

Your 30s

EAT TO BEAT PMS Nearly 9 in 10 women suffer at least one PMS symptom each month, and those in their 30s are often hit the hardest. You can avoid irritability by eating more foods containing tryptophan, an amino acid that helps your body make the “happy” hormone serotonin, says Beth Hamilton, MD, an OB-GYN in Newport Beach, California, and co-author of *So Stressed: The Ultimate stress-Relief Plan for Women*: Turkey, chicken, salmon, and nuts all contain meaningful amounts of tryptophan.

JUST SAY NO Many women are neck deep in career-building during this decade. The unhappy side effect? Killer work stress. Get off the hamster wheel by avoiding automatic “yes” responses to requests that catch you off guard, if saying “yes “makes sense, fine, but being choosy helps you avoid the powerless feeling that leads to burnout.

GET BABIED The 30s are prime time for bringing a little bundle of joy into the world-but pregnant women and new moms often feel depressed and overwhelmed. The good news: massage seems to help by decreasing stress hormones. A recent study from the University of Miami showed that pregnant women at risk for postpartum depression had a lower incidence if their partners gave them massages twice a week during the pregnancy. Earlier research found that massage can also prevent the milder mood troubles suffered by most new moms. So don't be afraid to ask for it –often.

Your 40s

ACT HAPPY The growing field of positive psychology explores how to lead happier, more fulfilling lives (as opposed to treating psychological disorders). One key finding: “We become how we act,” says Christopher Peterson, PHD, a professor at the University of Michigan. Translation? Make a determined effort to be warm and smile, and you'll beat back bad moods.

Safeguard Sleep Depression spikes for women in their 40s, according to Ali Domar, PhD, director of the Domar Center for Mind/Body Health in Boston – and sleep trouble linked to hormone swings is a culprit for many of us. It's a vicious cycle: night sweats and hot flashes keep you up, and the ensuing fatigue hikes depression and stress, which can worsen the night sweats. You can break the pattern by doing a cardio workout-anything you find fun-at least three times a week. Don't give up if you don't get an instant mood boost: the benefits kick in only after you've stuck with it for a while.

GO IT ALONE about 46 million American women care for an elderly, ill, or disabled family member. Those caregivers' average age forty-eight. The job can play havoc with your emotions and mean you're often last on you own list. Rejuvenate with alone time. “Wake up

a half-hour before everyone else, take time for yourself after everyone leaves for work or school, or spend your lunch hour alone a couple of days a week, “says Barbara Ann Kipfer, author of the Field Guide to Happiness for Women.

Your 50s

50s BEAT BELLY BLUES Many women find belly fat increasingly difficult to fight at midlife- and studies show that this kind of fat is linked to depression around the time of menopause. Plus, other research shows that anxiety and depression can in turn double a womans’ risk of gaining weight as she ages. Break the cycle by eating more whole grains, low-fat dairy, beans, and vegetables-they fill you up so you’re less tempted to drown your sorrows in high-fat, high-calorie foods. And exercise for at least 30 minutes every day.