

# Empower – Menopause and Cancer Survivorship Pathway

## Brain Fog – Summary Overview from Sessions 1, 2, 3 & 6

# Common Psychological symptoms of (Peri)Menopause

- **Night sweat and hot flushes – can contribute to fatigue/brain fog**
- **Fatigue - can significantly contribute to brain fog**
- **Poor Concentration & Memory Loss**
- **Psychological problems including Stress and Anxiety - can contribute to brain fog**
- Menstrual Changes: heavier periods/ irregular periods
- Loss of Vaginal Elasticity & Lubrication
- Decrease in metabolism resulting in increase in weight
- Increase risk of metabolic syndrome
- Hair & skin changes
- Joint complaints
- Bladder complaints

# Impact of Fatigue

- Physical Impact
  - Muscle Weakness
  - Reduced Energy Endurance
  - Reduced Ability for Daily Activities
- **Cognitive Impact**
  - **Difficulty Concentrating**
  - **Memory Difficulties**
  - **Difficulty Multitasking**
- **Emotional Impact**
  - **Anxiety & Stress**

Brain Fog

Drained

Fogginess

Hit by a hammer

Hit by a bus

Unpredictable

Cloudiness

My brain says Go  
My body says NO!

Like a wave washing over me!

# How do I Manage Cancer/Menopause Related Brain Fog

- Manage Energy Levels Efficiently – prioritise activities and pace yourself
- Sleep Well and nap if needed
- Awareness of Anxiety and Stress triggers – relaxation techniques
- Physical Activity
- Resting
- Balanced Diet
- Routine
- Rest – rest breaks, breathers & daytime naps
- Reminders – notes, phone alarms etc
- Rejuvenate
- Rely on Others – seek help
- Regular Sleep

# Health Promotion: Diet

- Hydrate – drink plenty of water
- Oily fish, low GI fruits & veg, whole grains, soya, legumes, etc
- Avoiding excess red meat & simple sugars can improve weight and reduce hot sweats (may help with brain fog)
- Avoid alcohol, excess sugar, excess caffeine
- B Vitamins & Omega 3's (check with pharmacist for contraindications)



LIMIT CONSUMPTION  
OF RED AND  
PROCESSED MEAT

LIMIT CONSUMPTION  
OF SUGAR  
SWEETENED DRINKS

LIMIT ALCOHOL  
CONSUMPTION

LIMIT CONSUMPTION  
OF 'FAST FOODS' AND  
OTHER PROCESSED  
FOODS HIGH IN FAT,  
STARCHES OR SUGARS

World  
Cancer  
Research  
Fund International

# OUR CANCER PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

DO NOT USE  
SUPPLEMENTS  
FOR CANCER  
PREVENTION

EAT A DIET RICH  
IN WHOLEGRAINS,  
VEGETABLES,  
FRUIT AND BEANS

FOR MOTHERS:  
BREASTFEED YOUR  
BABY, IF YOU CAN

Not smoking and avoiding other exposure to tobacco and excess sun are also important in reducing cancer risk. Following these Recommendations is likely to reduce intakes of salt, saturated and trans fats, which together will help prevent other non-communicable diseases.

AFTER A CANCER  
DIAGNOSIS: FOLLOW OUR  
RECOMMENDATIONS,  
IF YOU CAN

BE PHYSICALLY  
ACTIVE

BE A  
HEALTHY WEIGHT

wcrf.org



# Practical Tips - Diet

Aim for at least 5 portions fruits and vegetables daily

Aim for wholegrain carbs in each meal

Limit Alcohol, salt and processed foods

Have protein in most meals. Lean sources are best

Add oats or pearl barley to daily diet to ↓ LDL cholesterol

2g Plant Sterols and Stanols –if cholesterol raised

Vitamin D daily - 15ug

Minimise supplements for food first approach

For soya products add edamame to salads, try tofu meals, soya milk

2-3 portions of Calcium rich foods daily



# Health Promotion: Movement

## Regular Physical Activity :

- **Exercise improves most psychological symptoms**
- **Helps with mental clarity and managing stress**
- Decreases premature death, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, colon cancer, obesity and more
- Exercise has a beneficial effect on Bone & Muscle and can reduce the risk of falling by improving strength, flexibility & balance.
- Exercise reduces bad cholesterol and raises the good cholesterol



