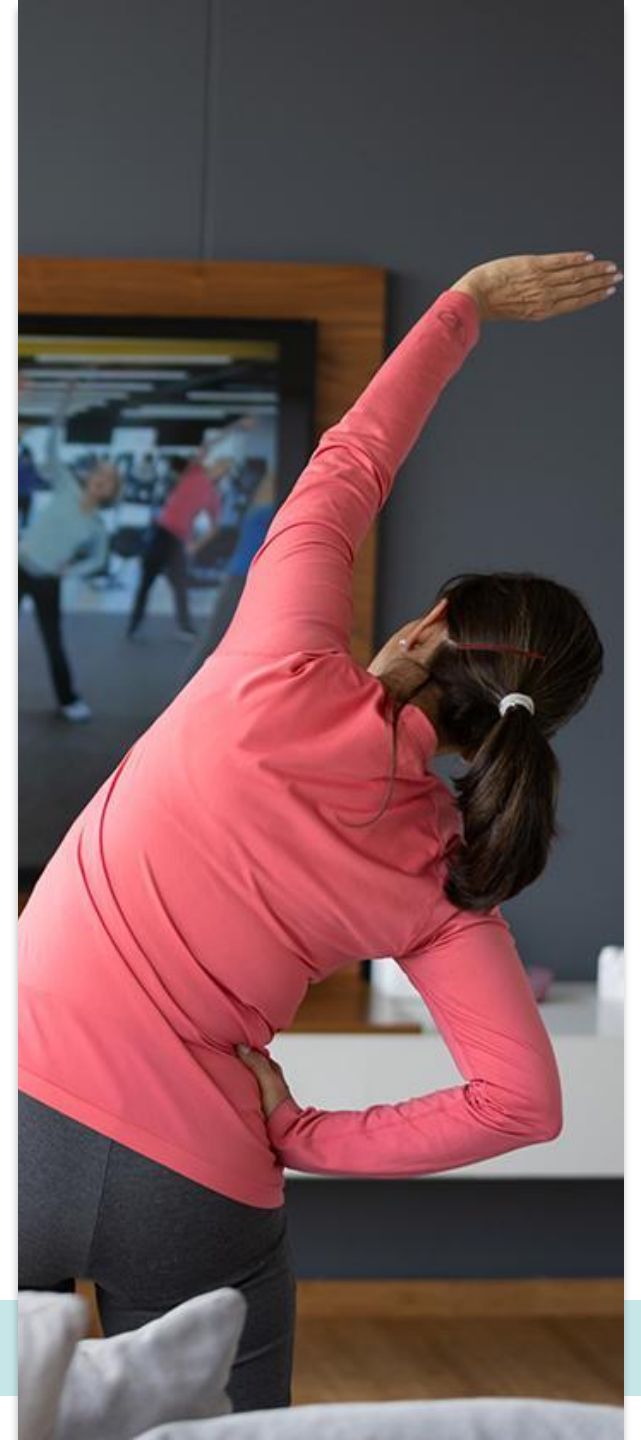
- ✓ Multi-joint exercise
  - Squat
  - Lunge
  - Deadlift
  - Bench press
  - Row
  - Lat pull down
  - Shoulder press
- ✓ Heavy resistance training **builds** lean mass, **increases** metabolic rate, **increases** joint strength and stability, **gives** better glucose control



Aim for 3-4 sets  
of 8-12 reps

# Rest and recovery

- ✓ Rest and recovery workouts three or more times a week
  - Hot baths (Epsom salts)
  - Massage/foam rolling
  - Mind/body, such as tai chi, Pilates
  - Sauna
  - Stretching
  - Walking your pets
  - Playing with your kids
  - Pelvic floor/core



