

Big Ideas. Little Read.



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Have you ever stopped to think about the way you 'digest' stress?

Our hormones are phenomenal. When harnessed, they are our superpower. Yet few of us realise how sensitive they are to external pressures. Learning to digest stress well in midlife is critical. In fact, many of the nutritionists we work with assert that, without first addressing the way we respond to challenges – big or small, any dietary changes will struggle to have an impact.



The reason? Sitting behind the brain/ gut conductor is an orchestra of hormones: each with a specific role to play in keeping our bodies balanced. When we feel stressed, our bodies release a complex group of hormones, including the stress hormone cortisol. Our heart rate increases, along with our blood pressure and our blood sugar. At the same time digestion and immunity are suppressed.

Critically, when cortisol is produced, our bodies deprioritise the production of our sex hormones too. This means that when we're stressed we produce less progesterone, oestrogen and testosterone. We also produce less stomach acid.

This matters in menopause because our bodies are already depleted in these hormones. By internalising stress we place extra pressure on our bodies and reduce production further.

This issue of the Little Read looks at a few tools and practices that can help us manage stress – and is a taster of the conversations our community hosts every day. If you enjoy the read, why not scan the QR code on this page and come and say hello? We'd love to see you.



Want weekly midlife tips direct to your inbox? Scan now to join our community of curious minds.

Rebekah, founder of MPowder
www.mpowder.store



Menopause and fight or flight.

Tools to help you better digest stress.

We need cortisol to function. But during menopause, being constantly in ‘fight or flight’ can be dangerous. Because, when we are busy producing cortisol to survive a perceived threat, our ability to produce sex hormones is impacted. Learning how we ‘digest stress’ and exploring tools that may reframe external pressures and challenges can make a real difference to the health of our bodies and minds in midlife.

Incremental tweaks can make a big difference. Here are a few recommendations from our expert team;

1. Learn to breathe: Research shows that there’s a direct correlation between our emotional state and the way we breathe. By learning to control our breath, preemptively – whether through mindfulness practice, cognitive behavioural therapy, yoga or specific breathwork practice – we are able to manage our breath when we begin to feel the familiar signs of overwhelm or anxiety.
2. Embrace the power of the pen: Journaling can help us process negative emotions and events, sleep better, improve brain function and productivity. By putting down thoughts on paper, we can mitigate the churning of recycling them in our mind. There are many journaling frameworks out there. Allow yourself time to experiment and find the prompts and practices that work for you.
3. Move in nature: Getting outside at the start and end of the day, and specifically being able to watch the sun rise and set, can have a profound effect on our brains, our hormones and our stress levels. Serotonin is stimulated, which not only helps us to feel happy, it also promotes feelings of calm and enables focus.
4. Feel more: There is a reason so many of us are drawn to cold water in menopause. Cold therapy is actually a ‘good stressor’. By facilitating a short, shocking burst of cold, we trigger our parasympathetic nervous system, reduce inflammation in our bodies and increase endorphin levels.
5. Start the day with a PFF breakfast: A protein heavy breakfast full of good fats and fibre is the best change you can make to your diet (alongside taking our blends of course!). And it is so easy to do. From avocado, eggs and toast to oily fish, vegetables and legumes... or greek yoghurt with flax seeds and fruit, moving away from refined carbohydrates and sugary cereal will balance your blood sugar, your hormones and your mind.

We’ll never remove stress from our lives. But we can learn to manage it. The very act of prioritising yourself, just for a few minutes every day, can lead to a happier state. And when your body knows it’s being listened to, it no longer needs to scream.

Your skin as a window into your soul.

In conversation with Annee de Mamiel, world-leading facialist and founder of the eponymous skincare range, de Mamiel.

'I remember the exact patient that changed everything – the moment when I went, 'that's it, it all comes back to cortisol.'



