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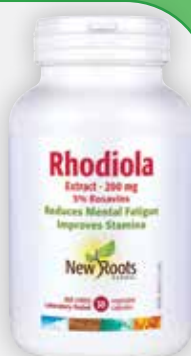
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# Editor's Letter



Recently I was complimented on a dress I was wearing, and I immediately brushed it off muttering “this old thing?” That same day I heard a colleague praised for her work say “I’m just doing my job.” Then it hit me: so many of us are doing the same. When did women decide we were no longer going to accept compliments?

Don’t get me wrong—I’m not talking about catcalls from strangers on the street. I’m referring to kind words of praise, genuine appreciation, and, yes, simple statements like “you look lovely today.” How can we have come such a long way, only to start minimizing ourselves to the point that kindness can feel uncomfortable?

Ladies, we’ve broken barriers in education, careers, and leadership. We’ve advanced human rights and redefined social equality. We’ve reshaped beauty standards, family roles, and expectations. We’ve built communities, raised voices, and cared for our loved ones. We are amazing!

But in all our strength, we must also remember to receive; to welcome not only praise but also support—without apology. This edition contains a few extra articles aimed at supporting women’s health and wellness. Because we can all use an extra hand, or just a smile, to help us *Flourish*!

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA  
Editor-in-Chief

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Flourish magazine is published quarterly and distributed throughout Canada.

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**Legal Deposit:** Library and Archives Canada

**Legal Deposit:** Bibliothèque et Archives  
Nationales du Québec

ISSN 2371-5693 (Print Version)

ISSN 2371-5707 (Online Version)

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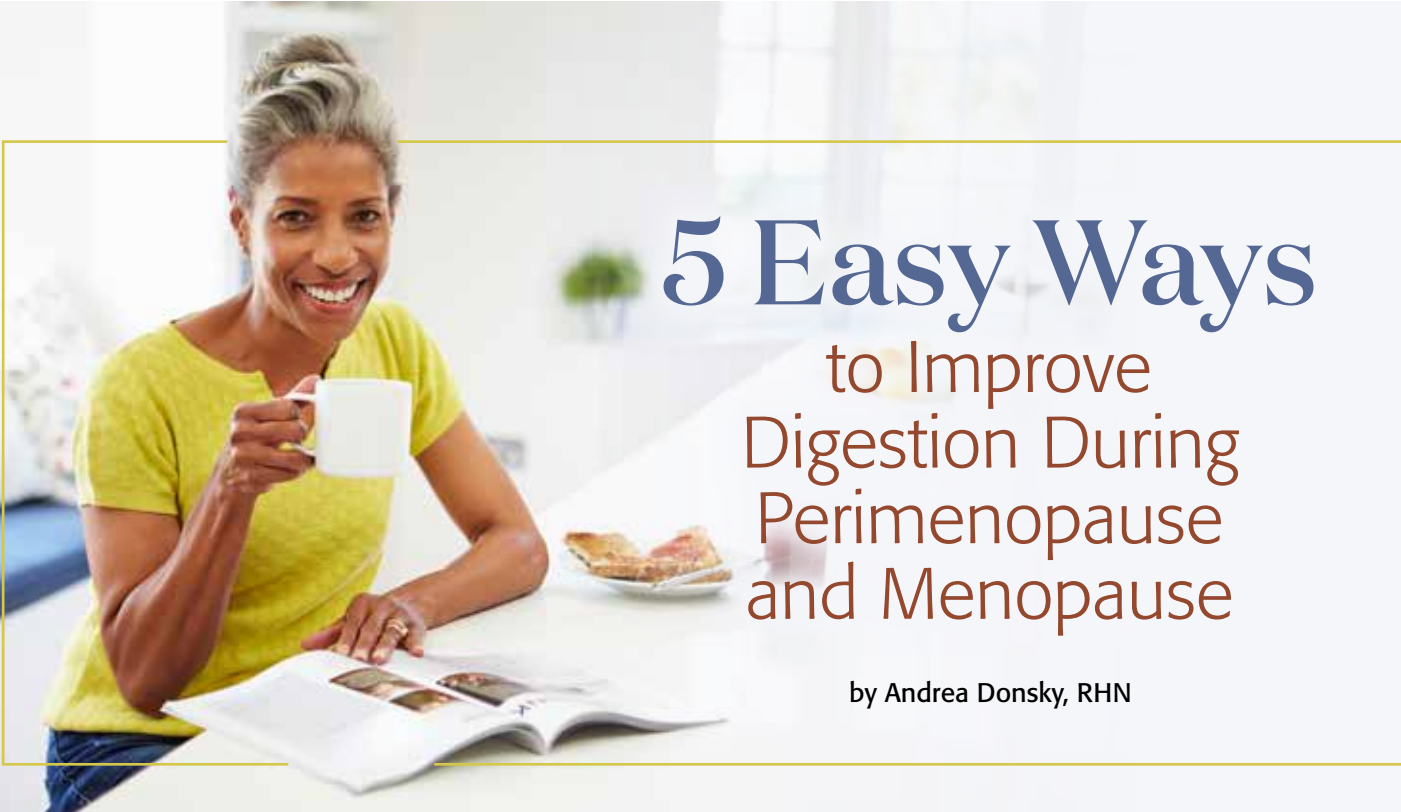
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# 5 Easy Ways to Improve Digestion During Perimenopause and Menopause

by Andrea Donsky, RHN

As women transition through perimenopause and menopause, hormonal fluctuations—particularly changes in estrogen and progesterone—can lead to various digestive challenges, including bloating, gas, constipation, and indigestion. Fortunately, several strategies can help manage these symptoms and promote better digestive health. Here's an overview of five easy but effective ways to improve digestion during this transitional phase.

## Fibre Up

Dietary fibre plays a crucial role in maintaining digestive health. It adds bulk to the stool, making it easier to pass and reducing the risk of constipation, a common issue during menopause due to hormonal changes that can slow down the digestive system.

### How to Increase Fibre

- Aim for 25–30 g of fibre daily. Most people on standard American diet (SAD) only get 10–15 g of fibre daily.

- Incorporate whole grains like oats, brown rice, and quinoa; fruits such as apples, berries, and pears; vegetables like broccoli, carrots, and leafy greens; and legumes such as beans, lentils, and chickpeas into your diet.
- Increase fibre intake gradually to prevent gas and bloating. Pair fibre-rich foods with plenty of water to help them move through the digestive system.

Research shows a high-fibre diet can improve bowel regularity and reduce digestive discomfort. A study found that an increased fibre intake is associated with a lower risk of constipation and improved gut health. The study concluded that fibre supplementation, particularly with psyllium at doses exceeding 10 g/d over a minimum of four weeks, effectively improves symptoms of chronic constipation. The study emphasizes that psyllium, a soluble fibre, enhances stool frequency and consistency, thereby alleviating constipation symptoms.

## High-Fibre Foods to Support Digestion Health

Food Item	Portion Size	Fibre Content
Chia Seeds	1 tbsp. (15 g)	5 g
Cooked Lentils	½ cup (100 g)	7.8 g
Avocado	½ medium (100 g)	6.7 g
Raspberries	1 cup (123 g)	8 g
Rolled Oats	½ cup dry (40 g)	4 g
Steamed Broccoli	1 cup (150 g)	5.1 g
Cooked Quinoa	1 cup (185 g)	5.2 g
Almonds	¼ cup (35 g)	4.5 g





## Practice Mindful Eating

Mindful eating involves paying full attention to the experience of eating and drinking, which can enhance digestion by promoting better chewing and reducing stress. Since stress impairs gut motility and enzyme secretion, a calm eating environment becomes essential to reducing symptoms like bloating, cramping, or indigestion.

### How to Eat Mindfully

- Take time to chew each bite thoroughly. Aim for 20–30 chews per mouthful.
- Avoid screens and multitasking during meals to focus on your food.
- Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues, and eat until you are satisfied, not stuffed.

