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# Perimenopausal Power

## PROVEN DIETARY PICKS FOR RELIEF

For many women, perimenopause — the transition into menopause, considered complete once menstrual cycles have ceased for a full year — can be a long and physically taxing experience. Before reaching full menopause (by the average age of 51), women often endure fluctuating estrogen and progesterone levels, weight gain, hot flashes, and other uncomfortable symptoms. Bodies under this level of stress may also experience inflammation, which can contribute to heart disease, Alzheimer’s disease, and arthritis. While perimenopause is a natural phase in the female body’s evolution, researchers and experts suggest the process can be more manageable through dietary changes and regular exercise.

### Plant-Based Plates

According to Women’s Health, the physical discomfort associated with perimenopause can be alleviated by

drastically reducing the consumption of animal products and following a diet focused more on fruits, olive oil, vegetables, nuts, seeds, grains, and legumes. Research from George Washington University supports this dietary regimen, concluding that women experienced an 88% reduction in hot flashes by eating fewer animal-based foods and increasing their intake of legumes.

### Weighing in on Wellness

In her book “Strong Foundations: Why Pelvic Health Matters,” physiotherapist Clare Bourne describes perimenopause as “a time when thinking about what we are eating could not be more important,” adding that focusing on “the power of nutrition and what it can do to help fuel us can be really helpful.”

Nutritionist Emma Bardwell, coauthor of the book “The Perimenopause Solution:



Take Control of Your Hormones Before They Take Control of You,” recommends that women restructure their dietary habits well before entering the perimenopausal stage.

As she told Women’s Health, “Ideally, I want women to make sure they’re well prepped in advance, rather than waiting until their symptoms are impacting their well-being. Forewarned is forearmed.”

### The Exercise Equation

Naturally, diet is only part of a successful perimenopausal health plan. If a woman is already overweight, establishing a daily exercise routine before the transition begins can help reduce the burdens on her body. Simple movements, like lunges or regular walks, can go a long way in easing an expected — but nonetheless challenging — part of getting older.

# Happy Healthy New Year!

## Building Brighter Smiles and Futures

Now that the holiday season has passed and the New Year is upon us, I want to take this time to reflect and be grateful for all the opportunities and blessings of last year. We are lucky to be part of our patients’ lives, and we appreciate sharing your smiles and all the growth through the trials and tribulations of life. In 2025, we hope to share our blessings with our community even more to help strengthen our bond and build a brighter future full of smiles!

### Part of our gratitude for the blessings that we have been given is to give back!

Our office and team have a long history of doing dentistry to make smiles better and donating our dental services. From Dental Access Days to YMCA health screenings, Special Olympics health screenings, and oral cancer screenings, our team has donated dental services to underserved people. Our office recently joined Donated Dental Services (DDS), a network of dentists and dental laboratories in New Jersey that volunteer their services to those in need. My team and I are deeply committed to volunteering and participating in year-round outreach programs. This new year, if you have not tried volunteering, give it some thought. The benefits are endless.

### Healthcare Is a Rising Concern

For many, access to healthcare is challenging. Just look at the news and comments on recent events; we can understand this is a hot topic. Our office can’t do much about the national healthcare system, but we can do our

part in providing dental care for our patients. One of the biggest reasons our office went out of network with insurance companies is that many of their policies do not result in better health. Much of our work to comply with insurance policies fosters the “drill and fill” philosophy, where our work is reactive. Wait for the damage, patch the hole, and wait for the next one.

### Advanced Diagnostics

The science of dentistry — and, in this example, how cavities are formed — is robust and well-documented. We can do many things to prevent and control cavities, gum disease, bone loss, tooth loss, inflammation, bad breath, and a myriad of other dental ailments. But first, we must look for the cause and personalize the treatment to our patients. The good news is that looking for why patients have these issues is accessible. We have advanced diagnostic capabilities in dentistry that my grandfather (Yup! Grandpa was the first in our family, and I’m a third-generation dentist) could only dream of! It can inform us how to best help our patients. The not-so-good news is that insurance doesn’t cover these tests, and if I were in-network, insurance contracts would dictate that I cannot charge patients for the test if I offered it! So, there was an ethical dilemma for me and my team. We know that better alternatives are out there, but if we offered them to patients, we would not have any way to pay for them — be it tests, procedures, materials, or equipment! So, our office chose to be



able to offer these advanced diagnostics, technologies, and procedures to our patients by going out of network. We refuse to allow insurance companies to dictate how we care for our patients. We want **results**. We want better overall health plans and not just providing treatment where we seemingly spin our wheels and treat endless cavities while patients suffer pain.

The results? I can’t recall a patient who follows through with our personalized recommended preventive routine coming in with tooth pain, aside from the occasional wisdom tooth coming up. Not having any emergencies or pain is one of the metrics by which we gauge the effectiveness of our work.

### What Can You Do at Home?

Our office personalizes our home care recommendations per patient. But the following tips are always good for everyone to follow to help keep up your dental health:

#### 1. Rinse with water after every meal and snack.

This is the most effective habit for preventing cavities, bad breath, and gum disease because it protects oral health throughout the day. It removes food stuck between teeth that causes bad breath and gum disease and washes away acid from meals that cause cavities.

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# Snow, Sweat, and Smiles

## HOW TO SAFELY TRAIN FOR WINTER SPORTS



As the air turns frosty and snow covers the sports fields, it doesn't mean you have to ice out your athletic pursuits this winter. But before you dust off your skis and favorite warm layers, preparing your body for the cold-weather challenges ahead is essential. From proper hydration to stretches designed to protect your muscles, a little preseason prep can ensure you stay in shape even in the chilliest times of the year. Get ready to work up a sweat because we're sharing our favorite tips to prepare for the winter sports season.

