

# DIABETES, ESTROGEN & INSULIN RESISTANCE: YOUR ACTION PLAN

## A PRACTICAL QUICK-REFERENCE GUIDE FOR WOMEN IN PERIMENOPAUSE, MENOPAUSE & POST-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:**

1. Fasting glucose (fast for 8–12 hours before test)

2. HbA1c (3-month blood sugar average)

3. Fasting insulin (KEY test – you must ask specifically for this)

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

5. 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.**

#### 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)

**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

This guide is for educational purposes and does not replace professional medical advice. Always consult your healthcare provider for personalized guidance. Created by Menopause Mentor | Compiled from peer-reviewed research, clinical guidelines & expert recommendations

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