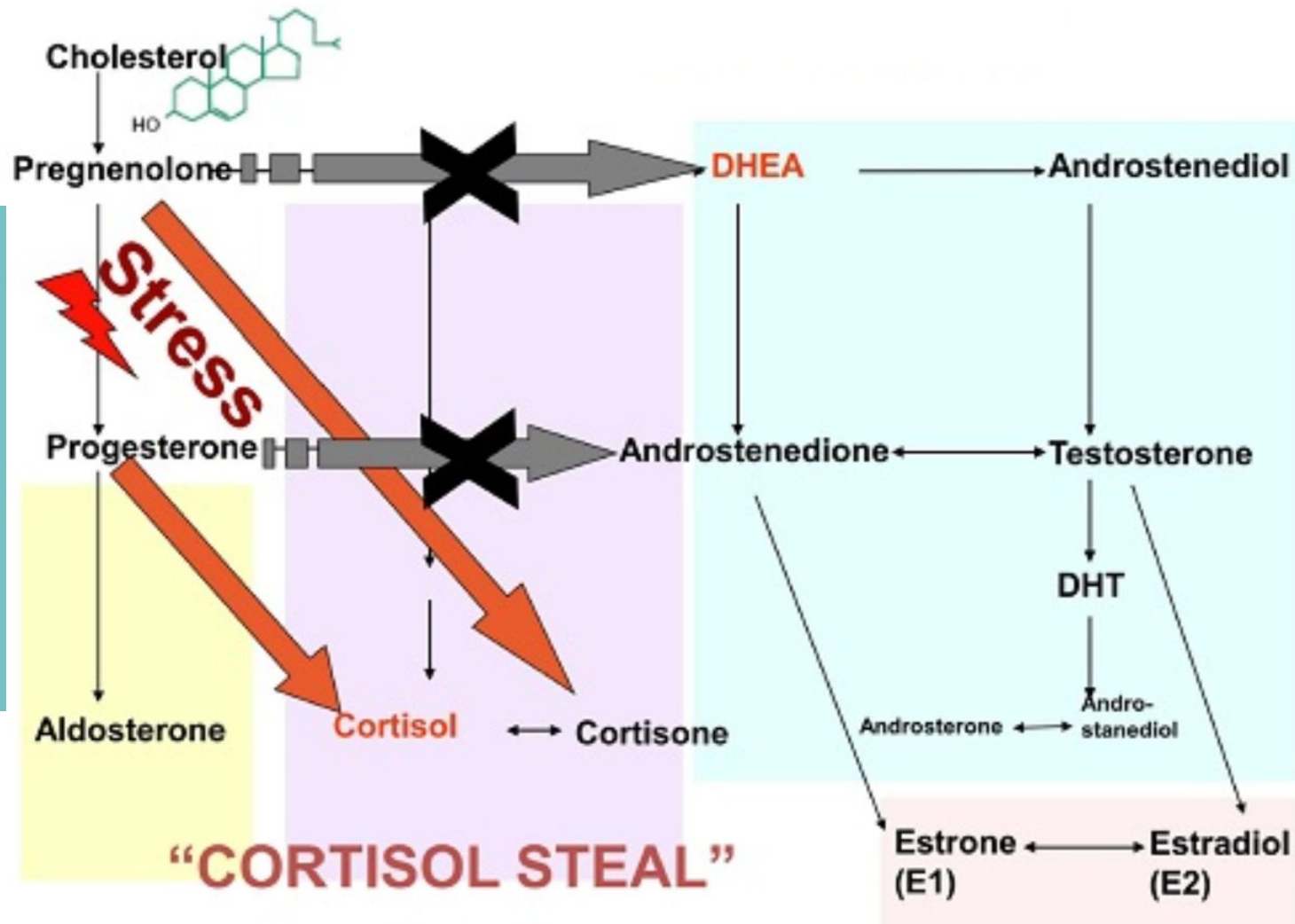
# Rx for middle age movement

- ✓ More is not always better
- ✓ NEAT
- ✓ Walking daily
- ✓ 3-5 days a week
- ✓ 2 days of heavy strength training; end with 5-10 minutes of jump training
- ✓ 2-3 days sprint interval training or HIIT

