

The Impact of Menopause on our Joints: Expert advice from Karen Newby & Cytoplan

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The Impact of Menopause on Joint Health

Expert Menopause Nutritionist & Cytoplan share what we can do to improve the health of our joints as we age to stay active and healthy

Plus: Joint Rejuvenating Smoothie Recipe!

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While the menopause is primarily associated with reproductive changes, it can also affect various other aspects of a woman's health, including joint health and some of the frequently stated but less examined symptoms of the menopause are joint pain, joint stiffness, reduced flexibility and inflammation, with many women finding their joints suddenly become stiff and painful during perimenopause and menopause, which can have a significant impact on everyday life.

Market-leading supplement brand Cytoplan and Specialist Menopause Nutritionist; Karen Newby deep dive into the link between menopause and the impact it has on the health of our joints, the problem of inflammation and while menopause can impact our joint health, there are steps to take in order to reduce the impact and to help women keep doing what they love.

Below are the top foods, nutrients, lifestyle choices and other factors that can improve joint health during and after the menopause to support women to stay active and well in midlife and beyond:

The link between menopause and joint health

Oestrogen plays a significant role in maintaining joint health by protecting the bones and cartilage and reducing inflammation. Declining levels of oestrogen has a proven impact on joint health and can significantly increase inflammation in the joints with new research suggesting that the period of time leading up to menopause; the perimenopause, can now be viewed as a 'pro inflammatory phase' in a woman's life. Chronic inflammation of the joints can have a huge impact on everyday life and reduce activity levels, which will in turn negatively impact overall health and wellbeing.

Specialist Menopause Nutritionist Karen Newby explains why:

"Oestrogen supports osteoblast activity which builds new bone and is why post menopause is a risk factor for developing osteoporosis. Declining oestrogen levels can also make us more inflamed as oestrogen is one of our natural anti-inflammatory steroid hormones. This explains why new research positions perimenopause (the lead up to menopause) as a 'pro-inflammatory phase' in a woman's life. We can start to suffer with aches and pains during perimenopause, although we may have struggled with these pre menopause, just before day one of our cycle, when oestrogen is at its lowest.

“Another important factor to consider is the reduction in collagen - the building block of cartilage. Research suggests collagen can reduce by up to 30% at menopause. Collagen has also been shown to have huge benefits for our skin health and can help to reduce symptoms of osteoarthritis, a common condition at menopause. So it may be important to consider a premium collagen supplement to bridge the gap that the menopause can cause.

“Furthermore, oxidative stress, which is caused by an imbalance between free radical formation and antioxidant status, is known to be a factor in cartilage destruction and this can often be exacerbated at menopause as the decline of oestrogen increases oxidative stress. Therefore, it will be important to maximise antioxidant rich foods to help quench these free radicals. Aim for 30+ unique plants per week – these can be fruits and vegetables, herbs and spices, nuts and seeds, pulses, and gluten free grains. Then work your way up to 40+ to 50+ - your joints will thank you for it!”

The problem with inflammation during menopause

Declining oestrogen levels can cause chronic inflammation and if hormone fluctuations are experienced alongside a diet high in omega 6 oils, processed foods, alcohol, caffeine, gluten and with lifestyle factors such as smoking, sun damage and pollution, then the risk of chronic inflammation in our body and probability of joint pain is even higher.

Specialist Menopause Nutritionist Karen Newby explains why:

“Inflammation is essential in the body in order to alert you that there is a problem. For example, if you sprain your ankle, the pain, swelling and redness (inflammation) will alert you not to walk on it, so that the body can repair it. But during the menopause, declining oestrogen levels can also cause women to experience chronic inflammation in the body, which in turn, can cause joint aches, pains and stiffness.

“To combat this, omega-3 foods have more anti-inflammatory properties so are important to include in your diet. They include oily fish such as salmon, sardines, trout and mackerel, and a vegan source from algae (usually in supplement form - look for a high-quality and trusted source!), are all sources of EPA and DHA, which provide an anti-inflammatory action. Linseeds/flaxseeds, linseed and flaxseed oil, hemp oil and nuts such as walnuts are vegan sources of omega 3 too.

There is also a kind of omega-6 called gamma linolenic acid, which has anti-inflammatory actions: from evening primrose, hemp and borage oil, so it might be important to consider a high-quality and bio-effective supplement to increase levels too.”

What are the key foods and nutrients for optimal joint health?

Specialist Menopause Nutritionist Karen Newby shares the key foods and nutrients that can make a significant impact to improve joint health:

Increase collagen-rich foods and foods that help to boost the body's natural production of collagen.

These include chicken, fish skin, glycine-rich tofu, nuts, seeds and proline- rich alfalfa sprouts, asparagus, beans, buckwheat, cabbage, cucumber and tempeh.

