

Section 1

Menopause



Menopause is when a woman stops having periods.



It is not only women who have the menopause. Some transgender men, non-binary people and intersex people can have the menopause.



Menopause is a natural change that women experience. The timing and symptoms are different for everyone. Symptom is the word we use to describe how people feel.



Your family history may give an idea of when it might happen to you. It may be around the same age as when your mother or older sisters had it.



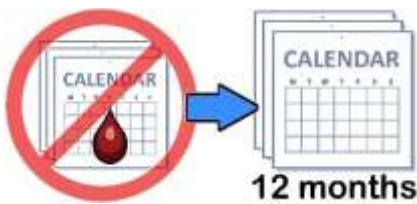
Menopause can also happen because of surgery or cancer treatments. This can sometimes cause symptoms to be worse or happen sooner.



Perimenopause is from when menopause symptoms start until after a woman has had her last period.



You will have less periods over a few months or years before they stop. They might be less regular and become heavier or lighter. For some women, they can stop suddenly.



Postmenopause is the time after a woman has her last period. A woman is postmenopausal when she has not had a period for 12 months.



Perimenopause and menopause are a natural part of life's course. They usually happen between 45 and 55 years of age.



Life does not have to be put on hold because of menopause. A lot can be done to help with symptoms. This includes making healthy lifestyle choices, trying different treatments and getting support from healthcare professionals.

Symptoms of menopause



Most women will have symptoms of menopause. Some women will only have a few symptoms or none. But for some, they can be quite bad. They can have a big impact on life.



The first sign of menopause is usually a change in your periods. You may start having lighter or heavier periods.



The timing of periods may change. They may come every two or three weeks, or they might not come for months at a time. Eventually, periods will stop. For some women other menopause symptoms may continue.



Some women can have symptoms like migraines and low mood especially around the period time even if the timing of periods doesn't change.

There are many symptoms of menopause, things like:



- brain fog and memory issues



- difficulty sleeping



- fatigue



- hot flashes



- joint aches



- not wanting to have sex



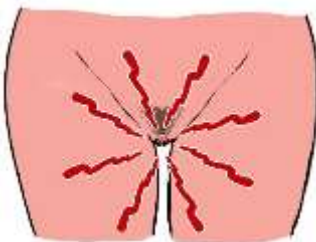
- low mood or anxiety



- migraine



- night sweats



- vaginal dryness or pain

Causes of menopause



Menopause is caused by a change in the body's hormones. This happens as you get older. Hormones are chemicals that affect how our bodies grow and work.



Premature or early menopause can happen at any age. We do not always know why this happens.



Menopause happens when your ovaries make less of the hormone oestrogen and no longer release an egg each month.



Menopause can also happen after some treatments like chemotherapy or radiotherapy. It can also happen when the ovaries are removed by having a hysterectomy.

Treatments for symptoms



It is important to get healthcare advice about menopause treatments. You decide what is best for you.



If you or someone you know needs help with the symptoms, you can get support through your GP.



Your healthcare professional can talk to you about treatments. They can speak with you about changes to your lifestyle if you have symptoms.

They can talk about things like:



- hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- medicines for vaginal dryness
- cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- eating healthy foods, balanced diet and exercising regularly
- taking things like vitamin B6 and vitamin D.

Menopause and daily life



Sometimes symptoms of menopause are bad and affect daily life. There is help available if you need it.



Sometimes it can feel hard to talk about menopause and about your symptoms.



Speaking to other women can help. There might be Menopause Cafes near you or other local groups. You can hear other women's stories and share your own.

Mental wellbeing



Menopause can have an effect on your mental health and wellbeing. Some of the symptoms include getting annoyed easily, feeling depressed and anxious. Lack of sleep caused by menopause can also have an impact on mood.



If you or someone you know has any of these symptoms, speak to your local GP practice. They can help you get support.

Workplace



Some people find it hard to manage menopause symptoms at work. It is important to remember that the menopause is a normal time. Support should be available to help you feel comfortable at work.

Sex and relationships



Menopause symptoms like vaginal dryness or pain, not wanting to have sex can have an impact on your sex life and relationships.



There are treatments that might help with these symptoms.



It can be helpful to speak with your partner. If you help them understand what you are experiencing, they will know how they can support you.

Supporting someone through menopause



If you know someone who is going through menopause, you can let them know that you are there to support them.



Ask them what you can do to help. Ask them how they are feeling. People might not feel comfortable talking. It is important to let them know you are there for them.