



FREE GUIDE

20 THINGS I WISH EVERY WOMAN OVER 35 KNEW ABOUT PERIMENOPAUSE

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Before we begin

What a 10-minute GP appointment can't cover – but this guide can

When my own perimenopause began (much earlier than I expected) I had a clinical psychology degree, almost a decade of experience, and still felt completely lost. I left appointments feeling unheard, so I searched online, applied for Functional Medicine training, and eventually worked it out mostly on my own, one piece at a time.

What finally helped was not a single answer or the perfect supplement. It was simply understanding what was happening in my body, why my mind felt different, and who I was in the process of becoming.

These twenty things are what I wish someone had given me at the start. You do not need a medical background to use any of them. You do not need a prescription for any of them. You just need someone to finally explain them clearly – and that is what this guide is for.

With love, Dr Kamila

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 01–05 Your body & hormones
- 06–10 Your brain & nervous system
- 11–15 Your energy & daily rhythms
- 16–20 Your mind, identity & becoming
- + Where to go next

01

Your morning meal is a hormonal message

Every morning, your body produces a natural wave of cortisol – the hormone that helps you wake up and get going. This is completely normal. But if you skip breakfast or eat something with very little protein, your blood sugar becomes unstable for the rest of the day. The result is low energy, mood dips, and often that awful energy crash in the afternoon. Aim for around 25–30 grams of protein within your first 2 hours of being up. Eggs, Greek yoghurt, or a protein-rich smoothie all count.

What you eat in the morning sets the tone for your hormones all day long.

02

Vitamin D works more like a hormone than a vitamin

Most people think of vitamin D as something you take for your bones. But it actually behaves like a hormone in the body – it affects your immune system, your mood, your blood sugar, and your bone health all at once. In the UK, a level above 50 nmol/L is usually considered adequate. But many specialists who work with women in midlife aim for a level of around 100–150 nmol/L for you to actually feel the difference. Next time you have a blood test, ask for the exact number – not just a yes or no.

Being told your vitamin D is normal does not always mean it is at the level where you will feel well.

03

Low iron can look completely normal on paper

There is a protein in your blood called ferritin that stores iron. The normal range on most lab tests starts as low as 31 and goes to over 300 – which means a woman with a level of 35 can be told everything is fine, while she is exhausted, losing hair, struggling to concentrate, and always feeling cold. Most practitioners who specialise in women's health aim for a ferritin level of at least 70, or even above 150, before a woman starts to feel genuinely well. If you have never been told your actual number, ask for it.

Low iron is one of the most common things missed in women going through perimenopause – and one of the most fixable.

04

Magnesium helps you sleep in a way that melatonin cannot

Melatonin tells your body what time it is – it is a clock signal, not a sleeping pill. It isn't designed as a nightly sleep aid – and in the UK it is prescription-only. Taking it every night can actually make your body less sensitive to it over time. Magnesium glycinate works differently. It calms the nervous system, helps the brain switch off, and improves the quality of your sleep rather than just making you feel drowsy. Around 300mg before bed is what most integrative doctors recommend. It does not cause dependency and it does not leave you foggy in the morning.

If you are lying awake at night, your nervous system may need calming more than your melatonin needs topping up.

Want to go deeper? Read my guide [Sleep in Perimenopause](#).

05

Zinc quietly affects your mood, your libido, and your cycle

Zinc is one of the nutrients that women are most commonly low in – and one of the least likely to be tested. It plays a direct role in producing progesterone, which is the calming, balancing hormone that tends to drop first in perimenopause. When zinc is low, it can show up as a flat mood, reduced sex drive, hair thinning, and PMS that nobody has been able to explain. A simple blood test can check your levels. It is worth asking for.

Sometimes the thing affecting how you feel most is something nobody has ever thought to check.

YOUR BRAIN & NERVOUS SYSTEM

06–10

06

Creatine is not just for athletes – it feeds your brain too

Creatine is a natural compound that your body uses for energy. Most people associate it with muscle building, but it also fuels the brain. During perimenopause, the brain's creatine reserves tend to drop, which can contribute to the mental fatigue and sluggishness many women describe. A small daily dose of 3–5 grams has been studied for its effects on memory, focus, and mental energy. It is one of the most well-researched supplements available, and one of the least talked about for women.

Supporting your brain with the right fuel is just as important as supporting your body.

07

The brain fog is real – and it has a biological cause

Oestrogen does a lot more than people realise. One of its jobs is helping the part of your brain responsible for focus, decision-making, and staying calm – called the prefrontal cortex – get the energy from glucose it needs to work well. When oestrogen levels start to change in perimenopause, that part of the brain can feel like it is running on low battery, because it is starved of its primary fuel source. Words disappear mid-sentence. You walk into a room and forget why. You feel mentally unlike yourself. This is not early dementia. It is not you falling apart. It is a hormonal shift – and it can be supported by keeping your blood sugar steady and, for some women, a lower-carb or more ketogenic way of eating, because ketones give the brain an alternative fuel.

