18 Estrogen-Rich Foods to Include in Your Diet

by AFRA WILLMORE

Estrogen-Rich Foods for Menopause

Each woman has a different experience with menopause. Your doctor can prescribe hormone replacement therapy (HRT), but many women prefer to try and manage their symptoms without prescribed medications, such eating estrogen-rich foods for menopause.

Most annoying menopause symptoms are caused by the drop in estrogen production and the effect this has on other hormones. Therefore, it makes sense to try and replace the hormone – obviously, that is the entire theory behind prescribed HRT.

But did you know you can eat estrogen in the form of phytoestrogens? Otherwise known as dietary estrogens, certain plant-based foods contain compounds that mimic the effects of estrogen or, conversely, cause antiestrogenic effects.

Which Foods Increase Estrogen Levels?

The following are the best estrogen-rich foods for menopause:

- Legumes, especially soybeans or tofu.
- Whole grain cereals.
- Seeds (i.e., flax seeds or sesame seeds).
- Apples.
- Carrots.
- Coffee.
- Mint.
- Oats.
- Barley.
- Lentils.
- Dried apricots.
- Dates.
- Prunes.
- Peaches.
- Plums.
- Pears.
- Cherries.
- Some nuts (i.e., pistachios, walnuts, almonds, peanuts, whole or ground into butter form).

Here are some ways you can include these estrogen-rich foods in your diet:

- Sprinkle flax seeds in your salad or choose burger buns with sesame seeds on them, and make a dip out

of soy yogurt, lemon juice and mint (with a sprinkle of sugar to taste). Serve this with raw carrot batons to boost the phytoestrogen in your daily diet.
- Drink miso soup with a side of multi-grain bread or enjoy a snack of pistachios washed down with V8, cranberry or orange juice or green tea.
- Finish meals with peaches, plums, pears or some cherries and you will be doing lots to boost your phytoestrogen intake.
- Bag up portions of dried apricots, dates or prunes for a healthy phytoestrogen-rich snack on the go.

Also, you can even get a small dose of dietary estrogen in your wine or beer. Red wine yields the highest density followed by white wine, then beer.

But remember this: the amount of phytoestrogen varies hugely between foods so you cannot rely on a glass of wine a day to do the same job as a stir fry with shredded carrots, tofu and alfalfa sprouts with a sprinkling of fresh seeds.

Foods That Decrease Estrogen

As well as understanding which foods contain an estrogen substitute, it is worthwhile to discover which foods you might be eating that can decrease what natural estrogen is left in the body.

These vegetables are the main culprits:

- Brussels sprouts.
- Broccoli.
- Cabbage.
- Cauliflower.
- Bok Choy.
- Turnips.
- Collard greens.
- Mushrooms (i.e., particularly shiitake, Portobello, baby button and cremini varieties.)
- The skin and seeds of red grapes.

Some experts believe that eating as much pesticide-free organic produce as possible makes a difference. It’s thought that some chemicals used in food production could have an estrogen-like effect, so choose food that has as much as possible and avoid the addition of chemical pesticides and preservatives.

What Are the Benefits of Boosting Estrogen Naturally?

Those who swear by phytoestrogens say they can help with low libido, improve vaginal and skin health and help with mood swings. They can help with hot flashes and potentially help maintain bone density in older women.

It’s also thought that dietary estrogen can help regulate irregular menstrual periods, although part of the natural progression of a woman’s life will see menstruation eventually disappear altogether, and taking prescribed HRT or consuming natural estrogens in food or supplement form can only delay not prevent the inevitable.

Are There Any Downsides to Increasing Estrogen Levels?

Because phytoestrogens mimic the effect of the hormone estrogen, they can have the same negative effects including bringing on a higher risk of some cancers, uterine fibroids and some forms of hepatitis.

Mostly the risk is higher in those who take supplements rather than through diet, but much research still needs to be done, so it is best to play it safe and mention it to your doctor if you plan to increase the number of phytoestrogens in your diet vastly.

Those with a family history of some forms of breast cancer should be particularly cautious. Your healthcare

provider is the best person to give personal advice on what is safe for you.