

# Menopause: Don't suffer in silence



**Menopause, often called ‘the change of life,’ is when women stop having periods. It is a normal part of aging for women.**

## Perimenopause

In the lead up to menopause, known as perimenopause, levels of the oestrogen hormone rise and fall unevenly and decrease over time. This often causes symptoms such as:

- irregular periods
- hot flashes
- mood swings
- sleep disturbance
- night sweats
- joint pain
- brain fog
- vaginal dryness and more.

Symptoms usually last 5-10 years but may last longer.

## Menopause

If you haven't had a period for 12 months it is likely you've reached menopause. The term 'menopause' refers to the final menstrual period.

## Postmenopause

Is the time after menopause. As your body adjusts to lower hormone levels, you may notice your symptoms reduce or disappear—but some women still experience menopausal symptoms for years after their final period.

## Age

In Australia, the average age of menopause is 51, but it can occur anywhere from 45 to 55 years of age.

Around one in 10 women will experience menopause before 45 and one in 25 before the age of 40. Some medical and surgical treatments may bring on menopause early.

## Symptoms

Each person's experience of menopause is individual and depends on their situation and culture. While most women will experience menopause symptoms to some degree, not all are bothered by them. However relationships, work performance and quality of life can be affected.

Healthy diet, regular physical activity, good quality sleep, reducing alcohol and not smoking may be enough to support wellbeing and the ability to manage menopause symptoms.

**There are safe and effective treatments available that will help you get through menopause without having to suffer in silence.**

## Up to one in four women experiences severe and debilitating symptoms associated with menopause.

Some women are too embarrassed to talk about symptoms such as incontinence or sexual problems, so their health care providers may be unable to diagnose menopause accurately. Some menopause symptoms are not as well-known as others, so women may not even be aware that their symptoms are related to menopause.

### Support

If menopause symptoms are troubling you, here are some things you can do:

- Make an appointment with your GP, Women's Health Centre or Family Planning NSW for a health assessment
- Complete the [Perimenopause and Menopause symptom](https://bit.ly/menopausechecklist) checklist and take it with you to your health care appointment to make sure your needs are fully understood
- Be prepared to try different treatment options until you find the best ones for you
- Stay informed, but trust only evidence-based information from reliable sources such as the [Perimenopause and Menopause Toolkit](https://bit.ly/meno-toolkit), [Jean Hailes](https://bit.ly/jean-hailes) and the [Australasian Menopause Society](https://bit.ly/amsdoc)

- Share what you know with the people around you. You may be able to help a family member, friend or colleague.

### Managing Menopause

After menopause, women are at higher risk of developing certain conditions such as osteoporosis (brittle bones) and cardiovascular disease. That's why menopause is an important time to consider ways of improving your health as you age.

#### Please note:

NBMLHD recognises gender diversity. The term 'women' refers to anyone experiencing menopause symptoms regardless of gender identity.

### Get in contact

For more information contact our Menopause Referral Service Coordinators

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