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Women's Midlife Health: Perimenopause, Menopause & Wellbeing

Cycle changes, hot flushes, sleep, stress, safety red flags and sensible TCM conversations

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This guide is designed to be read, saved and shared. It uses practical language, keeps TCM terminology in context and clearly separates general education from symptoms that need medical assessment.

Before you begin

Midlife can bring genuine biological change, but not every new symptom should be dismissed as “just hormones”. This guide combines practical tracking, sleep and lifestyle support, TCM-informed conversations and a safety-first approach to symptoms that deserve medical assessment.

What this book is designed to do

A practical reading approach

- Explain the topic in plain language without turning TCM terminology into a biomedical diagnosis.
- Help you notice useful patterns: timing, triggers, medicines, habits, associated symptoms and change over time.
- Show where everyday self-care may be reasonable and where medical review should come first.
- Make consultation more useful by helping you arrive with clearer information and questions.

A safety note

Emergency or red-flag symptoms come before complementary care. Tell healthcare professionals about prescription medicines, over-the-counter products, herbs, supplements, pregnancy, allergies and important chronic conditions.

CHAPTER 01

Perimenopause: Cycle Changes Worth Tracking and Changes Worth Checking



A practical guide to changing periods in midlife without assuming every new symptom is “just hormones”.

Perimenopause can change the pattern, but it is not a diagnosis for everything

Cycles may become shorter, longer, lighter, heavier or less predictable. Sleep, temperature sensitivity and mood can also change. But new symptoms still deserve context rather than automatic dismissal.

Track bleeding in a way that is useful

Record start date, duration, unusually heavy flow, large clots, bleeding between periods, bleeding after sex and any dizziness or breathlessness. A simple record helps a clinician judge whether investigation is needed.

Some bleeding patterns should be reviewed

Very heavy bleeding, persistent bleeding between periods, bleeding after sex, symptoms of anaemia or bleeding after menopause should be discussed with a doctor. Do not rely on TCM treatment alone to explain these patterns.

TCM conversations can focus on symptoms and wellbeing

A TCM practitioner may discuss sleep, stress, temperature sensations, digestion and menstrual pattern within the traditional framework. Keep screening and medical evaluation in place where appropriate.

Medication and supplement history matters

Hormonal medicines, contraception, blood thinners, supplements and herbal products can affect the conversation. Bring an updated list to both conventional and TCM appointments.

Midlife health is broader than periods

Blood pressure, bone health, exercise, sleep, mental wellbeing and routine screening remain important. Perimenopause is a useful time to review the whole health picture rather than only the cycle.

CHAPTER 02

Menopause, Hot Flashes & Sleep: A Practical Night-Time Guide

How temperature changes, sleep habits and health conditions can overlap - and where TCM may fit responsibly.

Night waking may have more than one cause

Hot flashes can disturb sleep, but caffeine, alcohol, stress, pain, snoring, medicines and room temperature can also contribute. Track what happens rather than assuming every waking is hormonal.

Make the bedroom adjustable

Light bedding, breathable sleepwear, a fan or air-conditioning at a comfortable setting and easy access to water can make night-time temperature changes easier to manage. Extremely cold rooms are not necessary.

Watch the late-evening pattern

Alcohol can worsen sleep quality for some people, and caffeine later in the day may delay sleep. Large late meals, work messages and long screen sessions can add another layer of disruption.

TCM can be discussed as part of a broader plan

Acupuncture or Chinese medicine may be considered after assessment, but disclose medicines and health conditions and keep routine medical care in place. Claims of guaranteed hormone “balancing” should be treated cautiously.

Persistent sleep problems deserve proper assessment

Loud snoring, gasping, severe daytime sleepiness, depression, significant anxiety or insomnia that persists despite enough opportunity to sleep should be discussed with a doctor.

Measure progress in real life

Useful outcomes include fewer disruptive nights, better daytime energy and improved function, not simply whether a single symptom disappeared after one treatment.

CHAPTER 03

Menopause, Sleep and Everyday Wellbeing: A Balanced TCM-Informed View



A straightforward overview of preparation, common sensations, hygiene and when to tell your practitioner about medical conditions.

Key points

- Menopause experiences vary widely; not every symptom should be assumed to have one cause.
- Sleep, mood, bleeding changes and medicines are important parts of a proper history.
- New heavy bleeding, chest pain or significant mental-health symptoms need appropriate medical assessment.

A transition, not one identical experience

Some people have few symptoms around menopause, while others notice hot flashes, disturbed sleep, mood changes, joint discomfort or changes in concentration. The pattern can shift over time. A useful conversation starts with what is actually affecting you rather than assuming every symptom is “hormonal”.

