

Diabetes, Estrogen & Insulin Resistance: Your Action Plan

A Practical Quick-Reference Guide for Women in Perimenopause, Menopause

THE KEY CONNECTION

Declining estrogen during menopause significantly increases your risk of insulin resistance—the first step toward type 2 diabetes.

Good news: Insulin resistance is reversible at this stage.

Why estrogen matters: Estrogen helps muscles use glucose for fuel and regulates liver glucose production. Without it, we become vulnerable to high blood sugar and insulin resistance—independent of age.

STEP 1: ASSESS YOUR RISK

Check these risk factors: ✓ Age 45+ or early menopause

✓ Family history of type 2 diabetes

✓ Waist measurement >80cm

✓ Physically inactive (less than 3 hours exercise/week)

✓ High blood pressure or high cholesterol

✓ PCOS, sleep apnoea, or fatty liver disease

Action: Measure your waist at belly button level. Write it down: _____ cm

STEP 2: GET THE RIGHT TESTS

Book a GP appointment and request:

Fasting glucose (fast for 8-12 hours before test)

HbA1c (3-month blood sugar average)

Fasting insulin (KEY test - you must ask specifically for this)

HOMA-IR score (calculated from fasting insulin + glucose)

Lipid panel (cholesterol, triglycerides)

Don't accept "your bloods are fine" without seeing actual numbers.

What the numbers mean:

Fasting glucose: <5.6 mmol/L is normal; 5.6-6.9 is prediabetes; ≥7.0 is diabetes

HbA1c: <5.7% is normal; 5.7-6.4% is prediabetes; ≥6.5% is diabetes

HOMA-IR: <1.0 is excellent; 1.0-1.9 is good; 2.0-2.9 is early insulin resistance; >3.0 indicates significant insulin resistance

STEP 3: TRANSFORM YOUR BREAKFAST

START eating:

2-3 eggs (scrambled, poached, omelette with vegetables)

Greek yoghurt (full-fat or 2%) + 1/4 cup berries + 2 tbsp nuts or seeds

Scrambled tofu with spinach and mushrooms

Avocado (1/2) + 2 eggs or smoked salmon

Protein smoothie (protein powder + berries + spinach + chia seeds + unsweetened almond milk)

Why this works: Protein + fat keeps blood sugar stable for 3-4 hours and prevents mid-morning cravings.

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MENOPAUSE HUB

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STEP 4: BUILD BETTER MEALS ALL DAY

LUNCH & DINNER FORMULA:

1/2 plate: Non-starchy vegetables (leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, capsicum, zucchini) 1/4 plate: Lean protein (palm-sized portion - fish, chicken, tofu, legumes) 1/4 plate: Complex carbs (brown rice, quinoa, sweet potato, wholegrains) Add: 1-2 tbsp healthy fats (olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds)

SMART SNACKS (if needed):

Apple slices + 2 tbsp almond butter

Veggie sticks + hummus

Small handful nuts (10-15 almonds or walnuts)

Hard-boiled egg + cherry tomatoes

Greek yoghurt + cinnamon

DRINKS:

Water (aim for 2 litres daily)

Herbal tea (unsweetened)

Black coffee or with dash of milk

Soft drinks, fruit juice, cordial

Alcohol (or limit to 1-2 drinks per week)

STEP 5: MOVE YOUR BODY STRATEGICALLY

RESISTANCE TRAINING: 2-3 TIMES PER WEEK (Non-Negotiable!)

Beginner Routine (15-20 minutes):

Squats: 2 sets of 10 reps (bodyweight or holding dumbbells)

Push-ups: 2 sets of 8-10 reps (on knees if needed)

Lunges: 2 sets of 8 reps each leg

Plank: 2 sets of 20-30 seconds

Dumbbell rows: 2 sets of 10 reps each arm

Progress gradually: Add 1-2 reps per week OR increase weight by 0.5-1kg when current weight feels easy.

Where to start:

YouTube: Search "beginner strength training for women over 50"

Local gym: Book 2-3 sessions with a personal trainer

Equipment: Start with 2-5kg dumbbells and resistance bands

DAILY WALKING: 30 MINUTES

After breakfast, lunch, or dinner (post-meal walks lower blood sugar by 10-15%)

Break into 3 x 10-minute walks if needed

Aim for brisk pace (should be able to talk but not sing)

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OPTIONAL: HIIT 1-2 times per week

20-30 seconds high intensity + 1-2 minutes rest, repeated 6-8 times

Examples: Fast walking intervals, cycling, swimming, dancing