A study found that mindful eating can improve digestion and reduce symptoms of gastrointestinal distress. Participants reported less bloating and discomfort when they practiced mindful eating techniques. Additionally, mindful eating was associated with decreased stress levels and better self-regulation, which can be beneficial for individuals suffering from conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Beyond digestive health, the study found that mindful eating contributes to improved cognitive functions, emotional regulation, and neuroplasticity, thereby enhancing memory, attention, and mood.

## Stay Hydrated

Staying hydrated is vital for digestive health, especially during menopause. Adequate hydration helps maintain the mucosal lining of the intestines, facilitates the smooth movement of food through the digestive tract, and helps maintain enzyme function. Since estrogen plays a role in fluid balance, declining levels can make women more susceptible to dehydration, making consistent hydration more important during this stage.

### How to Hydrate

- Aim for 8–10 glasses (of 250 mL each) of water daily. Adjust based on activity level and climate. Consider adding electrolytes to your water for added flavour and hydration support.
- Include fruits and vegetables with high water content, such as cucumbers, watermelon, oranges, and celery.
- Consider drinking herbal teas like peppermint or ginger, which may also aid digestion.



A study investigated the relationship between drinking water habits and the composition of gut and oral microbiota. Researchers found that individuals who consumed more plain water had distinct microbial profiles, which may play a role in maintaining gut balance and supporting overall digestive health. The findings suggest that hydration influences the diversity and structure of the gut microbiome—an essential factor in digestive and immune function. While more research is needed to determine direct outcomes, the study reinforces the importance of adequate water intake as part of a healthy lifestyle that supports gut health.



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## Strengthen Your Inner Ecosystem

Probiotics are beneficial bacteria that help maintain a healthy gut microbiome. Hormonal changes during menopause can disrupt this balance, leading to digestive issues. Supplementing with probiotics or consuming fermented foods can help restore gut health.

### How to Strengthen Your Gut Flora

- Look for high-quality probiotic supplements containing strains like *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*.
- Incorporate fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, and kombucha into your diet.

A systematic review evaluated the effects of probiotics on functional gastrointestinal symptoms in adults. The analysis included 21 randomized controlled trials and found that specific probiotic strains—particularly those containing *Bifidobacterium* and *Lactobacillus* species—were effective in reducing common symptoms such as bloating, abdominal pain, and gas. The review concluded that multistrain probiotic formulations offered the most consistent benefits. Although the review did not focus on hormonal fluctuations specifically, its findings support the role of probiotics in enhancing digestive comfort and supporting gut health, especially in individuals with functional bowel disorders.



## Engage in Regular Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is essential for maintaining digestive health. Exercise stimulates the digestive system, helps regulate bowel movements, and can alleviate symptoms like bloating and constipation. In addition, while there is no correlation between strength-training and digestion, lifting heavy weights is invaluable for strong bone health, especially for women in perimenopause and menopause.



## How to Increase Physical Activity

- Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, cycling, or swimming.
- Incorporate strength-training exercises at least twice weekly to support overall health.
- Consider yoga or gentle stretching to promote relaxation and improve digestion.

A population-based study examined the association between physical activity and bowel function in over 62,036 women. The researchers found that higher levels of physical activity were significantly associated with a reduced risk of constipation. Women who engaged in regular exercise—especially vigorous activity—reported more frequent bowel movements compared to those who were sedentary. Additionally, because exercise is also known to help reduce stress, it may also indirectly support gut health through the gut-brain connection.



Navigating the digestive challenges that can arise during perimenopause and menopause does not have to be overwhelming. You can effectively manage digestive issues and enhance your overall wellbeing by incorporating these five evidence-based strategies—boosting fibre intake, practicing mindful eating, staying hydrated, adding probiotics, and engaging in regular physical activity. Embracing these habits supports digestion and contributes to a healthier lifestyle during this transitional phase of life. Consider consulting with a health-care practitioner before significantly changing your diet or exercise routine, especially if you have underlying health conditions.



**Andrea Donsky, RHN**

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# Happy Gut for Summer

by Angela Wallace, BSc, MSc, RDN

Summer often disrupts our daily routines. Between travel, outdoor dining, social events, and rising temperatures, it's no surprise that digestion can take a hit. If you've been feeling bloated, sluggish, or just not quite yourself, your gut may be reacting to these seasonal shifts. The digestive system plays a central role in more than just breaking down food: it's deeply connected to your immune function, energy levels, and mood. At the core of this system is the gut microbiome, a complex community of bacteria and microbes that work behind the scenes to help keep things running smoothly. When that microbial balance gets disrupted, it can show up in different ways.

Common summer habits like irregular meals, dehydration, more alcohol or processed foods, and even the stress of travel can all impact gut health. But small, intentional adjustments can help support your digestive system and keep your microbiome happy.

Here are five research-backed strategies to help your gut stay healthy and happy this summer.

## Add in Probiotics

Probiotics are good bacteria that help maintain a healthy balance in your gut microbiome. They work to support digestion, reduce bloating, help regulate bowel movements, and even play a role in immune and mental health. During summer, when routines are more unpredictable and eating patterns may shift, probiotics might offer some extra support.

You can find probiotics in fermented foods like plain yogurt, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, and kombucha. Some people also choose to take a daily probiotic supplement. If you go that route, look for a product with well-studied species such as *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacteria*. In addition to species, it's important to look for probiotics that are specifically designed to survive stomach acid. This is important because stomach acid can kill many probiotic bacteria before they even reach the intestines, where they are needed to do their work.

When choosing a probiotic, check the label for enteric-coated capsules. This special coating helps protect the bacteria as they pass through your stomach, so more of them make it to your gut.

Taking your probiotic with a meal, especially one that includes some fat, can give those good bacteria a better shot at surviving digestion. Fat helps buffer stomach acid, and this creates a more ideal environment for probiotics to travel through.

### Give this a try:

This summer, add a serving of fermented food to your daily routine. Add a spoonful of sauerkraut onto your breakfast plate, blend kefir into your smoothie, or enjoy a few bites of kimchi with dinner. It's best to rotate different types of fermented foods to help introduce a wider range of helpful bacteria to your gut.



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## *Probiotic Grocery Checklist*

### Fermented Dairy and Dairy Alternatives

- **Greek yogurt with live and active cultures**  
Tastes great in: Smoothies, parfaits, salad dressings, or breakfast bowls
- **Kefir in dairy and nondairy forms**  
Tastes great in: Smoothies, overnight oats, or blended with fruit
- **Indian Lassi yogurt drink**  
Tastes great in: As a standalone snack, or lightly spiced with cardamom

### Fermented Vegetables

- **Sauerkraut, raw and unpasteurized**  
Tastes great in: Sandwiches, salads, grain bowls, or as a side
- **Kimchi**  
Tastes great in: Rice dishes, stir-fries, wraps, or eggs
- **Fermented pickles**  
Tastes great in: Burgers, wraps, or charcuterie boards
- **Kvass beet drink**  
Tastes great in: Shot glasses before meals or added to salad dressings

### Soy-Based Fermented Foods

- **Miso Paste**  
Tastes great in: Miso soup, broths, marinades, or salad dressings
- **Tempeh**  
Tastes great in: Stir-fries, tacos, grain bowls, or sandwiches
- **Natto**  
Tastes great in: Rice dishes, sushi rolls, or paired with mustard and green onions



## Other Probiotic Foods

### ❑ Sourdough bread, naturally fermented

Tastes great in: Sandwiches, avocado toast, or dipped in olive oil

### ❑ Kombucha, raw, unpasteurized

Tastes great as: A fizzy beverage, mocktail base, or digestive tonic

### ❑ Probiotic shots or drinks

Tastes great as: A quick shot or mixed into smoothies



## Stay Hydrated

Proper hydration helps your digestive system run smoothly. It helps keep your bowels moving and support a healthy gut lining. During the summer, we are exposed to more heat, which often means more sweating and faster loss of fluids.

