



Perimenopause 101

Resource guide
for optimal health

What is (Peri)Menopause?

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Menopause sets in after an individual has passed a full year without experiencing a menstrual period.



However, the period leading up to this time is known as **perimenopause**. This period generally extends for a span of three to seven years. Throughout the perimenopausal phase, there will be variations in the levels of estrogen and progesterone, accompanied by several physical and physiological transformations.

The following pages will outline some of the more common symptoms you may experience.



(Peri)Menopause

DEFINED

(Peri)Menopause can often be confusing. We've broken down the key terms associated with menopause to help you grasp this phase of life more clearly.

Perimenopause: The transitional phase before menopause, marked by hormonal fluctuations and irregular menstrual cycles.

Menopause: The point at which a woman has not had a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months, indicating the end of fertility.

Estrogen: Primary female sex hormone responsible for the development and regulation of the female reproductive system, including menstruation and secondary sexual characteristics.

Progesterone: Another female sex hormone that plays a crucial role in regulating the menstrual cycle, preparing the uterus for pregnancy, and maintaining pregnancy.

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI): Formerly known as premature menopause or early menopause, POI refers to the loss of normal ovarian function before the age of 40, leading to infertility and hormonal imbalances.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): A hormonal disorder characterized by enlarged ovaries with small cysts on the outer edges, often leading to irregular periods, excess androgen levels, and difficulties with fertility.

Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH): A hormone produced by the pituitary gland that stimulates the growth of ovarian follicles and plays a crucial role in the menstrual cycle.

Luteinizing Hormone (LH): Another hormone produced by the pituitary gland that triggers ovulation and plays a role in the menstrual cycle.

Osteoporosis: A condition characterized by weakened bones, increasing the risk of fractures, commonly associated with menopause due to declining estrogen levels.



(Peri)Menopause

DEFINED

When we are educated, we are better able to make informed choices that affect our overall well-being.

Endometriosis: A disorder in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus, causing pelvic pain, infertility, and other symptoms.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT): Also known as Menopause Hormone Therapy (MHT). Treatment to relieve symptoms of menopause by supplementing the body with estrogen, progesterone, or both hormones.

Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT): A form of HRT that uses hormones derived from plant sources that are structurally identical to those produced by the human body.

Vaginal Atrophy: Thinning, drying, and inflammation of the vaginal walls due to declining estrogen levels, often resulting in discomfort, pain during intercourse, and increased risk of infection.

Dyspareunia: Painful intercourse, often associated with conditions such as vaginal dryness, pelvic floor dysfunction, or psychological factors.

Pelvic Organ Prolapse: A condition in which pelvic organs, such as the bladder, uterus, or rectum, protrude into the vaginal canal due to weakened pelvic floor muscles.

Endometrial Hyperplasia: A condition characterized by the abnormal thickening of the lining of the uterus, often caused by excess estrogen without sufficient progesterone.

Hysterectomy: Surgical removal of the uterus, sometimes performed to treat conditions such as uterine fibroids, endometriosis, or certain cancers.



(Peri)Menopause

DEFINED

Women's bodies experience many changes over their lifetime.

Oophorectomy: The surgical removal of one or both ovaries. This procedure may be performed for various reasons, including the treatment of ovarian cancer, endometriosis, ovarian cysts, or as a preventive measure for women at high risk of ovarian cancer

Osteoporosis: A condition characterized by weakened and brittle bones, increasing the risk of fractures, particularly in postmenopausal women due to decreased estrogen levels.

Osteopenia: A precursor to osteoporosis, characterized by lower than normal bone density but not yet meeting the criteria for osteoporosis, often considered a warning sign of bone health issues.

Hormone Therapy Options:

Transdermal: This refers to a method of administering hormones through the skin, typically via patches or gels, allowing for absorption directly into the bloodstream.

