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Dietary guidelines: Post menopausal

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Menopause brings a multitude of changes for women. It is a time when she needs to protect herself against various health risks, make positive, healthy lifestyle decisions. Menopause is the cessation of menstruation for 12 consecutive months. This marks the end of a woman's reproductive years. It occurs earlier in women who use tobacco, are heavy smokers and those who live at a higher altitude. Women who have a hysterectomy will experience instant menopause. Symptoms of hormonal fluctuations are hot flushes, tachycardia, mood swings, urinary incontinence, depression, decreased libido and vaginal dryness. The most important health issues are the increased risks of osteoporosis, heart disease and weight gain. Some of the chronic symptoms of menopause are CAD, osteoporosis and genital cancers like cancer of uterus, breast and ovaries. They may also have chronic urinary tract infection & endocrine disorders like thyroid and parathyroid disorders and diabetes. Women's diets are often low in iron and calcium hence foods rich in these nutrients & vitamin D are important. Enough fiber, plant based isoflavones plenty of water and cutting back on foods high in fats, sugars & salt and being physically active can help prevent or ease certain conditions that may develop during and after menopause. The two diets that focus on maintaining blood lipids to reduce risk for heart disease are The Heart Healthy Diet & Therapeutic Lifestyles Changes (TLC) Diet while Dash Diet maintains healthy blood pressure. Therefore, diet and life style modification are the corner stone for a healthy qualitative life.

Biography

Nafeesa Ahmed is the Director of Nutrition & Lifestyle Management with Zulekha Health Care Group, Clinical Dietitian and Life Style Management Consultant. She has more than 18 years of hospital experience. She has been actively involved in conducting presentations on healthy eating for heart, diabetes kidney and other diseases during clinical symposiums hosted by the hospital. She was invited twice to speak at the Annual Convention of the Indian Dietetic Association, India. She has contributed nutrition-related advice during interviews and published articles about food and health for local newspapers.

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