The women who worry most about their memory during perimenopause are usually the sharpest and most self-aware.

08

What matters is not how much you do – it is how well you recover

Heart rate variability, or HRV, is a measure of how well your nervous system has recovered from the demands of the day. The higher and more stable it is, the more resilient your body is. When it starts to drop consistently, it is an early sign that your body is under more strain than it can recover from – often before you feel it consciously. Wearable devices like Oura and Whoop track it while you sleep. HeartMath helps you train your HRV directly, and the Muse headband helps you train a calmer state through meditation feedback.

Pushing harder when your body has not recovered is one of the most common ways women in midlife make things worse.

09

Your breath can calm your nervous system within minutes

There is a nerve called the vagus nerve that runs from your brain all the way down to your gut. It controls how safe and calm your body feels. One of the quickest ways to activate it is through slow, deliberate breathing – and especially through humming. The vibration in your throat and chest directly stimulates this nerve and signals your body to relax. This is not a wellness trend. It is how your nervous system is built. It costs nothing, takes minutes, and works. You can hum throughout your day while doing house chores, or set an alarm for a 10-minute practice before bed.

You carry one of the most effective calming tools with you everywhere. It is your breath.

10

Ashwagandha can lower the stress hormone that disrupts everything else

Cortisol is your main stress hormone, and in small amounts it is helpful. But when it stays high for too long – which happens easily during midlife – it starts to suppress other hormones, disrupt sleep, and make anxiety worse. Ashwagandha is a plant extract that has been studied in multiple clinical trials for its ability to bring cortisol down in women. It works on the stress response system in the brain rather than just masking symptoms. Many women find it most helpful taken in the evening. Avoid it if you are pregnant or have a thyroid or liver condition, and check with your doctor if you take any medication.

When stress hormones are high for too long, almost everything else in your body struggles to work properly.

11

Strength training is the most important thing you can do in perimenopause

From your mid-30s onwards, your body starts to lose muscle – slowly at first, then faster once perimenopause begins. This matters because muscle is not just about how you look. It controls how your body handles sugar, how strong your bones are, how well your metabolism works, and how you manage stress hormones. Three sessions of strength training a week (lifting weights, using resistance bands, or doing bodyweight exercises) make a genuine difference. If you are only doing cardio, you are missing the point.

Building and keeping muscle in your 40s is one of the best investments you can make in your long-term health.

12

Your weight on the scale tells you almost nothing useful

The number on the scale shows your total body weight – but it cannot tell you how much of that is muscle, how much is fat, or where the fat is sitting. Fat that builds up around the waist and abdomen – known as visceral fat – is the kind that raises your risk of heart disease and affects your hormones most. A much more useful measure is your waist-to-hip ratio, which you can work out in thirty seconds with a measuring tape. For women, a ratio above 0.85 is a sign worth paying attention to. But ideally, book yourself a DEXA scan and there will be no more guessing what needs addressing.

You can feel worse, look worse, and be less healthy – all while the number on the scale stays exactly the same.

13

Ten minutes of morning light changes your hormones for the whole day

Your body has an internal clock that controls when your hormones are released, when you feel alert, and when you feel sleepy. The most powerful way to set that clock each day is through natural light – specifically, going outside within thirty minutes of waking, without sunglasses, for about ten minutes. This sends a strong signal through your eyes to a small part of your brain that coordinates your entire hormonal rhythm. Looking through a window does not have the same effect. A [Mitolux SunLamp](#) can help in the winter, but actual daylight works best.

Your hormonal day begins the moment light reaches your eyes. It is the first message your body receives.

14

Going without food for a short window is a hormonal event, not a punishment

When you go without food for a period of time – even just extending the gap between dinner and breakfast – your body responds by releasing more growth hormone. This helps preserve muscle, burn fat for fuel, and keep your blood sugar stable. This is not a diet trend. It is something your body has always been designed to do. You do not need to fast for long periods. Even a 12-hour window overnight, which most people already do without realising, activates these processes. But if you can do a 14-hour fast, that is even better. If you have a history of disordered eating or diabetes, or if your sleep or anxiety gets worse, keep to a gentle 12 hours.

Your body knows how to take care of itself when you give it the space to do so.

15

A short walk after eating does something a longer walk later cannot

When you eat, your blood sugar rises. How high it rises, and how quickly it comes back down, affects your energy, your mood, your weight, and your hormones. Walking for 10–15 minutes within 30 minutes of eating significantly flattens your blood sugar spike. In perimenopause, the body becomes less efficient at managing blood sugar naturally, so this simple habit becomes more valuable than it sounds. You do not need a gym. You just need a short walk, or simply to walk around the house doing some chores.

