



MenoPause

Unmasked

Your Comprehensive Resource Guide for Navigating
Perimenopause, Menopause & Beyond

Community Edition · April 2026

Featuring expert insights from

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Asara Tsehai — African Medicine Woman, Healer & Founder, Ancient Treasure

Dr. LaKeisha Webb McMillan — Integrative OB-GYN & Menopause Specialist

This guide reflects lived experience, shared community wisdom, and public health information. It is not a substitute for individualized medical advice.

How to Use This Guide

This guide was built from a real community conversation — real questions, real symptoms, real wisdom. It is meant to be used, not just read. Here is the simplest way to get the most from it.

01 READ — Read Each Section

Move through the guide at your own pace. Each section builds on the last — from understanding the transition, to recognizing your symptoms, to taking action. You don't have to read it all at once.

02 REFLECT — Reflect on Your Experience

Use the Personal Notes section at the back to record what resonates with you — symptoms you recognize, questions for your doctor, and insights from the community voices woven throughout.

03 ACT — Take One Step Forward

The Wellness Toolkit and Resources sections are designed for action — specific supplements, tests to request, and experts to follow. You don't need to do everything. Choose one thing and begin.

This guide is a companion, not a prescription. Always work with a qualified healthcare provider for personalized medical advice.

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A Letter to You

Dear Sister,

If you're reading this, it means you showed up — for yourself, for your health, and for the conversation that too many women are still having in whispers. We see you, and we're glad you're here.

When we created **MenoPause Unmasked**, we did it because we were tired of the silence. Tired of being told "it's just stress" or "that's normal for your age." Tired of watching brilliant, powerful women shrink under the weight of symptoms they couldn't name and doctors who wouldn't listen.

This guide is your companion. It won't replace your doctor (though it might help you fire a bad one). It won't cure anything overnight. But it will give you language for what you're experiencing, tools to start feeling better, and the deep comfort of knowing that a whole circle of women is walking this path alongside you.

You are not broken. You are not "too much." You are in transition — and transitions deserve tenderness, information, and community.

With love and intention,

Shria Tomlinson — Founder & Chief Impact Officer, Elevated Movements

Asara Tsehαι — African Medicine Woman, Healer & Founder, Ancient Treasure

Understanding the Transition

Menopause is not a single event — it's a continuum. Understanding where you are on this continuum is the first step toward getting the right support. The hormonal transition can span a decade or more, and symptoms can shift dramatically from one phase to the next.

During our live session, one of the most powerful realizations was how many women didn't know they were in perimenopause. They'd been told their labs were "normal," their symptoms were "just stress," or they were "too young for menopause." The truth is that hormonal shifts begin well before periods stop — and the symptoms are real, measurable, and treatable.

Perimenopause

Typically 40s – early 50s

4–10 years before menopause

The transition phase when estrogen and progesterone levels begin to fluctuate. Periods may become irregular, and symptoms like hot flashes, sleep disruption, mood shifts, and brain fog often begin here — sometimes years before periods stop. Many women don't realize their symptoms are hormonally connected.

Menopause

Average age 51

Defined by 12 consecutive months without a period

Menopause is technically a single point in time — the day marking 12 full months since your last period. But the symptoms that began in perimenopause often continue and can intensify. Estrogen levels have dropped significantly, affecting bone density, brain function, and skin elasticity.

Postmenopause

Every year after menopause

The rest of your life

The years following menopause. Hormone levels have stabilized at their new baseline. Some symptoms ease, but others — like bone loss, cardiovascular changes, and vaginal dryness — may become more prominent. This is a new chapter that deserves just as much attention and care.

KEY INSIGHT

"Normal labs do not necessarily mean your hormones are balanced."

Both Shria and Asara shared experiences of being dismissed by doctors who relied solely on standard lab ranges. Standard reference ranges are broad population averages — they don't account for your individual baseline or the complex interplay between estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, thyroid, and cortisol. If your symptoms are real, your experience is valid regardless of what a lab report says.

Understanding HRT

During the session, the speakers distinguished between synthetic hormone replacement therapy and bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT). Earlier public fear around hormone therapy was shaped by overstated or misunderstood risk narratives. Today, many practitioners — including Dr. LaKeisha Webb McMillan — offer personalized hormone balancing using bio-identical hormones, guided by advanced testing like the DUTCH test.

