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## Hormone helpers

Menopause, typically around age 51, is the natural biological end of menstrual cycles. The resulting shift in hormones, especially estrogen, causes various physical and emotional symptoms. Supporting the women in your life, and seeking it yourself, can help ease the challenges of menopause.

### OFFER SUPPORT

- Understand that mood swings and irritability can be symptoms of hormonal changes, not personal attacks. Validate her feelings and listen without judgment.
- Talk openly about her symptoms and how you can best help. Encourage her to speak with a healthcare provider about treatment options, such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
- Support her in maintaining a balanced diet and regular exercise, which can help manage weight gain and improve sleep quality—both common challenges during this transition.
- Always lead with empathy. Remember that each woman's journey is unique, and symptoms can vary widely in intensity and duration.

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# Outsmarting sniffles

When pollen counts rise, many people face the misery of seasonal allergic rhinitis, commonly known as hay fever. While over-the-counter medications are helpful, several simple, non-pharmacological remedies can reduce symptoms like sneezing, congestion, and itchy eyes.



## EASY RELIEF STRATEGIES

- Check daily forecasts for pollen and mold levels. On high-count days, try to limit outdoor activities, especially during peak pollen hours (usually late morning to mid-afternoon). If you must go outside, wear a hat and sunglasses to keep pollen out of your eyes and hair.
- Using a saline nasal rinse (like a neti pot or squeeze bottle) helps flush allergens and mucus from your nose and sinuses. Always use distilled, sterile, or previously boiled and cooled water to prevent infection. 
- If your pet spends time outdoors, their fur can easily carry pollen inside. Wipe down your pet's fur with a damp cloth or give them regular baths to reduce the amount of pollen they track into your home.
- Keep windows and doors closed at home and in your car during allergy season. Use an air conditioner, and consider investing in a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to clean the air to reduce indoor allergens.
- Smoke and strong fumes can irritate your already inflamed nasal passages and worsen allergy symptoms. Maintaining a smoke-free environment is critical for respiratory health.
- Wash your bedding in water that is at least 130°F to effectively kill dust mites and remove allergens.
- Pollen can stick to your skin, hair, and clothing. When you come inside, immediately remove your outdoor clothes and wash them. Taking a shower and washing your hair before bed can help prevent transferring pollen to your bedding.
- Drinking plenty of water and clear fluids helps keep mucus thin and easier to drain, which can provide relief from congestion and a post-nasal drip. Warm teas can also soothe an irritated throat.



# Chemo brain & beyond

Chemotherapy is a vital cancer treatment, but can cause a range of side effects beyond the well-known issues like hair loss and fatigue. Here are a few often-overlooked side effects that patients and caregivers should be aware of.



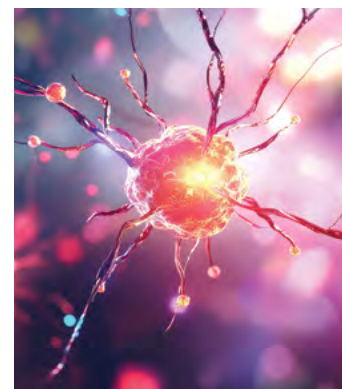
## SECONDARY CANCER RISK

While chemotherapy is designed to treat cancer, some agents can slightly increase the risk of developing a second, new type of cancer (like leukemia) years later due to damage to healthy cells. Regular, lifelong follow-up appointments with the oncology team are critical. They will monitor health, perform necessary screening tests, and ensure early detection if a secondary malignancy develops. Be sure to report any new or unusual symptoms promptly.



