

Ask Leyla: Post-menopausal weight loss

Q: Any tips for losing weight post-menopause? I eat a healthy diet (salmon 3-4 times per week; no white flour/sugars) and exercise but cannot lose ten pounds. I never had a weight issue in my entire life until now!

A: Here's the thing about menopause. Everything we did diet-wise *before menopause* doesn't necessarily continue to work afterward. The biggest complaint I hear is, "I never gained weight around my midsection before. Now I have a belly!"



It could very well be the decline in hormones that causes metabolic resistance to weight loss. It would be a good idea to get your thyroid and DHEA levels checked.

Adrenal stress is another reason for metabolic resistance to weight loss. A salivary cortisol test can show if stress hormone levels are too high. Adrenals can be soothed with adaptogens such as **ashwagandha** and **rosavin**.

While I agree you're on a very healthy diet if you're eating salmon and avoiding refined carbohydrates, we do become a little more carbohydrate intolerant as we get older. I know it feels like some kind of cosmic punishment, but there it is.

So we need to go a little further down in the carbohydrate department. Essentially, I'm talking about the avoidance of grains, even whole grains. This food group has the highest amounts of carbohydrates, and because they cause spikes in blood sugar and subsequent insulin levels in predisposed individuals, this keeps metabolism in perpetual fat storage mode.

In addition, keep your fruit intake limited to low glycemic fruits such as berries, grapefruit, plums, kiwi and Granny Smith apples (the green one). It's best to avoid bananas and grapes, or at least choose them less frequently. And keep away from any juices and fruit smoothies.

You should eat more vegetables than fruit. Limit your starchier vegetables such as potatoes (yes, even sweet potatoes), peas and corn. Eat more green stuff!

Avoid artificial sweeteners (or any sweeteners for that matter) like the plague. Most will cause spikes in blood sugar and insulin in susceptible individuals. An exception might be xylitol, but enough xylitol may have a laxative effect—watch out!

The objective is to keep insulin levels low so the fat-burning hormone glucagon can do its job.

Then you can say goodbye to the last ten pounds.

To your health!