

Keto Diets & Their Effect on Menopausal Symptoms

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Rebekah Kelley: Welcome to the Humanized podcast, all about personalizing your health. I am your host, Rebekah Kelley, and today we'll be discussing menopause and food choices with author Dr. Anna Cabeca of the new book *MenuPause*. Before I enter introduce Dr. Cabeca, I want to remind everyone to subscribe and get all of the other varieties of casts in audio, video and transcription at HumanizedHealth.com. I'd also like to thank our lead sponsor, Village green Apothecary, at MyVillageGreen.com.

Dr. Anna Cabeca is a triple board certified and fellow of gynecology and obstetrics, integrative medicine, and anti-aging and regenerative medicine. Nationally known as "the girlfriend doctor," Dr. Anna is a passionate health advocate for women, helping them to truly thrive in body, mind and spirit. She's the author of two highly acclaimed books, creator of several popular virtual transformation programs, creator of several top-selling health products, and is a sought-after lecturer throughout the world. Dr. Cabeca, thanks for being here with us.

Anna Cabeca: It's a pleasure to be here with you. Thanks for having me.

Rebekah Kelley: So we used to hear that menopause was a drop in estrogen and would be corrected by taking estrogen. But that's a real simplified description, right? So what's really going on in menopause?

Anna Cabeca: Yeah, it's a really big transition in our hormones. And we used to say, okay, menopause, age 52 if you're a non-smoker, 42 for smokers – big red flag there – but 52 and 1 to 2 years, right? Really, it's 10 to 15 years of peri-menopause symptoms that women can experience, and sometimes longer. And what's happening, to simplify it... I think estrogen gets a really bad rap, in so many ways. And we really have to look at, where is estrogen coming from? And so estrogen is produced downstream from our main hormone, which is progesterone. And that is a "pro-gestation," life-giving hormone. It's essential for good hair, good skin, good bones, healthy breasts – I mean, all of these important things. And from there we make DHEA, which is our adrenal hormone, and then estrogen downstream, estrogen and testosterone.

So when we're stressed and we're worn out, I mean, just transition in life, and if you're like me, you're going through menopause with teenagers in the house – that's a cruel joke of nature too, in and of itself [laughs] – there's stress. There's stress going on and that depletes your hormones even more. And estrogen and testosterone, those are reproductive hormones. Those are the hormones that make us want sex, feel sexy and are really important. And I am a fan of bioidentical hormone replacement, menopause and beyond, in very natural, supportive ways, administered in healthy ways. So the way we take it makes a difference.

So while it's gotten a bad rap, what we really need to address is progesterone and adrenals. Adrenals. So addressing our stress. And Rebekah, when I wrote my first book, *The Hormone Fix*, I lived through my own analysis. I say it takes more than hormones to fix our hormones. And

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the major hormones that we really deal with, as much as attention is on estrogen, are really cortisol, that stress hormone, insulin, because we get more insulin resistant as we get older, and oxytocin, the hormone of love, bonding, and connection. So those three hormones, when we balance that, our other hormones play better together.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that. What a great way of describing what's an entire cascade and what happens in our lives. I could see, every time you mentioned a different hormone and what it does, I could see it in my life. So I was like, oh yeah, that's right. That's right. And then the oxytocin, I love that one. I was told, and I don't know if this is true, that just touching – like a woman can touch her hair and that releases oxytocin. So sometimes I just do that and it does feel really good [laughs]. A hug's even better, though.

Anna Cabeca: It's so good. And you just think it, a head massage. Why do we love to get our hair washed, a facial, a body massage, laughter, funny movies, sex. I mean, all of these things increase oxytocin. But you know, those little, those head massagers? I love that. I have a hack for that. Do you want my hack?

Rebekah Kelley: [Laughing] I do. Yes. Bring it.

Anna Cabeca: So, we have horses here in Dallas, Texas. My daughter does rodeo. And hair is a really big thing. And I had lost a ton of hair after I'd had her, plus was so stressed. I mean, I had hair loss to here, Rebekah, halfway [pointing to back of her head]. Male pattern baldness. That's a whole other story. But healing my hormones really made a difference. But anyway, in the horse world, we have this \$1 horse comb and it has nice, sharpish edges. And you just run that [across] your head, and you feel that, and it's just so good. That's my \$1 hair hack.