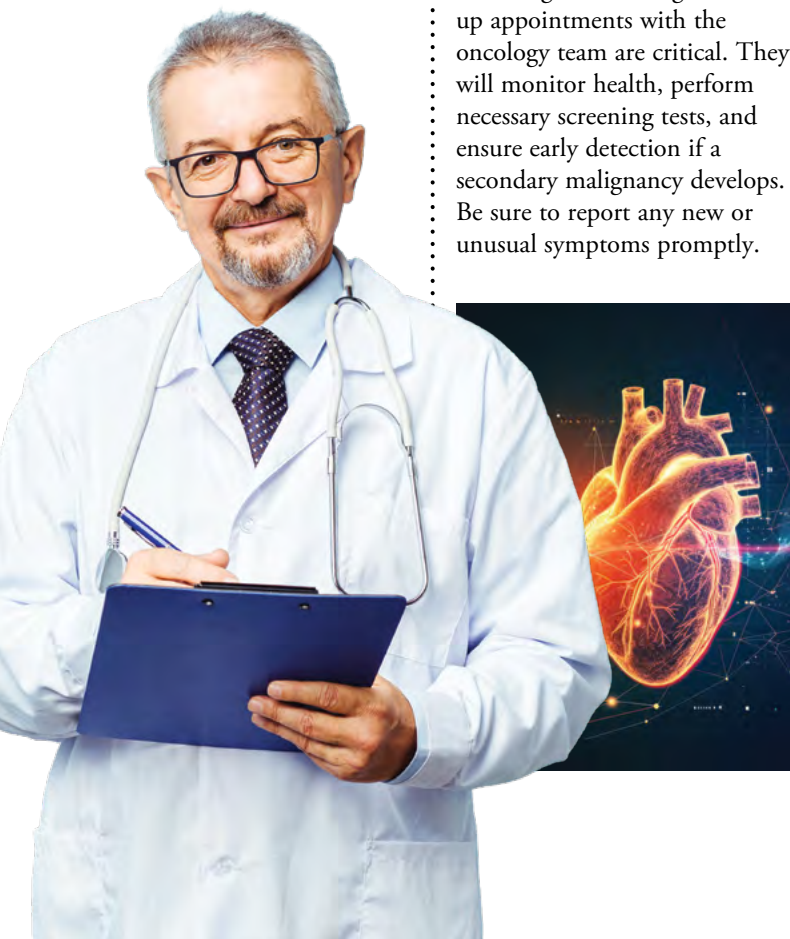
## CHEMOTHERAPY-INDUCED COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

Known as “Chemo Brain,” this involves issues with memory, focus, and processing speed. Patients may describe feeling mentally foggy or having trouble multitasking. Using memory aids like planners or phone apps, maintaining a routine, and engaging in brain-stimulating activities (like puzzles) can help manage symptoms.



## PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Chemotherapy can damage nerves, particularly in the hands and feet, leading to numbness, tingling, pain, or muscle weakness. This can affect daily tasks and increase the risk of falls. Inform your care team immediately if you notice symptoms. They may adjust your chemo dosage or recommend medications. Physical therapy can also help maintain strength and balance.



## CHANGES IN HEART HEALTH (CARDIOTOXICITY)

Some chemotherapy drugs can potentially weaken the heart muscle (cardiomyopathy) or cause other heart rhythm problems, sometimes years after treatment. Cardiac monitoring (like echocardiograms) before, during, and after treatment may be recommended.

## MENTAL HEALTH CHANGES

The stress of cancer, combined with the physical impact of chemo, can lead to or worsen anxiety, depression, and mood swings. These issues are often overlooked as normal responses to the diagnosis. Seeking professional mental health counseling and/or joining support groups are recommended.

## Recipe: Power smoothie



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium frozen banana
- 1/2 cup mixed berries
- 1/2 cup low-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 scoop whey or plant-based protein powder (optional)
- 1/2 cup low-fat milk or unsweetened fortified milk alternative
- 1 tsp chia seeds
- Pinch of salt

