



recalibrate.

A FUNCTIONAL NUTRITION TOOLKIT FOR PERI- & EARLY MENOPAUSE

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A Note Before You Begin

This toolkit is for anyone starting to notice changes that might point to perimenopause — shifts in cycle, sleep, mood, or energy — whether you're just beginning to wonder, or well into it.

Every body's timeline here is different. This toolkit is built around noticing your own pattern first, and making the smallest useful adjustment — not applying someone else's protocol.

This toolkit is educational content from a functional nutrition perspective. It is not medical advice, and it isn't intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any condition. It is not a substitute for the guidance of your healthcare provider.

If you are currently managing a diagnosed hormonal or health condition, are pregnant or nursing, or are under the care of a provider, please consult with them before making significant changes to your diet, lifestyle, or supplement routine.

The optional AI Thinking Partner prompts throughout are offered as reflection aids. Responses generated by AI tools are not medical advice and shouldn't be treated as such — they're a way to think out loud, not a second opinion.

Every body's perimenopause timeline, pattern, and pace is genuinely different. This toolkit offers a structure for noticing your own — not a universal protocol to apply on top of it.

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Module 1: What's Actually Happening

Perimenopause isn't a single event — it's a transition, and for most people it starts years before a period ever gets skipped. The earliest driver isn't falling estrogen. It's ovulation becoming less consistent.

Each cycle you don't ovulate, your body doesn't build the progesterone that normally comes after. Estrogen keeps doing its usual rise-and-fall — sometimes even swinging higher than before — but progesterone quietly drops out of the picture more and more often. The result isn't “too much estrogen” so much as not enough progesterone to balance it.

This is why perimenopause can feel less like a gradual fade and more like turbulence: heavier or lighter periods, cycles that shift length, mood or sleep that seems to have a mind of its own — sometimes years before hot flashes show up at all.

There's no universal timeline here. Some people notice shifts in their late 30s, others not until their late 40s. The pattern, pace, and dominant symptoms are genuinely different from body to body — which is exactly why this toolkit starts with noticing your own pattern, not applying someone else's.

Module 2: Estrogen Dominance — Signs & Symptoms

Estrogen dominance gets talked about like a diagnosis, but it's more accurate to call it a ratio problem. It doesn't always mean your estrogen is high — it means estrogen is acting disproportionately loud compared to progesterone, whether because progesterone dropped, estrogen isn't clearing efficiently, or both.

Common Contributors

- Ovulation becoming irregular (less progesterone made overall)
- Chronic stress (the body prioritizes cortisol production over progesterone — they share a building block)
- Slower estrogen clearance through the liver or gut

Two more contributors, the full Commonly Reported Signs list, and the module's closing note continue from here in the full toolkit.

Module 3: Symptom Inventory

Not a diagnostic list — a noticing list. Check what's showing up for you, not what “should” be showing up. Most people recognize a handful of these, not all of them, and that's normal.

Cycle & Reproductive

- ☐ Periods heavier, lighter, longer, shorter, or less predictable
- ☐ Spotting between periods
- ☐ New or worsening PMS

Sleep & Energy, Mood & Cognition, Body & Metabolism, and Temperature Regulation — each with its own fillable checklist — plus the closing reflection prompt, continue from here in the full toolkit.

Module 6: Lifestyle

Starting With Sleep

Sleep gets its own starting point here for a reason: it's often one of the earliest disruptions in perimenopause — sometimes showing up years before anything else does — and it sits at the center of nearly every loop this toolkit has already covered.

Progesterone has a natural calming effect through its interaction with GABA. As progesterone becomes less consistent, that built-in “off switch” gets less reliable. Estrogen, meanwhile, helps regulate body temperature and the brain's internal clock — so as it fluctuates, night sweats and a shifted sleep-wake rhythm can follow.

- Consistent sleep/wake timing (matters more than total hours for stabilizing circadian rhythm)
- A cool sleep environment (temperature regulation is already under strain)
- Steady blood sugar in the evening — a dip overnight can spike cortisol and wake you
- Morning light exposure to help anchor the circadian rhythm

***Where does your sleep break down — falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking too early?
What's happening in the hour before bed most nights?***

Movement, Stress & Blood Sugar, the Eat-Less, Cardio-More Trap callout, and the Other Supportive Practices table (CBT, clinical hypnosis, pelvic floor therapy, and more) continue from here in the full toolkit.

Module 7: Food as a Lever

Everything this toolkit has covered so far — inflammation, the gut-hormone connection, blood sugar — runs through what you eat every day. Food isn't a separate track from hormone balance; for most of these systems, it's one of the most direct levers you have.

Common Inflammatory Contributors

Research doesn't point to one universal culprit for every body — but these show up often enough in the inflammation and blood-sugar research to be worth noticing in your own pattern.

- Added sugar and refined carbs — the same blood-sugar spike-and-crash cycle from Module 6, which also feeds inflammation
- Alcohol — can worsen hot flashes and fragment sleep, especially close to bedtime
- Gluten and dairy — not inflammatory for most people on their own, but declining estrogen can increase gut permeability and lower lactase activity, so new sensitivity sometimes shows up for the first time during this transition

Supportive Foods to Build Around, the Food Rules callout, and two reflection prompts continue from here — along with Module 8's supplements table, the full Fillable Exploration (Notice, Journal, Connect, Explore, Reassess), the Food & Pattern Journal, AI Thinking Partner prompts, and Renee's full worked example.

This Is Just the Beginning

You've seen the starting point. Here's what's waiting inside the full toolkit.

Module 1: What's Actually Happening

The full orientation to perimenopause — ovulation, progesterone, and why this transition can feel like turbulence rather than a gradual fade.

Module 2: Estrogen Dominance — Signs & Symptoms

The complete list of common contributors and commonly reported signs, sharing a page with Module 1.

Module 3: Symptom Inventory

A full fillable checklist across five categories — cycle, sleep, mood, body, and temperature — plus a reflection prompt.

Module 4: The Inflammation Connection

How estrogen regulates inflammation, the Bloodwork: A Snapshot, Not the Full Picture callout, and two reflection prompts.

Module 5: The Gut-Hormone Connection

The estrobolome, beta-glucuronidase, and why an aggressive “estrogen detox” can backfire.

Module 6: Lifestyle

Sleep, movement, stress, and blood sugar as one connected system, the Eat-Less, Cardio-More Trap callout, and a table of other supportive practices from CBT to cold exposure.

Module 7: Food as a Lever

Common inflammatory contributors, supportive foods to build around, and two reflection prompts.

Module 8: Common Natural Supplements

A full evidence table across seven commonly explored supplements — what they're for, what the evidence shows, and what to watch for.

Module 9: Every Body, Different Timeline

The philosophy underneath the whole toolkit — why pre-empting symptoms that haven't shown up can do more harm than good.

Module 10: The Fillable Exploration

Notice, Journal, Connect, Explore, Reassess — including the full 5-day Food & Pattern Journal, the Clearing the Muddy Waters callout, and Watch and Reassess.

Module 11: Using AI as a Thinking Partner

Five ready-to-copy AI prompts, one for each part of the Fillable Exploration plus food patterns, and a full-page notes field.

Throughout

Renee's complete worked example, module by module, and a closing reflection to carry forward.

Delivered as a fillable PDF — write directly into your toolkit, on screen or in print.

Get the full toolkit

Available soon at justtheg.com/nutrition

Thank you for taking this first step toward a practice that's truly your own.

— **monica g.**

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