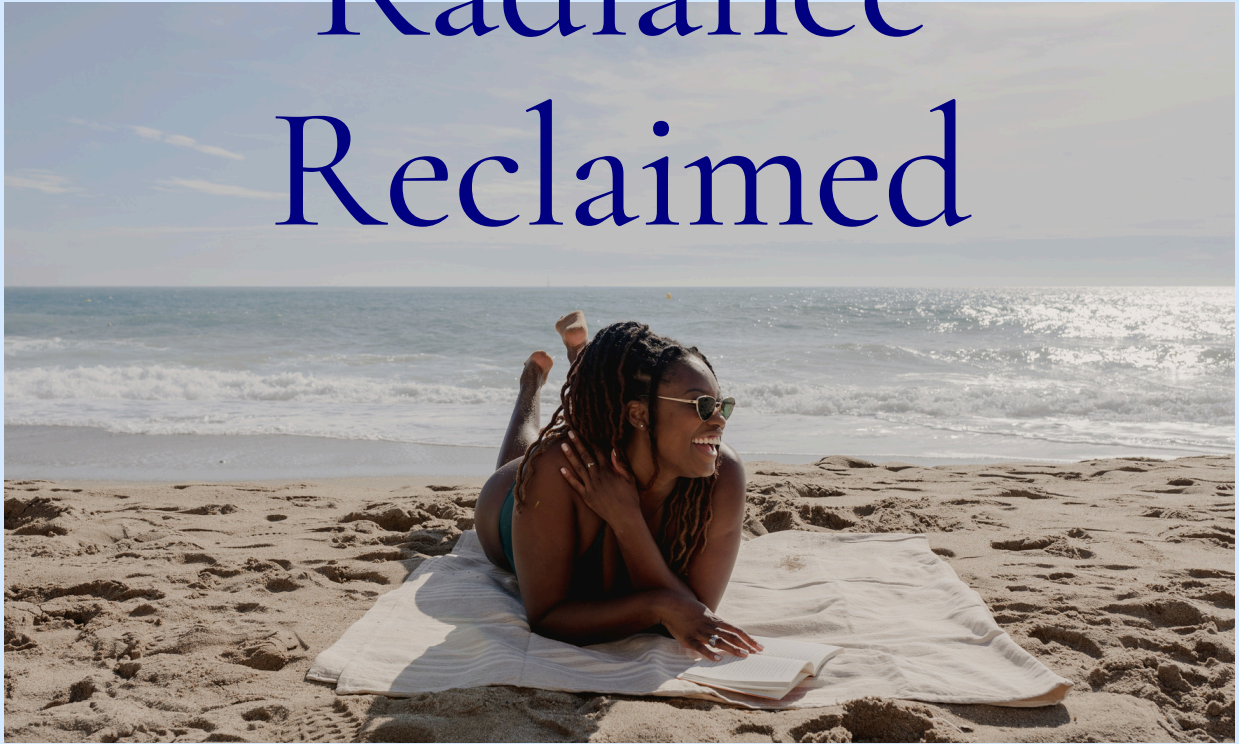


GUIDE

Radiance Reclaimed



*Thriving Through
Perimenopause and Menopause*

BY DR. JENN EDWARDS
RENEWELL FOUNDATION



About Dr. Jenn

Dr. Jennifer Edwards is an experienced nonprofit leader and financial strategist who is passionate about equity for underrepresented groups. With 20 years of experience in public health, and ten years of related experience in grants, Jennifer prioritizes resilience, planning, and accessible resources to equip women and their families through Savvy Financial Wellness and The Renewell Foundation. She has PhD from Howard University, MBA from Walden University, and a BS from Florida A&M University.

“Black women have so many special and unique experiences that deserve to be elevated. We need the village now more than ever before to understand how to thrive and reclaim radiance during life’s transitions. - Dr. Jenn Edwards

Read Together



Black women often experience menopause and perimenopause differently than other groups, facing unique challenges such as higher rates of severe symptoms, earlier onset, and limited access to culturally relevant healthcare information. Despite these differences, the experiences of Black women are frequently overlooked in conversations about menopause, leaving many to navigate this life stage without the support or resources they need. Elevating these experiences is not just important—it's essential. When Black women's voices and stories are centered, it opens the door to better understanding, equitable healthcare, and practical solutions tailored to their needs. This guide is a step toward creating that space, offering insights and strategies rooted in both evidence-based practices and cultural wisdom.

Reading this guide and adopting healthier habits during perimenopause and menopause can have a profound impact on your overall well-being. By understanding the changes happening in your body and how to support them, you can reduce symptoms, improve your energy, and enhance your quality of life. This is not just about managing hot flashes or sleepless nights; it's about thriving in a way that honors your body, your heritage, and your goals. Whether you're looking to feel more balanced, maintain your vitality, or prepare for the next chapter of life, this guide provides the tools and knowledge to help you navigate this transition with confidence and care.

