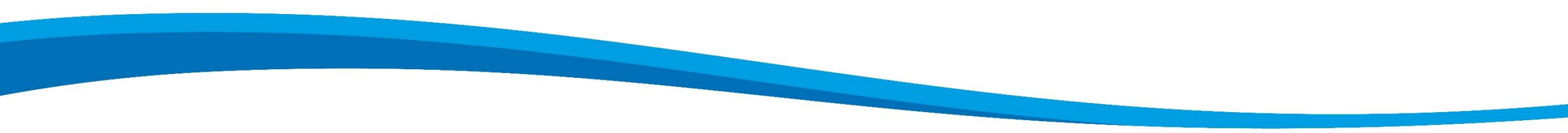


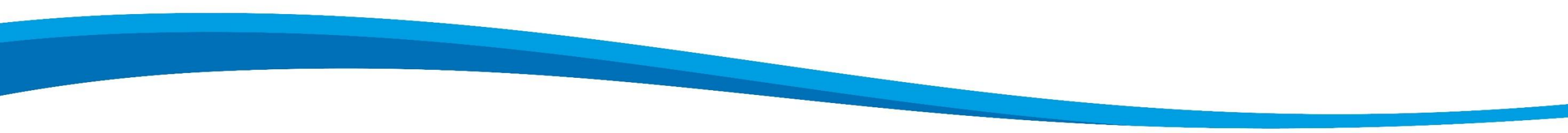
# Eating Well For Menopause

Ellen Kelly  
Specialist Dietitian

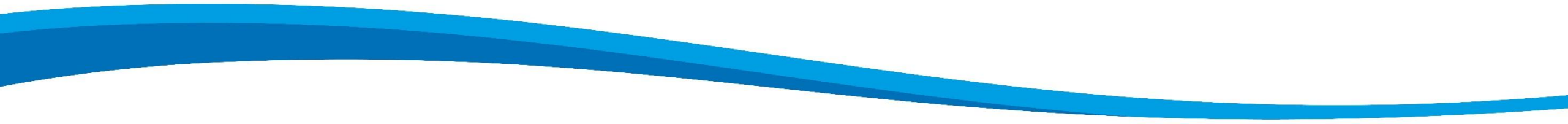


# Menopause

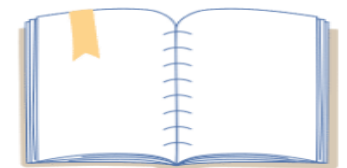
Some of the information we will cover, you may know and be aware of, however, as a transitional part of life it is good to evaluate habits and behaviours



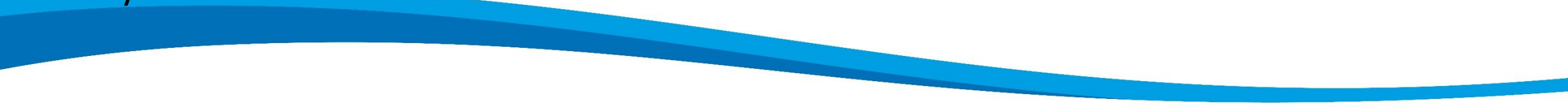
# Symptoms & Potential Effects

- There are a variety of symptoms which can be experienced including:
  - Hot flushes
  - Night sweats
  - Sleep disturbances
  - Tiredness
  - Increased risk of certain diseases e.g. CVD (due to fall in oestrogen levels)
  - Joint pains, aches
  - Headaches
  - Memory loss
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Weight gain
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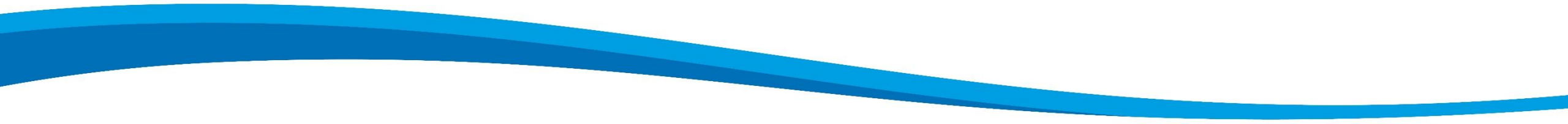
- Support from Health Professionals; HRT, medication, therapies e.g. CBT
- There are a number of factors, including lifestyle which can help manage some symptoms
- We will explore more around factors for managing symptoms over the following slides, focusing on aspects of diet, hydration and physical activity
- It could be useful to keep a symptom diary, this could help identify causes and what strategies to implement and whether they are helping