Annee and her beautiful product range are an anomaly in a fast-paced beauty and wellness space where scale and brand discoverability are the end goal. She's a true 'find'. Loved by celebrities, statespeople, royalty – and those individuals who live life 24/7 under extreme pressure, she has developed a philosophy to skincare that is rooted in deep research into what happens to our DNA when we experience chronic stress:

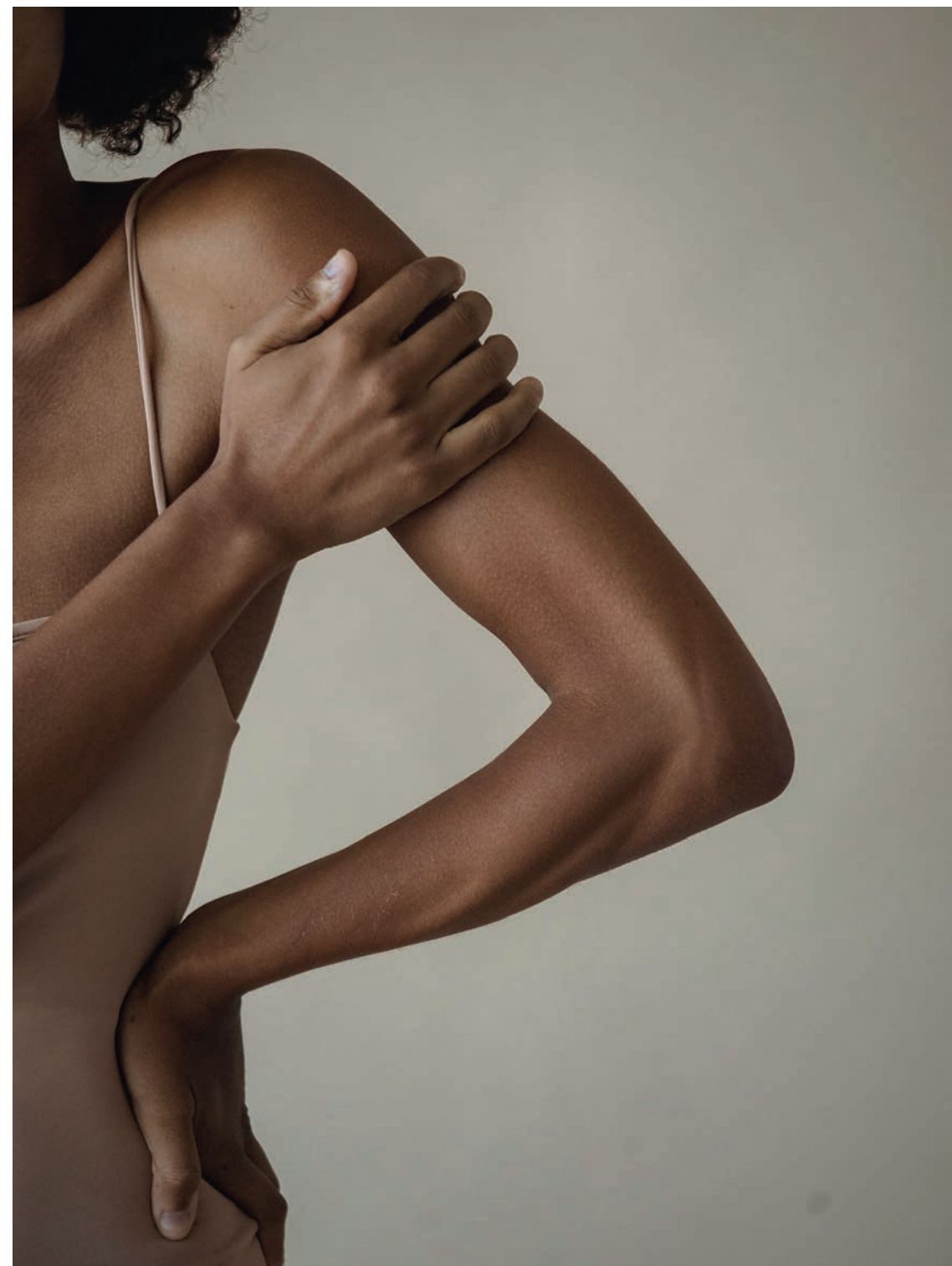
'Research shows that telomeres, which is the protective casing at the end of a strand of our DNA, decreases under pressure – and this is where inflammation in our bodies begins.'