# MENOPAUSE

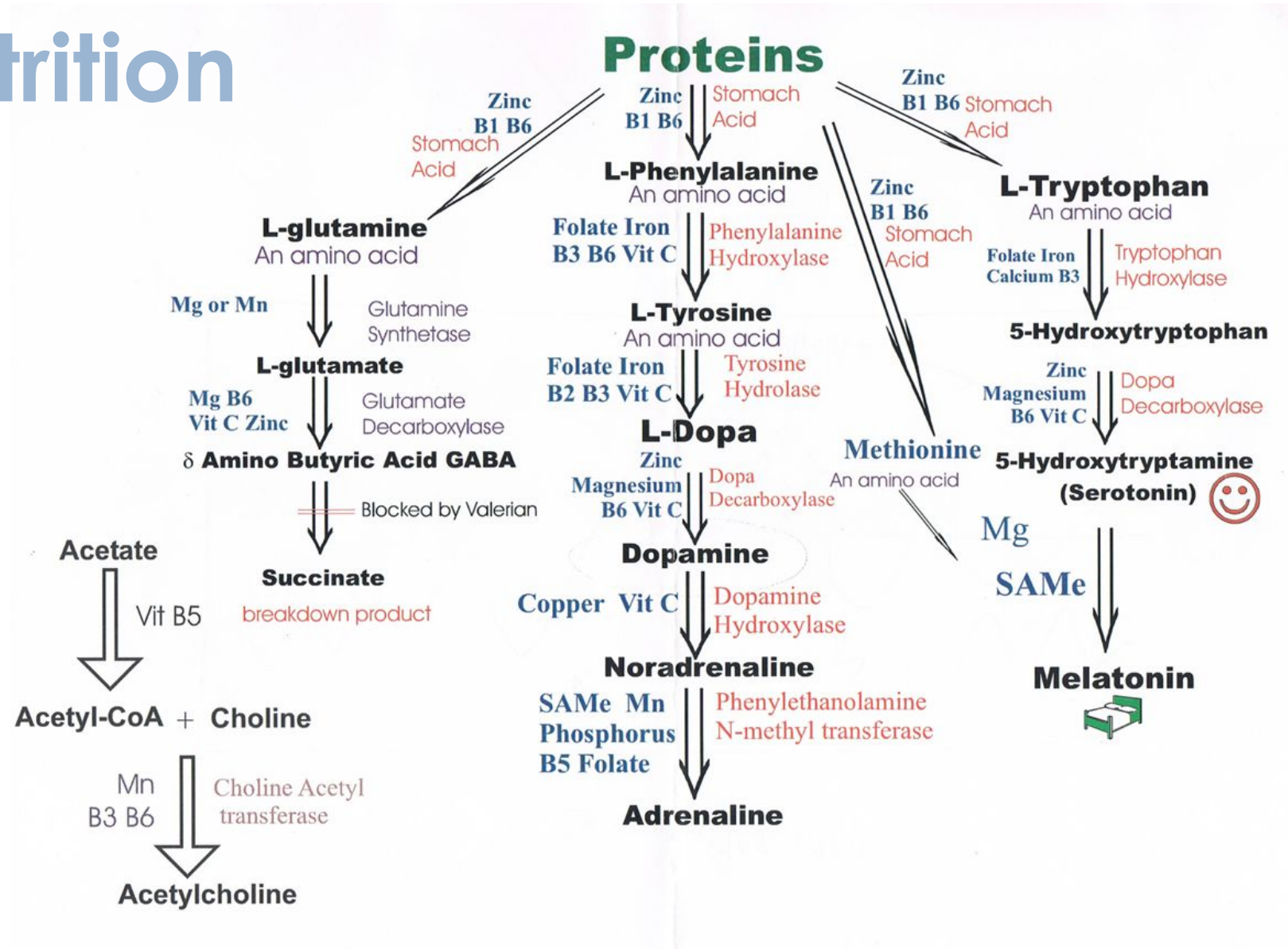
# SLEEP

# Cortisol steal



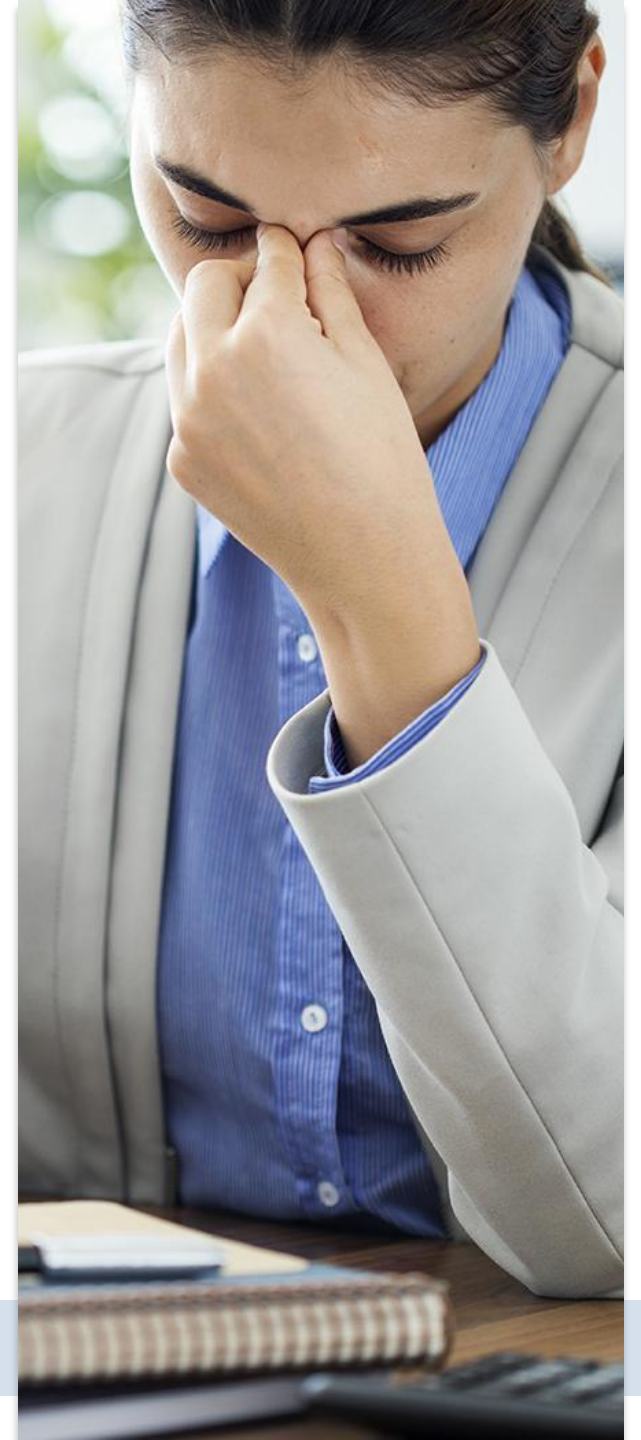
# Impact of nutrition on sleep

- ✓ Amino Acids
- ✓ Vitamin C
- ✓ Zinc
- ✓ B1- Thiamine
- ✓ B3 - Niacin
- ✓ B6 - Pyridoxine
- ✓ Magnesium
- ✓ Manganese
- ✓ Copper
- ✓ Folate
- ✓ Phosphorus
- ✓ Iron
- ✓ Calcium
- ✓ Stomach acid



# Common sleep disruptors

- ✓ Stress
- ✓ Screen addiction
- ✓ Alcohol
- ✓ Caffeine
- ✓ Nicotine
- ✓ Sleep apnea
- ✓ Vitamins and supplements
- ✓ Low blood sugar



# Sleep disruptors

- ✓ Blue light suppresses melatonin, which already decreases with age.
- ✓ Alcohol within an hour of bedtime shortens your REM sleep, so you get less restorative sleep.
- ✓ Eat at least three hours before bedtime for adequate digestion.
- ✓ Inadequate protein consumption resulting in low amino acid pool (algorithm).

# Sleep disruptors

- ✓ Low serum B vitamins
- ✓ Low serum Vitamin C may cause sleep disruption. Waking up between 1 a.m. to 3 a.m.
- ✓ Most adults have low magnesium
- ✓ Gut bacteria strains: Bifidobacterium and Lactobacillus
  - Adequate fiber for pre-biotic properties

# Sleep tips

- ✓ Keep room cool and dark
- ✓ Relaxing fragrance: lavender, lemon balm
- ✓ Soft, comfortable bedding
- ✓ Prioritize circadian health
  - Get sunlight in the morning
  - Exercise regularly, ideally during the earlier part of the day
  - Maintain consistent sleep and wake times



