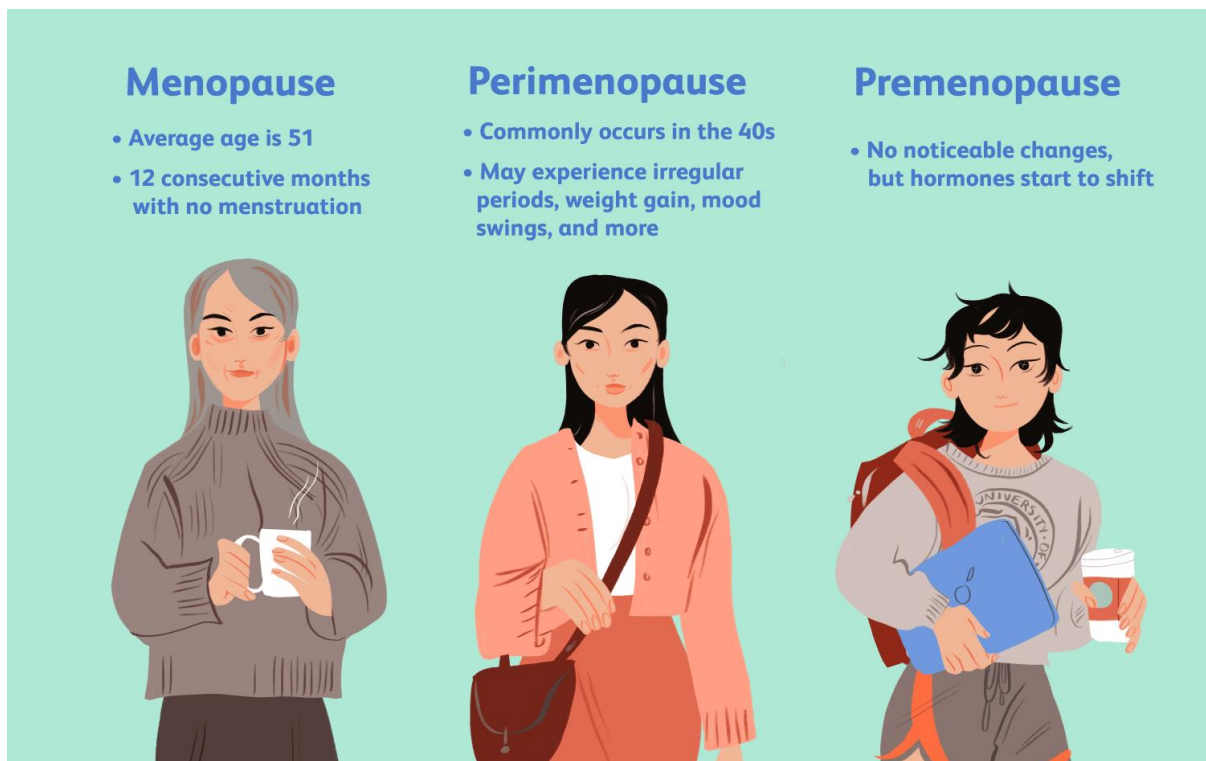


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Menopause

Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually affects women between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier. Menopause can happen naturally, or for reasons such as surgery to remove the ovaries (oophorectomy) or the uterus (hysterectomy), cancer treatments like chemotherapy, or a genetic reason. Sometimes the reason is unknown. Perimenopause is when you have symptoms of menopause but your periods have not stopped. Perimenopause ends and you reach menopause when you have not had a period for 12 months. Menopause and perimenopause can cause symptoms like anxiety, mood swings, brain fog, hot flashes and irregular periods. These symptoms can start years before your periods stop and carry on afterwards.



Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on your life, including relationships and work.

There are things you can do to help with symptoms. There are also medicines that can replace the missing hormones and help relieve your symptoms.

