



Your Depression Checklist



1. Get to know your hormones and your cycle

No two women are the same- we all have different length cycles, different monthly symptoms and sensations and different experiences of what it means to have a menstrual cycle.

Tracking when everything happens and how it feels for you will help you understand yourself, spot any changes early on and also notice any improvements when you take action!

This is the most important and most empowering thing you can do as a woman, regardless of whether you're experiencing the peri-menopause, menopause or you're much earlier on in your reproductive life.

Visit the website www.smarterchange.co.uk/blog for your free period tracker.



2. Balance your blood sugar

Our hormones are the mafia bosses of the body- basically they run the entire show, so if they're not happy, they won't let you be happy either.

One of the main ways we can control their 'mood' by making better food choices, especially when it comes to sugars. Eat too much processed sugar and processed white carbs and our blood sugar levels will shoot up, triggering a massive release of insulin and disrupting the rest of our hormones (including our reproductive hormones.)

Can you guess what all of this spells? Further hormonal imbalances and yet more symptoms of depression and the menopause

Make better food choices by eating regularly, cutting back on cakes, cookies and other sweet treats, always eating unrefined carbs and ensuring you're eating a small amount of protein at every meal.



3. Get outside

Want to get an instant boost of feel-good serotonin, regulate your hormonal balance and boost hormonal production? Get outside into the fresh air!

Just being out there will really make you feel better (if only for a second), you can find a certain amount of peace in the natural world and all that natural light will work wonders for your menopausal symptoms. Did I mention that it will also help you sleep better too?

✓ 4. Start singing!

Beat your depression by singing! Singing helps to calm the vagus nerve which is when overstimulated can often cause anxiety and depression.

It's this nerve which is linked to that sensation of butterflies in your tummy, or that gut feeling you get about someone or something. So pop your favourite song onto the stereo and get singing at the top of your voice!

✓ 5. Give your gut some TLC

Stress and depression has a profound impact on your entire body so it's vital you take extra care of yourself, primarily focussing on your gut.

You see, stress triggers a release of cortisol, one of the main stress hormones. If this stress is short-lived, it is soon metabolised in the body. But if the stress is more prolonged, it can cause your stomach acid to become much weaker and impair your ability to absorb all of the nutrients you're getting in your diet, including vitamins, minerals, fats and protein.

Without sufficient quantities of these nutrients, our bodies just can't operate as they should- our sleep quality declines, we take longer to heal, suffer from more infections, struggle with poor digestion and leaky gut, and also find it hard to make the right neurotransmitters we need to feel good.

I'd recommend you supplement with digestive enzymes and HCL for better digestive health, as well as taking B-complex, and making sure you're getting enough healthy fats and protein to build healthy neurotransmitters.

✓ 6. Get moving!

Yes, I know! No one likes to hear they should be getting more exercise. But it's actually one of the best ways to stay looking and feeling younger and keep depression at bay.

You get all of the health-boosting effects of the exercise itself such as a healthier heart, improved circulation and stronger muscles plus you'll look younger, those feel-good endorphins will get flowing and you'll be full of energy and raring to go.

It doesn't really matter what kind of exercise you choose, but it MUST make you get out of breath and stay that way for at least 15 minutes, three times per week. HITT is perfect for this.