



What to know about menopause



While the thought of no longer having a menstrual period may appeal to many women, going through the menopause transition isn't always easy.

Menopause, or the end of menstruation, usually occurs in women between ages 45 and 55.¹ Understanding its stages, symptoms, and how to get relief can help you navigate this life change with confidence.

The three stages of menopause

The menopause transition covers three phases:

Perimenopause starts 4 to 8 years before menopause, usually in your mid-40s.² During this time, your ovaries make less estrogen and progesterone, which are key reproductive hormones. As hormone levels drop, you might have symptoms like hot flashes, moodiness, and sleep problems.

Menopause is the official point at which you haven't had a period for 12 months. The average age for menopause is 51, but it can happen from ages 46 to 55.³

Post-menopause refers to the years after menopause. While menopausal symptoms often become milder or even go away, it's vital to keep seeing your doctor for preventive healthcare. During this stage of life, your risk for heart disease, stroke, and osteoporosis rises. Routine checkups can find health issues early when they're easier to treat.



Talk to your doctor about menopause

Schedule a visit with your primary care physician (PCP) or OB-GYN. To find a doctor, use the Find Care feature on the **SydneySM Health** app or **anthem.com/ca**.



Symptoms of menopause

Signs of menopause differ for each person, but common symptoms include:

- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Irregular periods
- Loss of bladder control
- Mood swings
- Sleep problems
- Vaginal dryness
- Weight gain

75% of women experience hot flashes⁴

How to cope

While menopause can be disruptive, you have options for managing the symptoms and maintaining your quality of life. It helps to:

- **Talk to your doctor.** Together, you can decide if hormone therapy, antidepressants, or alternative medicine might work for you based on your symptoms, family and medical history, and preferences.
- **Consider lifestyle changes.** Being more active, eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and consuming less refined sugar, processed food, and alcohol can all help control symptoms.
- **Get enough sleep.** Try going to bed at the same time each night and using a fan to help keep the room as cool as possible.
- **Manage stress.** Practicing mindfulness or yoga can help your sleep and keep other symptoms at bay.

Every woman's menopause transition is unique, but knowing the stages and symptoms of menopause helps each of us navigate this milestone with more confidence.

¹ National Institute on Aging: *What Is Menopause?* (September 30, 2021); [nia.nih.gov](https://www.nia.nih.gov).

² North American Menopause Society: *Menopause 101: A primer for the perimenopausal* (accessed June 24, 2024); menopause.org.

³ Endocrine Society: *Menopause Map* (accessed June 24, 2024); endocrine.org.

⁴ National Menopause Foundation: *What do I need to know about menopause?* (accessed June 24, 2024); nationalmenopausefoundation.org.

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