In this conversation, we discuss the danger of a society that promises us that we can 'have it all', how her belief in the healing properties of nature has informed her work and why we should all be allowing ourselves to let go for the good of our bodies and minds.

Let's start by looking at the way we live. You've developed your whole range in recognition of the extreme stress of everyday life. What has informed that approach?

Overexposure to cortisol is just one challenge that our skin faces, but you could argue it's one of the most significant. While other causes of skin ageing include oxidation in the form of damaging free radicals (think UV and air pollution), glycation (too much sugar or poor control of blood sugar) and inflammation, cortisol is known as the "master controller". It's crucial to do all you can to address the root cause of stress in your life and help reduce your exposure to cortisol.

When we experience stress, our skin has to deal with the impact it has on our brain as well as our sympathetic nervous system. It also responds directly to stress itself. Understandably, it can quickly become overwhelmed, leading to symptoms that include dehydration, dullness and increased sensitivity. Stress also leads to a breakdown in the body's production of collagen which means our skin will also lose elasticity and firmness.





A lot of what we do is focused on the belief that routines can become nourishing rituals. And that rituals lead to results.

To address the impact of stress on our skin, we have to address the impact it has on our lives. You can't give 100% to everything! But we don't give ourselves the ability to be ok with that. If we can make that shift – and be ok with that, everything changes. My focus is on giving people the tools to move through that process to acceptance. In Chinese Medicine, skin offers a map towards a resolution. Every wrinkle, every mark tells a story. And it is a valuable place to begin the process of change.

We know that if you take time to experience the practice of skincare, if you simply stop to breathe in the product, it changes the neuroplasticity of the brain. It works on a cellular level.

I'd love to pause a little and explore the role of smell in your range. I know that it is an element that you've explored in the lab too.

'We process smell in the same area of the brain that we hold memory, which is why it can be such a powerful and emotive sense. But what we're now learning is that there is also a brain/blood connection and that inhaling a scent can change our chemistry from within. We're also learning more and more about the power of breath. It impacts our parasympathetic nervous system. So, by using aromatherapy and encouraging a ritualistic approach to applying our products, we can affect hormone balance, address inflammation and see results on our skin and muscle tissue.'

So much of your range draws on your training in Chinese Medicine. And it must be fascinating to be able to view this ancient practice through the lens of science.

'We live in a world where we won't believe in something until we have the data. But the fact is we're still learning about our bodies and minds;

'We've only recently discovered cortisol receptors on our skin. And there is so much about the brain that remains unknown.'

Think about the gut microbiome and how much we're learning about where hormones are produced. The mind/gut relationship. It's all new. We have to remain aware of the fact that science evolves too. Old 'facts' become the stuff of science fiction as they are replaced with new insights.



For those of us looking at how we better support our skin as we transition through menopause, what would be your key piece of advice?

'I honestly believe it comes down to how we breathe. Just by taking a breath, by slowing down, we are able to create the space we need. Sometimes we need visual cues to remind us to breathe. One of the practices I encourage my patients to try is to use red dots – just a set of stickers from the store – and to place them around the house, the office, wherever you're spending time – as a reminder to pause. Our Altitude Oil takes that practice further using Aromachology. It creates a moment, a ritual – and a moment in time and allows our bodies to rebalance.

In menopause we carry so much fear about our bodies – and we may not feel able to talk to the people we may usually share our emotions with. We need to know it is ok to feel. And if you accept that emotion, if you give yourself time to stop, to pause, if we move from a focus on what we 'should do' or 'should feel', we can reconnect with ourselves.



