

7 Gaps

7 HIDDEN NUTRIENT GAPS IN MENOPAUSE

During menopause, nutrient depletion doesn't happen randomly. There are seven common deficiencies that consistently impact energy, recovery, metabolism, and results — often before clients realize what's happening.

Consider this your quick-reference guide: which nutrients are most affected in midlife, the signs your client may already be showing, and the simple nutrition habits that support replenishment. Start with what her symptoms are telling you, then layer your strategy accordingly.

Coach Kai

This document is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Individuals in good health, those with health concerns, or those aware of any medical conditions or physical limitations should always consult a physician before starting any eating or exercise program.

NUTRIENT 1
THE AFTERNOON ANCHOR

WHY IT MATTERS

Magnesium is the mineral your menopausal clients are almost guaranteed to be short on — burned faster by chronic stress, caffeine, alcohol, and poor sleep, and harder to hold onto when estrogen falls.

Watch for the 3 pm crash, night cramps, tension headaches, racing thoughts at bedtime, and chocolate cravings. Replenishing is often the fastest win a new client will feel.

THE HABIT

Build a "magnesium plate" at lunch — dark greens, pumpkin seeds, black beans

Add 1 square of 85% dark chocolate daily — for a daily dose of magnesium

Swap afternoon coffee for water + sea salt + almonds at the 3 pm crash

Before bed: small banana + 1 tbsp almond butter — sleep-supportive combo

If food isn't enough: glycinate or citrate (200–400 mg) — refer for dosing





NUTRIENT 2
THE BRAIN FOG BUSTER

WHY IT MATTERS

Omega-3s — especially EPA and DHA — lose their edge in menopause. Estrogen helped with their conversion and anti-inflammatory action; without that buffer, fog lifts later, joints feel stiffer, and little mood dips start to linger.

Most North American women run a 20:1 omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. We want closer to 4:1.

THE HABIT

Aim for 2–3 servings of cold-water fatty fish weekly — wild salmon, sardines, mackerel

Keep one tinned-fish lunch on rotation — sardines or salmon, cheap and iconic

Daily: 1 tbsp ground flax or chia in yogurt, oats, or smoothie — plant-based ALA base

Swap seed oils for extra-virgin olive oil as default cooking fat — drops omega-6 load fast

If no fish: third-party-tested algae EPA/DHA (refer to a practitioner for dose)



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NUTRIENT 3
THE LEAN MASS LOCK

WHY IT MATTERS

Anabolic resistance is the quiet reason menopausal clients plateau. The body stops responding to the protein dose it used to — the 20 g breakfast scoop that worked at 35 barely registers at 52.

The fix isn't only to "add more protein" — it's better-distributed, leucine-rich protein. 30+ g per meal across 3–4 meals cracks past anabolic resistance.

THE HABIT

Target 30–40 g protein per meal — not 20 g snack-sized portions

Anchor breakfast with real protein — eggs + smoked salmon, Greek yogurt + whey, 30 g shake

Hit the leucine threshold (2.5–3 g/meal) — whey, Greek yogurt, beef, salmon, eggs

Keep emergency protein ready — rotisserie chicken, boiled eggs, tuna pouches, cottage cheese

Pair every resistance session with 30–40 g protein within 2 hours



NUTRIENT 4
THE ENERGY FOUNDATION

WHY IT MATTERS

Iron is the nutrient we assume is "handled" once clients stop bleeding — but depletion from 5–10 years of heavy perimenopausal cycles doesn't repair overnight. Ferritin can stay low for years while hemoglobin reads "normal."

Watch for hair shedding, cold hands and feet, workouts that suddenly feel harder, restless legs, and fatigue sleep can't fix.

THE HABIT

Prioritize heme iron 2–3x/week — grass-fed beef, bison, lamb, clams, oysters, sardines

Pair non-heme sources (lentils, chickpeas, spinach) with vitamin C (peppers, lemon, berries)

Never pair iron meals with coffee or black tea — tannins cut absorption up to 80%

Cook acidic foods (tomato sauce, chili) in a cast-iron pan — a measurable iron boost

Refer for a ferritin panel (not just hemoglobin) if symptoms persist past 8 weeks



NUTRIENT 5
THE IMMUNITY DUO

WHY IT MATTERS

Vitamin D and zinc work as a duo — neither does the job alone. D runs the immune command centre and regulates bone, mood, and insulin sensitivity. Zinc is the mineral that lets those signals actually land at the cellular level.

Midlife women are the most vitamin-D-deficient group in North America.

THE HABIT

Sun exposure: 10–20 min on arms and legs midday, 3–4x/week (no sunscreen, then cover)

D-rich foods year-round — wild salmon, sardines, egg yolks, cod liver oil, UV-exposed mushrooms

Test 25(OH)D annually — most clients benefit from 40–60 ng/mL (refer for supplementation)

Zinc-rich foods 3–4x/week — oysters (gold standard), grass-fed beef, pumpkin seeds, lentils

Balance zinc with copper (cashews, dark chocolate) — isolated zinc can create a copper deficit



NUTRIENT 6
THE MOOD STABILIZERS

WHY IT MATTERS

B-vitamins — especially B6, B12, and folate — run the neurotransmitter factory. They turn food into serotonin, dopamine, and GABA, which keeps a menopausal nervous system from running on bare wire.

B12 absorption drops with age — metformin or PPI use plus falling stomach acid can create a functional deficit.

THE HABIT

Start with a quality B-complex that includes methylated folate (not folic acid) and methyl-B12

Red flags for deficiency: persistent fatigue, mood shifts, tingling in hands/feet, mouth sores

Pair B-vitamin support with steady protein and iron — they work as a team for energy

Teach clients: B-Vitamin-rich foods include: Beef, Poultry, Eggs, Fish, Dairy, Oats, Lentils, Avocados



NUTRIENT 7
THE BONE BANK

WHY IT MATTERS

Bone density drops fastest in the five years around menopause — up to 20% of a woman's lifetime bone loss can happen in this window. Calcium alone doesn't build bone: it needs K2 to direct it into the skeleton, D to absorb, and magnesium to activate.

Without K2, calcium can calcify the wrong tissues.

THE HABIT

Hit 1,000–1,200 mg calcium daily from food — sardines, Greek yogurt, kefir, kale, tahini, almonds

Include K2 3–4x/week — natto (MK-7), grass-fed dairy, egg yolks, aged Gouda and Brie

Pair calcium with magnesium — pumpkin seeds, spinach, and dark chocolate help the ratio

Layer vitamin D — calcium without D is like filling a leaky bucket

Non-negotiable: resistance training 2–3x/week + 15 min walking daily — movement creates the signal