This is not medical advice. Discuss hormone therapy options with a qualified practitioner who understands your full health history.

The Full Symptom Landscape

Most women know about hot flashes. But menopause can bring **over 40 different symptoms** across every system in your body — physical, cognitive, emotional, and even spiritual. The list below captures what was discussed during our live session, expanded with expert input from Asara and Dr. LaKeischa.

You don't have to experience all of these. But if you recognize yourself in even a few, know that these are **real, hormonally connected symptoms** — not signs that something is wrong with you.

Vasomotor

Hot flashes

Night sweats

Heart palpitations

Flushing

“

“Dress in layers and carry a hand fan to cool down as needed.”

— Elaine

Cognitive & Emotional

Brain fog

Memory lapses

Word-finding difficulty

Anxiety & panic

Mood shifts & irritability

Feeling overwhelmed

Emotional detachment

Grief & identity shifts

“

“I'm pushing through grief, brain fog/forgetfulness and insomnia.”

— Afina

Musculoskeletal

Joint pain & stiffness

Frozen shoulder

Reduced flexibility

Bone density loss

Muscle weakness

“

“Frozen shoulder and flexibility is gone... I thought it was just an injury.”

— Janna

Sleep & Energy

Insomnia

Non-restorative sleep

Fatigue & low energy

Waking at 3am

Restless legs

“

“Eight years of severe insomnia after menopause without doctors connecting it.”

— Asara

Hair, Skin & Nails

Hair thinning

Dry or aging skin

Brittle nails

Collagen loss

Texture changes

“

“Your body just changes like overnight. You look in the mirror and you're like a completely different person.”

— Zeffie

Intimate & Pelvic Health

Vaginal dryness

Painful intimacy

Urinary urgency

Pelvic floor changes

Reduced libido

“

“Okra water for internal moisture... if you know, you know.”

— Jana

Neurological & Sensory

Headaches & migraines

Tingling sensations

Vertigo or dizziness

Tinnitus

Electric shock feelings

Metabolic & Body Composition

Weight gain (especially belly)

Bloating

Increased inflammation

Slower metabolism

Blood sugar shifts

“

“No patience. No filter.”

— Kaye

“The body is communicating, not merely malfunctioning.” — Asara Tsehai

Asara reframed menopause symptoms not as failures of the body, but as messages. Joint pain may be asking for support and trust. Insomnia may be asking for a different pace. Brain fog may be asking you to slow down and listen. This doesn't replace medical treatment — but it adds a layer of meaning that many women find deeply comforting.

Expanded Symptom Deep Dives

For the symptoms that came up most powerfully during our session, we've created detailed deep dives — explaining why they happen, what they feel like, and what you can actually do about them. Each section includes expert guidance from Asara and voices from our community.

01 Joint Pain & Stiffness

Why your joints ache and what you can do about it

02 Brain Fog & Memory

Hormonal cognitive shifts and practical memory strategies

03 Sleep Disruption

Why sleep changes and how to restore deep rest

04 Hair, Skin & Nail Changes

Collagen, hydration, and rebuilding from within

05 Intimate & Pelvic Health

Physiological changes and expert-backed solutions

"Understanding why your body is changing is the first step toward working with it, not against it."

— ASARA TSEHAI

Joint Pain & Stiffness

When your knees start telling a story

WHY THIS HAPPENS

Estrogen plays a key role in maintaining joint lubrication and reducing inflammation. As estrogen declines, joints can become stiffer, more inflamed, and more sensitive — especially in the knees, hips, and shoulders. Collagen loss accelerates, reducing the cushioning between bones. Many women mistake this for aging or injury when it's actually hormonally driven.

WHAT YOU MIGHT FEEL

- Morning stiffness that takes time to ease
- Aching knees, especially on rainy or cold days
- Frozen shoulder (extremely common, often misdiagnosed)
- Reduced flexibility and range of motion
- Swelling or tenderness in hands and fingers

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Moist heat remedies

Ginger compress, heating pad, steamy shower — warmth increases circulation and eases stiffness

Gentle movement

Walking, stretching, light dancing — movement over stillness, always

Anti-inflammatory foods

Turmeric, ginger, leafy greens, sea moss smoothies

Castor oil compresses

Applied to joints for circulation and pain relief

Warm water protocol

5–6 cups of very warm water throughout the day, especially on rainy days

Bone density scan

Recommended for women 50+ — ask your doctor, don't wait for them to offer

ASARA'S WISDOM

"Your body is speaking — softly, but clearly. Knees are about support, trust, and moving forward. Let's tend to them with care, not force."

