

FREE GIFT FROM FRANCESCA · RHN

100% FREE — NO CATCH

5 Signs Your Gut *Needs Help*

A free, science-backed guide for women in midlife
who know something is off — and are tired of being told
they're fine.

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A NOTE FROM FRANCESCA

Your body is not broken. *It's responding.*

If you're reading this, you already know something is off.

You're bloated by 10am. The belly fat showed up uninvited. You're exhausted by 3pm and you used to thrive on six hours sleep. You forget words mid-sentence. Your mood swings between fine and unrecognizable.

And your doctor said your bloodwork is normal.

Here's what most women never get told: standard bloodwork wasn't designed to catch what's happening to you. It measures the easy stuff. It doesn't measure your gut bacteria, your inflammation patterns, your cortisol rhythm, or the way estrogen is breaking down (or not) inside you.

That's why you can be "normal" on paper and still feel like a stranger in your own body.

This guide walks you through the 5 signs I see most often in women in midlife — the signs that say your gut is asking for help. Read them. See yourself in them. Then come find me when you're ready to do something about it.

*Your symptoms are not in your head.
They are in your gut.*

— Francesca

Persistent Bloating

You look 4 months pregnant by lunch.

01

If your stomach swells throughout the day — flat in the morning, distended by afternoon, painful by evening — that is not normal aging. That is your gut telling you something is fermenting that shouldn't be.

WHAT'S LIKELY HAPPENING:

- An imbalance of gut bacteria (dysbiosis) producing excess gas
- SIBO (small intestinal bacterial overgrowth) — bacteria growing where they shouldn't
- Food intolerances your body has developed in midlife (gluten, dairy, FODMAPs)
- Low stomach acid that prevents proper digestion

WHAT IT IS NOT:

- Just "getting older"
- Something you have to live with
- A sign you need more fiber (often makes it worse)

Belly Fat From Nowhere

02

You haven't changed how you eat. Your body changed.

You used to be able to drop five pounds in a week. Now you eat the same way you've always eaten and the weight settles directly on your midsection — and stays there.

WHAT'S LIKELY HAPPENING:

- Visceral fat redistribution due to estrogen decline (60-70% of perimenopausal women experience this)
- Cortisol dysregulation driving fat storage to the belly
- Insulin resistance — your cells stop responding to insulin the way they used to
- Gut inflammation that triggers systemic fat retention

WHY DIET ALONE WON'T FIX IT:

- Cutting calories raises cortisol, which makes belly fat worse
- Keto and intermittent fasting often backfire after 45
- The fix is metabolic, hormonal, and gut-based — not willpower

Exhaustion By 3pm

You used to thrive on six hours sleep. Now eight isn't enough.

03

If you wake up tired, hit a wall every afternoon, and need caffeine just to function — your gut is involved. Your gut produces about 90% of your serotonin and influences your cortisol curve more than most people realize.

WHAT'S LIKELY HAPPENING:

- Blood sugar swings caused by gut-driven insulin resistance
- Cortisol crashing in the afternoon (it should stay stable)
- Nutrient malabsorption — you eat well but your gut isn't absorbing
- Mitochondrial fatigue from chronic low-grade gut inflammation

WHAT HELPS (AND WHAT DOESN'T):

- More caffeine: makes it worse
- More sleep alone: doesn't fix it
- Healing the gut: addresses the root cause

Brain Fog & Mood Swings

04

You forgot a word mid-sentence. Again.

The gut-brain axis is not a wellness buzzword — it's the most studied bidirectional communication system in modern medicine. When your gut is inflamed, your brain is inflamed. When your microbiome is depleted, your neurotransmitter production drops.

WHAT'S LIKELY HAPPENING:

- Reduced production of serotonin, GABA, and dopamine in the gut
- Vagus nerve dysregulation between gut and brain
- Leaky gut allowing inflammatory compounds into the bloodstream
- Estrobolome disruption (the gut bacteria that regulate estrogen)

SYMPTOMS THAT ARE CONNECTED TO YOUR GUT:

- Brain fog and word-finding difficulty
- Anxiety that came on "out of nowhere"
- Mood swings that don't track with your cycle
- Sleep that breaks at 3am every night

Bloodwork Says You're Fine

But you know you're not.

05

This is the most validating sign of all — because it's the one that makes women doubt themselves. If your standard tests come back normal but you feel anything but normal, here is what is likely being missed.

WHAT STANDARD BLOODWORK DOESN'T MEASURE:

- Your gut microbiome composition or diversity
- Inflammation markers like zonulin or LPS
- Your cortisol rhythm across the day
- How your estrogen is being metabolized
- Your nutrient absorption (only blood levels, not what cells get)

WHAT WE LOOK AT INSTEAD:

- Functional gut testing (GI-MAP, comprehensive stool analysis)
- Hormone metabolism panels (DUTCH testing)
- Food sensitivity and inflammation markers
- Symptom mapping across multiple body systems

Your symptoms are real. The right testing finds the cause.

WHAT NOW

You saw yourself *in these pages.*

If even one of these signs felt like reading your own diary — that's not a coincidence.

Your body has been speaking to you. This guide gave you the translation.

I help women in midlife figure out what to do about it — specifically, for the body you have, the symptoms you have, and the life you're living.

Free 20-Minute Clarity Call

No pressure. No pitch. Just a real conversation about what's going on.

BOOK YOUR CLARITY CALL

calendly.com/francescathenutritionist/clarity-call

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