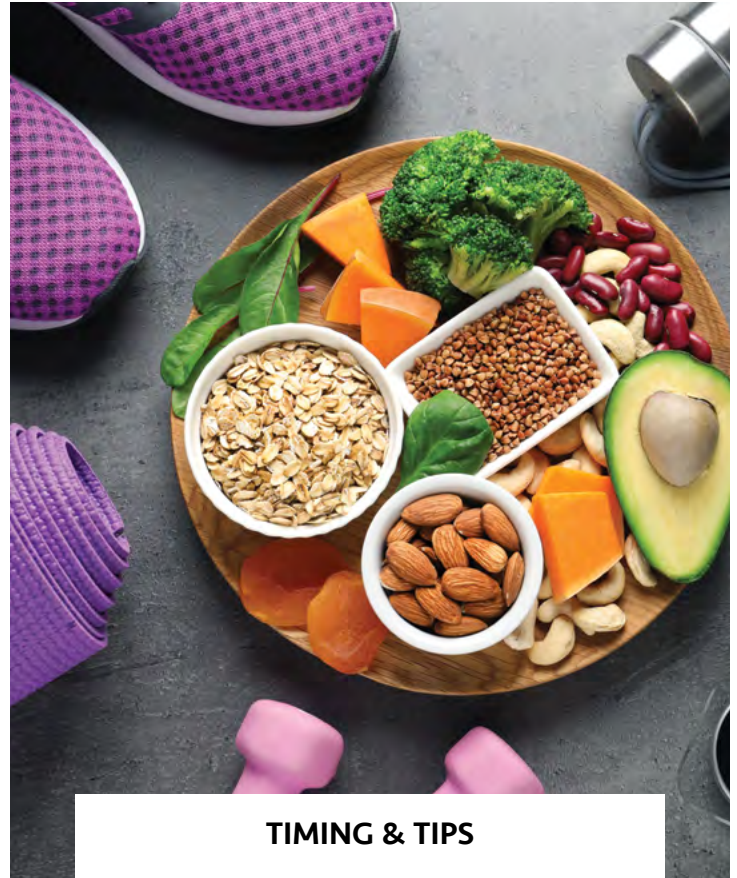
### DIRECTIONS

1. Combine the frozen banana, mixed berries, low-fat Greek yogurt, protein powder (if using), milk/milk alternative, chia seeds, and a pinch of salt in a blender.
2. Blend on high until completely smooth and creamy. If the mixture is too thick, add a splash more milk or water until the desired consistency is reached.
3. Pour into a glass and enjoy.

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:** Serves 1  
Per serving: 300 calories, 4g total fat, 2g saturated fat, 50g carbohydrates, 0g added sugar, 8g fiber, 20g protein, 200mg sodium

# Refuel & rebuild

Your pre- and post-workout meals critically affect energy, performance, and recovery. Pre-workout fuel provides easily accessible energy, while post-workout nutrition replenishes stores and begins muscle repair. Strategic timing and food choices are key to optimizing fitness results.



### TIMING & TIPS

- **Pre-workout (1–3 hours before):** Consume a meal rich in complex carbohydrates (like oatmeal, whole-grain toast, or fruit) for sustained energy. Keep fat and fiber low to prevent stomach discomfort during exercise.
- **Pre-workout (30–60 minutes before):** If time is short, grab a small, easily digestible carbohydrate source, such as a banana or an energy bar, to top off your glycogen stores.
- **Post-workout (within 1 hour):** This is the critical window for replenishing depleted energy (glycogen) and repairing muscle tissue. Combine a source of lean protein (like eggs, Greek yogurt, or a protein shake) with simple carbohydrates (like fruit or potatoes).
- **Proper hydration:** Drink water before, during, and after your workout. Dehydration can lead to fatigue and poor performance, regardless of how well you've eaten.

# Escape the grind

Wellness retreats are designed to improve physical, mental, and emotional health. These experiences often include guided activities, healthy meals, and educational workshops aimed at holistic well-being. They provide a space to disconnect from daily stressors and focus on self-care and personal growth.



## WELLNESS GETAWAY

A wellness retreat is a focused, short-term immersion experience designed for health optimization. They often promote practices like mindfulness, fitness, and nutritional guidance to support long-term healthy habits.

## COMMON TYPES

Retreats vary widely. Examples include:

- Yoga retreats (focused on physical postures and meditation)
- Detox/nutrition retreats (centered on clean eating and diet)
- Fitness bootcamps (high-intensity physical training)
- Mindfulness/meditation retreats (focused on quiet reflection and mental clarity)



## PROS

- A break from the daily stress that can negatively impact health, including heart health and stress-related conditions.
- The structured environment helps kickstart new, healthy routines—like regular exercise or mindful eating.
- Access to experts (yoga instructors, nutritionists, therapists) and a supportive community.
- Encourage deep rest and improved sleep quality, which is vital for immune function and mental health.

## CONS

- Quality retreats can be expensive, limiting accessibility for some individuals.
- It can be challenging to maintain the intensive focus and practices learned once you return to your normal, demanding environment.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT RETREAT

- Define your primary goal. Do you need physical fitness, stress relief, or help with sleep? Match the retreat's specialty to your most pressing need.
- Research the schedule and philosophy. Ensure the activities genuinely align with what you enjoy and what you are prepared for.

## CREATING YOUR OWN WELLNESS RETREAT

- Designate a “retreat weekend” at home and commit to disconnecting from work, email, and social media.
- Plan a simple, healthy menu in advance to eliminate cooking stress.
- Incorporate activities like a long walk, 30 minutes of deep stretching, or journaling.

# Bodyweight power

The most effective exercises are often the simplest, utilizing your own body weight to engage multiple muscle groups simultaneously. Mastering movements like squats, push-ups, and planks is the key to improving overall strength, posture, and stability, offering immense benefits for long-term health.