Hydration goes beyond just drinking water: When you sweat, you also lose important minerals like potassium and sodium. While water is essential, you can boost your hydration by adding mineral-rich drinks like coconut water, herbal teas, or water infused with citrus fruits and mint. It's also a great idea to include hydrating foods in your diet as well, such as cucumber, celery, watermelon, strawberries, and oranges.

If you're going to be in the heat for an extended period or have been sweating, a homemade electrolyte drink with coconut water can be a great way to replenish some lost minerals and keep hydrated.

### Give this a try:

Homemade electrolyte recipe

- 1 cup regular water
- ½ cup coconut water (for electrolytes)
- ¼ cup citrus juice (lime, lemon, orange)
- 1–2 tsp. honey or maple syrup (optional, for sweetness)
- ⅛–¼ tsp. Himalayan salt

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## Eat Fibre-Rich Foods

In simple terms, fibre is food for the good bacteria in your gut. It helps feed these bacteria and supports healthy digestion. Summer is a great time to add fresh, local produce to your meals, such as peaches, berries, zucchini, and dark leafy greens. If you're increasing your fibre intake, remember to do it gradually and drink plenty of water. Too much fibre without enough water can lead to constipation, so it's important to stay mindful of that.

An easy way to boost your fibre intake is by adding chia seeds or ground flaxseeds to oatmeal, salads, or yogurt.

Research from the American Gut Project has found that eating 30 different plant foods per week can greatly improve gut health and the diversity of your gut microbiome. A more diverse microbiome is linked to better gut health and stronger immune function.

### Give this a try:

Try eating 30 different plant-based foods over the next 7 days. This can include a variety of vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, herbs, and spices!

## Support Your Nervous System

Your brain and gut are in constant communication, and stress—be it from a packed weekend or a carefree vacation—can impact your digestion. Take time to unwind in ways that work best for you, and make sure to do so regularly throughout the summer. Whether it's focusing on your breath, spending time in nature, enjoying moments with family and friends, or taking a break from technology, these simple habits help keep your nervous system (and gut) calm and balanced.

### Give this a try:

Deep-belly breathing before meals. Just a few focused breaths can help boost your digestion. Belly breathing activates your parasympathetic nervous system (the “rest-and-digest mode”), which encourages relaxation and supports better digestive function.

## Think of Your Gut While Traveling

Changes in routine, food choices, and sleep can put stress on your gut, even when you're having fun. To support your digestive health, pack snacks that make you feel good, like trail mix, fruit, and veggies—things you know will keep your gut happy. You can also bring along gut-friendly teas (such as peppermint or ginger tea) or your probiotic supplement if you're taking one.

### Give this a try:

Go for a walk after lunch and dinner. Studies show that going for a short walk (just 10–15 minutes) after meals can help reduce bloating and improve digestion. It's an easy way to support your gut health while on the go and enjoy some new scenery.

## Set the Stage for an Epic Season

Summer doesn't have to disrupt your gut health. Incorporating probiotic-rich foods, staying hydrated, and managing stress can help maintain healthy digestion and boost your energy. Be sure to give your gut what it needs this summer so it can help you feel your best!



**Angela Wallace, BSc, MSc, RDN**

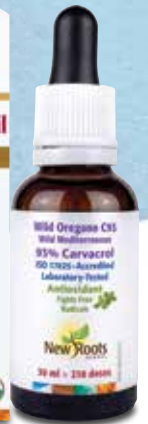
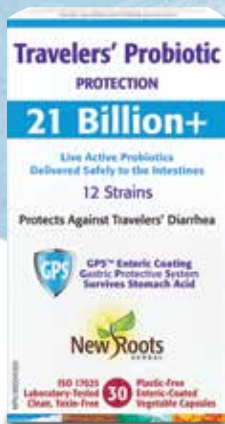
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[eatrightfeelright.ca](http://eatrightfeelright.ca)

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# TUDCA

## Cute Name, Serious Benefits

by Colleen Hartwick, ND



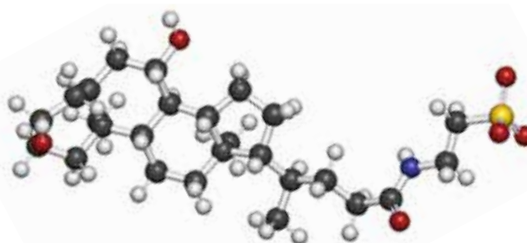
In the world of health and wellness, few compounds have drawn as much attention as tauroursodeoxycholic acid, better known as TUDCA, has. Originally derived from bear bile and used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries, TUDCA is now synthetically produced and studied for its wide-ranging health benefits. Modern science is uncovering the compound's remarkable potential—especially in supporting digestive health, liver function, and even brain health.

### Common signs of bile-acid deficiency

- Bloating after fatty meals
- Floating or pale stools
- Gas or indigestion
- Dry skin or brittle hair
- Fatigue or brain fog
- Trouble absorbing vitamins A, D, E, or K

But what exactly makes TUDCA so versatile? Because TUDCA is derived from bile acids, it not only plays a crucial role in the digestion

and absorption of fat and fat-soluble vitamins but has also shown anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and thus cell-protective effects. Let's explore how this little-known supplement is making big waves across multiple systems of the body.



## More Than Just a Bile Acid

TUDCA's most foundational role begins in the gut. Bile acids are essential for breaking down dietary fats and ensuring proper absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, E, and K. TUDCA enhances bile flow and improves the solubility of cholesterol, which augments one's ability to digest and absorb fat and fat-soluble vitamins and reduces the risk of gallstones.

However, its benefits don't stop there. Recent studies suggest that TUDCA helps protect the gut lining by increasing intestinal mucous production, reducing inflammation, preventing intestinal cell death, and increasing the production of proteins that sustain intestinal tight junctions. This is particularly important for individuals dealing with gastrointestinal issues such as leaky gut syndrome and inflammatory bowel disease. Moreover, TUDCA positively influences the gut microbiome, helping to maintain a healthy balance of beneficial bacteria. A stable microbiome has been linked to improved digestion, immune function, and even mood regulation, suggesting that TUDCA may contribute to overall wellness through gut-brain signaling.



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## A Natural Detoxifier

Given its origins as a bile salt, it's no surprise that TUDCA plays a central role in liver health. As it enhances bile flow, it reduces bile acid toxicity within liver cells—a crucial benefit for those with cholestatic liver diseases, where bile becomes trapped in the liver and causes cellular damage. Clinical trials have shown that TUDCA supplementation can reduce levels of liver enzymes such as aspartate transaminase and alkaline phosphatase, indicators of inflammation and liver stress. In animal models of metabolic dysfunction—associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), TUDCA supplementation has been observed to improve insulin sensitivity, reduce fat absorption, and decrease fat accumulation in the liver.

What makes TUDCA especially intriguing is its cytoprotective (cell-protecting) action. It reduces endoplasmic reticulum (ER) stress, a condition associated with liver-disease progression and metabolic disorders. By easing ER stress, TUDCA may not only halt liver damage but also support tissue regeneration, offering hope for long-term liver health management.



## A Neuroprotective Secret

One of the most exciting discoveries about TUDCA in recent years is its ability to cross the blood-brain barrier—the body's protective shield for the central nervous system. Once in the brain, TUDCA exhibits neuroprotective properties that could have profound implications for those at risk of neurodegenerative disorders.

Animal studies and preliminary human trials suggest that TUDCA can prevent neuronal apoptosis (cell death), reduce oxidative stress, and stabilize the function of neurotransmitter producing endoplasmic reticulum—key mechanisms implicated in diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and Huntington's diseases.