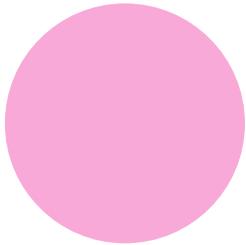
Pellets: These are small, solid hormone implants inserted under the skin, usually in the buttocks or abdomen, which gradually release hormones over time to maintain hormonal balance. *Pellets are not FDA approved or regulated.*

Oral: This method involves taking hormones in pill form, which are absorbed through the digestive system before entering the bloodstream.

Topical: This involves applying hormone creams or gels directly to the skin, where they are absorbed into the bloodstream through the skin's surface.

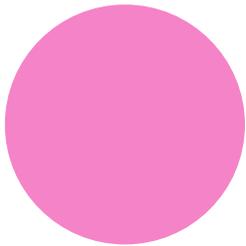
Injection: Hormones can also be administered via injection, where a needle is used to deliver the hormones directly into the muscle or fatty tissue, allowing for rapid absorption into the bloodstream.

stages menopause



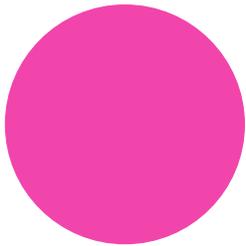
Early Menopause *(late 30s - early 40s)*

Up to 12% of women will have their final period before the age of 45. If women have had surgical induced menopause, this percentage could be higher.



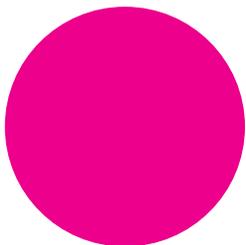
Perimenopause *(early 40s- early 50s)*

Perimenopause serves as a transitional phase bridging the gap between pre-menopause and menopause. Generally beginning in a woman's 40s, this period persists for multiple years. Throughout this duration, the effects of hormonal changes become evident as the ovaries gradually cease their function.



Menopause *(late 40s - mid 50s)*

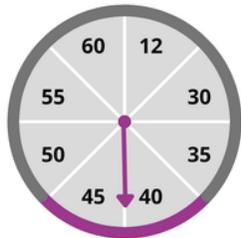
The impact of menopause can be felt by women anywhere from their 30s to their 60s. The average age at which menopause typically begins among women in the US is 51. For a woman to be officially in the menopausal stage, she must have experienced a continuous absence of menstrual cycles for a full 12 months.



Postmenopause *(mid - late 50s)*

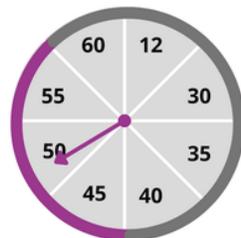
After completing a span of twelve months without a menstrual cycle, a woman enters the postmenopausal phase. This stage persists for the remainder of her life. Fortunately, throughout this period, the symptoms that characterized the years of perimenopause and menopause start to diminish, leading to increased physical comfort for most women.

averages menopause



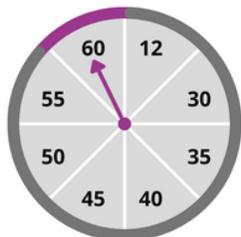
Early Menopause *(before the age of 45)*

Early menopause refers to the onset of menopause before the age of 45, which can result in symptoms and health implications earlier than expected.



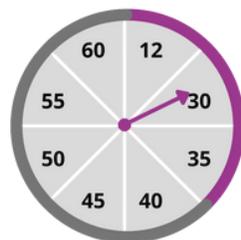
Average *(between ages of 45-55)*

The average age to reach menopause is around 51, although this can range anywhere between ages 45- 55 for many ethnic groups.



Late *(after the age of 55)*

Late menopause occurs after the age of 55, extending the reproductive years and delaying the onset of menopausal symptoms. T



Premature *(between ages of 12-40)*

Premature menopause occurs between the ages of 12 to 40, leading to an early end to menstrual cycles and potential long-term health considerations.