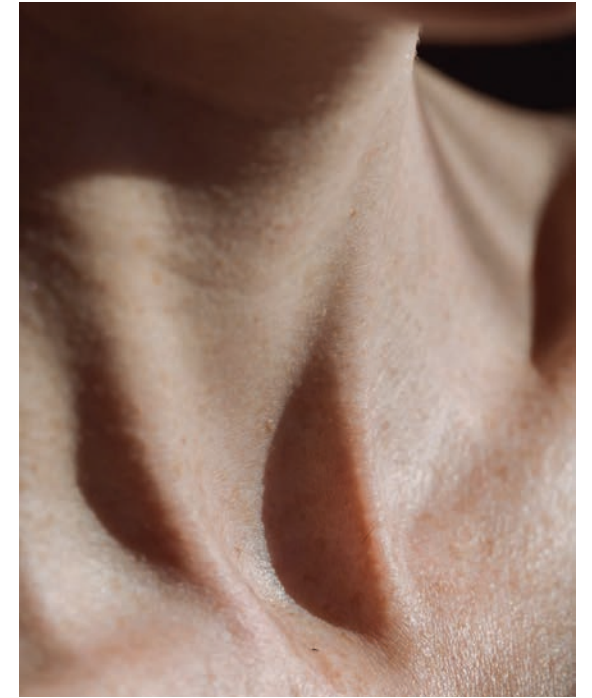
Finally, you place a big focus on nature and the change of seasons in your formulations. Why is that?

'We live so much of our lives in our heads. But each season has the potential to bring us back to our bodies. Nature roots us. It grounds us. We need to learn to live with our seasons too. In Chinese Medicine, Summer is our heart – it is about being carefree. But, as we move into Autumn, nature offers us the opportunity to let go. To release what no longer serves us. This, in turn, allows us to create space, through the rest that Winter brings, to welcome spring.

Women's bodies can be mapped against a 7 year cycle. What is fascinating is that Chinese wisdom shows that, as we transition into menopause, the one meridian in our body that goes around our waist, opens up.

It is a release of everything we carried 'under the belt'. It means our Second Spring is an opportunity to redefine ourselves, our perspective and our lives.

If you'd like to learn more about the science behind the de Mamiel range, head to www.demamiel.com



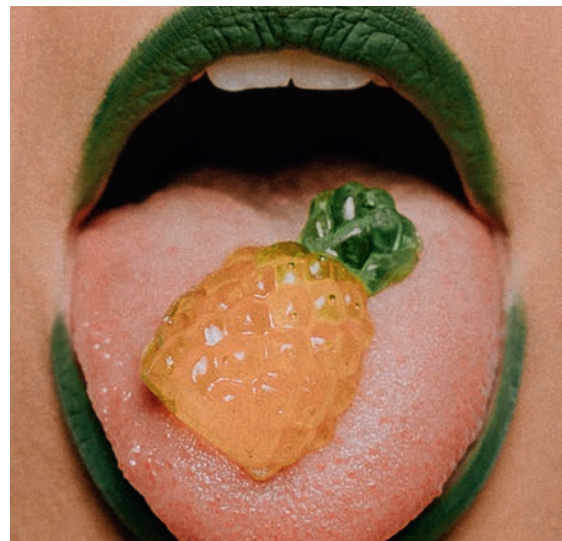
Why bitter is good in menopause.

Did you know that our guts naturally produce less stomach acid as we transition through menopause?

Falling oestrogen impacts our bodies in so many ways. And the changes that can occur in our gut can be responsible for new food intolerances, gassiness, bloating, IBS-symptoms and acid reflux too.

How we digest stress can present additional pressure on our stomachs in midlife. It can inhibit our ability to absorb nutrients. It can impact our ability to maintain a healthy weight. Critically, our gut, when it functions optimally, is responsible for up to 95% of the production of serotonin. Changes in our serotonin level can have a significant impact on how we feel, how we sleep – low serotonin levels may even contribute to the reduction of bone density in our bodies.

So, how can we support our guts in menopause?



1. Embrace bitter tastes: The tastes on our tongue send messages to our central nervous system. And bitter tastes prime our bodies for digestion. When we taste something bitter, our saliva production increases, as a result of the nervous system triggering the release of the stomach hormone gastrin. This in turn tells our internal organs to perform and wakes up movement in our intestines.

All of these actions help us extract maximum nutritional value from what we're consuming.

Those of you that have already introduced the MPowder nutritional foundational range into your routines will know that our recipes have a bitter taste. For some, the functional flavours of Peri-Boost and Meno-Boost can take a bit of getting used to. But by blending our whole foods, botanicals, vitamins and minerals in their pure form, without flavour masks or artificial sweeteners, we're able to ensure your body gets the most back. So start your day bitter! Your body and mind will thank you for it.