Increase vitamin C - we need a steady supply of vitamin C as it is not stored well in the body and is essential to help collagen synthesis. Try incorporating fruit and vegetable smoothies and juices into your diet packed with citrus fruits, parsley and peppers - some of the highest food sources of vitamin C.

Ensure you are getting enough vitamin D – which is known to support calcium absorption and helps to support bone mineral density. It can also help to reduce joint pain in osteoarthritis. Sunlight and a high-quality supplement can help reach optimal levels and foods such as fish skin, and mushrooms if they have been grown under UV light are best.

Zinc, magnesium, copper and boron are essential minerals to consider for joint health so foods such as sesame seeds, prawns, dark raw chocolate, lean meat, green leafy veg, pumpkin seeds, pinto and black beans, avocado, chickpeas, tofu, pears, plums and cherries are good sources to include in the diet.

One other very important mineral is manganese and a great saying to remember is ‘clicky knees, more manganese!’ Sources include oats, brown rice, hazelnuts, almonds, pecans, linseed, sesame and pumpkin seeds, cloves, saffron and chilli powder.

Overall, your diet should be high in antioxidant rich fruit and vegetables such as pomegranate, blueberries, plums, red onions, beetroot and carrots. Flavonoids found in pomegranate and cherries, for example, can inhibit cartilage breakdown. Increasing phytoestrogens to help support oestrogen can be achieved by including foods such as soya, peas, chickpeas, broccoli, carrots, cabbage and red clover tea.

In terms of movement, make sure you are standing up more, regularly exercising and maintaining a healthy weight to keep your joints healthy. For extra support, consider supplements such as Glucosamine Sulphate, Chondroitin, a high-quality collagen such as Cytoplan’s award-winning Marine Collagen and premium Omega 3.

To find out about Cytoplan’s market-leading Joint Health range head to:
www.cytoplan.co.uk/shop-by-health/joint-health to discover CytoProtect Joint Health:
www.cytoplan.co.uk/cytoprotect-joints or to find out more from Specialist Menopause Nutritionist; Karen Newby, please visit: www.karennewby.com

Joint Rejuvenating Smoothie Recipe

Credit: Cytoplan & Karen Newby; Specialist Menopause Nutritionist

A smoothie rich with vitamins, minerals, protein, phytoestrogens and award-winning collagen from Cytoplan; designed by Karen Newby to show your joints a little TLC:

Ingredients & Method

Handful of frozen cherries (pitted) - rich in vitamin C rich to help collagen synthesis and antioxidants including flavanoids which can inhibit cartilage breakdown

3 florets of fresh or frozen cauliflower - a liver loving brassica containing indole 3 carbinol which helps the liver detox our hormones effectively. Cauliflower is also a source of manganese - as the expression goes 'clicky knees, more manganese!'

Handful of walnuts - great source of anti-inflammatory omega 3, manganese and protein

1 tbsp of linseed/flaxseed – another rich source of phytoestrogens in the form of lignans

1 level teaspoon of Cytoplan's Marine Collagen or open a capsule of Cytoplan's Vegan Collagen - you can find both products here: www.cytoplan.co.uk/marine-collagen and www.cytoplan.co.uk/vegan-collagen

200ml of organic plant milk - organic soya milk for phytoestrogens to help support collagen synthesis

Optional: 1 date to sweeten and/or add more water to get your perfect consistency

Pop everything into your blender of choice, blend & serve!

-Ends-

For more Information, high-res imagery, request for interview or further comment from Karen Newby or Cytoplan please contact the Cytoplan press team: katie@cytoplan.co.uk

About Cytoplan

www.cytoplan.co.uk

Nature Meets Science

As leaders in food-based and ethical supplementation for over 30 years, Cytoplan has maintained the belief that nature holds the key to health, creating products that work in harmony with the body to optimise health and the company is dedicated to improving the health of the nation, both ethically and sustainably.

An independent British company and wholly owned by a charitable foundation; Cytoplan invests widely in health and nutritional projects across the UK and address issues such as global warming, community wellbeing and mental health. Every product purchased goes towards helping others. To find out more about

The AIM Foundation please visit: theaimfoundation.org.uk

Combining nature with science, Cytoplan has pioneered Wholefood & Food State supplements to create a market-leading supplement range with products that are grounded in science, proven by results and designed to improve health, safely and effectively.

Trusted by practitioners and customers alike, the company offers sound information about supplements and health to encourage self-empowerment and growth, helping customers to make their own informed decisions on their approach to nutrition and wellbeing. To find out more about Cytoplan's Nutrition Gap Philosophy and market-leading supplement range head to: www.cytoplan.co.uk

Research sources

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