



Caffeine, Chaos & Cravings

A Cliff Notes Guide to Surviving the Rollercoaster of Midlife Blood Sugar and Energy Crashes

A Menopausal Survival Series
by Virginia Crowe
Thrive by Design



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About Thrive by Design with Virginia Crowe

Thrive by Design was born out of my own personal journey through menopause and a deep desire to change the experience for other women. After facing a terrifying panic attack on a hike—one that resulted in me being airlifted off a mountain—I realized how little support and information was available for women going through such a major transition.

My doctor brushed it off as “just perimenopause,” offering no guidance or solutions. That moment changed everything for me.

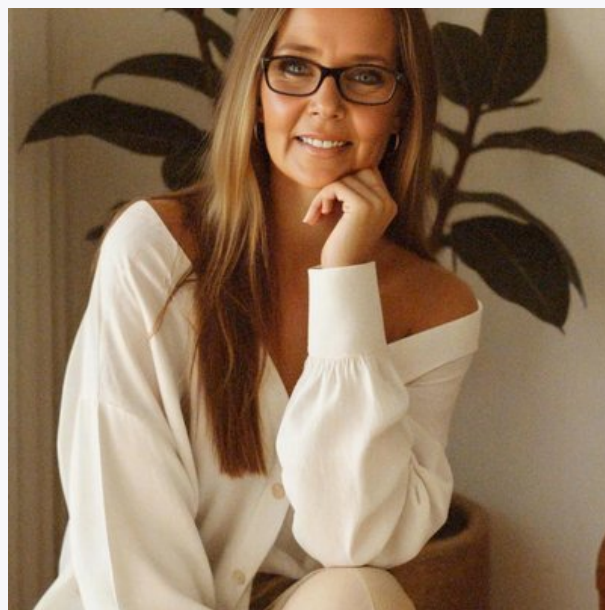
With years of experience as a personal trainer, wellness coach, art for healing facilitator, and nutrition coach, I had many of the tools—but I knew I needed to understand menopause on a deeper level. That’s why I became a Certified Menopause Coaching Specialist. Thrive by Design is the program I wish I had: a fully customizable blend of fitness, nutrition, mindset, and creative healing, tailored to support the unique and complex needs of women in midlife. Whether online or in person, this program is designed to help you feel informed, empowered, and truly supported.

If you’ve ever felt confused, dismissed, or alone during this transition—you’re not. I’m here, and so is Thrive by Design. Reach out if you have questions. Let’s change the narrative together.

Virginia can be reached by

email : thrivewithvirginia@gmail.com

Website: www.thrivewithvirginia.com



Introduction: The Caffeine-Craving Cycle Is Real

Do you start your day with coffee, crash by noon, search for sugar around 3 p.m., and wonder how you're supposed to cook dinner when all you want is a nap and a cookie?

Welcome to the **blood sugar rollercoaster of midlife**, also known as “trying to function in menopause without falling apart.” If your energy spikes and crashes feel like a cruel prank, you're not crazy—you're just running on unstable fuel.

This **Cliff Notes-style guide** will help you understand what's happening with your hormones, energy, cravings, and mood swings—and give you simple, science-backed ways to get back in control.

And if you're ready for more than a short survival guide, everything in here is just a preview of what I teach in my full wellness program: **Thrive by Design**.



COFFEE PSYCHO®



Section 1: Why You're Craving Coffee, Sugar, and Silence

Hormonal shifts during perimenopause and menopause throw a wrench into your blood sugar regulation. This means your energy can spike high and crash hard—all day long.

Here's why:

- **Estrogen and progesterone** help regulate insulin sensitivity and blood sugar control
- When they decline, you become more prone to **blood sugar highs and lows**
- Low blood sugar = low energy, low mood, and high cravings
- Cortisol (your stress hormone) gets elevated when blood sugar crashes, which only makes things worse
- You end up tired but wired...and hiding in the pantry

Section 2: Signs You're on the Blood Sugar Rollercoaster

If any of these feel familiar, your body might be trying to tell you something:

- You feel hangry if you skip a meal
- You get shaky, lightheaded, or irritable between meals
- You crash hard after eating something sweet
- You crave sugar or caffeine by late afternoon
- You wake up at 3 a.m. with your heart racing
- You need caffeine to function—multiple times a day

This isn't a willpower issue. It's a **fuel management issue**. Your body is begging for balance.



Section 3: What Actually Helps Balance Energy and Cravings

Here are the top strategies I teach my clients to stabilize blood sugar and stop the caffeine-chaos-craving cycle:

1. Eat Balanced Meals on a Schedule

- Every meal should include **protein, healthy fat, and fiber-rich carbs**
- Don't go more than 4–5 hours without eating
- Eat within 1–2 hours of waking up—don't delay breakfast





2. Reduce Caffeine Dependency

- Caffeine stimulates cortisol, which makes blood sugar swings worse
- Switch to half-caf or drink coffee **after** breakfast
- Don't use caffeine to replace food—it backfires

3. Keep Snacks Real, Not Processed

- Choose snacks with protein and fiber (like nuts + apple or hummus + veggies)
- Avoid “naked carbs” (crackers, candy, bread without protein)
- Sugar spikes lead to sugar crashes—every time





4. Hydrate All Day

- Dehydration can mimic fatigue and cravings
- Aim for 60–80 oz of water a day (or more if you're active)

5. Move Gently After Meals

- A 10-minute walk after eating helps regulate blood sugar
- Movement isn't just for burning calories—it's metabolic magic





Section 4: What Doesn't Help (Even If It's Tempting)

Let's be honest about what often feels like the easy fix:

- Drinking coffee on an empty stomach
- Skipping meals to "save calories"
- Snacking on sugar when energy drops
- Ignoring your body's hunger cues
- Feeling guilty for being tired or craving carbs

These quick fixes make things worse in the long run. Your body needs consistent, stable fuel—**not shame and starvation.**

Section 5: This eBook Is Just the Beginning

This guide gives you a quick snapshot of how blood sugar, caffeine, and cravings are connected during menopause. But there's so much more support available inside my signature program: **Thrive by Design**.

Here's what's inside:

- Nutrition plans designed for stable energy and hormone health
- Easy recipes and snack ideas that don't spike your blood sugar
- Education on caffeine, cortisol, and how to naturally boost energy
- Movement routines that support blood sugar and metabolism
- Mindset coaching and nervous system practices
- Optional concierge 1:1 coaching (online or in person in Laguna Hills, CA)
- Thrive by design can give you the guidance you need

Ready to Get Off the Rollercoaster?

You don't need to live on coffee, crash at 3 p.m., or blame yourself for the chaos. With the right tools and support, balance is not only possible—it's your birthright.

Let's stabilize your energy and help you feel like yourself again.

I look forward to working with you - Virginia

Website: www.thrivewithvirginia.com

Email: thrivewithvirginia@gmail.com

Instagram: [@thrivewithvirginia](https://www.instagram.com/thrivewithvirginia)