2. Up your intake of probiotic and prebiotic whole foods: There has been a large and valuable focus on probiotics in the last 2 years. And it's becoming easier to find great fermented options that deliver a great probiotic punch on our supermarket shelves. Many, like kombucha and kimchi, are surprisingly easy to make at home. But it is also important not to neglect prebiotics in your diet. For a prebiotic boost, look to leafy and cruciferous vegetables as well as olive oil.

Cacao, one of the key ingredients in our Peri-Boost blend, is considered to be a prebiotic – as well as containing probiotic qualities in its raw form. We blend it with Moringa, which also contains prebiotic qualities. Meno-Boost is also a great source of prebiotic goodness. Blended with slippery elm, it ensures your body can extract optimal goodness from the other ingredients in our blend.

3. Chew more than you want to!: In Ayurveda, slow and thorough chewing is seen as a cornerstone of good digestive health. By chewing more, we break down our food, but we also let our digestive enzymes do their job well.

Chewing more can have the halo effect of making us take more time with our food, and more time experiencing it. Mindful eating is having a moment – and like all moments, has many meanings depending on who you talk to. But, by staying present when we're eating, we have the opportunity to listen to our body and what it needs. We're more likely to reach for nourishment than convenience. And we're more likely to hear when it's full.

Interestingly, there is also growing research that a scheduled moment of meditation, before a meal, can calm our minds and also support our gut. This weekend, why not give it a go? A first step in nourishing your gut. Before you pick up the cutlery, simply sit. Shut your eyes. Focus on your breath. Take a body scan and establish how you're feeling. Then return to the breath as it slows. Feel it nourish you from within before the food touches your lips. Then...open your eyes to the colours and textures on your plate. And allow yourself to enjoy every bite.

Life is better lived together.

Why community is good for us in midlife.

There is a much cited community in Japan where people have one of the longest lifespans. Researchers have been fascinated by both the health, harmony and happiness of those that live there. They accept that diet and activity levels enable longevity. But the secret ingredient appears to be not what they're putting on their plate... but the power of being valued... at every stage of life. And a lifelong philosophy focused on finding life's purpose. But perhaps what makes this practice, called *Ikigai*, particularly powerful, is that this purpose evolves and takes on more shape over time. Your life's purpose at 21 should be very different to what you focus on and what brings you fulfilment at 61.

In the West we have a complicated relationship with the process of ageing. Culture teaches us, quite simply, that 'old' is bad and 'young' is good. That purpose is only useful in our youth.

Many of us also live outside of a traditional community dynamic. We're further away from our families, which means the natural process of ageing often happens on the edges of our everyday. We live in places designed for young, mobile single people (and for anyone who has had a child, definitely not designed for prams!). We don't see diversity because people gradually slip away from places and environments where they don't 'fit'. This includes all facets of society: not just the social gatherings, the workplace too.

Yet, the people of Okinawa remind us of the richness of life when everyone is together. And this is even more true for us as females navigating midlife and beyond.

Scientists tell us that the female body responds, on a biological level, to being in the presence of other females.

Spending time with each other is literally a form of medicine.



As significantly, spending time intergenerationally brings even more value. It signposts tomorrow and allows us to remember yesterday through each others' eyes. Which is why it's so important that menopause is a discussion open to women at all stages in life. Because when we hear stories from across myriad walks of life and life stages, our own paths become clearer. We know from the conversations we have everyday that with the right support, our post menopause years are often the most fulfilled and exciting. For some there is a building of confidence: a new found conviction, more comfort with our bodies. For others, a sense of liberation – the motivation to put ourselves a little further up the priority list... new-found purpose.

Yet too often we feel that society wants us to fade away. To cover that light. That menopause and beyond should happen in the shadows.

So, if you're reading this and feeling that your body and mind need a little boost, find time for that coffee with a female friend. Book in more so they're regular moments in your diary. Talk to someone 10 years' older than you... and then 20 years' younger. Your experiences are valuable. The world is brighter when you allow yourself to shine.