(Peri)Menopause Symptom Tracker

How to Use the Tracker

1. **Date:** Record the date you experience the symptom.
2. **Symptom:** List the specific symptom you're tracking (e.g., hot flashes, mood swings).
3. **Severity (1-10):** Rate the severity of the symptom on a scale of 1 (mild) to 10 (severe).
4. **Frequency:** Note how often the symptom occurs (daily, weekly, or less frequent).
5. **Notes/Triggers:** Add any relevant details, such as triggers or activities that seem to influence the symptom (e.g., stress, certain foods).
6. **Actions Taken:** Record any steps you take to manage the symptom (e.g., supplements, lifestyle changes like meditation, exercise, diet adjustments).
7. **Progress:** Indicate if the symptom has improved, worsened, or stayed the same since your last entry.

DATE	SYMPTOM	SEVERITY (1-10)	FREQUENCY (Daily/Weekly)	NOTES/TRIGGERS	ACTION TAKEN	PROGRESS (BETTER, WORSE, SAME)
9/01/24	Hot Flashes	7	Daily	Stressful day, ate spicy foods	Took black cohosh, wore lighter clothes	Same
9/15/24	Mood Swings	6	Weekly	Felt anxious after bad sleep	Practiced deep breathing, took magnesium supplement	Same



Symptom: Anxiety

What's Happening

Hormonal changes can affect neurotransmitter activity and mood regulation, potentially contributing to feelings of anxiety.

What to Do

Practice relaxation techniques, deep breathing, engage in regular exercise. Seek medical help if anxiety cannot be managed by lifestyle.

Supplements

Ashwagandha, passionflower, magnesium

Food to Consider

Complex carbohydrates (whole grains, legumes), lean proteins, foods rich in magnesium.

Lifestyle Changes

Get regular physical activity, consider meditation or yoga.



Symptom: Brain Fog

What's Happening

As estrogen levels decrease during menopause, it can impact neurotransmitter activity and communication in the brain, leading to brain fog.

What to Do

Stay mentally active, practice mindfulness, make lists, get good sleep. Hormone therapy can be helpful.

Supplements

Ginkgo Biloba, Fish oil, GABA

Food to Consider

Fatty Fish, berries, dark leafy greens, nuts & seeds

Lifestyle Changes

Regular exercise, healthy diet, stay hydrated, manage stress, limit alcohol and caffeine.



Symptom: Breast Tenderness

What's Happening

Hormonal fluctuations, including changes in estrogen and progesterone levels, can lead to breast tissue becoming more sensitive and tender.

What to Do

Wear a supportive bra, avoid caffeine and salt before your period.

Supplements

Vitamin E, evening primrose oil.

Food to Consider

Leafy greens, flaxseeds, whole grains, lean proteins, fruits.

Lifestyle Changes

Reduce caffeine intake, maintain a healthy weight.



Symptom: Changes in Body Odor

What's Happening

Hormonal fluctuations can affect sweat composition, potentially leading to changes in body odor.

What to Do

Maintain good hygiene, use antiperspirants.

Supplements

Chlorophyll, zinc.

Food to Consider

Chlorophyll-rich foods such as leafy greens, parsley, and mint, can help neutralize odors.

Lifestyle Changes

Shower regularly, choose breathable fabrics, stay hydrated.



Symptom: Decreased Libido

What's Happening

Hormonal changes, along with psychological factors, can contribute to a decrease in sexual desire and arousal.

What to Do

Communicate with your partner, explore intimacy techniques. Estrogen cremes are available by prescription. Testosterone can also help.

Supplements

Maca root, Tribulus terrestris.

Food to Consider

Dark chocolate, avocados, bananas, oysters, figs, asparagus.

Lifestyle Changes

Manage stress, engage in regular physical activity.



Symptom: Digestive Problems

What's Happening

Hormonal changes can influence gastrointestinal motility, potentially leading to digestive discomfort, bloating, and changes in bowel habits.

What to Do

Eat fiber-rich foods, stay hydrated. Consider seeing a nutritionist or health coach.

Supplements

Probiotics, ginger.

Food to Consider

High-fiber foods (beans, lentils, whole grains), yogurt with probiotics, ginger, peppermint.

