SHARE LIFE GIFTS, INC. | CHRISTIAN COUNSELING GROUP LLC

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Navigating Menopause with Knowledge, Nutrition & Support

A practical participant resource guide for Black women and the people who care about them.

Understand your body. Nourish your health. Ask questions. Build your circle of support.

Inside: trustworthy resources, culturally relevant nutrition ideas, appointment questions, symptom tracking, family conversation prompts, and personal action planning.

Prepared for the October-November 2026 support series. Educational use only; not individualized medical advice.

1 | Understanding the transition

There is no single "right" way to experience menopause. Your symptoms and decisions deserve individual attention.

Perimenopause: The transition before menopause. Cycles can become irregular, and hot flashes, sleep disruption, mood changes, and vaginal symptoms may appear.

Menopause: Clinically identified after 12 months without a menstrual period, if there is no other explanation such as pregnancy, surgery, or medication.

Postmenopause: The years after that point. Some symptoms continue, and heart, bone, metabolic, and sexual health deserve ongoing attention.

A large US study found that Black participants reported a median 10.1 years of hot flashes and night sweats, compared with 6.5 years among non-Hispanic White participants. This describes groups, not what any one woman will experience. [1]

Research also identifies disparities in menopause symptom treatment and midlife cardiovascular health. Women should not have to minimize symptoms or accept dismissive care. [2, 3]

What deserves a conversation with a clinician?

- Symptoms disrupting sleep, work, relationships, or daily life
- New depression, anxiety, or severe mood changes
- Painful sex, vaginal dryness, or urinary concerns
- Unusually heavy or persistent bleeding during the transition
- Any bleeding after menopause - this requires medical assessment [4]

Helpful starting points

The Menopause Society - Patient Education

Plain-language resources for perimenopause, hot flashes, treatment choices, and healthy aging.

ACOG - The Menopause Years

A clear introduction to stages and common symptoms.

2 | Symptoms and treatment conversations

You can ask for help even when symptoms are common. Common does not mean you must simply endure them.

Some people benefit from lifestyle changes, counseling, symptom-specific nonhormonal treatment, or menopausal hormone therapy. Benefits and risks vary by age, medical history, symptom type, and treatment route. Discuss options with a qualified clinician. [5]

Bring this 2-week symptom snapshot to a visit

Concern	None / mild / moderate / severe	When? What helps?
Hot flashes / night sweats	_____	_____
Sleep / fatigue	_____	_____
Mood / anxiety	_____	_____
Brain fog / focus	_____	_____
Period changes	_____	_____
Vaginal / urinary changes	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

ACOG - Menopause Symptom Tracker

Use the online tracker to prepare for your next appointment.

The Menopause Society - Hot Flashes

Reviews treatment discussions and why sleep and mood can be affected.

3 | Nutrition, movement, and prevention

Food traditions can be a source of comfort and connection. Healthier preparation can preserve familiar flavors.

Heart health

Build meals with vegetables, fruit, beans, whole grains, fish, and other nutrient-rich foods. The DASH eating pattern may help lower blood pressure.

Bone strength

Include calcium-rich foods and ask about vitamin D needs. Fortified alternatives can help if dairy is not suitable.

Muscle and metabolism

Include protein-rich foods and suitable strength-building activity; ask your clinician about safe activity if you have limitations.

Blood sugar and energy

Choose fiber-rich carbohydrates and balanced meals; talk with your care team about diabetes risk and screening.

Supplements

Do not assume menopause supplements are safe or effective. Review products and medications with a healthcare professional.

Culturally familiar meal ideas

- Collard greens with beans and a lower-sodium seasoning blend
- Oven-baked fish, sweet potatoes, and roasted vegetables
- Black-eyed peas, brown rice, and a colorful side salad
- Plain yogurt or fortified soy yogurt with fruit and nuts, if appropriate

These are general examples; dietary needs vary with allergies, kidney disease, diabetes, and other conditions.

NIH - Heart-Healthy Home Cooking: African American Style

Free collection of traditional dishes prepared with heart-health considerations.

NIH - A Week With the DASH Eating Plan (PDF)

A practical sample week of meals.