Meet MPowder's foundation supplement range. Powered by plants.

Our goal, when creating our first range of menopause supplements, was for you to get all the goodness critical at this life-stage in one easy-to-integrate serving, every day.



With 24+ different ingredients in every recipe, each with a specific role to play at each bio-chemical stage of your menopause journey, it doesn't feel fair to have favourites in our 2 foundation blends. But here are a few of the super-hard working heroes we love ...

Moringa

The leaves of the Moringa plant contain zeatin which feeds our skin, beta-sitosterol which can help lower cholesterol, anti-inflammatory acids supporting its potent anti-inflammatory properties, carotenoids that support eye health and calcium and phosphorous to nourish our bones naturally.



Raw Cacao

A rich source of magnesium which supports nerve function, bones, hormone balance, sleep and blood pressure. Magnesium is also an important mineral in supporting the body in regulating calcium. Research points to cacao's powerful antioxidant properties and its potential to improve cognitive function and skin health too.



Moldavian Dragonhead

Clinical research points to the potential of this member of the mint family in increasing skin moisture, skin elasticity, density and its ability to repair the skin's dermis layer. We use a highly concentrated botanical extract developed by our partner Mibelle Biochemistry, and customers consistently highlight visible changes in their skin.



Ashwagandha

We work with a highly concentrated source of this ancient herb called Ashwagandha KSM-66. It supports the libido and adrenals. And research has also highlighted its potential in reducing stress, anxiety and supporting hormone balance.



Red Clover

Trials have seen small doses of this herb deliver positive results in addressing hot flashes, regulating sleep and supporting bone mass density. It works best alongside a prebiotic.



Slippery Elm

Often called 'The King (shouldn't that be Queen?!) of Digestive Health', this herb is a prebiotic as well as an anti-inflammatory, with fantastic gut healing properties.



Your taste is as individual as your body.

We said 'no' to artificial sweeteners and flavouring masks.
And 'yes' to plant-based ingredients that simply work.



This makes us pretty different in the powdered supplement space. And our powders taste pretty different too. Earthy and nourishing, some find it great with water and ice, and some like to add other ingredients to create their own, unique blends.

Our brand is built on the wisdom and creativity of our community. So, to get you started with a few ideas on how you could use our powders, we've collected some of their favourite recipes. We're adding to our collection all the time. So, whenever you're in need of inspiration, head to www.mpowder.store for the latest tips. And, if you've a blend or hack you'd like to share with us, we'd love to hear from you — yourteam@mpowder.store

For recipe tips and inspiration
from our community, head to
www.mpowder.store/blogs/recipes

Your body. Your journey.

Our powders deliver a big nutritional punch.



The recommended serving size is 3 level tablespoons a day (30g). But, if you experience any discomfort or detox symptoms, please reduce this to 1 level tablespoon per day and gradually increase back to the recommended amount over 7 days. And know we're always on hand to support you.

If you struggle – with taste, with recipes, with your body's response to our blends, please do get in touch: yourteam@mpowder.store

Change is good.

Your transition through the menopause will shine a light on many areas of your life. And that is exactly how it should be. Our powders provide an important nutritional foundation.

But how you live, what you want to prioritise, what new stuff you want to learn ... and what you want to do with your 'second spring' – well, those decisions will influence your journey too. We're here. To share the science, feed your curiosity and surround you with community. So, let's get started! This 'change' is good change.



With love, the MPowder Team.
yourteam@mpowder.store

Together we rise.

**MPowder is more than a midlife supplement range.
We're a community.**

And we grow almost entirely through
personal recommendations.
Share your find.

Discussion about menopause can feel uncomfortable.
Research last year by Gen-M revealed that 2 in 3 of us
still see it as a taboo topic. Yet, when we share our
own experiences, our discoveries, our learnings ...
those that follow don't feel so alone.

We each have the power to torpedo the menopause taboo,
one conversation at a time. Collectively, we can lift
each other up. And that is when good change happens.

Share your discovery of MPowder with those you love.

MPowder®