### Possible symptoms of sluggish bile flow

- Nausea after eating
- Constipation or sticky stools
- Skin itching (especially without rash)
- Upper-right abdominal discomfort
- Hormonal imbalance
- Fat-soluble vitamin deficiencies





What connects all of these benefits is TUDCA's role in cellular health. Whether it's gut epithelial cells, liver hepatocytes, or neurons, TUDCA helps stabilize the internal environment, reduce toxic buildup, and support overall resilience of tissues under stress.

## One Compound, Multiple Systems

There is a growing body of research on TUDCA and its interconnected impact on systems that are deeply linked: the gut, liver, and brain. We now understand that gut health influences liver detoxification, and both play key roles in cognitive health through what's known as the gut–liver–brain axis. TUDCA, as a compound with effects across all three, may be a vital player in supporting holistic wellness.

That said, while TUDCA is generally well-tolerated and available as a supplement, it's important to consult with a health-care practitioner before starting it, especially for those with preexisting liver or neurological conditions. Dosage, duration, and formulation can all affect efficacy and safety.

## A Promising Frontier in Functional Medicine

As research continues, TUDCA is emerging not just as a digestive aid, but as a potent multisystem protector. With its roots in ancient medicine and its relevance firmly grounded in modern science, this bile-acid derivative holds promise for addressing some of today's most pressing health concerns such as metabolic disorders or cognitive decline.

In the evolving landscape of functional medicine, TUDCA may well become a cornerstone supplement for those looking to support their body from the inside out—one system at a time.



**Dr. Colleen Hartwick, ND**

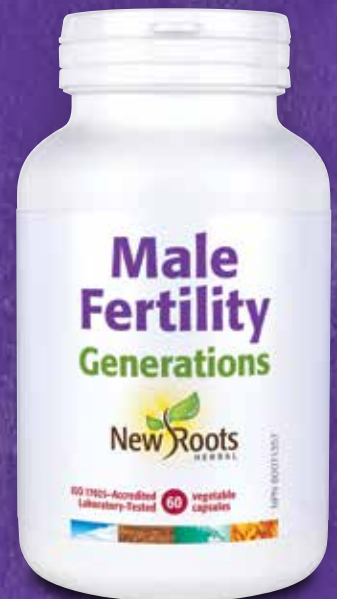
Dr. Colleen Hartwick is a licensed naturopathic physician practising on North Vancouver Island, BC, with a special interest in trauma as it plays a role in disease.

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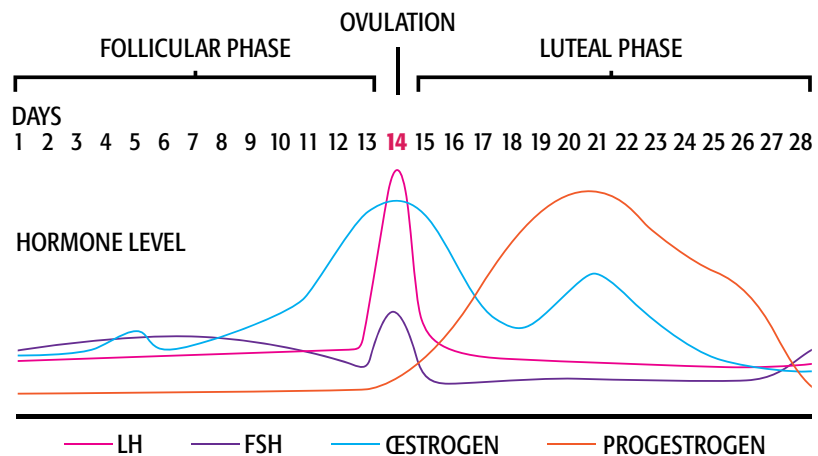
# Take Charge of PMS

## Holistic Strategies to Feel Better Every Month

by Jill Northrup, ND

Premenstrual syndrome, or PMS, is more than just a signal that a woman's period is approaching: it involves a range of recurring physical, behavioural, and emotional symptoms that occur cyclically before menstruation. The symptoms can include, among others, bloating, fatigue, weight gain, headaches, irritability, nervousness, sadness, mood swings, and sleep disturbances. PMS symptoms begin after ovulation (which occurs approximately on day 14 of the cycle) and resolves within a few days of menstruation starting. PMS symptoms can last anywhere from a couple of days up to two weeks. The timing of PMS symptoms corresponds to hormonal fluctuations that occur in the luteal or postovulatory phase of the cycle. While 50 to 80% of women report experiencing mild PMS, 30 to 40% experience symptoms significant enough to require treatment. The exact cause of PMS is not fully understood, but it is believed that some women are more sensitive to normal hormonal changes, which may explain the variation in symptom severity.

## Menstrual Cycle Hormone Level



## Lifestyle Tips for Relief

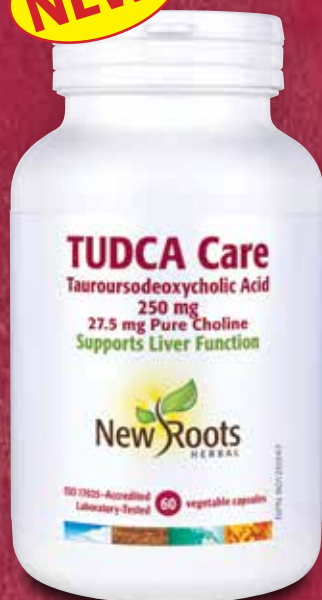
Various lifestyle strategies can help to manage these bothersome recurring symptoms. Regular exercise, regardless of the type, has been shown to reduce symptoms of pain, constipation, breast sensitivity, and emotional disturbances including anxiety and anger. Exercise increases feel-good endorphins to support a healthy mood, stimulates circulation which can ease muscle cramping and stress, and supports hormonal balance including reducing estradiol and increasing progesterone.

Diets high in fat, sugar, salt, processed foods, and soft drinks have been linked to an increased risk of PMS. In contrast, eating habits that emphasize fresh, unprocessed foods rich in essential micronutrients and omega-3 fatty acids—and that limit alcohol, simple carbohydrates, saturated fats, and excess salt—are associated with a reduced risk of PMS symptoms.



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## Supplement Smart

Many nutraceuticals, including herbs, vitamins, and minerals, can also help to manage PMS symptoms.

### *Vitex agnus-castus*

*Vitex agnus-castus*, otherwise known as chasteberry or chaste tree berry, is an herb that may help reduce symptoms of PMS. *Vitex* has prolactin-lowering activity while also supporting midluteal progesterone levels. Over a three-month period, *Vitex* has been found to significantly reduce self-rated PMS severity compared to placebo, including significantly reducing back pain, breast fullness, headaches, and irritability, while also improving sleep quality.



### Vitamin B<sub>6</sub>

Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> has also been shown to be useful for PMS. Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> plays a role in healthy mood balance by regulating production of serotonin and dopamine. B<sub>6</sub> also plays a role in water metabolism, with deficiencies of vitamin B<sub>6</sub> contributing to increased water retention, another common premenstrual symptom. Low levels of B<sub>6</sub> also contribute to elevated prolactin, a hormone associated with premenstrual symptoms. Daily supplementation with vitamin B<sub>6</sub> has been found to significantly reduce the physical and psychological symptoms of PMS compared to placebo, with dosages ranging from 40 mg to 250 mg daily over the course of 2–3 menstrual cycles.

### Calcium

Calcium supplementation is also a promising potential therapeutic for PMS. Calcium levels have been found to fluctuate with the cycle and tend to be lower amongst those who experience PMS. Supplementing with calcium carbonate, between 500 mg and 1,200 mg daily, contributes to significant reductions in PMS symptoms, including improvements in energy, mood, and water retention. One study found that combining calcium with vitamin B<sub>6</sub> was more effective at reducing PMS severity than calcium alone.



## Vitamin E

Vitamin E may also play a role in managing PMS symptoms. As a potent antioxidant, vitamin E supplementation can help reduce cyclical breast pain associated with PMS. One study compared the supplementation of vitamin E dosed at 200 IU/d versus 40 mg/d of vitamin B<sub>6</sub> versus placebo, for two months. Both vitamins E and B<sub>6</sub> contributed to significant reductions in breast pain, and vitamin E was found to be as effective as vitamin B<sub>6</sub>.