Asara connects joint pain to both the physical (collagen loss, inflammation) and the emotional (where in your life do you need more support?).

“

"The older we get, the more we need resistance training and lifting heavy things for our bone density."

— Tenisha, from our live session

Brain Fog & Memory

You're not losing your mind — your hormones are shifting

WHY THIS HAPPENS

Estrogen is a key neurotransmitter regulator. It supports acetylcholine (memory), serotonin (mood), and dopamine (motivation). When estrogen fluctuates or drops, cognitive processing can slow, word retrieval becomes harder, and the ability to hold multiple thoughts simultaneously decreases. This is not dementia — it's a hormonal cognitive shift.

WHAT YOU MIGHT FEEL

- Walking into a room and forgetting why
- Struggling to find the right word mid-sentence
- Difficulty concentrating or multitasking
- Slower processing speed
- Feeling 'foggy' or disconnected
- Forgetting appointments or conversations

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

External memory systems

Use calendars, notebooks, phone reminders — stop relying on recall alone

Say it out loud

"I'm putting my keys on the bed" — narrating actions helps encode memory

Send notes to yourself

Text or email yourself important information immediately

Sleep prioritization

Brain fog worsens dramatically with poor sleep — address sleep first

Omega-3 fatty acids

Support brain cell membrane health and reduce neuroinflammation

Movement

Even 20 minutes of walking increases blood flow to the brain

“

“Saying things out loud — 'I'm putting my keys on the bed' — to combat brain fog.”

— Janna, from our live session

Sleep Disruption

When rest becomes the hardest thing to find

WHY THIS HAPPENS

Progesterone — your body's natural sedative — declines during perimenopause. Estrogen fluctuations disrupt the body's temperature regulation (causing night sweats that wake you) and affect melatonin production. Cortisol patterns can shift, leading to the classic '3am wake-up.' Asara described eight years of severe insomnia after menopause that doctors never connected to her hormonal transition.

WHAT YOU MIGHT FEEL

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Waking at 2–4am unable to return to sleep
- Night sweats disrupting sleep cycles
- Non-restorative sleep (sleeping but waking exhausted)
- Racing thoughts at bedtime
- Deep depletion and reduced functioning

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Yoga nidra / transformational sleep

A guided practice that can help the body enter deep rest even without traditional sleep

Craniosacral work

Gentle bodywork that supports nervous system regulation

Sunlight timing

Morning sunlight and dusk light help regulate circadian rhythm and melatonin

Temperature management

Cool bedroom, breathable fabrics, layers you can remove

Grounding practices

Time in nature, bare feet on earth, warm compresses before bed

Mineral rebuilding

Magnesium glycinate, especially before bed — supports muscle relaxation and sleep

ASARA'S WISDOM

"I went eight years with severe insomnia. No doctor connected it to menopause. Recovery involved rebuilding, rest, and addressing mineral depletion before other interventions were effective."

Asara's testimony underscores how sleep disruption can be the most debilitating symptom — and how it's often the last one doctors investigate hormonally.

Hair, Skin & Nail Changes

When the mirror shows someone unfamiliar

WHY THIS HAPPENS

Collagen production drops significantly as estrogen declines — up to 30% in the first five years of menopause. Collagen supplies proline, glycine, and hydroxyproline, which are essential for keratin production (the protein that makes up hair and nails). Hair follicle stability decreases, the growth phase shortens, and nails lose their structural integrity.

WHAT YOU MIGHT FEEL

- Hair thinning, especially at the temples and crown
- Edges receding or thinning
- Increased hair shedding
- Texture changes (coarser, drier, or wiry)
- Nails peeling, breaking, or bending easily
- Ridges appearing on nails
- Skin losing elasticity and moisture

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Hydrolyzed collagen peptides

More bioavailable than whole collagen — supports hair, skin, and nail rebuilding

Pair with cofactors

Vitamin C, zinc, silica, and iron are essential for collagen absorption

Marine collagen

Vital Proteins Marine Collagen recommended for bioavailability

Hydration

Half your body weight in ounces of water daily — skin and hair need internal moisture

Gentle hair care

Reduce heat styling, use silk pillowcases, avoid tight styles that stress follicles

Biotin and B-vitamins

Support keratin production and cellular energy for hair growth

ASARA'S WISDOM

"She's not just aging. Her body is asking for reconstruction, nourishment, and support at a foundational level."

