

Welcome to the 1st Optimal Women's Health Guide



Joe Miller
Founder of
1st Optimal

Introduction:

After 25 years in fitness, health, and diagnostics, I saw a painful pattern. Women in their 30s and 40s were battling mood swings, brain fog, poor sleep, and weight gain dismissed as “just aging.”

Men in their 20s and 30s were losing strength, drive, and confidence, with no clear reason. They trained, ate clean, took supplements and still felt exhausted, inflamed, and ignored. They weren't failing. The system was.

Modern medicine treats disease, not dysfunction. It reacts, rather than builds resilience. That's why I started 1st Optimal: to replace symptom-chasing with science-backed optimization.

We begin by listening. Then we use advanced diagnostics GI-Map, DUTCH, full-spectrum blood work combined with expert hormone therapy, nutrition, training, and licensed medical oversight.

Whether it's perimenopause, low testosterone, insulin resistance, or just feeling off. You deserve care that treats the whole you.

But this is more than professional. It's personal. I've seen what happens when people reclaim their energy, purpose, and fire after years of just surviving.

Optimize You. Uplift Others.

When you feel strong again, you lead differently. You show up for your family, your partner, your team—with clarity and vitality.

That's our belief at 1st Optimal:

When one person rises, everyone around them does too.
You weren't meant to just live longer.
You were meant to thrive.

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The Optimal Plate For Fat Loss



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The Optimal Plate: What to Eat for Hormone-Friendly Fat Loss

You're eating less, trying to be healthy, maybe even skipping meals. But the scale won't move, and your energy is tanked.

It's not just about calories—it's about communication. Every bite you take sends a signal to your hormones. And for midlife adults, those signals matter more than ever.

1. Insulin Sensitivity: The Fat Loss Accelerator Most Diets Ignore

Insulin is a powerful hormone. When your body is sensitive to insulin, it efficiently pulls glucose into your cells for energy. But when you're resistant—a common issue after 35—your body pumps out more insulin to do the same job.

High insulin = more fat storage, especially around the belly.

This resistance builds over time from:

- Skipping protein
- Eating too many refined carbs
- Poor sleep and high stress
- Inflammation from the wrong fats and processed foods

The fix? Meals that minimize blood sugar spikes and support stable energy.

2. Inflammation: The Silent Hormone Saboteur

Inflammation isn't just about joint pain or soreness—it disrupts nearly every hormone system in your body, from cortisol and thyroid to testosterone and estrogen.

And one of the biggest modern culprits? Refined seed oils.

Canola, soybean, corn, safflower, and sunflower oils common in “healthy” packaged foods and restaurant meals are rich in omega-6 fats. While not inherently bad, when consumed in excess (and out of balance with omega-3s), they promote chronic inflammation, impair insulin sensitivity, and damage hormone receptors.

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👉 Swap these out whenever possible for:

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Avocado oil
- Coconut oil (in moderation)
- Grass-fed butter or ghee

Choose foods that help cool inflammation, not fuel it.

3. Lean Mass: The Metabolic Engine You're Probably Undereating For

After 35, both men and women naturally start losing muscle mass. Less muscle means a slower metabolism, reduced insulin sensitivity, and weaker hormone signals.

The key? Daily protein intake.

💡 Aim for 0.8–1.0 grams of protein per pound of your ideal body weight.

So if you want to weigh 160 lbs, shoot for 140–160g of protein daily.

Protein isn't just about muscle—it stabilizes blood sugar, promotes satiety, supports detoxification, and balances hunger hormones like leptin and ghrelin.

The 1st Optimal Plate Formula:

■ ½ of your plate: Non-starchy vegetables (broccoli, greens, cabbage, peppers)

🍗 ¼ of your plate: Lean protein (chicken, eggs, turkey, tempeh, fish)

🍌 ¼ of your plate: Fiber-rich carbs (berries, lentils, sweet potato, wild rice)

🥑 Add healthy fats: Olive oil, avocado, nuts/seeds (but skip the seed oils)

✅ Optional: A scoop of collagen or whey protein to help meet your protein goal

🚫 Avoid: Packaged foods, seed oils, sugar-sweetened beverages, and highly refined grains

Eating this way won't just help you lose weight. It will rebalance your hormones.

Your body isn't broken—it's just waiting for the right inputs. At 1st Optimal, we test for the root causes behind weight loss resistance, hormonal imbalances, and energy crashes and we build nutrition strategies that match your labs, not someone else's trend.

“Your Hormones Aren’t the Problem. Ignoring Them Is.”



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Mood swings, exhaustion, weight gain, poor sleep, brain fog—sound familiar?

Maybe you’ve been told it’s stress. Or “just getting older.” Maybe you’ve tried the diets, the supplements, the willpower. But no one’s actually looked under the hood. At 1st Optimal, we believe women deserve better than guesswork. Our Female Hormone Health Panel is designed to give you real answers so you can finally feel like you again.

What We Test:

- ✓ Estradiol, Progesterone, Testosterone – Are your core hormones balanced?
- ✓ DHEA-S, SHBG, LH, FSH – Are your adrenals and reproductive signals in sync?
- ✓ Thyroid (TSH, Free T3, Free T4, TPO Antibodies) – Undiagnosed thyroid issues are everywhere.
- ✓ hs-CRP – Chronic inflammation can hijack every system in your body.
- ✓ HbA1c – Blood sugar affects hormones, hunger, and fat storage.
- ✓ Vitamin D3 – A critical hormone-like nutrient for mood and metabolism.
- ✓ CBC, CMP, Lipids – We check your blood, organ, and cardiovascular health too.

