

# menopause:unmuted

## Menopause discussion guide



Menopause is the time in a woman's life when she stops producing the hormones needed for reproduction and menstruation. Most women go through menopause in their 40s or 50s. A woman reaches menopause when she has not had a period for 12 months in a row. The average age of menopause for women in the United States is 51 years old.

### Noticed any changes to your body or how you feel? Not sure if these changes are from menopause?

Some women do not have any menopause symptoms or may have only a few. Other women may have symptoms that are severe and impact their daily lives. Let's look over the list below. Are you having any of these symptoms? If yes, how much does each of these symptoms impact your daily life on a scale of 1 to 10?

SYMPTOM CHECKLIST: Below are some common symptoms of menopause. They may also be symptoms of other health conditions	YES	HOW MUCH DOES IT IMPACT YOUR DAILY LIFE? RATE: 1 not at all, 10 very much
<b>Changes in your period</b> your period is heavier or lighter than normal. The time between your periods is longer or shorter than normal		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Changes to your vagina and vulva</b> your vagina may feel dry, itchy, or irritated		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Hot flashes or flushes</b> feeling warm in your face, neck or chest lasting for a few minutes		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Night sweats</b> sweating at night, often while trying to sleep or while asleep		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Problems sleeping</b> difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up too early		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Changes to your mood</b> feeling more anxious, irritable, nervous, or depressed; having less interest in doing things you once enjoyed		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Changes to your memory</b> feeling forgetful, having difficulty concentrating, feeling in a 'fog'		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Pain during sex</b> discomfort or pain when you have sex		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Loss of interest in sex</b> feeling less interested in sex than you once were		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Heart pounding, racing or palpitations</b> a feeling that your heart is beating stronger or faster than normal		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Incontinence</b> Being unable to hold your urine long enough to get to the bathroom		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Leaking urine</b> urinating a little when you cough or laugh		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Urinary urgency</b> a sudden or strong urge to go to the bathroom		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
<b>Taken together, how much do these symptoms impact your daily life?</b>		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

#### Why is this happening?

During menopause, a woman's ovaries produce different amounts of the hormones estrogen and progesterone than they did before. The ovaries also no longer release an egg every month. This means your periods stop happening.

Menopause is a natural process. It does not occur suddenly, but over the course of many years during a phase called perimenopause or the menopause transition. How long this phase lasts will be different for each woman.

While menopause is a normal part of a woman's life, many women may experience uncomfortable signs or symptoms of menopause due to changes in their hormones. If this happens to you, talk to your healthcare provider about your options. There are steps that you can take to feel better.

#### Lifestyle changes you can make to manage your symptoms

Getting exercise, eating well, and having a regular daily routine often helps ease menopause symptoms and can improve your overall health. These options may or may not be right for you, and they are not always easy for many women. Let's start by reviewing your present lifestyle.

##### Exercise

Current guidelines recommend that you do something physically active for about 30 minutes, 5 or more days a week (150 minutes total). This might include a fast walk, jog, biking, or swimming.

In a typical week, how likely are you to be active for 30 minutes a day, 5 or more days a week?	
Rate from 1 to 10; 1 = not at all likely and 10 = very likely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

##### Eating Healthy

In general, it is recommended that women eat mostly vegetables, lean meats, whole grains, and fruit, and avoid food that is high in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt and added sugars. Your own eating plan should be based on your needs and preferences, and help support a healthy weight.

In a typical week, how likely are you to eat a healthy diet?	
Rate from 1 to 10; 1 = not at all likely and 10 = very likely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

##### Your Daily Routine

A healthy daily routine includes having a regular bedtime that allows for 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night. You should avoid caffeine late at night as well as TV and computer screens. You should also set aside a time each day for a low stress activity, such as reading, walking, meditation or yoga.

In a typical week, how likely are you to have a regular daily routine?	
Rate from 1 to 10; 1 = not at all likely and 10 = very likely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

#### What changes do you think you could make to your lifestyle?

Setting small, achievable goals may help you live a healthier life and help your menopause symptoms. For example, take a 30-minute walk with a friend or family member, swap one fast food meal for a healthy dinner, or have a 'screen-free' bedtime.

If you would like to make any small, achievable goals to improve your diet, exercise or daily schedule, you can write them down here:

GOAL #1	
GOAL #2	
GOAL #3	

**Your health is important. Please contact your healthcare provider if you have any problems with your menopause symptoms.**

**Please remember that you are not alone and that help is available!**