# Phytoestrogens

- Interchangeably may also be referred to as isoflavones or plant oestrogens
  - Quite similar to human oestrogen.
  - If consumed on a regular basis in suitable amounts can produce mild oestrogen-like effects
  - Can benefit by relieving symptoms of menopause, particularly hot flushes
  - It can take 2-3 months for benefits of plant oestrogens to be apparent
  - May work better for some than others
- 
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# Caffeine and Alcohol

- Both stimulants
  - Can impact on hot flushes, sleep, mood, and anxiety
  - Consider caffeine consumption from beverages like coffee, tea and colas and consider choosing/replacing with decaffeinated drinks
  - Adhere to alcohol guideline recommendations. Completely avoid if you feel it aggravates symptoms.
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# Eating, drinking & sleep

- Limit/avoid caffeine in the day, in the evening opt for a non caffeinated beverage
- Avoid/limit alcohol in the evenings can impact sleep quality
- Consider caffeine consumption and frequency, including habits such as when dining out
- If we are not adequately hydrated or lacking in nutrients it can affect our health & wellbeing in many ways including tiredness
- Importance of regular balanced meals, and staying hydrated
- Serotonin helps to regulate sleep, our mood, and appetite. It also has cognitive functions, including in memory and learning
- Serotonin is made from tryptophan
- Sources of tryptophan in our diet come from many dietary sources including beans, lentils, meat, fish, nuts, seeds, eggs, milk and cheese
- Eating before bed time – important to consider time and type of meal

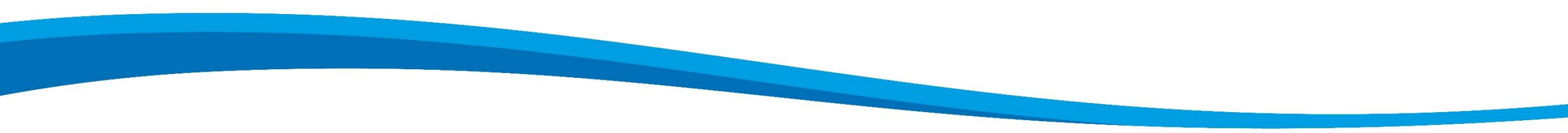
# Food & Mood

- Food & mood can affect many choices
- Due to change in hormones, if experiencing symptoms including anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep this could impact food choices which could then lead to weight gain.
- Weight gain - for many this affects self confidence and which could impact other existing symptoms
- If we are not adequately hydrated or lacking in nutrients it can affect our concentration affecting our working day, home and social lives, and can lead to experiencing headaches, depression, tiredness



# Food & Mood

- Any experiences?
- If feeling low, anxious, depressed, or tired – does this affect what or how much you eat?
- How do you feel afterwards?



# Triggers & tackling triggers

- If suffering from depression, anxiety, or lack of sleep it for some it may lead to comfort eating, erratic eating patterns, and craving certain foods

# How to tackle triggers

- Anything tried and tested?
- Anything that helps with triggers?
- What might your plan of action be in the future?

# Assess hunger levels



- Hunger Scale – can help with identifying is it physical hunger or emotional hunger
- Often mistake thirst for hunger
- Is it emotional hunger or physical hunger?



# The Hunger Scale



# Cravings

- If experiencing lack of/disturbed sleep, depression, anxiety certain foods may be opted for
- Craving rating – assess rating on a scale of 1 – 10
- Delay/Distraction tactics – delay or distract for 20 minutes
- Re-rate
- If craving still strong after delaying/distracting and decide to have ‘X’ food or drink opt for a small serving size and aim to enjoy and be mindful of experience
- Reflect – what may you have done in the past? Commend positivity

- Exercise can be an effective factor in weight management, decreasing the risk of osteoporosis, for heart health, can be useful in limiting hot flushes, positively impact on mood, and sleep, and can be a sociable outlet
- There is a wide variety of exercise options available to us. The following are reported to have been particularly successful in managing menopausal symptoms:
  - Aerobic exercises; e.g. cycling, walking, jogging, running and swimming
  - Zumba
  - Yoga; this can be a good gentle exercise to do in the evenings or if exercising closer to bed time. Can aid with relaxation, and sleep
- Resistance activities, such as using weights, are especially important to both preserve and build muscle mass
- Can build into daily and social activities and routines
- Whatever form of treatment you choose, it is worthwhile to engage in regular exercise as a part of your routine



# Bone health

- Osteoporosis risk can be increased – loss of oestrogen in menopause increases calcium loss. From circa 35 onwards, calcium loss from our bones occurs.