Why It Matters:

Hormonal imbalance isn’t just a nuisance it’s often the root cause of fatigue, mood shifts, bloating, stubborn weight, anxiety, and even low libido.

Whether you're navigating perimenopause, PCOS, postpartum shifts, or simply feeling “off,” this panel gives us the insights we need to create a tailored strategy for your health. That may include hormone therapy, nutrition guidance, supplement protocols, and expert coaching delivered by licensed professionals who understand your body, your life stage, and your goals.

Your symptoms are not just in your head. They’re in your labs.
Let’s find out what your body’s been trying to tell you.

👉 [Order your Female Hormone Panel now](#)

The Sleep Guide for Women 8 Expert-Backed Strategies to Optimize Hormones, Nutrition, and Deep Rest



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4. Prioritize Protein, Especially at Breakfast

A high-protein breakfast stabilizes blood sugar and cortisol rhythms all day, improving sleep later. Target: 30–40g of protein within 90 minutes of waking. This reduces evening cravings, balances hormones, and sets a consistent circadian rhythm

5. Support Melatonin Naturally Before Supplementing

Melatonin is often overused and under-supported.

🔥 Support production by:

- Getting morning sunlight within 30 minutes of waking (10–20 min outdoors).
- Blocking blue light in the evening (with glasses or screen filters).
- Keeping your bedroom pitch-dark and cool (65–68°F).

If supplementing: start low—0.3 to 1 mg 60–90 min before bed. More is not better.

6. Adaptogens and Herbal Allies for Hormonal Sleep Support

When stress is a factor, adaptogens can be your sleep ally.

🌿 Evidence-backed options:

- Ashwagandha (300–600 mg/day): reduces cortisol and anxiety.
- Passionflower and Valerian root: increase GABA and reduce sleep latency.
- L-theanine (100–200 mg): calming amino acid great in the evening.

Check for interactions if you're on medications or HRT.

7. Limit Alcohol and Caffeine—With a Menopause-Aware Window

Both interfere with sleep architecture and hormone metabolism.

☕ Caffeine cut-off: No later than 12 p.m.—even earlier if you're slow to metabolize it (common in perimenopause).

🍷 Alcohol: Avoid within 3–4 hours of bedtime. It may help you fall asleep but disrupts REM and increases body temp.

8. Lift Heavy Things—and Walk More

Exercise timing and type matter.

🏋️♀️ Strength training 2–4x per week boosts progesterone and growth hormone, supporting sleep and muscle repair.

🚶♀️ Daily movement (aim for 8,000–10,000 steps) helps regulate circadian rhythms and insulin sensitivity.

Avoid intense workouts too close to bedtime.

Perimenopause or Just Stress? Here's How to Tell



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Understanding Perimenopause: The 10-Year Hormonal Rollercoaster

Perimenopause is the transitional phase before menopause, and it can begin as early as your mid-30s. Hormone levels, especially estrogen and progesterone don't just decline steadily. They fluctuate unpredictably, causing symptoms that often mimic or amplify what we call "stress":

- Mood swings or irritability
- Brain fog or poor memory
- Sleep disturbances or insomnia
- Unexplained weight gain
- Anxiety, low motivation, or depressive moods
- Irregular periods or heavier cycles
- Fatigue that doesn't improve with rest

Sound familiar?

2. How Stress and Perimenopause Overlap (And Make Each Other Worse) Chronic stress triggers elevated cortisol, your body's primary stress hormone.

Over time, high cortisol:

- Disrupts progesterone production (since both compete for the same precursor, pregnenolone)
- Weakens thyroid function
- Increases insulin resistance and fat storage
- Worsens sleep quality, blood sugar, and inflammation

In perimenopause, your body is already under hormonal strain. Add stress to the mix, and it becomes much harder to maintain balance physically and emotionally.

This is why so many high-achieving, health-conscious women say:

"I'm doing everything right... but nothing's working anymore."

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So, Is It Perimenopause or Just Stress? Ask Yourself:

- Have your periods changed (length, flow, or frequency)?
- Are your mood and sleep affected in waves, not consistently?
- Are you reacting more emotionally than usual, even when life is “fine”?
- Are your cravings, bloating, and weight gain worsening—especially around your midsection?
- Is your PMS getting more intense, or lasting longer?

👉 If you answered yes to 3 or more, your body may be signaling perimenopausal hormone dysregulation—not just stress.

4. What You Can Do Today: Test & Support Your Hormones

At 1st Optimal, we don't play the guessing game. We help women get answers with advanced, real-world tools:

- ✅ Comprehensive hormone panels to assess estrogen, progesterone, DHEA, cortisol, thyroid, and insulin
- ✅ GI-Map and nutrient testing to identify root causes of fatigue, bloating, or mood swings
- ✅ Lifestyle strategies designed for your real life—not a one-size-fits-all plan

Our goal is to support your hormones and your nervous system—because midlife health isn't just about balance, it's about resilience.

Additional Links And Resources



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Free Virtual Consult with a Health Expert *(US Only)*

- [LINK: https://1stoptimal.com/book-a-call](https://1stoptimal.com/book-a-call)

Helpful Quizzes to learn more!

- [LINK: FREE Women's Nutrition Assessment](#)
- [LINK: FREE Women's Hormone Health Quiz](#)

Helpful Educational Articles:

- [Fat Loss And Hormone Optimization Article](#)
- [Women's Carb Cycling Article](#)
- [Women's Hormone Therapy Article](#)

****Ready to take control of your hormones?****

Book your intake call with a 1st Optimal specialist today at 1stOptimal.com and get a personalized plan built around your labs, lifestyle, and goals.