Asara provided detailed science on collagen's role in hair and nail health. See the self-assessment checklists in Section 07.

Intimate & Pelvic Health

The conversation no one wants to have — but everyone needs

WHY THIS HAPPENS

Estrogen maintains the thickness, elasticity, and moisture of vaginal tissue. As levels drop, the vaginal walls thin (vaginal atrophy), natural lubrication decreases, and the pH balance shifts — increasing susceptibility to infections and discomfort. Pelvic floor muscles can weaken, affecting bladder control and sexual comfort. This is one of the most undertreated aspects of menopause.

WHAT YOU MIGHT FEEL

- Vaginal dryness and discomfort
- Pain during intimacy
- Reduced libido or desire
- Urinary urgency or leaking
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Changes in sensation

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Quality lubricants

Dr. LaKeischa is a founding advisory board member of Momentum Intimacy — physician-designed intimate care

Pelvic floor exercises

Kegels and pelvic floor physical therapy can restore strength and control

Vaginal moisturizers

Regular use (not just during intimacy) helps maintain tissue health

Community remedy

Okra water for internal moisture — a tip shared during our live session

Open conversation

Talk with your partner. This is a physiological change, not a reflection of desire or love

Specialist consultation

Dr. LaKeischa offers integrative GYN consultations specifically for menopausal intimate health

“

“Okra water for internal moisture... if you know, you know.”

— Jana, from our live session

Your Wellness Toolkit

This section compiles the practical strategies, remedies, and protocols shared during our session and expanded by Asara's expert notes. These are shared practices and public information — not individualized medical advice.

“

"You cannot assume you can keep living at the same pace indefinitely. The body may demand more rest, more intentional movement, better sleep support, and greater boundaries."

— Session theme

Movement & Body Support

Movement is medicine during menopause — but the type of movement matters. The session emphasized that your body may need different kinds of movement than what worked in your 30s.

Resistance training & weights

Critical for bone density and muscle mass. The older we get, the more we need to lift heavy things.

Walking regularly

Low-impact, accessible, and proven to improve mood, sleep, and cardiovascular health.

African dance

Combines joyful movement with weight-bearing impact — good for bones and spirit.

Stretching & flexibility

Combat stiffness and frozen shoulder. Gentle daily stretching keeps joints mobile.

Pilates reformer

Builds core strength, improves posture, and supports pelvic floor health.

Jumping / impact-based movement

Important for bone density. Swimming and bicycling alone are not sufficient for bone health.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Swimming and bicycling are not sufficient on their own for bone density.

Weight-bearing and impact exercises are essential. If you swim or cycle, supplement with resistance training or walking to protect your bone health.

Anti-Inflammatory Nutrition

Inflammation increases as estrogen decreases. An anti-inflammatory approach to eating can reduce joint pain, brain fog, bloating, and fatigue.

Turmeric & ginger

Powerful natural anti-inflammatories. Use in cooking, teas, smoothies, or supplements.

Leafy greens

Rich in magnesium, calcium, and antioxidants. Aim for a serving at every meal.

Sea moss smoothies

Mineral-rich superfood that supports thyroid function, skin elasticity, and gut health.

Prunes

About six a day help bones stay strong — backed by research on bone density preservation.

Omega-3 rich foods

Fatty fish, walnuts, flaxseed — support brain health, reduce inflammation, and improve mood.

Reduce processed sugar

Sugar increases inflammation and can worsen hot flashes, mood swings, and weight gain.

Supplement Guidance

Asara provided detailed guidance on key supplements for menopausal women. Always consult your practitioner before starting new supplements.

Vitamin D3 + K2 (together)

D3 increases calcium absorption; K2 (MK-7 form) directs calcium to bones, not arteries. Without K2, high-dose D3 can cause hypercalcemia. D3 cholecalciferol preferred over D2.