Small habits at the right moment have a bigger effect than large efforts at the wrong one.

YOUR MIND, IDENTITY & BECOMING

16–20

16

Perimenopause changes more than your hormones – it changes how you see yourself

The hot flushes and the sleepless nights are real, and they deserve proper care. But many women also notice something harder to name – a sense that who they have been no longer quite fits. Things that used to feel important start to feel hollow. Relationships, careers, and routines that once worked begin to feel like they need to change. This is not a breakdown. It is your inner life catching up with your outer one. It is one of the most significant (and least talked about) parts of this transition. You will never be the same woman you were at 30, and that is actually a good thing.

Your body is changing. And quietly, so is your sense of who you are. Both deserve attention.

17

The anxiety you are feeling is likely hormonal – but it needs more than hormones to heal

Around four in ten women notice a real increase in anxiety during perimenopause – often for the first time in their lives. This happens because oestrogen and progesterone directly affect the brain chemicals that regulate calm and mood. When those hormones fluctuate, the nervous system becomes more easily triggered. Knowing this can take away a lot of shame and self-blame. But understanding biology is the beginning, not the whole answer. Learning how to settle your nervous system is just as important as addressing the hormonal side.

You are not becoming an anxious person. Your brain chemistry is shifting – and there are real ways to support it.

Want to go deeper? Read my blog post [Is My Life Over? Anxiety, Low Mood and the Mental Weight of Perimenopause.](#)

18

Your body has been trying to tell you things for years – perimenopause turns up the volume and removes the blindfold

Many women spend decades overriding what their body is telling them – pushing through tiredness, ignoring tension, dismissing discomfort. Perimenopause makes that much harder to do. Symptoms become louder. The signals are harder to ignore. This can feel frightening. But it can also be the beginning of a very different and more honest relationship with yourself – one where you stop managing your body from the outside and start actually listening to it from the inside.

Your body is not betraying you. It is finally being heard.

Want to listen to your body more closely? Download my free [Perimenopause Symptoms Checklist](#) – 117 symptoms across body, mind, spirit and identity.

19

It is completely normal to grieve during this transition – and important to let yourself

A lot of women feel a quiet sadness during perimenopause that they cannot quite explain or justify. They feel sad for the version of themselves they are leaving behind, for a body that felt familiar, for a chapter of life that is closing. This grief is real. It is not weakness, and it is not ingratitude for what you have. It is a natural response to genuine change. Naming it – even just to yourself – is the first step to moving through it rather than carrying it as a silent burden.

You do not have to pretend this is only exciting. Endings are real. Grief is allowed.

20

Moving your body in a way that feels good is medicine for your nervous system

Exercise that is rhythmic, expressive, and enjoyable – dancing, yoga, walking in nature, any movement that brings you back into your body – does something that structured gym workouts cannot always achieve on their own. It helps release tension that has been held in the body, settles an overactive nervous system, and rebuilds the sense of feeling at home in yourself. This is not about burning calories. It is about reconnecting with your body at a time when it can feel like a stranger.

This transition asks you to come home to your body. Movement is one of the most direct ways in.

You do not have to figure this out on your own

This guide is a starting point. A way in. What it opens up – the questions, the realisations, the things you finally want to understand properly – that is where the real work begins.

If something here has resonated and you have questions you have been carrying quietly, bring them to my free monthly Q&A. One hour, online, open to any woman. No commitment, no pressure. Just honest conversation with someone who has genuinely been through it.

And if you are ready to go deeper, you have two options. You can get an extended and expanded version of this guide with my personal reflections on this crazy journey – *What I Wish I Knew in My 30s Instead of My 40s*. Or, if you wish to understand the full picture, get the tools, and have someone guide you as you implement them, while being surrounded by women who get it – the *Finding Joy in Perimenopause Academy* was built for exactly this moment.

This is not the end of something. It is the beginning of you.

MORE GUIDES

[HRT & You](#) – what every woman in perimenopause deserves to know about HRT.

[Sleep in Perimenopause](#) – why you wake up at 3am, and what your body is actually asking for.

Medical note: for information only, not medical advice. I am not a prescriber – please speak with your doctor before starting any supplement, especially if you take medication, are pregnant or have a health condition. © IN HER BODY 2026

Where to go next

FREE

Monthly Q&A – Ask Dr Kamila anything

Every third Wednesday of the month at 7pm UK time, online. One hour, open to any woman – no commitment, no pressure.

EBOOK

What I Wish I Knew in My 30s Instead of My 40s

The extended and expanded version of this guide, with my personal reflections on this crazy journey.

9-WEEK ACADEMY

Finding Joy in Perimenopause

A live, intimate cohort – only 12 places. Body, mind and soul: the full picture, the tools, and guidance as you put them into practice, surrounded by women who get it.

1:1

Private Mentorship

Personal guidance across hormones, psychology and identity – starting with a free connection call.

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