

The Menopause and Autumn/Fall connection

Theory, tips and recipes



Little intro

Autumn is my favourite time of year. The fresh smell is intoxicating and walks in nature are a trip to colour heaven. However, for many women transitioning through menopause, this season can often aggravate their symptoms.

Here's an overview of why that is the case - according to Ayurveda - and some tips on how you can help bring yourself back into balance.

The Ayurveda connection

Ayurveda (an ancient science from India, around 500 years old) believes that everything in the world is made up of 5 main elements:

Ether, Space, Fire, Water and Earth

Each element has properties that it's dominant in. These elements are grouped into 3 energy groups:

Ether + Space = Vata
Fire (+ some Water) = Pitta
Water + Earth = Kapha

Autumn is dominant in Ether and Space i.e. Vata, and Vata's qualities are:

Cold, dry, rough, light, subtle, mobile

These are also the elements and qualities that are dominant as we transition through menopause. Therefore, menopause is aggravated more during the Autumn/Fall.

Common menopause symptoms during Autumn

Insomnia or disturbed sleep

Mood swings

Dry skin

Irregular cycle

Nervousness and anxiety

Vaginal dryness

Palpitations

Loss of skin tone

Feeling cold

Tip 1

Foods to favour

Tastes: sweet, sour, salty

Flavours: warming herbs and spices



Drink: herbal teas with cumin, fennel and ginger

Vegetables to favour: beets, carrots, chilies, garlic, okra, onions, pumpkin, squash, sweet potatoes

Cook: soups, stews, anything gravy like, nuts and seeds, meats and cheeses (not cold milk)

NB: sweet food...not sweets/candy!



Tip 2

Pumpkin soup recipe

This soup is my new favourite. The spices are perfect for the pumpkin and it's super warming and filling.

Ingredients:

- 1 pumpkin (approx 1kg)
- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1.5 inches ginger, grated
- 1 tbs coconut oil
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 500ml hot water
- 1 can/carton of coconut milk
- 1 tsp salt (Himalayan preferred)

Method:

1. Cut the pumpkin into quarters and scoop out the seeds - add to baking tin
2. Cut the sweet potato in half - add to the same baking tin
3. Rub ingredients with olive oil and salt, and roast on 180 degrees for 40 minutes. Once cooked and cooled, scoop out the flesh
4. In a pot, heat up the coconut oil and add the onion - cook for around 5 minutes until translucent
5. Add the ginger, garlic and spices to the pot and cook for 2 minutes (may need to add a little more oil at this stage)
6. Add the pumpkin and sweet potato to the pot, add the water and coconut milk and cook for 10 mins
7. Remove from heat and blend until smooth
8. Garnish with fresh coriander, peanuts, cashews, pumpkin seeds - whatever takes your fancy

*Note: pumpkin eaten during this time MUST be paired with warming spices like garlic and ginger, or allspice

Tip 3

Sweet potato soup or curry recipe

I totally adore this soup (and so do my friends and family!). You can eat it either as a soup or as a curry with rice on the side. I'll explain how:

Ingredients:

- 750g sweet potatoes
- 2 red onions, chopped
- 1/2 tbs cumin powder
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 4 tbs olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, finely sliced
- 1/2 - 1 fresh red chilli, finely sliced
- 1/2 a bunch of fresh coriander
- 125g split red lentils
- 500ml - 1 litre boiling water
- 1 can/carton of coconut milk (optional)
- 1 lemon

Method:

1. Peel and cut the sweet potato into chunks - add to baking tin with the onion
2. Cover with 2 tbs olive oil, cumin and coriander and roast on 180 degrees for 40 minutes until soft
3. Separate the coriander leaves and put aside, and finely chop the stems
4. Heat up olive oil in a pot and add the garlic, chilli (quantity depending on how spicy you like it) and coriander stems - saute until golden
5. Add the red lentils and stir for one minute
6. Add the water, coconut milk (if using) and salt, and cook for 20 minutes
7. Add the sweet potato and onions to the pot and cook for a further 5 minutes
8. If you want it as a soup, add more water to stage 6 and once cooked, blend it
9. If you're eating it as a curry then don't blend and eat it on top of white basmati rice
10. Garnish with fresh coriander and a squeeze of lemon (sounds bizarre but this gives it an incredible oomph....try it out!)

Adapted from Jamie Oliver

Tip 4

Root vegetable soup recipe

You can't go wrong with this soup. Use a range of veg for it and try out things you may not be used to cooking with:

Ingredients:

- 6 tbs olive oil (or ghee)
- 1 large onion or 2 leeks, chopped
- 2 to 3 celery stalks, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 rosemary or thyme branches
- 2 bay leaves
- 1.5 kg mixed root vegetables, cut into one inch chunks
- 2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- Juice of 1/2 lemon

Method:

1. Heat up olive oil in pot
2. Add onion and celery and cook for 10 minutes or until tender - stir occasionally
3. Add garlic, rosemary/thyme and bay leaves and cook for another minute
4. Add root vegetables, 8 cups water, salt and pepper
5. Bring to the boil, reduce heat to medium and then simmer, covered, until vegetables are tender - approx 30 to 40 minutes
6. Remove and discard rosemary branches and bay leaves
7. Either keep the soup chunky or blend it. You can do both and eat it chunky for the first meal and smooth on the second
8. Season with lemon and more salt if needed
9. Drizzle olive oil on top before serving and some chopped walnuts

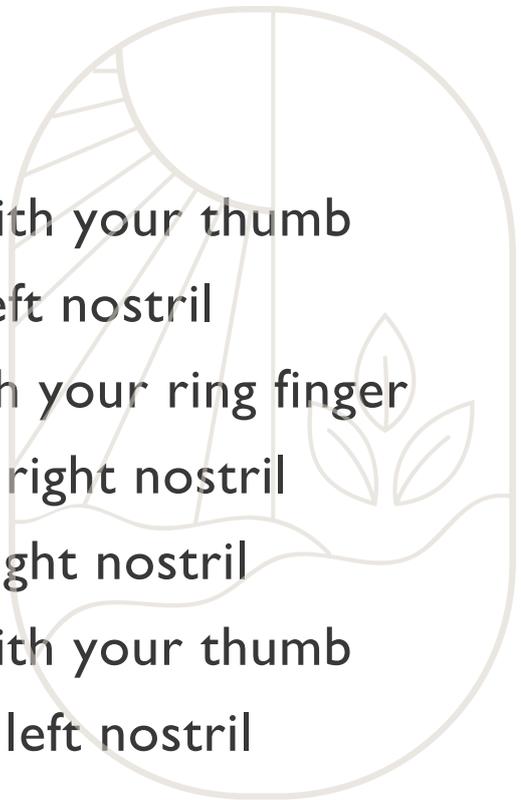


Tip 5

Balanced breathing

Nadi shodhana is a breathing exercise that balances out the heating (left side) and cooling (right side) energies in the brain. It also helps balance hormones, reduce anxiety and calm the nervous system:

- Raise your right hand
- Close your right nostril with your thumb
- Breathe in through your left nostril
- Close your left nostril with your ring finger
- Breathe out through your right nostril
- Breathe in through your right nostril
- Close your right nostril with your thumb
- Breathe out through your left nostril
- Repeat 20 times



Tip 6

CCF tea

Benefits

Gives a subtle detoxification

Relieves bloating and helps digestion in general

Clears the mind

...and a lot more

How to make it:

- 1/2 tsp whole cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp whole coriander seeds
- 1/2 tsp whole fennel seeds
- 1 cardamom pod (optional)
- Cover with hot water and steep for 3-4 mins.

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packages