## Ginger

Cramping can also be a component of PMS for some women. Various studies have found ginger supplementation to be effective in reducing menstrual cramping, in doses ranging from 750 mg/d to 2,000 mg/d during the first 3–4 days of menstruation. Painful menstrual cramping without any underlying pathology is not entirely understood but is associated with an increased production of proinflammatory molecules which contribute to excessive uterine contractions. Ginger root contains various antioxidant and anti-inflammatory constituents which inhibit inflammatory molecules and disrupt pain signals. Another study found ginger to significantly reduce overall PMS severity (encompassing mood, behavioural, and physical symptoms) in comparison to placebo.



### Dr. Jill Northrup, ND

A Toronto-based naturopathic doctor with a passion for health and natural medicines, she values an evidence-based treatment approach and emphasizes patient education and preventative medicine in her practice.

[aspire-health.ca](http://aspire-health.ca)

## Palmitoylethanolamide

Palmitoylethanolamide (PEA), a fatty acid, is known for its anti-inflammatory and endocannabinoid-like effects. Palmitoylethanolamide has been studied in the context of pain control for various conditions, including menstrual pain. Used acutely with the onset of menstrual cramping, 300 mg of PEA can significantly reduce menstrual pain in comparison to placebo.

## Relief Is Within Reach

PMS is an incredibly common component of the menstrual cycle for many women. Various strategies, including lifestyle intervention and supplements, can help to reduce the severity of PMS symptoms. It is important to consult a physician if PMS symptoms change in their pattern or intensity, are present throughout a large portion of the cycle, or are accompanied by significant mood disruptions or pain.



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# Travel Smart

by Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

Summer is a great time for travel. I often get asked in my practice which supplements are best to bring along on summer adventures. While it depends on where you are going and what your needs are, there are a few helpful supplements to have on hand. Be sure to consult with your naturopathic doctor or other wellness-informed health-care practitioner to determine the best approach for you for your travels.

## Probiotics for "Tourista"

Probiotics can be a helpful backup when traveling abroad to places that are different from what you are used to. Places where you may encounter changes in climate, different cuisine, or unfamiliar cultural practices. These may be places associated with tourists getting digestive upset, diarrhea, vomiting, or other symptoms of traveller's diarrhea and have a whole new set of microbes that you may not be exposed to on a regular basis. To help prepare your microbiome and have lots of friendly microbes around to help balance the new guys, probiotics can be helpful.

A meta-analysis concluded that probiotics are indeed effective at preventing traveller's diarrhea. Various probiotics were investigated. One particular probiotic of note is *S. boulardii*, a yeast that can be found in fermented foods like kombucha, kefir, lychee, or mangosteen. If these foods are available or part of the food culture in the country you are traveling to, bonus! Try them out! Your taste buds and digestive system will probably thank you. For patients looking for a traveller's probiotic, I usually recommend looking for one that has a variety of enteric-coated probiotics that includes *S. boulardii* in the mix.

## Ginger for Nausea or Motion Sickness

As someone who has a history of motion sickness, this is a staple in my travel kit. Ginger is a great herb to help combat motion sickness or nausea and can even be quite calming for the anxious traveller. There are so many convenient ways to bring it along. Ginger chews tend to be my favourite method.

Acupressure is another great way to address nausea. Pressing on neiguan, an acupressure point located three fingers below the wrist crease, in between the two tendons known as the flexor carpi ulnaris and flexor carpi radialis, can be calming and help to relieve nausea. Ask your naturopathic doctor or acupuncturist to help you locate this point if you are not sure.



## Digestive Enzymes

Digestive enzymes are great to have on hand if you are planning on trying foods that you are not used to or foods that may be difficult to digest, especially if you are having larger meals. Another simple way to help support digestion while traveling is having freshly boiled hot water or tea with meals. Be sure to let it cool a bit first before drinking.



## Grapefruit Seed Extract, Oregano Oil, and Garlic

Grapefruit, oregano, and garlic are very handy to have around if you catch a stomach bug, cold, or flu while traveling. Each are reported to have antimicrobial properties and may help shorten the duration or intensity of an infection. It is important to note that these herbs in larger doses can interact with various medications or conditions. Talk to your naturopathic doctor about these antimicrobial fruit and herbs to determine which ones will most safely help you meet your health needs while you travel.

## Glutathione

Glutathione is a favourite for patients who want to support their liver while traveling for a smooth recovery upon returning, especially if they overindulged a little while on vacation. Glutathione is a great antioxidant that helps support the body's detoxification processes. Other antioxidants like vitamin C and vitamin E can also be helpful here.

Happy travels!



**Dr. Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND**

A Hamilton-based naturopathic doctor whose goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey.

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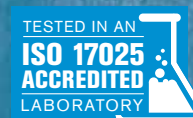
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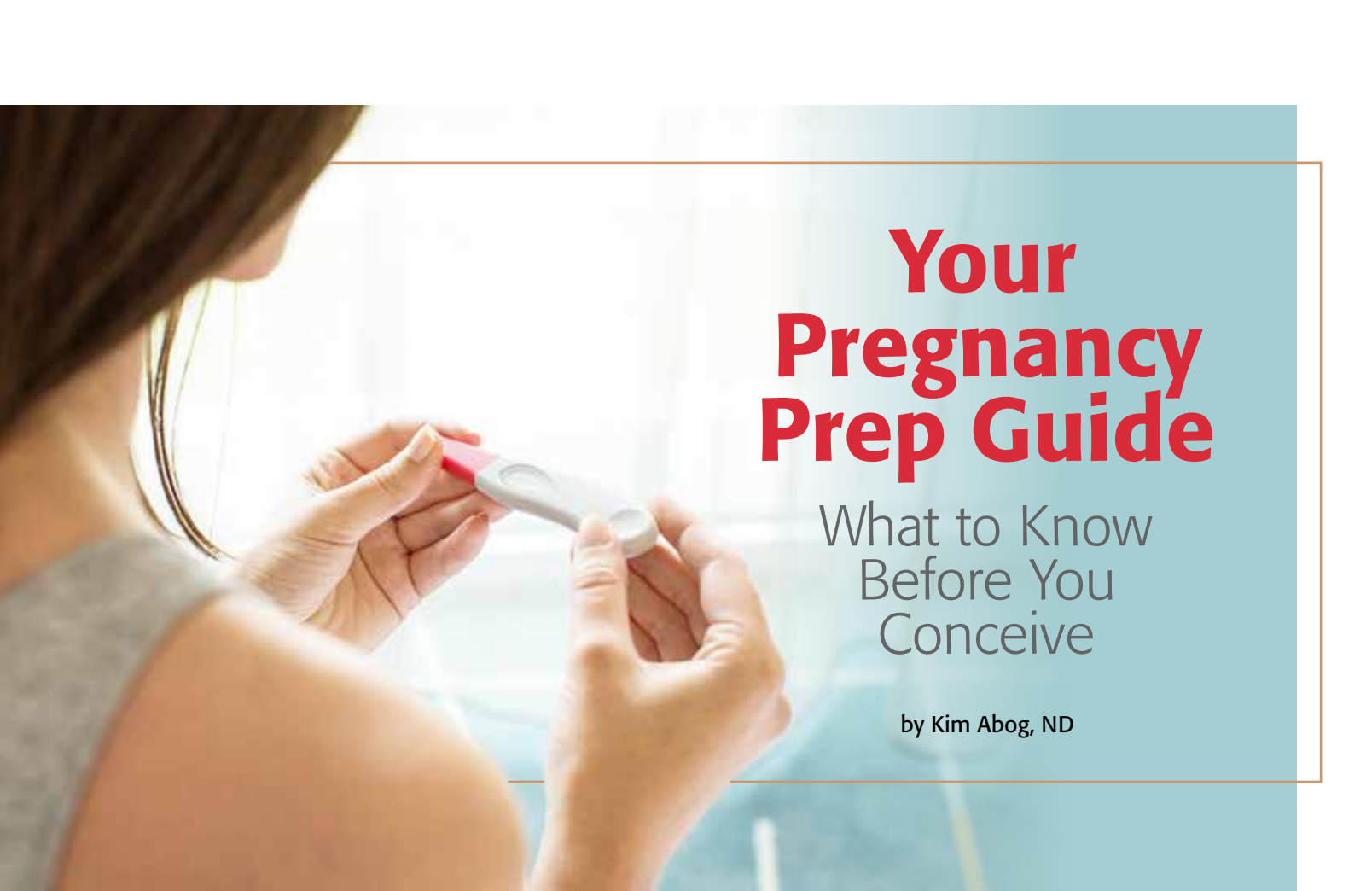
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A woman with long brown hair is shown from the back, holding a white pregnancy test stick with a red cap. She is looking at the result window. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting with light coming from a window.