Why sleep often becomes the first concern

Night sweats, stress, caring responsibilities, work and changes in sleep rhythm can all contribute. Track bedtime, night waking, hot flashes, alcohol and caffeine, medicines and daytime energy. This can help a doctor or TCM practitioner understand the pattern more clearly.

What a TCM consultation may explore

TCM assessment may include sleep, digestion, temperature sensations, energy, emotional wellbeing and other symptoms. Traditional pattern language is used within TCM and is not a replacement for medical evaluation of abnormal bleeding, thyroid problems, anaemia or other conditions that may present with overlapping symptoms.

Support should be individual, not marketed as a cure

Depending on suitability, TCM care may include acupuncture or other approaches aimed at symptom support. Expectations should remain realistic. If you use prescription medicines, hormone therapy or supplements, tell the practitioner so that care can be discussed safely.

When medical review matters

Seek medical advice for new or heavy bleeding after periods have stopped, persistent pelvic pain, unexplained weight loss, significant depression or anxiety, or symptoms that are rapidly worsening. Emergencies such as chest pain, severe breathlessness or stroke-like symptoms require urgent care.

Track changes rather than normalising them

Record cycle timing where relevant, pain, bleeding changes, sleep, mood, medicines and symptoms that are new or worsening. Ask what can reasonably be supported with TCM, what should be investigated medically, how progress will be reviewed and whether any herbal or supplement recommendation could interact with current treatment.

Use a symptom calendar

A simple calendar can capture pain, bleeding, sleep, hot flushes, mood, headaches, digestive symptoms and medicines. Patterns over two or three cycles, where relevant, are often more useful than remembering one difficult day. The record can also make it easier to notice when a symptom has genuinely changed and deserves medical evaluation rather than being normalised as “just part of being a woman”.

CHAPTER 04

Women's Midlife Health: Symptoms Not to Normalise

A safety-first guide to bleeding, chest symptoms, neurological changes, persistent pelvic symptoms and other reasons to seek medical assessment.

“Common at this age” is not the same as “safe to ignore”

Midlife brings normal biological changes, but persistent or severe symptoms still deserve assessment. Avoid explanations that automatically attribute every problem to menopause, stress or “hormonal imbalance”.

Unexpected bleeding deserves context

Very heavy bleeding, bleeding between periods, bleeding after sex or any bleeding after menopause should be medically reviewed. Keep a record of timing and associated symptoms.

Chest pain and neurological symptoms come first

Chest pain, severe breathlessness, fainting, sudden weakness, facial droop, speech difficulty or a sudden severe headache need urgent conventional medical care. TCM treatment should not delay emergency response.

Persistent pelvic or abdominal symptoms matter

New persistent bloating, pelvic pain, increasing abdominal size, unexplained weight loss, appetite changes or urinary symptoms deserve medical discussion, especially when they are new and persistent.

Bone and muscle health become more important

Strength training, adequate nutrition, appropriate vitamin D and calcium intake, fall prevention and medical risk assessment can matter increasingly with age. TCM should complement rather than replace these basics.

Use every consultation to improve coordination

Bring screening results, medicines, supplements and relevant diagnoses to TCM appointments. Tell your doctor about herbal products. Better information flow reduces avoidable risk.

CHAPTER 05

PMS, Stress and Lifestyle: A Balanced TCM-Informed Guide



Premenstrual symptoms can vary from month to month. Learn how sleep, stress, food, exercise and TCM support may fit together without dismissing severe symptoms.

Key points

- Track symptoms across at least a few cycles rather than judging one difficult month.
- Sleep, stress and exercise can influence how symptoms feel.
- Severe mood symptoms or symptoms that disrupt daily life deserve medical advice.

PMS is not identical for everyone

Bloating, breast tenderness, headaches, irritability, low mood, food cravings and fatigue can appear before menstruation, but the combination and severity vary. A symptom diary across several cycles can show whether there is a consistent pattern.

Stress can amplify the experience

Busy periods at work, poor sleep and irregular meals may make premenstrual symptoms feel harder to manage. This does not mean symptoms are “all in your head”; it means the nervous system, sleep and daily routines can influence how the body experiences discomfort.

How TCM may be used

A TCM practitioner may use acupuncture, lifestyle advice or herbs based on a traditional pattern assessment. The aim should be realistic symptom support, not promises to permanently “balance hormones” without appropriate medical testing.

Keep the basics boring and reliable

Regular meals, enough sleep opportunity, moderate exercise and reducing excessive alcohol or caffeine may help some people. Consistent basics are often more useful than changing supplements every month.