## Calcium

Aim for two to three portions of calcium-rich foods every day which could include:

- a third of a pint/ 200ml milk,
- a matchbox size piece of cheese,
- a small yoghurt

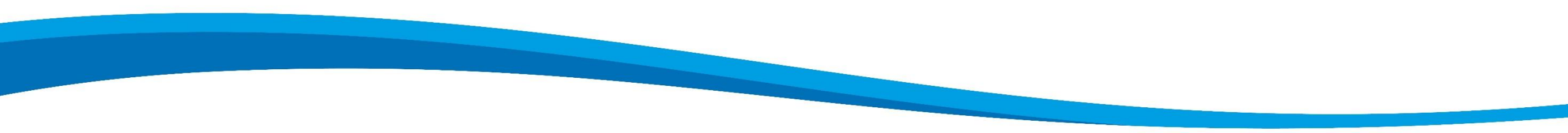
*If consuming dairy alternatives such as soya products choose those that are fortified*

## Vitamin D

- Made by skin in response to sunlight exposure. Happens over circa 6 months in the UK (Apr – Sept)
- Foods containing Vitamin D include fortified products such as cereals and plant based milks eggs, oily fish

## HRT

Helps maintain oestrogen levels and protect bone health.

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# Heart Health

- Increased risk of developing heart disease, some simple changes/swaps could help reduce the risk including:
- Being mindful of fat intake;
  - opting for unsaturated fats over saturated fats such as spreads and oils
  - lower fat dairy products,
  - healthy cooking methods
  - avoiding fatty cuts of meat, removing excess fat and skin
- Reduce salt by avoiding or limiting processed foods such as ready meals, soups and sauces, and limiting salted snacks
- Swap to high fibre foods
- Aim for at least two portions of fish per week, one which should be oily
- Fruit and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, fibre and other plant nutrients such as antioxidants that help protect your heart
- Reduce intake of refined sugars

# Summary

- Various factors can help manage many menopausal symptoms and are important to consider
- There may be some changes you wish to implement
- It is important to work with your GP to find the treatment options that are best suited to you
- When making changes to lifestyle you may wish to opt to concentrate on a few small changes at a time
- Some changes may take some time to notice benefits, consistency is key
- HRT, medication and CBT could be helpful alongside lifestyle aspects including dietary approaches, adequate hydration, exercise, weight management, good sleep and routine, smoking cessation, and stress management techniques
- Please seek further help at any time as through Healthcare Professionals, support sites, groups, as well as initiatives running there may be further avenues that could help you

# Further information tools & support

Speak with GP

Menopause Matters: [www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk),

British Menopause Society (<https://thebms.org.uk/find-a-menopause-specialist/>)

Book – ‘Menopause: the change for the better’ - by Henpicked and Deborah Garlick.

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

<https://henpicked.net/>

‘Squeezy’ an app supporting people with their pelvic floor muscle exercise programmes.

<https://www.squeezyapp.com/>. Designed by chartered physiotherapists specialising in pelvic health

# Your NUH Wellbeing Programme

## Mental Health Support

- 24/7 Confidential Employee Assistance Programme 'Health Assured' 0800 028 0199
- Counselling via Occupational Health
- Mental Health Sessions & Workshops for All Staff
- Sleep Quality Seminars
- Mindfulness Courses
- Mental Health Training For Staff & Managers
- Spiritual & Pastoral Care
- Staff Support Networks – LGBTQIA+, Staffability, PINC
- Mental Health and Mindfulness Apps
- Addiction Support



**We Can Help With...**



## Financial Wellbeing Support

- Financial Wellbeing Toolkit
- Serve and Protect Credit Union
- Salary Finance Loans through a salary sacrifice scheme, and Free Educational Resources through Salary Finance
- Travel to work discounts
- Health Assured Financial & Legal Advice



## Physical Health Support

- Onsite Health Checks
- Staff Gym at QMC
- Weight Management Courses
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Couch To 5K
- Staff Physiotherapy
- Menopause Awareness & Support
- Nutrition Workshops & Seminars



To find out more about the staff wellbeing services, visit:



[www.nuh.nhs.uk/staff-wellbeing](http://www.nuh.nhs.uk/staff-wellbeing)



[nuhnt.staffwellbeing@nhs.net](mailto:nuhnt.staffwellbeing@nhs.net)



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Nottingham  
University Hospitals  
NHS Trust

# Thank you