Hydrolyzed collagen peptides

More bioavailable than whole collagen. Supports hair, skin, nails, and joint health. Pair with Vitamin C, zinc, silica, and iron.

Floradix Iron + Herbs

Liquid iron supplement recommended by Asara for fatigue and low energy. Gentle on the stomach.

Magnesium glycinate

Supports sleep, muscle relaxation, and stress reduction. Best taken before bed.

Omega-3 / Fish oil

Supports brain function, reduces inflammation, and supports cardiovascular health.

Biotin & B-vitamins

Support energy production, hair growth, and nervous system function.

PRACTICAL TIP

Life Extension offers a \$44 Vitamin D blood test with complimentary consultation.

Know your levels before supplementing — Vitamin D deficiency is extremely common and directly affects bone density, mood, immunity, and inflammation.

Hydration Protocol

Hydration goes beyond "drink more water." Asara provided a specific protocol that connects hydration to joint health, skin elasticity, and overall cellular function.

Half your body weight in ounces

If you weigh 160 lbs, aim for 80 oz of water daily. This is your baseline.

5–6 cups of very warm water

Warm water throughout the day — not cold. Warm water is more easily absorbed and supports digestion.

Warm water without anything in it

Especially on rainy or cold days when joints are more sensitive. Pure warm water, not tea or coffee.

Hydration and joints

Dehydration directly worsens joint stiffness and pain. Water lubricates cartilage and synovial fluid.

Nervous System & Restoration

Your nervous system may be in overdrive. These practices help shift from fight-or-flight into rest-and-restore — essential for sleep, mood, and overall healing.

Yoga nidra / transformational sleep

A guided practice that induces deep rest. Powerful for insomnia and nervous system regulation.

Craniosacral work

Gentle bodywork that supports the central nervous system. Transformative for sleep and anxiety.

Time in nature & grounding

Bare feet on earth, sitting under trees, walking in parks. Nature regulates cortisol and calms the nervous system.

Humming bee breath

Humming on the exhale calms the vagus nerve and reduces anxiety — shared by our community.

Warm compresses & ginger compresses

Applied to tense areas — neck, shoulders, lower back. Heat therapy with anti-inflammatory ginger.

Boundaries as medicine

Saying no, reducing commitments, protecting your energy. This is not selfish — it's survival.

Products Mentioned in This Guide

The following products were mentioned by our speakers and community members as tools they personally use or recommend. These are not paid endorsements.

Vital Proteins Marine Collagen

Collagen support — recommended for bioavailability

Floradix Iron + Herbs

Energy & iron — gentle liquid formula

Life Extension D3 Test

Vitamin D testing — \$44 with consultation

Momentum Intimacy

Intimate wellness — physician-designed line

7 Days to Calm App

Guided mindfulness app — by Elevated Movements

Voices from the Circle

The most powerful moments of our live session weren't the expert advice — they were the moments when someone in the chat said what everyone else was feeling. The "it's not just me" moments. This section honors those voices.

These quotes are shared with first names only, as they were given during our public session. Each one represents a woman who chose to be vulnerable so that others could feel less alone.

Grief & Identity

“

"I think grief through the phases of life/womanhood is something I never knew would be a part of the journey... mourning the loss of maidenhood."

— Tenisha

Perseverance

“

"I'm pushing through grief, brain fog/forgetfulness and insomnia."

— Afina

Generational Patterns

“

"I'm 62 years young and pushing through night sweats, joint pains & an ovarian cyst... feeling like I have to push through like my Mom not taking any HRT."

— Aneesah

Resilience

“

"I'm pushing through grief as I'm pushing through to my 80's (I'm 77 years young) feeling disassociated from my body and emotions."

— Stephanie

Emotional Shifts

“

“No patience. No filter.”

— Kaye

Body Changes

“

“Your body just changes like overnight. You look in the mirror and you're like a completely different person.”

— Zeffie

Hidden Symptoms

“

“Frozen shoulder and flexibility is gone... I thought it was just an injury, but it turned out to be connected to menopause.”

— Janna

Proactive Health

“

“I had one and due for another bone density test soon.”

— Mama Mut

Community Wisdom

During the session, attendees shared practical tips and remedies that have worked for them. These are presented as lived experience and community wisdom — not medical advice.