- **Cancer Related Fatigue**

- Aerobic: **3x/week for 30 min** per session of moderate intensity
- Resistance: **2x/week of 2 sets of 12-15** reps for major muscle groups of moderate intensity



### Health Related Quality of Life

- Aerobic: **3x/week for 30-60** min per session of moderate intensity  
Resistance: **2x/week of 2 sets of 8-15** reps for major muscle groups of moderate to vigorous intensity



### Physical Function

- Aerobic: **3x/week for 30-60** min per session of moderate intensity  
Resistance: **2x/week of 2 sets of 8-15** reps for major muscle groups of moderate to vigorous intensity



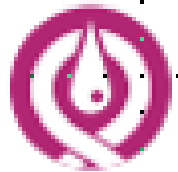
- **Anxiety**
- Aerobic: **3x/week** for **30-60** min per session of moderate to vigorous intensity
- Resistance: Insufficient evidence



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### **Depression**

Aerobic: **3x/week** for **30-60** min per session of moderate to vigorous intensity  
Resistance: **2x/week** of **2** sets of **8-15** reps for major muscle groups of moderate intensity

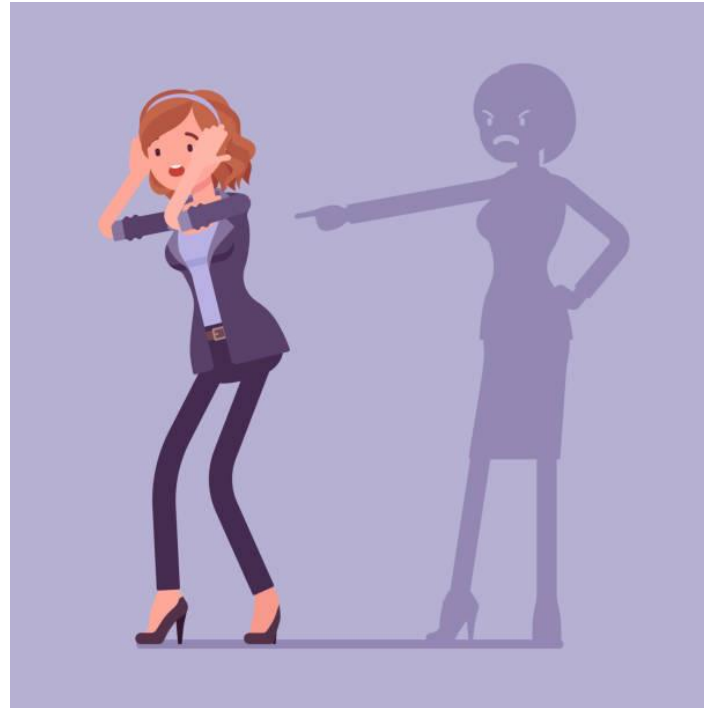


### **Lymphedema**

Aerobic: Insufficient evidence  
Resistance: **2-3x/week** of progressive supervised programme for major muscle groups does not exacerbate lymphedema



# Are you self-critical during moments of brain-fog, anxiety ...?



# The Power of Self-Criticism

- Constantly putting yourself down can activate your stress systems and trigger the emotional systems in your brain that lead you to feeling anxious, angry and down.
- Our own thoughts can affect parts of our brain that give rise to more stressful and unpleasant feelings.
- If we develop a self-critical style then we are constantly stimulating our threat system and will understandably feel constantly threatened.

# Reminder ...

- We have ‘tricky’ brains, this is not our fault.
- How we respond to ourselves can – or + our distress.
- Compassion takes practice but even 1 minute of “dedicated self-kindness” can make all the difference.
- Surf difficult emotions by breathing in, exhaling out.
- Use your attention like a “spot-light” moving away from anxious thoughts.
- Practice your kind-voice “Go easy” on yourself.