# Your Pregnancy Prep Guide

## What to Know Before You Conceive

by Kim Abog, ND

Getting ready to grow your family is a wonderful, life-changing decision. Yet, what we hear in the media, including social media and in our everyday conversations, does not always reflect the diverse realities of trying to conceive. One's journey to parenthood may be more complex than others. For many, pregnancy preparation takes time, meticulous planning, and assistance from a qualified and caring health-care team. If you are thinking about conceiving, then you may want to take into consideration some factors that influence fertility and how you can support your body through preconception, pregnancy, postpartum, and beyond.

### Not Everyone Gets Pregnant Right Away

Generally, the chances of conceiving in any given month can range from 5% to 25%.

This can depend on a woman's age, health history, and other factors. It can take several months of trying, and for some, even longer. Health-care practitioners can also provide insights and assistance for women who may be exploring infertility treatments.

For context, infertility is defined as a disease, condition, or status that is characterized by any of the following:

- the inability to achieve a successful pregnancy based on a patient's medical, sexual, and reproductive history, age, physical findings, diagnostic testing, or any combination of those factors;
- the need for medical intervention, e.g., the use of donor gametes or embryos, in order to achieve a successful pregnancy either as an individual or with a partner; and
- for partners having regular, unprotected intercourse and without any known issues that may suggest impaired reproductive ability. In such case, medical evaluations should be initiated after 1 year (12 months) of actively trying to get pregnant when the female partner is under 35 years of age. When the female partner is over 35 years old, evaluations should begin earlier, typically after 6 months of trying to conceive.

Understandably, this timeline can surprise and cause a great deal of stress to partners trying to get pregnant. As well, stress itself can make things even harder, because it can also have a significant impact on the already complex nature and dynamics of reproductive processes.

## How PCOS Affects Fertility

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is one of the leading causes of infertility, affecting 1 in 10 women of reproductive age. PCOS disrupts ovulation, often causing irregular cycles or no periods at all. It's also associated with insulin resistance, elevated androgen levels, and inflammation—all of which can make conception more difficult.

Women with PCOS can still conceive with the right support. Managing diet, improving exercise routines, and introducing specific supplements (more on those later) can help regulate cycles and other disruptive symptoms, and more importantly facilitate ovulation.



## How Age Affects Egg Quality and Fertility

It is increasingly common to hear about people waiting until their 30s or even 40s to start a family. While reproductive technology is slowly but surely becoming well integrated into our health-care system, it is important to be aware of the reality that egg quality and ovarian reserve decline significantly over time. Lower egg quality can lead to reduced chances of fertilization and higher risks of miscarriages or chromosomal abnormalities. That does not mean pregnancy is not possible later in life: it just may require more time, monitoring, or fertility assistance.



## How Lifestyle Choices Impact Fertility

Body weight and fertility are closely linked. Being either underweight or overweight—especially when body composition and metabolic health are affected—can disrupt hormone metabolism, ovulation, and menstrual cycles. Obesity, in particular, is associated with insulin resistance and hormonal imbalances, both of which can reduce fertility. Women with higher body mass indexes (BMIs) may experience longer times to conception and a higher risk of pregnancy complications.

Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can also negatively impact egg and sperm quality. Lack of sleep, poor nutrition, and a sedentary lifestyle are not supportive either. Admittedly, it can be overwhelming for people to change their diet and lifestyle completely, but these changes do not need to be perfectly implemented. Any reduction of exposure to these factors and adopting a more balanced diet, while getting regular physical activity and having proper sleep, can still provide meaningful benefits to fertility in both partners.



## How Targeted Supplementation Can Boost Fertility

If you are preparing your body for pregnancy, certain nutrients can provide important support. Do consult with your health-care practitioners before implementing any new supplement protocol, to ensure the following recommendations are appropriate for your unique health experiences.



### myo-Inositol

Often recommended for women with PCOS, *myo*-inositol helps improve insulin sensitivity and promotes regular ovulation. Studies have shown that it can enhance ovarian function and even improve egg quality.

### Coenzyme Q<sub>10</sub> (CoQ<sub>10</sub>)

This antioxidant is crucial for mitochondrial function and is especially helpful for women over 35 years of age. CoQ<sub>10</sub> has been linked to improved egg quality and better outcomes during fertility treatments, and it reduced the risk of preeclampsia in women at high risk for the condition.

### Folate or Folic Acid

Folate (or folic acid, a synthetic form of folate) is essential for preventing neural-tube defects (NTDs) in the developing fetus in early pregnancy. NTDs can be severe birth defects of the brain and spine, including conditions such as spina bifida. Folate also plays a broader role in fetal development and may help reduce the risk of other birth anomalies, including cleft lip and cleft palate. In certain cases, women who are in the intermediate- to high-risk categories for NTDs may be advised to take high-dose folic acid. These are women who have had either previous pregnancies affected by NTDs, a family history of NTDs, or insulin-dependent diabetes, or who take certain epilepsy medications.



### Prenatal Multivitamins

Prenatal vitamins and minerals are not just for pregnancy—they are for before, during, and after birth. A high-quality prenatal supplement should include iron, calcium, vitamin D, iodine, DHA, and folate or folic acid. These nutrients support fertility, fetal development, and postpartum recovery.

### Your Path, Your Pace

Preparing for pregnancy is more than just picking baby names. It is a physical, emotional, and complex journey that deserves care, patience, and accurate information.

Whether you are just starting your journey or already facing challenges, know that you are not alone and you are not doing anything wrong. Each body is different, and sometimes it takes time, a few changes, or some extra support to conceive.

The key is to listen to your body, make informed decisions, and reach out to professionals when needed. Fertility is not always a straight line—but it is a path worth preparing for.



**Dr. Kim Abog, ND**

Dr. Kim Abog is a registered naturopathic doctor and doula based in Toronto, Ontario. She has a special interest in fertility and reproductive health. She helps people by facilitating health-management plans with them, connecting them to evidence-informed integrative health solutions, and helping them thrive.

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# Male Fertility

## Supporting Sperm Health

by Kim Abog, ND

When conversations around fertility arise, much of the focus tends to be on the women who carry the pregnancies. While egg quality and ovulation are crucial pieces of the puzzle, fertility is a shared responsibility—and male factor infertility is just as real and important to address. Sperm-factor issues contribute to around 40–50% of infertility cases in couples trying to conceive, and so these issues should never be minimized nor undertreated.

Whether you are planning for pregnancy with your partner or just want to better understand your reproductive health, let's unpack the often-overlooked issues that affect sperm and how someone who is going through sperm-related fertility challenges can get help.