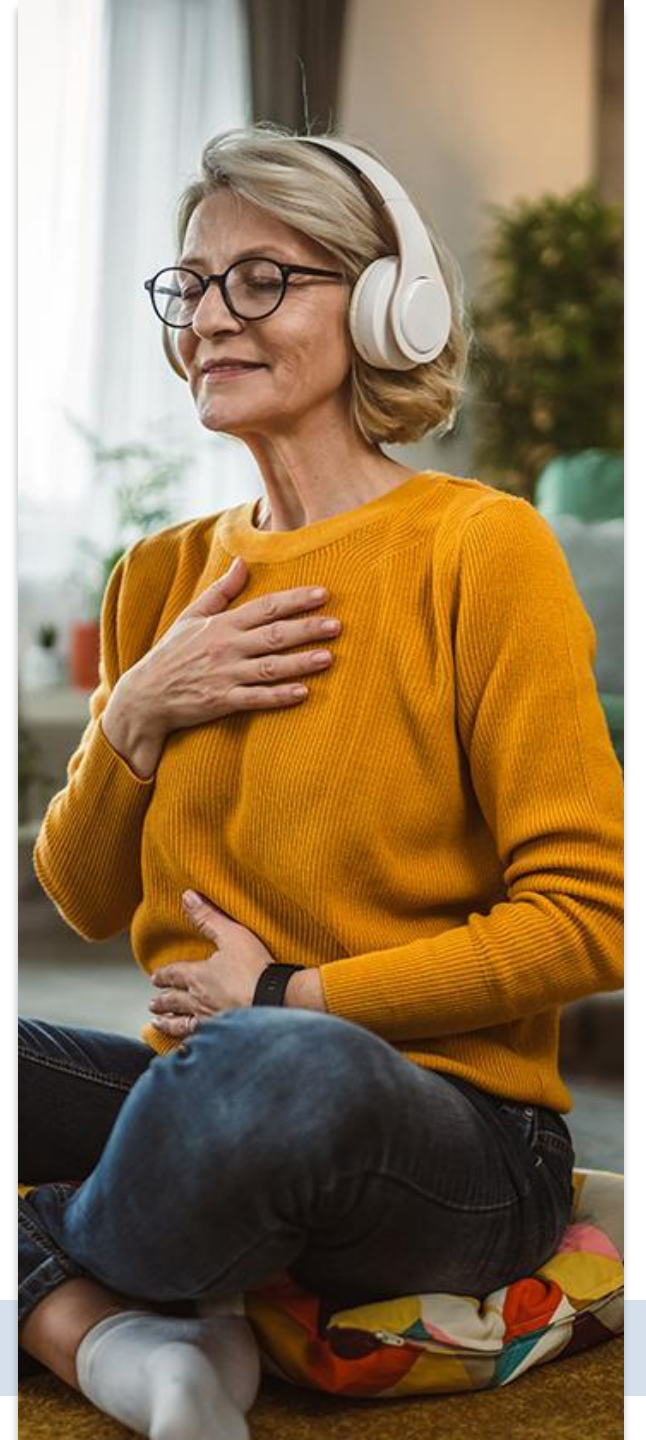
Take an Epsom salt bath as part of your bedtime routine

Minimal noise and/or calming acoustics



# Relaxation techniques

- ✓ Parasympathetic reset
  - Gratitude
  - Deep breathing
    - 4, 7, 8
    - Box breathing
- ✓ Progressive muscle relaxation
- ✓ Grounding
  - Sheets or pillows
- ✓ Lullaby music



# MENOPAUSE CARE

# Medical hormone therapy

- ✓ Estradiol
- ✓ Progesterone
- ✓ Pregnenolone
- ✓ Thyroid



# Menopause certified provider

- ✓ The Menopause Society features a tool for finding a menopause-certified provider near you.
- ✓ Always check to see if a provider is in-network.
- ✓ If a provider is not in-network, you will pay more out of pocket and your claims will not count toward your deductible.
- ✓ **menopause.org**

# Actions that make a difference

## Flexible scheduling

**Start time flexibility**

**Hybrid or remote options when possible**

## Meeting hygiene

**Shorter meetings**

**Breaks between calls**

**Agenda clarity**

## Recovery culture

**Normalize breaks**

**Encourage PTO use**

**Model boundaries at leadership level**

# ROI of menopause-supportive workplaces

## Retention

**Reduced turnover of  
experienced talent**

## Engagement

**Higher trust, loyalty  
and discretionary  
effort**

## Absenteeism

**Fewer stress-related  
sick days**  
**Improved productivity  
and focus**

# Questions?

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[messa.org/wellness](https://messa.org/wellness)