Common symptoms of menopause and perimenopause

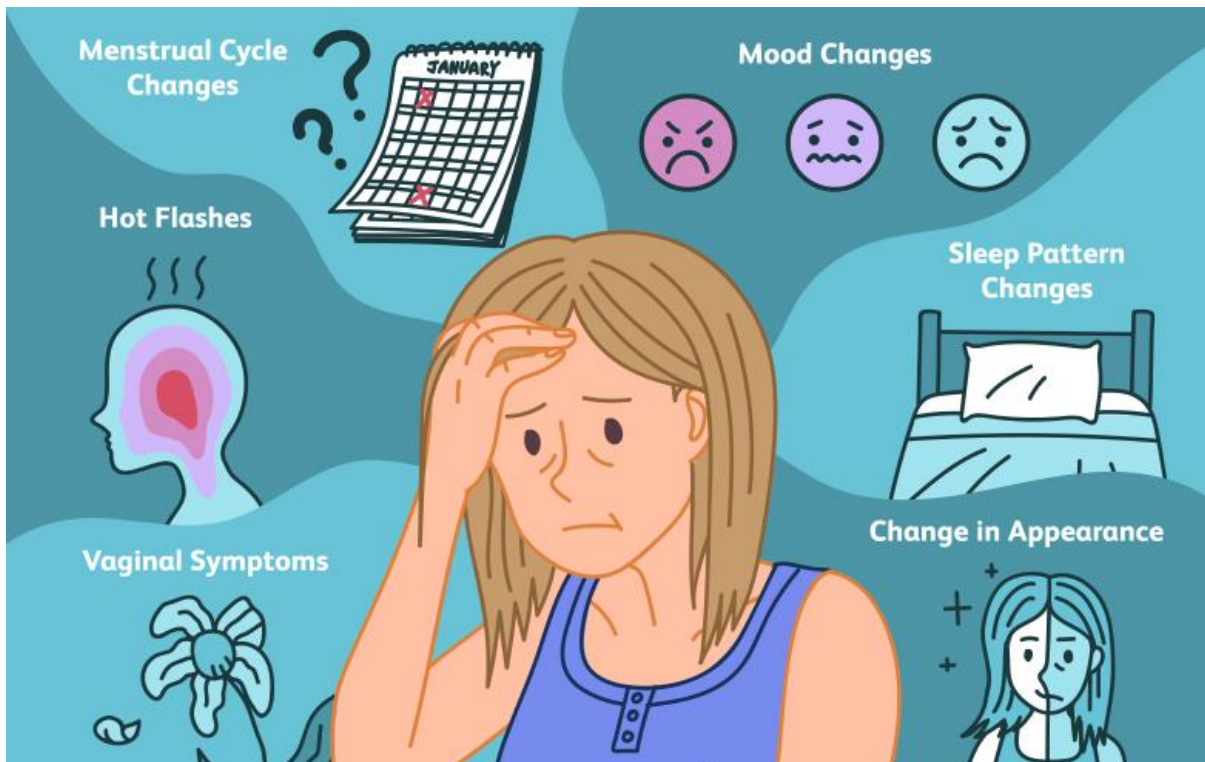
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Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on your daily life, including relationships, social life, family life and work.

It can feel different for everyone. You may have a number of symptoms or none.

Symptoms usually start months or years before your periods stop. This is called the perimenopause.



Changes to your periods

The first sign of the perimenopause is usually, but not always, a change in the normal pattern of your periods, for example they become irregular.

Eventually you'll stop having periods altogether.

Mental health symptoms

Common mental health symptoms of menopause and perimenopause include:

- changes to your mood, like low mood, anxiety, mood swings and low self-esteem
- problems with memory or concentration (brain fog)

Physical symptoms

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Common physical symptoms of menopause and perimenopause include:

- hot flushes, when you have sudden feelings of hot or cold in your face, neck and chest which can make you dizzy
- difficulty sleeping, which may be a result of night sweats and make you feel tired and irritable during the day
- palpitations, when your heartbeats suddenly become more noticeable
- headaches and migraines that are worse than usual
- muscle aches and joint pains
- changed body shape and weight gain
- skin changes including dry and itchy skin
- reduced sex drive
- vaginal dryness and pain, itching or discomfort during sex
- recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- sensitive teeth, painful gums or other mouth problems

How long symptoms last

- Symptoms can last for months or years and can change with time.
- For example, hot flushes and night sweats may improve, and then you may develop low mood and anxiety.
- Some symptoms, such as joint pain and vaginal dryness, can carry on after your periods stop.

Get help for symptoms

Getting advice early can help reduce the impact perimenopause and menopause have on your health, relationships and work.

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Things you can do-Menopause

Lifestyle changes to help menopause and perimenopause

Eating well, exercising and looking after your mental wellbeing can help with symptoms during perimenopause and menopause.

It can also help you keep as well as possible in the future.

Do

- get plenty of rest, including keeping to regular sleep routines
- eat a healthy diet
- have calcium-rich food like milk, yoghurt and kale to keep bones healthy
- exercise regularly, try including weight-bearing activities where your feet and legs support your weight like walking, running or dancing
- do relaxing things like yoga, tai chi or meditation
- talk to other people going through the same thing, like family, friends or colleagues
- talk to a doctor before taking herbal supplements or complementary medicines

Don't

- do not smoke
- do not drink more than the recommended alcohol limit

How to ease mood changes

It's common to have mood swings, low mood and anxiety around the time of the menopause and perimenopause.

You can try to:

- get plenty of rest
- exercise regularly
- do relaxing activities

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Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a type of talking therapy that can help with a low mood and feelings of anxiety. It can also help with sleep problems.

How to ease hot flushes and night sweats

You can:

- wear light clothing
- keep your bedroom cool at night
- take a cool shower, use a fan or have a cold drink
- try to reduce your stress level
- avoid or reduce potential triggers, such as spicy food, caffeine, hot drinks, smoking and alcohol
- exercise regularly

To find more information go to the website or scan the QR code:

Menopause - NHS (www.nhs.uk)



Information is correct as of 14.11.2024