### Male Factor Infertility Is Not Uncommon, nor Shameful

Male-factor or sperm-factor infertility typically relates to issues with sperm count, motility (movement), morphology (shape), or the sperm's ability to reach and fertilize an egg. Your health-care practitioner can also investigate whether there's a medical cause, like varicoceles (enlarged veins in the scrotum), hormonal dysregulation, or past infections. Other times, sperm issues may be affected by something that's less obvious, medically speaking.

And while the words “low sperm count” or “poor motility” might sound alarming, they are more common than most people realize, and the good news is, in many cases, they are treatable.



### Lifestyle and Environment Can Affect Sperm

There is truth to the statements often made by health-care practitioners that “sperm cells are sensitive.” Sperm health is heavily influenced by lifestyle habits and environmental exposures. Unlike egg reserves, which, as far as we know, are fixed from birth, sperm cells are generated continuously, with a full cycle of sperm production taking about 64–72 days. That means what you do today can impact fertility in just a few months.

Here are five of the most important factors that can affect sperm quality.

#### Smoking and Alcohol

Tobacco use has been linked to decreased sperm concentration and motility, as well as increased DNA damage in sperm cells. Similarly, heavy or frequent alcohol consumption can lower testosterone levels and reduce sperm production.

## Chronic Stress

Long-term stress can disrupt hormone levels, particularly testosterone and luteinizing hormone (LH). Both are vital for healthy sperm development. Stress can also reduce libido and impact overall reproductive performance. Stress may influence overall metabolism, which may also have indirect impacts on reproductive processes.

## Heat Exposure

Sperm thrives at temperatures slightly below body temperature, which is between 36.5 °C and 37.5 °C. Frequent exposure to heat—for example hot tubs, saunas, or placing laptops directly in your lap—can impair sperm production. Wearing tight underwear or pants may also raise scrotal temperature enough to make a difference in sperm quality over time.



## Plastics, EDCs, and Xenoestrogens

Certain chemicals found in plastics, like bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates, are considered endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDC), or more specifically, are xenoestrogens—substances that mimic estrogen in the body. These can alter endocrine function and have been associated with reduced sperm quality and testicular dysfunction. You may want to consider switching to glass or stainless steel for your frequently used containers and avoiding microwaving plastic to reduce your exposure to EDCs in general.

## Diet and Exercise

A diet high in processed foods, refined sugars, and *trans* fats can negatively affect sperm quality, while a diet rich in whole foods, antioxidants, and healthy fats seem to have beneficial actions on improving sperm markers. Regular moderate exercise helps maintain healthy testosterone levels, but overtraining, especially without adequate recovery, can potentially do the opposite.



## Nutrients That Can Support Male Fertility

Just like there are prenatal supplements for ovulating women, there are specific nutrients and nutraceuticals that support sperm quality, count, and motility. It is important to consult with your health-care practitioner before implementing any new supplement protocol, to ensure that the following four recommendations are appropriate for your unique health experiences.

### Coenzyme Q<sub>10</sub> (CoQ<sub>10</sub>)

This antioxidant plays a critical role in energy production and protects sperm from oxidative damage. Supplementing with CoQ<sub>10</sub> has been shown to improve sperm motility and concentration.

### Zinc

Zinc is vital for testosterone production and is found in high concentrations in the male reproductive system. Deficiency in zinc levels has been linked to low sperm count and poor motility. Foods rich in zinc include oysters, beef, pumpkin seeds, and legumes.

### Acetyl-L-Carnitine (ALC)

This amino acid is important for sperm metabolism and motility. Studies have found that ALC supplementation can enhance the movement of sperm, especially in men with low motility (asthenozoospermia).

### Ashwagandha

This adaptogenic herb has been used in traditional medicine for centuries to support vitality and stress resilience. Modern research shows that ashwagandha may help improve testosterone levels, sperm count, and motility, especially in men under chronic stress.





## It Is Never Too Early nor Too Late to Seek Help

If you have been trying to conceive for several months without success, it is a good idea for you and your partner to get evaluated—yes, both of you. A semen analysis is a simple, noninvasive test that can provide insight into sperm count, movement, size, and shape.

Men who experience symptoms like low libido, erectile dysfunction, or have a history of testicular injury or infection should also consider getting a fertility evaluation earlier. Addressing potential issues sooner rather than later can make a big difference in family-building options down the line.

## Fertility Is a Team Effort

Reproductive health is not just a one-sided issue—it is a shared journey. Whether you are just beginning your fertility journey or exploring ways to optimize sperm health, know that small, intentional changes in lifestyle and nutrition can make a meaningful impact. Supporting male fertility is not about perfection. It is about awareness, proactive choices, and, sometimes, a little supplementation. By taking care of your body and mind today, you are investing in your family's future tomorrow.



**Dr. Kim Abog, ND**

Dr. Kim Abog is a registered naturopathic doctor and doula based in Toronto, Ontario. She has a special interest in fertility and reproductive health. She helps people by facilitating health-management plans with them, connecting them to evidence-informed integrative health solutions, and helping them thrive.

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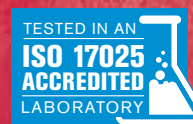
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# Summer Mindfulness

by Inga Bohnekamp

What do the words “mindfulness” and “meditation” mean to you? Well, if you are like a lot of people, meditation might conjure up images of sitting on a cushion for hours and, for some, mindfulness seems too time-consuming or too difficult to incorporate into their routine. They conclude that neither are for them nor their kids.

My hope is that the practices suggested in this article will make a convert out of you and bring a lot of simple joy to your life and to those you share these practices with.

Summer is the perfect occasion to get together with family and friends and explore some unique and playful mindfulness practices outdoors. Not only can these methods help anchor you in the present moment, but they can also be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age.

You can meditate anywhere and anytime by simply bringing yourself back to the present moment. For many, some sort of anchor—an object, a movement, your breath, a scent, a sound—can help.

In these mindfulness practices, we will focus specifically on nature—a fun twist for taking your practice outside and into real life. Anyone can do these, so get your kids, family, and friends involved, and share some fun mindful moments together whilst enjoying the outdoors and connecting to nature. These techniques may leave you feeling happy, light, and more connected to nature and to those around you. You can keep a journal to recall how each experience felt, which was more meaningful for you, and how to adapt it for different seasons and circumstances.

**Walk barefoot in the grass or sand.** Walk slowly and focus on feeling the ground, the different textures, and the temperature of it beneath your feet. Notice which part of your foot touches the ground first as you take a step and which part hits the ground last. Think about how you feel.

**Hug a tree!** Find a big tree; pick intuitively. What are the qualities that stand out for you? Is it large and sturdy, deeply rooted into the ground? Is it smaller or younger? Is it bendable, moving with the breeze of the summer wind? What does its bark look like? And its leaves? Which colours, shapes, and textures can you identify? What was it that drew you to exactly this tree? Do not overthink it; just mindfully notice and observe whatever comes up. Finally, give your tree a big hug, and notice how you feel.

**Engage your five senses**—play a game of sharing with each other: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste. No overthinking: there is no right or wrong.

**Play “paint a picture in your head”:** Have everyone select a favourite object outdoors. It can be a tree, a flower, a plant of any kind, a leaf, or the lake. It can also be man-made, yet found outside; a boat, a colourful beach towel, a



bottle of sunscreen, a shoe—anything. Then, have everyone describe their object to the rest of the group. Other participants can close their eyes and let their imagination roll with this or follow along gazing at the selected object, as if they wanted everyone to paint a picture of that object. The goal is to be very mindful and focus one's attention on the object as much as possible and really detect and describe all the tiny details as well as the big picture. You will be surprised at what nuances you will suddenly detect once you put your mindful attention on the object—even if you have picked an object (like your shoe) which you are familiar with.



**Wishing on an evening star**—who says wishes and intention setting are reserved to New Year's Eve? Prepare colourful cut-out cardboard stars and write or draw a heartfelt wish on it. Share with each other or keep your summer-night star wish to yourself. Bring your star home with you to create a beautiful “starry sky of wishes” collage together on a big colourful sheet of cardboard.