Doctor Jenn

01 Where to Start

Reclaiming your radiance starts with identifying the key areas of your life that need the most care and attention during this transformative phase. Midlife brings natural shifts in our bodies, emotions, and personal priorities, and it's the perfect time to reassess what matters most. Attraction life coaching teaches us that when we become clear about our true desires and align our actions with those goals, we begin to attract the resources and opportunities that support our growth. Take a moment to reflect on two aspects of your life that have changed significantly—whether it's your health, relationships, career, or personal development. Focusing on these areas can help you reignite your energy and cultivate the vibrant life you deserve.

Once you've pinpointed the areas that require focus, prioritize them with intention and clarity. It could be committing to a healthier lifestyle to support your well-being during perimenopause or reawakening hobbies and passions that nurture your soul. By intentionally dedicating time and energy to these changes, you invite the right opportunities and support to help you thrive. The more in tune you are with your deepest desires, the more naturally the right people and circumstances will flow into your life.



Seek new medical perspectives

Functional medicine is a personalized, patient-centered approach that seeks to address the root causes of health issues rather than just treating symptoms. It focuses on understanding the unique genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors that contribute to a person's well-being. Unlike traditional medicine, which often focuses on diagnosing and treating specific diseases or conditions, functional medicine views the body as an interconnected system and emphasizes prevention, holistic care, and individualized treatment plans. By taking a comprehensive approach, functional medicine aims to restore balance and optimize health, empowering patients to actively participate in their healing process.



Integrating functional medicine into your plan of care

- 1 Ask your health insurance company for functional medicine providers
- 2 Contact your state's medical board for functional medicine practitioners
- 3 Reach out in online communities to ask for highly recommended Black functional medicine providers

02

You can't out exercise a bad diet



Culinary medicine is a field that combines the art of cooking with the science of medicine to promote health and prevent disease. It focuses on the role of food as medicine, emphasizing how nutrition and culinary practices can support overall well-being, manage chronic conditions, and enhance recovery. Practitioners of culinary medicine teach patients how to prepare nutrient-dense meals using whole foods that are aligned with their health needs, integrating principles of nutrition science with cooking techniques. This approach empowers individuals to take control of their health through everyday food choices, making it both an educational and practical tool for long-term wellness.

Practicing culinary medicine in daily life starts with making intentional, health-focused food choices that support your overall well-being. Begin by incorporating a variety of whole, minimally processed foods into your meals, focusing on nutrient-dense vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and healthy fats. You can learn to cook with herbs, spices, and ingredients that have proven health benefits, such as turmeric for its anti-inflammatory properties or garlic for heart health. Preparing meals at home allows you to control the ingredients, portion sizes, and cooking methods, making it easier to create balanced meals that cater to your unique health goals.

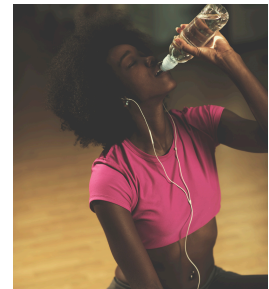
Mindful Eating

We are faced with stress at home and at work. Practicing mindful eating—paying attention to hunger cues and eating with purpose—can further optimize digestion and support a healthy relationship with food. By embracing these culinary practices, you empower yourself to take an active role in your health.



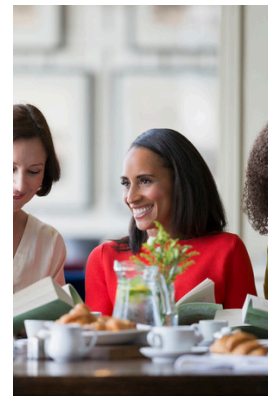
Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate!

Hydration is essential for maintaining overall health and supporting the body's vital functions. Water is involved in nearly every process in the body, from regulating temperature and aiding digestion to transporting nutrients and removing waste.



If you're not feeling well, start with water.

Staying properly hydrated helps maintain energy levels, improve cognitive function, and promote healthy skin. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, headaches, impaired concentration, and digestive issues, and in severe cases, it can impact kidney function and cardiovascular health.



You can make simple lifestyle changes that will help you reclaim your radiance. Commit and stay consistent to experience change over time.



03

Why Our Experience --- Matters

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African American women experience menopause onset earlier than other women.

This early onset is a risk factor for cardiovascular issues.

- Med Central

Black and Latinx women enter menopause earlier and have longer-lasting, more intense symptoms.