Lifestyle Changes

Eat smaller, more frequent meals.



Symptom: Dry Skin

What's Happening

Declining estrogen levels can lead to decreased production of skin's natural oils, contributing to dryness, itchiness, and a dull complexion.

What to Do

Use moisturizers, avoid harsh skincare products.

Supplements

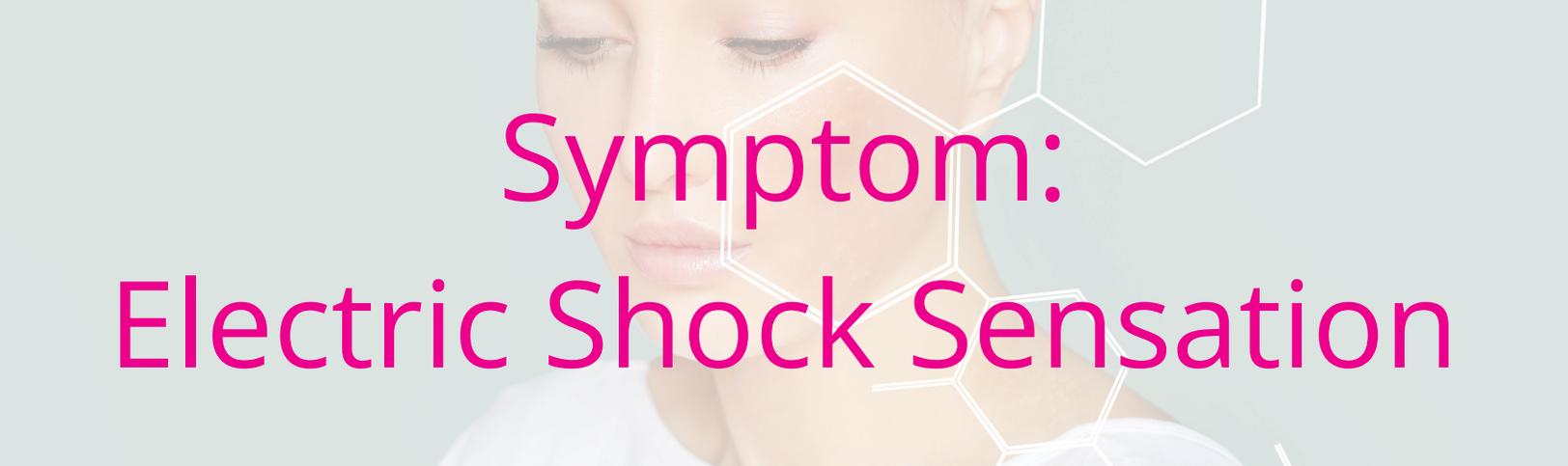
Omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil), vitamin E.

Food to Consider

Fatty fish (salmon, sardines), avocados, nuts (almonds, walnuts), olive oil, berries.

Lifestyle Changes

Stay hydrated, use humidifiers.



Symptom: Electric Shock Sensation

What's Happening

Hormonal changes can affect nerve sensitivity, leading to sensations commonly described as "electric shocks" or tingling.

What to Do

Manage stress, maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Supplements

B vitamins (B-complex), magnesium.

Food to Consider

Whole grains, lean proteins, leafy greens, nuts, seeds, colorful fruits.

Lifestyle Changes

Engage in regular exercise, prioritize sleep.



Symptom: Fatigue

What's Happening

Hormonal changes, sleep disturbances, and increased stress levels can contribute to feelings of fatigue and low energy.

What to Do

Maintain a regular sleep schedule, engage in moderate exercise.

Supplements

B vitamins (B-complex), iron (if deficient), magnesium.

Food to Consider

Iron-rich foods (leafy greens, lean meats), whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts.

Lifestyle Changes

Manage stress, stay hydrated.



Symptom: Hair Thinning or Loss

What's Happening

Fluctuating hormones can affect hair follicles and hair growth cycles, leading to a reduction in hair thickness and increased hair shedding.