**Close your eyes and take a slow deep breath of fresh air, filling your lungs and your belly.** Exhale very slowly, letting even longer breath out. If you want, you can imagine breathing in all that summery joy, and breathing out any big or small worries, heaviness, or tension. Repeat a few times. Smile. Notice how you feel right here, then open your eyes once you are ready.



**Inga Bohnkamp**

Inga holds a diploma in Psychology with post-graduate training in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Dialectic Behavioural Therapy, and Mindfulness. She is a graduate from the Strala Yoga (200hr) Ready to Lead Yoga Teacher Training and Tai Chi with Tara Stiles and Mike Taylor, as well as a certified yoga instructor for children and adolescents.

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## Summer Rainbow Tortellini Salad

A vibrant and fresh summer salad that perfectly works for picnics and feeding a crowd or meal prep for a busy week.

### Ingredients

- 400 g red, green, and yellow tortellini, any filling will do
- Small basket Cherry tomatoes
- 1 tin (418 ml or 14.75 oz) of corn
- 2 cups arugula
- 8 oz (225 g) pancetta cubes (leave out if you prefer a vegetarian version)
- ½ cup olives, any kind
- ½ cup Pine nuts
- ¼ cup basil pesto
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Fresh basil for garnish
- Salt and pepper, and a squeeze of fresh lemon to taste

### Instructions

Heat a nonstick pan over low to medium heat and gently roast the pine nuts until fragrant and golden. Transfer the nuts to a plate and let cool.

In the same pan, heat olive oil and fry the pancetta cubes until crispy.

While the pancetta is frying, heat up a large pot of water to boil, then add salt and the tortellini. Cook according to package directions.

Wash, drain, and chop up all the veggies and herbs. Leave a few of the basil leaves intact for decoration.

Grate the fresh Parmesan cheese.

Mix basil pesto with a few spoonfuls of olive oil plus salt, pepper, and freshly squeezed lemon to taste to create the dressing.

Now stir the tortellini, pesto sauce, pancetta, veggies, half of the pine nuts, and half of the cheese in a big bowl—I like to use a big blue ceramic bowl for a nice colour contrast—and mix well.

Cover with plastic wrap and let it sit in the fridge for a few hours.

Before serving, decorate the pasta salad with additional sprinkles of Parmesan, pine nuts, and basil leaves.

Enjoy outdoors with family and friends, or for a happy and colourful nourishing boost on your lunch break.



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## Roasted Carrot Rosée

### Pasta

- 500 g pasta of your preference, cooked as per instructions

### Roasted Carrot Rosée Ingredients

- 4 large carrots, peeled and cut into strips (about 2 cups total)
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 10 garlic cloves
- 2 cups reserved pasta water for desired rosée consistency
- 3 tbsp. New Roots Herbal's Beef Bone Broth Protein
- 2 tbsp. New Roots Herbal's Heart Smart Olive Oil
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp. nutritional yeast
- 1 tsp. Himalayan sea salt
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- A pinch of chili flakes

### Sizzled Almond and Sage Topping Ingredients

- ½ cup sliced or crushed almonds
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 20–30 small sage leaves (or 10–15 large leaves cut in half or thirds)
- ¼ tsp. Himalayan sea salt

### Instructions

Toss carrots and garlic with a tablespoon of olive oil and teaspoon of sea salt, and spread evenly over parchment-lined baking dish. Convection-bake at 400 °F (205 °C) for approximately 25 minutes until fork-tender. Transfer contents (including any residual juices) to a food processor.

Cook the pasta according to package instructions. Several minutes into cooking, remove approximately 2 cups of pasta water. Purée the roasted carrots and garlic with the pasta water. The finished sauce should be thick, but pourable: Err on the side of too thick, since you can always add more pasta water once combined with pasta. Transfer the finished sauce to a large deep sauté pan, add remaining ingredients, and stir over low heat until uniform.

Warm olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the sliced almonds and sage leaves, then sizzle and stir until fragrant. When done, transfer the almonds and sage leaves to a small plate lined with paper towel and sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon Himalayan salt.

When the pasta is ready, strain and add to sauce. Gently toss the pasta with the sauce over low heat. Add more pasta water if necessary for desired consistency. Transfer to serving platter, and top with the sizzled almonds and sage.

Serves six.

**Flourish Original Recipe**

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## Talapeño Cornbread

The ultimate side dish for BBQ! This original recipe was done with a 4" deep (10 cm), 7" × 10" (18 × 25 cm) casserole dish, and the addition of plant sterols lends a heart-healthy take on this southern classic.

### Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- 2 tins (12 oz / 341 ml) creamed corn
- 1 tin (14.75 oz / 418 ml) sweet corn kernels, broiled or air-fried, for topping
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeño, sliced thin and seeds removed; reserve for topping
- 1½ cups (10 oz) sharp cheddar, grated; reserve half for top
- ½ cup yellow corn meal
- ½ cup flour
- 3 tbsp. butter, melted
- 3 tsp. New Roots Herbal's Plant Sterols
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- ½ tsp. freshly ground pepper

### Instructions

Char corn kernels on BBQ; air frying is an alternative option.

Coat casserole with butter, whisk ingredients in a mixing bowl (except for 5 oz of cheese, jalapeño slices, and corn kernels), then pour into casserole dish.

Top with roasted corn kernels, jalapeño slices, and reserved cheese. Bake for approximately 40 minutes at 375 °F (190 °C). Cooking time will vary with depth of dish.

Remove from oven and let stand for 10 minutes.

Serves six generous portions.

**Flourish Original Recipe**

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# AskGord



*I've hit menopause and was told to take a calcium supplement to prevent osteoporosis. Could my husband benefit as well?*

Most definitely; just as cardiovascular disease has been typecast for men, osteoporosis has been labelled a women's disease. Women and men each have their own particular hormone which shields them from loss of bone density. The drastic drop-off in estrogen production following menopause is the major factor contributing to the higher incidence of osteoporosis for women. For men, the reduction in testosterone is more gradual, which leaves it often undiagnosed. The fact men have a shorter life expectancy further reduces the likelihood of a diagnosis; however, according to statistics from the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation, one in four men over 50 will suffer an osteoporosis-related fragility fracture.

Choose bovine-sourced calcium in the form of microcrystalline hydroxyapatite (MCHA), as it is recognized as for its resemblance with the mineral matrix of bone tissue. Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>, biologically active vitamin K<sub>2</sub>, and magnesium are among the nutrients to maintain strong bones. Look for these as key ingredients in a bone-health formula you can both benefit from.

*Ever since a major breakout during high-school finals, I've had cold sores emerge at the most inopportune times. Any suggestions to get rid of these, other than expensive over-the-counter creams?*

Cold sores and fever blisters around the mouth result from breakouts caused by type 1 herpes simplex virus (HSV-1). Once you've caught it, the virus remains in your system. Approximately 50 to 80 percent of North American adults live with it. Outbreaks can be triggered by stress, hormonal changes, prolonged exposure to sunlight or extreme cold, after a cold or flu lowers your immune response, or as a side effect from some medications.

Cold-sore creams feature synthetic ingredients to curb the spread of the virus, with some containing numbing agents to temporarily relieve pain. A natural alternative is L-lysine, an essential amino acid central to protein synthesis and collagen formation. It inhibits normal replication of the virus causing cold sores, thus shortening the duration of an outbreak and reducing recurrence. Avoid L-arginine-rich foods like nuts, pumpkin seeds, various legumes, and chocolate, as this amino acid helps the herpes virus multiply.

These products may not be right for you. Always read and follow the label.  
Content provided is for informational purposes only, and does not intend to substitute professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

You have a question you would like answered about your health and supplements? Gord would be happy to answer them! We could even feature them in this page if others could benefit from the information.

Reach out to him at [facebook.com/newrootsherbal](https://facebook.com/newrootsherbal) or call 1 800 268-9486 ext. 237



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