Rebekah Kelley: Can you start putting it up on DrAnna.com? [Both laugh]

Anna Cabeca: I think that's a great idea. My \$1 hair hack.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that! So, do people underestimate the impact of food, though? Because we talk about hormone cascades, right? But food choices, I mean, you can actually make a choice every time you have a meal, what you're putting in your body. So how does that impact menopause? What food choices should we be making? And, of course referencing your new book *MenuPause*. I'm assuming there's some hints that are going on there. What do you think we should be doing?

Anna Cabeca: Yeah, there's definitely certain foods that we have to pause in menopause. We're not designed for carbohydrates, higher carbohydrate diets anymore. So those beautiful fruit smoothies that we've loved... I mean, have them on your feast day, enjoy those. But we'll switch to the lower glycemic wines. I mean, it really makes a huge difference because we're becoming more insulin resistant. The more insulin resistant we are, the higher risk of diabetes,

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the higher our risk of dementia, Alzheimer's and degenerative joints. I mean, it's terrible. So we don't want to go there. We want to maintain a really highly sensitive response to blood sugar. And we have to do that through changing our food choices, absolutely, and through intermittent fasting.

And plus, the way we nourish our body changes our physiology. It affects these other hormones. So, you know, keeping blood sugar nice and stable, we need high-quality proteins and clean fats. And throughout, we need to support our gut bacteria, our microbiome and our physiology. To address our high-stress cortisol hormone, we need the alkalizing foods, the low carbohydrates, dark leafy greens that are high in fiber. We need the herbs and spices like cinnamon, turmeric, cumin. I mean all these worldwide spices... Garlic. Oh, my gosh. So good. And you think, whoever would want to eat garlic? But it was traditionally used in cooking by the physicians to the kings because it was medicinal. These are medicinal foods and these herbs and spices all have a medicinal effect. And we've forgotten about that in modern Western medicine. So bringing that back into our lives just adds [chuckles] spice of life. No pun intended.

Rebekah Kelley: [Both laugh] Well done! I like the twist of phrase. It's like *MenuPause*, [Dr. Cabeca holds up her book.] Yeah, definitely hold up the book, let us see it, for the people that are [watching]. There it is. Yeah, it's great. And opening it and showing the beautiful images and how you're also very descriptive. It's like a self-manual. That's beautiful, look at that.

Anna Cabeca: Isn't that beautiful?

Rebekah Kelley: That's gorgeous.

Anna Cabeca: Each plan has... there's five different plans, each pausing something that probably no longer serves us. And it's not designed to be restrictive. It's designed to be nourishing, and you're not going to be hungry. I put my girlfriend from my doctor club group through the toughest plan, which is the cleanse plan in here. And they're like, I don't feel deprived at all. I feel good. I'm not hungry. I'm not having cravings. And that is by design. My friend JJ Virgin says your body is a chemistry lab, not a bank account. So, I like that.

Rebekah Kelley: So, it makes me kind of feel like there's this diet kind of perspective for menopause, because you go through these things about how your body is different now for carbs, and alkalizing and some intermittent fasting, which starts sounding like there's one diet for menopause. Or does it need to be individualized?

Anna Cabeca: It really does become individualized. There's the foundational, which I call my Keto Green approach so that, because of research, it looked at women who intermittent fast, and if they have at least 12.5 hours between dinner and breakfast, they had a significantly reduced risk of recurrent breast cancer. So that is built into my plan. So that's number one. We want to keep at least 13 to 16 hours between dinner and breakfast. And the earlier we eat, the

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better. So there's that. And avoiding sugar, breaking up with sugar, because it is toxic to our systems. We no longer need it. So that's another big piece.