NERVOUS SYSTEM "Humming bee breath for calming the nervous system." *Shared by Elaine*

INTIMATE HEALTH "Okra water for internal moisture... if you know, you know." *Shared by Jana*

BRAIN FOG "Saying things out loud — 'I'm putting my keys on the bed' — to combat brain fog." *Shared by Janna*

BONE HEALTH "Prunes! About six a day help bones stay strong." *Shared by Elaine*

VITAMIN D & SLEEP "Sunlight in the morning and at dusk — super important!" *Shared by Tenisha*

BODY CHANGES "Witch hazel helps with the menopause scents." *Shared by Afina*

HOT FLASHES "Dress in layers and carry a hand fan to cool down as needed." *Shared by Elaine*

All community wisdom is shared as personal experience — not individualized medical advice. What works for one person may not work for another. Always consult your healthcare provider before trying new remedies or supplements.

Self-Assessment Worksheets

These worksheets transform this guide from something you read into something you use. Check the items that apply to you, track your patterns, and bring the results to your next doctor's appointment.

Hair Shifts Self-Assessment

From Asara's Expert Notes

Check all that apply to you. This checklist helps you identify patterns and gives you language for conversations with your healthcare provider.

- Noticeable hair thinning, especially at the temples or crown
- Edges receding or thinning
- Increased hair breakage or splitting
- Texture changes — hair feels coarser, drier, or wiry
- More hair shedding than usual (in brush, shower, pillow)
- Scalp dryness or itchiness
- Hair growing in new places (chin, upper lip)
- Overall loss of volume or body

IF YOU CHECKED 3 OR MORE

Consider discussing collagen supplementation, hormone levels, and nutritional support with your practitioner.

Your nails may be signaling the same deficiency — see the Nail Shifts checklist below.

Nail Shifts Self-Assessment

From Asara's Expert Notes

Your nails can be early indicators of nutritional deficiencies and hormonal changes.

- Nails peeling in layers
- Breaking or chipping easily
- Feeling thin, weak, or soft
- Visible ridges (vertical lines)
- Brittle or dry texture
- Bending instead of staying firm
- Slower growth than before

IF YOU CHECKED 3 OR MORE

Your body may be signaling collagen depletion or mineral deficiency.

Consider adding hydrolyzed collagen peptides with Vitamin C, zinc, and silica.

My Symptom Tracker

Bring This to Your Next Appointment

Use this checklist to track your symptoms over 2–4 weeks. Note frequency and severity. This gives your doctor concrete information instead of vague descriptions.

- Hot flashes or night sweats
- Sleep disruption or insomnia
- Brain fog or memory issues
- Joint pain or stiffness
- Mood changes (anxiety, irritability, sadness)
- Fatigue or low energy
- Hair, skin, or nail changes
- Weight changes or bloating
- Vaginal dryness or intimate discomfort
- Headaches or migraines
- Heart palpitations
- Tingling, vertigo, or sensory changes

TIP

Document when symptoms occur, how often, and how severe (1–10 scale).

This transforms a vague "I don't feel right" into actionable data your doctor can work with.

Doctor Visit Preparation

Advocate for Yourself

Many women leave appointments feeling unheard. This worksheet helps you prepare so you can advocate clearly and effectively.

- I've tracked my symptoms for at least 2 weeks
- I've written down my top 3 concerns in order of priority
- I've noted when my last period was (or when periods became irregular)
- I've listed all current medications and supplements
- I've prepared specific questions about hormone testing
- I've asked about comprehensive hormone panels (not just standard labs)
- I've researched whether my doctor has menopause-specific training
- I've considered requesting a referral to a menopause specialist
- I've asked about bone density testing (if 50+)
- I've brought a support person or plan to take notes

REMEMBER

"Normal labs do not necessarily mean your hormones are balanced."

If your symptoms are dismissed, you have every right to seek a second opinion or a specialist. You know your body.

Expert Resources & Next Steps

Knowledge is power — but only when you know where to go next. This section connects you with the experts, books, tests, and programs that can support your journey beyond this guide.

Your Expert Circle

Dr. LaKeisha Webb McMillan, MD, FACOG

Integrative OB-GYN & Menopause Specialist

Board-certified OB-GYN with over 20 years of experience, specializing in perimenopause and menopause. She offers personalized hormone balancing, advanced testing (including the DUTCH test), and integrative approaches that combine conventional medicine with holistic practices.