- Oprah Daily

How We Got Here

Perimenopause and menopause are marked by significant hormonal changes that impact a woman's body and overall health. During perimenopause, which typically begins in a woman's 40s, the ovaries gradually produce less estrogen and progesterone, leading to irregular menstrual cycles and fluctuating hormone levels. This shift can result in a range of symptoms, such as hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and sleep disturbances. There are labs and testing you can request that can help with this if you need it.

As menopause approaches—defined as the point when a woman has gone 12 months without a period—the production of estrogen and progesterone continues to decrease, leading to the end of menstruation and the onset of long-term changes in metabolism, bone health, and cardiovascular function. These hormonal shifts can also impact mental clarity, energy levels, and sexual health. Managing these changes often requires a combination of lifestyle adjustments, dietary changes, and sometimes medical support to alleviate symptoms and support overall health during this transition.

Ways to naturally reclaim your radiance

- ✓ Herbal remedies such as black cohosh, red clover, and evening primrose oil have been traditionally used to manage hot flashes, night sweats, and mood swings by supporting hormonal balance.
- ✓ Regular physical activity can help reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and support overall energy levels, while also promoting heart and bone health.
- ✓ Yoga, meditation, and stress management techniques can also help ease emotional fluctuations and support mental clarity.

Herbal Deep Dive



Black Cohosh

Black cohosh is a popular herbal remedy known for its ability to alleviate hot flashes, night sweats, and mood swings. Its natural compounds are thought to support hormonal balance and help reduce inflammation, providing a gentle, plant-based option.

Red Clover

Red clover is a plant rich in phytoestrogens, which can help balance hormone levels and reduce hot flashes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness. Its antioxidant properties also promote cardiovascular wellness and bone strength.

Evening Primrose

Evening primrose oil is known for its ability to alleviate hot flashes, mood swings, and breast tenderness, due to its high content of gamma-linolenic acid (GLA). Its anti-inflammatory properties support skin health.

Ashwagandha

Ashwagandha is an adaptogenic herb that helps manage stress and balance hormone levels, mood, anxiety, and sleep disturbances. Its ability to reduce cortisol levels also supports overall vitality, energy, and emotional resilience.



Let's Get Technical for a Moment

The occurrence of ovarian and uterine surgery prior to natural menopause is an impediment to determining the age at which the final period occurs; germane to this review, Black-White differences exist in the experience of these surgeries. In the cross-sectional survey Black women were twice as likely as White women to have undergone hysterectomy/oophorectomy.

Black women were less likely to have the opportunity to experience a natural menopause. When women were pre- or early perimenopausal 46% of Black women compared to 37% of White women reported experiencing any [hot flashes or night sweats] in the prior two weeks.

When women were premenopausal or beginning the MT, Black women already had a greater disease burden than White women. Not only were they more likely than White women to self-report being in poor health (16.2% vs. 6.6%), they were also more likely to be obese (51.3% vs. 31.0%)] and to have diabetes (10.7% vs. 4.0%), metabolic syndrome (MetS) (26.2% vs. 18.4%), and hypertension (36.9% vs. 16.2%)

Black women's experience of reproductive aging differs from that of White women and that Black women enter midlife with a more adverse cardio-metabolic profile and more physical limitations. Consequently, early interventions on blood pressure, LDL, and waist circumference in midlife may be key to reducing Black women's CVD risk

From Harlow et al.: *Disparities in Reproductive Aging and Midlife Health between Black and White women: The Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN)*

What Your Photos Say



Hydration

Drinking plenty of water helps keep your skin hydrated, plump, and smooth, reducing the appearance of fine lines and promoting a youthful, radiant complexion.

Sugar

Excessive sugar consumption accelerates the aging process of your skin by triggering a process called glycation, which damages collagen and elastin, leading to wrinkles, sagging, and a dull complexion.

Alcohol

Excessive alcohol consumption dehydrates the skin, reduces its elasticity, and dilates blood vessels, which can lead to premature wrinkles, a dull complexion, and a loss of youthful radiance.

Sun Exposure

Excessive sun exposure accelerates the aging of your skin by breaking down collagen and elastin fibers, leading to wrinkles, sunspots, and a loss of firmness, for Black women too.

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*Embrace this season of change
with grace and strength, for in
every challenge lies the
opportunity to rediscover your
radiance and step into the fullness
of your power.*



Congratulations

On Your New Beginning

Renewell is a wellness foundation and action partner centering underrepresented groups by curating supportive communities, connecting in the outdoors, and Harvesting Hope for Women™.



Renewell centers women, women leaders, and health professionals from underrepresented, underserved, and underinvested groups. We offer facilitation, training, and convening partnerships.

[RENEWELL.ORG](https://renewell.org)

As you move forward through this season of transformation, remember that your journey is unique, powerful, and filled with endless possibilities. Embrace each moment with intention, knowing that you have everything within you to thrive, shine, and create the life you deserve.



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