When symptoms deserve medical attention

Seek medical advice if symptoms are severe, new, rapidly worsening, associated with very heavy bleeding, or significantly affect mood, relationships or work. Severe depression, panic

or thoughts of self-harm require prompt professional help.

Track changes rather than normalising them

Record cycle timing where relevant, pain, bleeding changes, sleep, mood, medicines and symptoms that are new or worsening. Ask what can reasonably be supported with TCM, what should be investigated medically, how progress will be reviewed and whether any herbal or supplement recommendation could interact with current treatment.

Use a symptom calendar

A simple calendar can capture pain, bleeding, sleep, hot flushes, mood, headaches, digestive symptoms and medicines. Patterns over two or three cycles, where relevant, are often more useful than remembering one difficult day. The record can also make it easier to notice when a symptom has genuinely changed and deserves medical evaluation rather than being normalised as “just part of being a woman”.

CHAPTER 06

Cycle Tracking: What Changes Matter and When to Seek Care

A menstrual cycle does not have to be perfectly identical every month. A simple record can make changes easier to understand and discuss.

Key points

- Track patterns rather than one difficult day.
- Heavy bleeding, fainting, severe pain or pregnancy concerns need medical review.
- Bring the same record to both conventional and TCM appointments.

What to record

Start with the first day of bleeding, how long it lasts, whether flow is light, moderate or unusually heavy, and whether clots are new or different. Add pain, headaches, bowel changes, sleep, mood and any medication or supplement changes. The goal is not a perfect diary; it is enough detail to notice a pattern.

Why patterns help

Sleep, stress, illness, travel, contraception, pregnancy and perimenopause can all influence symptoms. Two or three months of notes can show whether a change is repeating. This also prevents one severe but unusual day from becoming the only memory at a consultation.

How TCM may use the history

A TCM practitioner may ask about timing, colour, discomfort, temperature sensations, digestion, sleep and energy as part of traditional pattern assessment. These observations belong to the TCM framework and do not replace tests or medical assessment when abnormal bleeding, anaemia or pregnancy complications are possible.

When changes deserve medical attention

Seek medical advice if bleeding becomes very heavy, you feel faint or unusually breathless, bleeding occurs after menopause, pain suddenly becomes severe, or you may be pregnant and have pain or bleeding. Persistent changes that affect work, sleep or daily life also

deserve assessment.

Questions to bring

Ask what should be checked medically, what TCM can realistically support, how progress will be reviewed and whether herbs or supplements could interact with medicines or contraception.

CHAPTER 07

Better Sleep Habits for Busy Singapore Adults



A realistic sleep checklist for long workdays, late meals, screens, caffeine and air-conditioning in Singapore.

Key points

- Consistency matters more than perfection.
- Late caffeine, alcohol, heavy meals and bright screens can all interfere with sleep.
- If tiredness is persistent despite enough time in bed, look for a medical cause.

Start with your actual schedule

Many sleep plans fail because they assume an ideal day. Begin with the time you realistically need to wake for work or family. Work backwards to create enough opportunity for sleep, then keep that wake time reasonably stable even on weekends.

Watch the “Singapore late night” pattern

Late dinners, supper, work messages and scrolling can all push sleep later. Caffeine can also appear in kopi, tea, energy drinks and chocolate. You do not need to remove everything at once; identify the one or two habits most likely to keep you awake and adjust them first.

Make air-conditioning work for you

A comfortable, cool room can support sleep, but very cold or dry air may be uncomfortable for some people. Adjust the temperature, airflow and bedding so you are not waking because you feel too cold, dry or congested.

Use TCM as an addition, not an excuse

If you choose acupuncture, Tuina or a TCM consultation for stress or sleep concerns, still keep the basic sleep habits in place. Traditional care works best as part of a sensible overall

plan, not as permission to ignore routines that are clearly disrupting sleep.

Persistent fatigue deserves attention

If you regularly get enough time in bed but remain exhausted, or if you snore loudly, wake gasping, have morning headaches or struggle to stay awake during the day, speak with a doctor. These can be clues that the problem is more than simple sleep hygiene.

Make the next conversation more useful

Before your appointment, note the timing and frequency of the problem, sleep and waking times, caffeine and alcohol, medicines, stressors and any symptoms such as snoring, breathlessness, pain or reflux. Useful questions include: What ordinary causes should I rule out? Which changes are worth trying first? How will we know whether the plan is helping? When should I seek conventional medical assessment instead?

Try a short observation period

For seven to fourteen days, keep the experiment simple. Record bedtime, wake time, night waking, naps, caffeine, alcohol, late meals, exercise and major stress. If you change something, change only one or two variables at a time. A small diary cannot diagnose a sleep disorder, but it can show whether your problem is linked with schedule, environment or particular habits and gives a clinician something more concrete to work with.