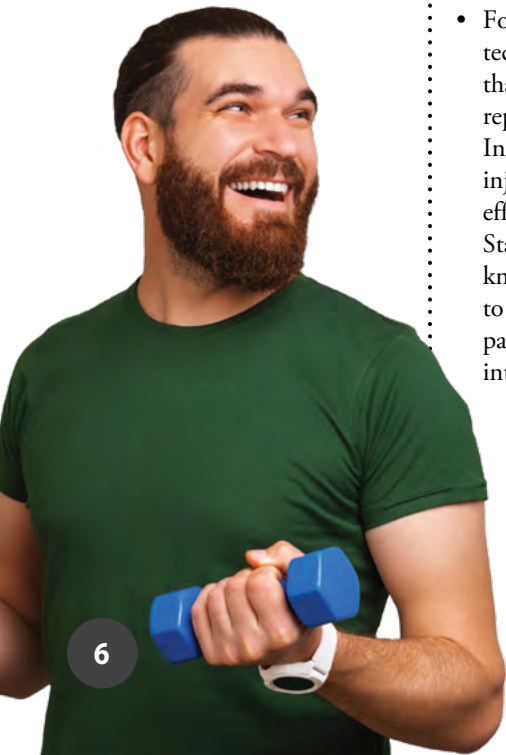


## FUNCTIONAL FITNESS

- Bodyweight exercises provides resistance training, which is crucial for building and maintaining bone density and muscle mass.
- Regular physical activity, including strength training, can help manage weight, lower blood pressure, and improve insulin sensitivity, which helps prevent conditions like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- Focusing on correct technique is more important than the number of repetitions you can perform. Incorrect form can lead to injury and minimize the effectiveness of the exercise. Start with modifications (e.g., knee push-ups, chair squats) to master the movement pattern before increasing the intensity.



Essential Exercises	Muscles Worked	Proper Form Tip
<b>Squat</b>	Glutes, quadriceps, and hamstrings. This move mimics sitting down and standing up, making it essential for daily functional movement.	Imagine sitting into a chair. Keep your chest up, push your hips back, and ensure your knees track in line with your toes, not caving inward.
<b>Push-Up</b>	Chest (pectorals), shoulders (deltoids), and back of the arms (triceps). It's also an excellent core stability exercise.	Keep your body in a straight line from head to heels (like a moving plank). Lower your chest until it's just above the floor, keeping your elbows tucked at about a 45-degree angle to your body.
<b>Plank</b>	Abdominals, obliques, and lower back muscles. The plank strengthens your core muscles to resist gravity and remain stable.	Get into a push-up position, either on your hands or forearms. Squeeze your glutes and brace your abs, imagining you are pulling your belly button toward your spine. Avoid letting your hips sag or hike up too high.



# Habit over hype

ACHIEVING A HEALTHY WEIGHT MEANS ADOPTING POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGES, NOT RAPID DIETING. SUSTAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS CREATES NEW PATTERNS THAT IMPROVE OVERALL WELL-BEING AND KEEP THE WEIGHT OFF LONG-TERM.



## KEYS TO LASTING CHANGE

- Instead of overhauling your entire diet, start with small, manageable steps (e.g., a daily walk or swapping sugary drinks). Consistency is more powerful than sporadic, extreme efforts.
- Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues instead of eating distractedly or emotionally. This practice helps you naturally consume fewer calories and improves your relationship with food.
- Poor sleep and high stress increase the hormone cortisol, which can sabotage weight loss and increase fat storage. Managing stress and aiming for seven to nine hours of quality sleep nightly supports weight management.
- Physical activity is vital for maintaining a healthy weight and preventing conditions like heart disease. Choose activities you genuinely look forward to, making exercise a sustainable routine.

# Brains at work

WORK LIFE

Neurodiversity recognizes that conditions like autism, ADHD, and dyslexia are natural variations in the human brain, offering unique strengths in the workplace.



## SUPPORTING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

- Neurodiverse individuals often experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, and burnout due to sensory overload and navigating workplaces designed for neurotypical norms.
- Anxiety can be reduced by providing clear instructions and expectations. Avoid vague language or sudden changes to routines, which can cause significant stress.
- Offering quiet rooms, flexible lighting, or the option to use noise-canceling headphones reduces sensory overload. Simple accommodations can improve focus and well-being.
- Allowing flexibility in work hours or remote work options helps individuals manage energy levels and schedule necessary mental health appointments without stigma.
- Educate managers and teams about neurodiversity and challenge stigma. A culture of acceptance leads to better mental health outcomes for everyone.
- Ensure employees have access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) or resources tailored to the specific mental health challenges faced by neurodiverse populations.