What to Do

Use gentle hair care products, consider minoxidil (under medical guidance).

Supplements

Biotin, collagen, saw palmetto.

Food to Consider

Eggs, fish (salmon, mackerel), nuts (almonds, walnuts), spinach, sweet potatoes.

Lifestyle Changes

Manage stress, maintain a healthy diet.



Symptom: Headaches

What's Happening

Hormonal changes, particularly the decline in estrogen, can trigger headaches or migraines in susceptible individuals.

What to Do

Manage stress, stay hydrated, practice relaxation techniques, such as yoga, meditation and breathwork.

Supplements

Magnesium, riboflavin (vitamin B2).

Food to Consider

Magnesium-rich foods (spinach, nuts, whole grains), ginger, water-rich fruits (watermelon, strawberries).

Lifestyle Changes

Maintain a consistent sleep schedule.



Symptom: Heart Palpitations

What's Happening

Fluctuating hormones can affect heart rate and rhythm, leading to sensations of rapid or irregular heartbeats.

What to Do

Manage stress, limit caffeine and alcohol. It is highly recommended to see a health care practitioner.

Supplements

Hawthorn berry, magnesium.

Food to Consider

Leafy greens (spinach, kale), berries, whole grains, fatty fish, nuts.

Lifestyle Changes

Engage in aerobic exercise, maintain a heart-healthy diet.



Symptom: Hot Flashes/ Night Sweats

What's Happening

Fluctuating estrogen levels impact the body's temperature regulation, leading to sudden feelings of intense heat (hot flashes) and excessive sweating, often occurring during sleep (night sweats).

What to Do

Wear light clothing, use fans, avoid triggers like caffeine and spicy foods. Consider hormone therapy or other non-hormonal medications by prescription. CBT has also shown to be effective .

Supplements

Black cohosh, evening primrose oil, vitamin E.

Food to Consider

Soy products (tofu, tempeh), flaxseeds, whole grains, fruits, vegetables.

Lifestyle Changes

Maintain a healthy weight, practice relaxation techniques.

A person is lying in bed, wearing a white shirt, and looking at a smartphone held in their hands. The background is softly blurred, showing the person's face and hair.

Symptom: Insomnia

What's Happening

Hormonal shifts, night sweats, and increased anxiety can disrupt sleep patterns and lead to difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.

What to Do

Establish a consistent sleep routine, create a calming bedtime environment. Hormone therapy can be helpful by prescription.

Supplements

Melatonin, valerian root.

Food to Consider

Complex carbohydrates (whole grains, sweet potatoes), lean proteins, herbal teas (chamomile, valerian).

Lifestyle Changes

Limit caffeine and screen time before bed. Consider yoga nidra and expanded exhale breathwork.



Symptom: Irregular Periods

What's Happening

Fluctuating hormone levels, particularly estrogen and progesterone, can disrupt the regular menstrual cycle, causing unpredictable periods, lighter or heavier flows, and changes in cycle length.

What to Do

Keep track of your periods, consult with a healthcare professional if changes are drastic or concerning.

Supplements

Chasteberry (Vitex), Black Cohosh

Food to Consider

Iron-rich foods (leafy greens, lean meats), foods high in B vitamins (whole grains, eggs, dairy or fortified plant-based milk).

Lifestyle Changes

Manage stress, maintain a healthy weight.



Symptom: Joint & Muscle Aches

What's Happening

Hormonal fluctuations can affect inflammation and joint lubrication, contributing to joint and muscle discomfort.

What to Do

Engage in regular exercise, consider strength training. Consider estrogen hormone therapy.

Supplements

Glucosamine, chondroitin, turmeric.

Food to Consider

Fatty fish (salmon, trout), nuts and seeds, whole grains, leafy greens, colorful fruits (berries, oranges).

Lifestyle Changes

Maintain a healthy weight, practice stretching.



Symptom: Memory Problems & Difficulty Concentrating

What's Happening

Estrogen plays a role in maintaining cognitive function, and its decline can lead to memory difficulties, decreased concentration, and mental fog.

