

A Fresh Focus - The Menopause Tool Box

Ever since I took up the baton and decided to raise awareness of menopause, providing support and advice, I've challenged the status quo - women are very good at challenges and I see no difference, here!

I would like you to think of this whole e-learning course as your Menopause Tool Box - your MTB! And I recommend that you refer to your resources often.

So, more information for your Menopause Tool Box, Top Tips!

1. **Drink plenty of water:** You should be drinking (at room temperature, please, we don't want any 'brain freeze'), approximately 2 litres per day, especially a glass of water on waking, will not only improve health but it will reduce constipation. Try it yourself! Why spend a fortune on laxatives when the real answer is in drinking plenty of water. I was given this tip by a health practitioner a few years ago and I've never looked back. I used to be dogged with constipation month after month, for about a week, just prior to menstruation - always relying on laxatives. When it came to peri-menopause, it got worse! No more lunar cycles, you see... but I wasn't happy about relying on laxatives, either. And then I met a lovely health practitioner who told me about drinking a glass full of water on waking. Brilliant!
2. **The Pelvic Floor:** It's our friend, oestrogen deficiency, again... not only affecting the muscles of the pelvic floor but also causing vaginal atrophy (and painful sex). This is one of those instances where the phrase 'use it or lose it' really does make sense! Please introduce women to seek out instruction on pelvic floor exercises. They can be done anywhere, in the car, walking, washing-up (!) - anywhere because you are exercising internal muscles, nobody knows you are doing it. Apparently, it can improve your sex life, too.
 - Please, please, please encourage women to take charge of their pelvic floor as failure to recognise this vital organ will result in stress incontinence! I used to think that stress incontinence meant that you became incontinent due to your own stress levels. No! The muscles are experiencing the stress of not having enough oestrogen to function properly and the result is leakage. Please ensure women are made aware of this. Before exercising or doing anything like running (for the train or bus) or jumping, skipping with the kids or grandchildren, etc.

because you WILL start to have accidental leakage and it is very embarrassing.
Take it from one who knows!

- There are also those occasions when you are dying for a pee (excuse the vernacular but it works well for this description); it can come on quite suddenly, you cross your legs and are not sure you're going to make it to the toilet. Here's a tip (only works if you're wearing flat shoes as it's too difficult to do when you're wearing heels)... clench your toes. You may end up looking like a duck walking to the toilet but it does work!

3. **Personal Action Plan**: I thought it would be a good idea to share the Personal Action Plan with you - It's included in your resources and is self-explanatory but helps you focus on what's really bothering you and when we get to discussing solutions, later on in this course, these can be added as personal steps to take to help resolve or lessen the impact of debilitating symptoms of menopause.