### Train for your favorite sports.

Not all sports are created equal, and many require different strengths and parts of your body. Think about the specific sports or athletic activities you will participate in this winter and train accordingly. If you like aerobic sports that demand endurance, like downhill and cross-country skiing, focus on exercises that will get your heart pumping. Swimming and running are effective ways to build your strength and stamina. Other winter sports like wrestling and basketball are anaerobic, requiring big bursts of power and energy over shorter periods. Training for these sports should include CrossFit, cardio, and weight-lifting routines.



### Stay warm with layers.

As you train in the winter air, keeping yourself warm is vital to prevent dangerous cold-weather side effects like frostbite and hypothermia. Opt to work out during the warmer parts of the day and limit how long you're in the elements. Layering your clothes can be a game-changer, keeping you toasty while allowing you to exercise correctly. Your base layer should be a thin, moisture-wicking fabric, like wool or polyester, to pull sweat away from your body. Next, choose a layer that will trap the body heat you produce to keep you warm, like wool or fleece. Your last layer should shield you from outside moisture and wind, so choose something rain-resistant. Wear warm socks, and don't forget a hat or helmet to protect your head from the cold. Even though you might not feel the sun's intense rays when it's chilly, you still need to wear sunscreen.

### Drink more water.

Proper hydration is necessary for athletes; it can be easy to forget to drink enough water when the weather chills. Dehydration can happen in the winter as quickly as it can the rest of the year, so drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after your workouts. If you do a more extended session, have a sports drink with carbohydrates and sodium. The proper nutrition will also keep your body nourished and better able to function in the cold weather. Focus on pre- and post-meal snacks that include protein, high-quality carbs, and healthy fats.

### Warm up beforehand.

When it comes to winter sports, slow and steady wins the race. Cold joints and muscles are more likely to rip or be damaged, so taking your time with warm-ups and stretches is crucial before you get into the game. Focus on gentle stretches, which can help blood flow and reduce your risk of strains and sprains. By pacing yourself and listening to your body, you'll be set for a safe and exciting sports season.

As the snow falls, it doesn't mean you have to miss out on your favorite activities. With the right preparation, you can enjoy all the fun of winter sports without the chill of an injury.

# DON'T FEAR THE FAT

## Why Your Body Needs Omega-Packed Foods

The word "fat" might sound like something to avoid on your wellness journey, but not all fats are created equal. Certain unsaturated fats are essential for keeping your heart strong, brain sharp, and energy levels steady. Knowing which fats to add to your plate can take your health goals to the next level. Get ready for a healthy serving of omega fats as we explore three of the best foods to fuel your body and improve your overall well-being.

### Salmon

Salmon is one of the best sources of omega fats and one of the most nutrient-rich foods you can find on the whole planet. Not only does it contain omega fats, which support a healthy nervous system, heart, and brain, but it also contains quality protein and multiple nutrients. By adding this tasty and popular fish to your plate, you can reap a wealth of benefits like lower cholesterol levels, healthy blood pressure, strong bones, improved brain function, and reduced risk of stroke, just to name a few.

### Avocado

Avocados are a superfood, and while they are high in fat, they're the good kind. This creamy and indulgent fruit also contains a high amount of vitamin E and provides a healthy

serving of dietary fiber. Add this green superstar to salads or toast to get the nutrient booster you need to maintain weight, reduce heart disease risk, control blood sugar, and improve brain function.



### Nuts

Nuts are heart-healthy snacks that provide protein, fiber, vitamins, antioxidants, and beneficial monounsaturated fats. When you incorporate these into your diet, your heart will benefit. Studies have found that nuts can help reduce the risk of diabetes and lower cholesterol levels. Almonds, pistachios, and walnuts are all wonderful options to try out. Just make sure you moderate how much you eat, as they are high in calories.

These nutrient-packed foods taste great and provide essential benefits to keep your heart, brain, and body functioning at their best. So, next time you prepare your plate, don't fear fats! Embrace the healthy ones that fuel your body.

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#### 2. Breathe through your nose.

Winter months are notorious for stuffy noses - from illnesses like the common cold to congestion caused by dry air, many of us start mouth breathing! Mouth breathing causes dry mouth, and because saliva is our body's No. 1 cavity-fighting mechanism, **mouth breathing increases cavities!** If you have chapped lips, then you have a dry mouth! So, in addition to applying lip balm, make sure you unstuff your nose to keep your lips together to prevent chapped lips and keep your saliva flowing in your mouth to protect your teeth.

#### 3. Don't forget your nightguard or sleep appliance!

With holiday travels and vacation plans throughout the year, don't forget to pack your nightguard. These little plastic guards take the beating when you clench or grind at night, so your teeth don't have to! If you have sleep apnea, don't forget to bring your sleep appliance. If you use your CPAP and don't feel like carting it with you on your trip, talk to us about a backup sleep appliance specifically for this reason — to use on short trips or while on the plane so you can avoid snoring with strangers!

### HELP A FRIEND OR FAMILY GET HEALTHY IN 2025!

We know that the mouth is the gateway to the body. There is abundant evidence that keeping our mouths healthy helps keep our bodies healthy — preventing heart

disease, metabolic conditions, Alzheimer's, and flare-ups of inflammatory issues such as rheumatoid arthritis and IBS. Dental health equals whole body health!

Let 2025 be the year you help yourself and your loved ones get healthy. Giving the gift of dental health goes beyond the holidays and provides lasting benefits. We are always honored when our patients recommend our office to friends and family.

**NEW YEAR RAFFLE:** From now until the end of February, refer a new patient to our practice, and you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of two \$100 Amazon gift cards. The more you refer, the more chances you have to win!

I wish all our patients and their families a joyful and prosperous New Year filled with health, laughter, and vitality!

To your great smiles and better health,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael S. Waller".