- Author of *The Other PMS: Perimenopause, Menopause, and Sensuality*
- Creator of the Hormone Hottie™ Boot Camp
- Founding advisory board member of Momentum Intimacy
- Host of The Hormone Hottie Podcast
- drlakeischamd.com · [@drlakeischamd](https://www.instagram.com/drlakeischamd)

Asara Tsehai

African Medicine Woman, Healer & Founder of Ancient Treasure

Asara brings deep ancestral wisdom and practical health knowledge to the menopause conversation. Her expertise spans herbal remedies, mineral rebuilding, collagen science, and the spiritual dimensions of the menopausal transition. Her detailed notes on D3+K2, joint pain, and hair/nail health form the foundation of several sections in this guide.

- Founder, Ancient Treasure
- Founder, Juicy to 100 Nation
- Expert in African traditional medicine and healing practices
- Specialist in mineral rebuilding and collagen science
- myancienttreasure.com · [@asaratsehai](https://www.instagram.com/asaratsehai)

Shria Tomlinson

Founder & Chief Impact Officer, Elevated Movements

Shria created the MenoPause Unmasked series to break the silence around menopause — especially for women of color. Through Elevated Movements, she builds community spaces where women can share, learn, and heal together.

- Founder, Elevated Movements™
- Co-Creator, MenoPause Unmasked (with Asara Tsehai)
- elevatedmovements.com · [@elevatedmovements](https://www.instagram.com/elevatedmovements)

Recommended Reading

The Other PMS: Perimenopause, Menopause, and Sensuality

by Dr. LaKeisha Webb McMillan — Practical guide to navigating hormonal changes with grace

The Menopause Manifesto

by Dr. Jen Gunter — Evidence-based guide to understanding menopause

What Fresh Hell Is This?

by Heather Corinna — Perimenopause, menopause, and the body's changes

Estrogen Matters

by Dr. Avrum Bluming & Carol Tavris — Re-examining the evidence on hormone therapy

Tests to Request

Don't wait for your doctor to suggest these. Advocate for comprehensive testing — especially if your symptoms are being dismissed with "your labs are normal."

DUTCH Test (Dried Urine Test for Comprehensive Hormones)

Advanced hormone testing that measures metabolites — more detailed than standard blood panels

Bone Density Scan (DEXA)

Recommended for women 50+ to establish baseline bone health. Don't wait for your doctor to offer — ask for it

Vitamin D Blood Test

Life Extension offers a \$44 test with complimentary consultation. Know your levels before supplementing

Comprehensive Thyroid Panel

TSH alone is not enough. Request Free T3, Free T4, and thyroid antibodies

Comprehensive Metabolic Panel

Baseline for liver, kidney, and metabolic function — especially important if starting supplements

YOUR HEALTH IS WORTH ADVOCATING FOR

"You are not just getting older. You deserve a healthcare provider who listens."

If your concerns are dismissed, seek a second opinion. Seek a specialist. You know your body.

My Wellness Action Plan

What three things will you start doing this week? Write them down and commit.

ACTION 01

ACTION 02

ACTION 03

Additional notes:

A Closing Word

You made it through this guide. That alone tells us something about you.

You're the kind of woman who doesn't accept "just deal with it" as an answer. You're the kind who researches, who asks questions, who shows up for herself even when she's exhausted. You're the kind who will share what she learns with her sister, her mother, her best friend — because knowledge shared is power multiplied.

Menopause is not a disease. It is not a decline. It is a profound biological and spiritual transition — one that deserves the same attention, research, and respect as any other major health event. The fact that it has been undertreated and under-discussed for so long is not a reflection of its importance. It's a reflection of whose bodies have been centered in medical research.

That's changing. And you're part of the change.

During our live session, something remarkable happened. Women who had been carrying symptoms alone for years — sometimes decades — discovered they weren't alone. The chat lit up with "me too" and "I thought it was just me." That collective exhale, that shared recognition — that's what community healing looks like.

You are not too old, too young, too far along, or too early to start paying attention to your body. You are right on time.

Keep this guide close. Use the worksheets. Bring the symptom tracker to your next appointment. Share the community wisdom with someone who needs it. There's more where this came from — more events, more conversations, more community.

Until next time,

The MenoPause Unmasked Team

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