MyHealthfinder - Get Enough Calcium

Food-based calcium guidance and vitamin D information.

4 | Emotional well-being and family support

Menopause happens in the context of everyday life: work, parenting, caregiving, partnership, finances, and community expectations.

Sleep changes and menopause symptoms may affect mood and concentration. Depression and anxiety deserve attention, and symptoms are not a personal weakness. Counseling and medical care can work together. [6]

Try a supportive family conversation

- Choose a calm moment rather than an argument.
- Describe what is happening without blaming: "My sleep has been disrupted, and I need more rest."
- Ask for one concrete form of help: a quieter bedroom, shared chores, or time for appointments.
- Invite questions; no one needs to solve everything immediately.
- Respect privacy. A woman decides what health information she wants to share.

A simple script

"I am learning more about changes in my body. I may need patience, rest, and support. Could we talk about one thing that would make this week easier?"

Support reflection worksheet

One change I want my family to understand:

_____

One practical request I can make: _____

One person I can reach out to: _____

The Menopause Society - Mental Health

Information on mood, memory, sleep, anxiety, and depression.

If you or someone else needs immediate emotional crisis support in the US, call or text 988.

5 | Speak up for your health

Your experience is important evidence. You can ask for explanations, options, and culturally respectful care.

Before an appointment

- List your three biggest symptoms and how long they have occurred.
- Bring your medicines, supplements, and relevant health history.
- Track questions and bring a trusted support person if you wish.

Questions worth asking

- Could these changes be related to perimenopause, menopause, or something else?
- Which treatments are appropriate for my medical history?
- What are the benefits, risks, and alternatives of each choice?
- Should we check blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar, or bone health?
- When should I follow up, and which symptoms need faster care?
- If my symptoms persist, would a menopause specialist or second opinion help?

My visit preparation worksheet

My most disruptive symptom: _____

How it affects my daily life: _____

The question I most want answered:

_____

The next action we agreed on: _____

The Menopause Society - Find a Menopause Clinician

Search for clinicians who focus on menopause care; verify coverage and availability.

6 | My seven-day wellness plan

Small, realistic choices are more sustainable than trying to change everything at once.

Choose one action in each area and mark your progress.

Area	My one small action	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Nourishment	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Movement	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Sleep / rest	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Connection	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Self-advocacy	_____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Weekly reflection

What helped me feel better this week?

_____

What was harder than expected? _____

What support would help next week?

_____

A reminder

Rest is productive. Asking for help is strength. Self-care is not another performance standard. Your health deserves attention and compassion.

7 | Resource library and next steps

Click any underlined resource name in the digital PDF. You can also type the addresses in a browser.

Menopause basics - The Menopause Society

https://menopause.org/patient-education

ACOG - Menopause Years

https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/the-menopause-years

ACOG - Symptom Tracker

https://www.acog.org/womens-health/health-tools/menopause-symptom-tracker

The Menopause Society - Mental Health

https://menopause.org/patient-education/menopause-topics/mental-health

The Menopause Society - Menopause Clinician Directory

https://portal.menopause.org/NAMS/NAMS/Directory/Menopause-Practitioner.aspx

NIH - African American Heart-Healthy Cooking

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/heart-healthy-home-cooking-african-american-style

NIH - DASH Meal Planning

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/WeekOnDASH.pdf

Health In Her HUE - Community and Care

https://bcbs.healthinherhue.com/

Research and clinical sources

[1] Avis et al., JAMA Internal Medicine (2015), duration of menopausal vasomotor symptoms. pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4433164/

[2] Harlow et al. (2022), reproductive aging and midlife health disparities. pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8822825/

[3] NIH, Menopause Research Overview (2026). discoverwhr.nih.gov/research/menopause/

[4] ACOG, Perimenopausal Bleeding and Bleeding After Menopause. acog.org

[5] ACOG, Hormone Therapy for Menopause. acog.org

[6] The Menopause Society, Mental Health. menopause.org

Medical note: This guide is for education and group discussion only, not diagnosis or personal treatment. Contact your own licensed healthcare professional for individualized advice.