CHAPTER 08

TCM and Conventional Medical Care: Using Both Responsibly

A safety-first guide to communication between healthcare providers and situations that require urgent conventional medical attention.

Tell each provider what you are using

Good communication reduces avoidable risks. Tell your TCM practitioner about your medical diagnoses, prescriptions and hospital care, and tell your doctor or pharmacist about herbs, supplements and TCM products.

Do not stop prescribed treatment on your own

If you are considering changing a prescription medicine, discuss it with the clinician who prescribed it. Stopping some medicines suddenly can be dangerous.

Keep records

A simple list of medicines, supplements, allergies and recent tests makes it easier for different providers to understand your care.

Recognise emergencies

TCM clinics are not emergency departments. For severe or sudden symptoms, difficulty breathing, major bleeding, stroke-like symptoms or loss of consciousness, call 995 or seek urgent conventional care.

You do not have to choose one side

Many people use TCM while also seeing a GP, specialist, physiotherapist or other healthcare professional. The safest approach is transparency. Tell each provider what medicines, herbs, supplements and treatments you are using. This allows interactions, duplicated treatment and conflicting advice to be considered rather than hidden.

Different systems answer different questions

A TCM pattern description and a biomedical diagnosis are not interchangeable. One may be used to organise treatment within the TCM framework, while the other may rely on examination, imaging, laboratory tests or established diagnostic criteria. Keeping those roles clear reduces confusion and prevents traditional terminology from being mistaken for proof of organ disease.

Urgent care is not a competition

Chest pain, severe breathing difficulty, stroke-like symptoms, major trauma, uncontrolled bleeding, loss of consciousness and other emergencies need immediate conventional medical care. Complementary treatment can be reconsidered after urgent problems are stabilised. Responsible TCM should never require delaying emergency assessment.

Give both sides the same medication list

One of the simplest safety habits is to keep a current list of prescription medicines, non-prescription products, vitamins, supplements and Chinese medicines. Show the same list to your doctor and TCM practitioner when relevant. This reduces the chance that each provider is working with only half the information.

Test results do not lose importance because you use TCM

Blood tests, imaging and specialist diagnoses can answer questions that traditional pattern assessment cannot. If a doctor has identified diabetes, anaemia, a fracture, infection or another condition, do not replace that information with a TCM label. Traditional care may still be discussed as complementary support, but the established diagnosis remains important for safety and planning.

Chronic disease needs coordination, not secrecy

People with high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney or liver disease, cancer, heart disease and other chronic conditions may still be interested in TCM. The safest approach is coordinated disclosure. Some herbs, supplements or changes in diet may affect medicines or laboratory results, so your treating medical team should know what you are using.

Do not stop prescribed medicine because of a broad promise

Be cautious if anyone tells you to stop essential medicine immediately because a complementary treatment can “replace” it, especially without speaking to the prescriber. Changes to long-term medication often need monitoring and should be made with the healthcare professional responsible for that treatment.

The best integration is practical

Integrated care does not require both systems to agree on every theory. It requires each to stay within its strengths, communicate clearly and avoid delaying necessary care. A patient should be able to use TCM for appropriate goals while still receiving vaccinations, screening, emergency care, surgery, medicines or rehabilitation when those are needed.

Preventive care still matters

Using TCM does not remove the value of vaccination, cancer screening, blood pressure checks, diabetes monitoring, dental care or other preventive services appropriate for your age and risk. Complementary care works best when it sits beside, rather than replaces, routine prevention and evidence-based follow-up for known conditions.

Transitions are the moments to communicate again

Hospital discharge, surgery, a new specialist, pregnancy, a new diagnosis or a major medicine change are good times to update every practitioner involved. Information that was safe six months ago may no longer be enough. Repeating your current medicine and supplement list during these transitions can prevent avoidable misunderstandings.

Practical consultation checklist

- What is the main concern, and when did it start?
- What clearly makes it better or worse?
- Which medicines, supplements or herbs are you taking?
- Are there allergies, pregnancy considerations or chronic conditions that matter?
- Which symptoms are new, severe, persistent or changing quickly?
- What is the single most useful outcome you want from this consultation?
- What would mean conventional medical review or emergency care should come first?

Contact Shande

For appointments and general enquiries, use WhatsApp or WeChat. Email is not presented as a routine customer-service channel.

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References & further reading

The chapters in this guide are drawn from the Shande Health Library. Key safety points are linked back to the public-health or professional sources cited in those articles.

General health education | Not a diagnosis | Emergency in Singapore: 995