Having fasts for hormones. So the Keto Green approach is foundational, but in my plan, I've also done a Keto Green Extreme, which follows an auto-immune protocol. So sometimes if you have MS or Hashimoto's or other auto-immune disease, even psoriasis or eczema, skin conditions, you want to pause some of those healthy, but otherwise inflammatory foods, like nightshades and peppers. And so I eliminated that in Keto Green Extreme. And sometimes we need to pause meat and be plant-based. We can do it for 6 days, my fellow meat lovers out there. We can absolutely do that for 6 days. And it's really good for your gut microbiome. So it helps with hormone balancing, and each time you learn something different about your body, [such as] I feel better this way, or when I eat this I'm not feeling as well as I did when I did this plan. And so there's a little switch. It's kind of like, if we do the same thing every day, the same exercise every day, we hit a stall. We'll stop seeing progress. If we're eating the same food every day, we hit a stall. And I'll just do a really big shout-out to chicken salad eaters out there. No more chicken salad. I always have clients and they're like, oh, I have a chicken salad every day for lunch. I'm like, no more chicken salad.

Rebekah Kelley: You are cut off!

Anna Cabeca: You are cut off. No more.

Rebekah Kelley: But your book's going to show them lots of yummy alternatives though, right?

Anna Cabeca: Lots of yummy... I mean, yeah. You can have the chicken salad, just once in a long while. So, a lot of diversity. Food diversity is really good for our gut. And that's good for our hormones because in the gut microbiome, we have the estrobolome, how we detoxify estrogen. So estrogen itself is not bad. How we detoxify it, how we metabolize it, what are things in our environment that disrupt our ability to eliminate it in a clean, healthy way – that's key. And so that is built into each and every one of the plans.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that. Can you share with us maybe a couple of stories? Maybe one or two little examples?

Anna Cabeca: Yes. And I'd love to. Actually this mother-daughter duo have been in my Keto Green community, in my "girlfriend doctor club" for a couple of... Mom's been in my club for 5 years, she's been in my groups, and then her daughter came on 2 years ago and started following what her mother did because she saw her mom's health. So, her mom was in her 60s, struggling with energy, weight, fatigue, brain fog, grumpy. And so she came on board and started following my magic menopause program. We were together 8 weeks and she just kept on doing it. And in her story, she's lost, I don't know, maybe 65 pounds, something like that, but more importantly, she gained her sexy back. She walks on the beach every day. She's more fun

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to be around, and her daughter's like, I'm going to do what you're doing. And so her daughter came on board and started doing what her mom was doing. You know, we supplement too, with my Keto Green shakes and Mighty Maca so she became addicted to those, we say, but really it was the Keto Green lifestyle. Making it easy, she's a busy teacher, making it easy and incorporating it into her life. And this story between the two of them, I mean, they are champions. If you ever come to my Keto Green community on Facebook, you'll see Chelsea and Jeannie, they are cheerleaders for everyone else out there because what a transformation they made. And I say this story, because there are many, there are thousands more, but these... when we take care of ourselves as a momma, then our children will be better taken care of. We come from a different place when our energy is more magnetic and positive and high vibration, then we do when we're exhausted and trying to do for... every piece of us is somewhere else, right? And we're scattered. I mean, I say this from a place, I've been there. Until I took care of myself, my girls were scattered energy, too. And now they're all... it's just that difference. Just see it. I guarantee it makes a difference. So, I know we're busy, especially as moms and working moms or whatever we're doing in our life. We're taking care of our significant other, our boyfriend, or whatever it may be. We want to take care of ourself first and that creates this better health all the way around us. Everyone around us gets better. When you see this generational effect, it's just, it's inspired.

Rebekah Kelley: I love that. And it's amazing how we do travel in our parents' footprints. Sometimes you don't mean to, right? You just do. And if they're teaching us, as this mom is, like how to care for ourselves, our children will do the same thing. Right? They'll do the same thing. How beautiful. I love that. Thanks, Dr. Cabeca.

Anna Cabeca: You give them permission.

Rebekah Kelley: You give permission, yes. Yes, I love that. Thank you so much. Really valuable insights. Dr. Cabeca can be found at www.DrAnna.com. It's D R A N N A.com. Let me remind you to subscribe and get access to all Humanized videos, podcasts and transcriptions from all of our thought leaders like Dr. Anna on personalized health at HumanizedHealth.com. Thanks so much for being with us.