What to Do

Engage in mental exercises, prioritize tasks, create a structured environment. Get adequate rest.

Supplements

Omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil), ginkgo biloba.

Food to Consider

Fatty fish, berries, dark leafy greens, nuts and seeds.

Lifestyle Changes

Get enough sleep, manage stress, practice mindfulness.



Symptom: Mood Swings

What's Happening

Hormonal fluctuations can impact neurotransmitter activity, leading to mood swings, irritability, and emotional sensitivity.

What to Do

Engage in regular exercise, practice stress-reduction techniques.

Supplements

St. John's Wort, omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil).

Food to Consider

Foods rich in complex carbohydrates (whole grains, legumes), lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables.

Lifestyle Changes

Prioritize self-care, consider therapy or counseling.



Symptom: Osteoporosis

What's Happening

Decreased estrogen levels lead to a loss of bone density and strength, increasing the risk of osteoporosis and fractures.

What to Do

Consume calcium-rich foods, engage in weight-bearing exercise. Consider hormone therapy.

Supplements

Calcium, vitamin D, magnesium, vitamin K.

Food to Consider

Dairy or fortified plant-based milk, leafy greens, almonds, sardines (with bones), fortified cereals.

Lifestyle Changes

Regular weight-bearing exercise, avoid smoking and excessive alcohol.



Symptom: Painful Intercourse

What's Happening

Vaginal dryness and thinning of vaginal walls due to lower estrogen levels can cause friction and discomfort during sexual activity.

What to Do

Use lubricants, consider estrogen creams (under medical guidance).
Supplements: Vitamin E, L-arginine.

Supplements

Vitamin E, L-arginine.

Food to Consider

Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, chia seeds), vitamin E-rich foods (almonds, spinach), soy products.

Lifestyle Changes

Engage in regular sexual activity, communicate with your partner.



Symptom: Urinary Problems

What's Happening

Lower estrogen levels can weaken the pelvic floor muscles and lead to urinary symptoms such as urgency, frequency, and leakage.

What to Do

Consider vaginal estrogen. Practice pelvic floor exercises, limit caffeine and alcohol.

Supplements

Cranberry extract, D-mannose.

Food to Consider

Cranberries, blueberries, watermelon, cucumbers, celery, parsley.

Lifestyle Changes

Stay hydrated, empty your bladder regularly.



Symptom: Vaginal Dryness

What's Happening

Reduced estrogen levels cause vaginal tissue to become thinner and less elastic, leading to dryness, discomfort, and potential pain during intercourse.

What to Do

Use water-based lubricants, consider vaginal moisturizers. Vaginal estrogens are also helpful.

Supplements

Vitamin E, sea buckthorn oil.

Food to Consider

Flaxseeds, chia seeds, soy products (tofu, tempeh), whole grains, water-rich fruits (watermelon, cucumber).

Lifestyle Changes

Stay hydrated, avoid douching and harsh soaps.

A photograph showing a person's feet on a white digital scale. To the right, a yellow measuring tape is coiled on a white surface. The background is a light, neutral color.

Symptom: Weight Gain

What's Happening

Hormonal changes, particularly a decrease in estrogen, can lead to a shift in fat distribution, often resulting in increased abdominal fat. This is influenced by changes in metabolism and how the body stores fat.

What to Do

Maintain a balanced diet, engage in regular physical activity.

Supplements

Green tea extract, conjugated linoleic acid (CLA).

Food to Consider

Lean proteins (chicken, turkey, fish), whole grains (quinoa, brown rice), fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Lifestyle Changes

Eat nutrient-dense foods, monitor portion sizes.



Note:

If you are considering using dietary supplements, it's recommended to:

- Consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new supplements, especially if you have underlying health conditions or are taking medications.
- Choose a reputable brand that undergoes third-party testing for quality and purity.
- Be cautious of unrealistic claims or promises made by supplement manufacturers.

To learn more go to www.TheMFactorFilm.com