



Women's Health & Menopause

Session One

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Table of Contents

- What is Menopause
- Stages of Menopause
- Menopause Symptoms
- After Menopause
- Treating Menopause
- Staying Healthy with Menopause
- Resources
- References



What is Menopause?

- Menopause is the time in a women's life that marks the end of your periods (menstrual cycles) and you can no longer become pregnant.
 - Sometimes called 'the change of life'.
- It is a natural process a women's body goes through.
 - Usually happens in your 40s or 50.
- Menopause is diagnosed after you have gone 12 months without a period (menses) without causes such as illness, medications, or pregnancy.

Stages of Menopause

Menopause does not happen all at once, but occurs in stages:

Premenopause/Perimenopause (or transition to menopause):

- Usually starts in women in their mid-to-late 40s.
- You have symptoms of hormonal changes:
 - Estrogen and progesterone levels fluctuate
 - Mood changes
 - Irregular periods
- You can still get pregnant.
- It can last about 4 years.

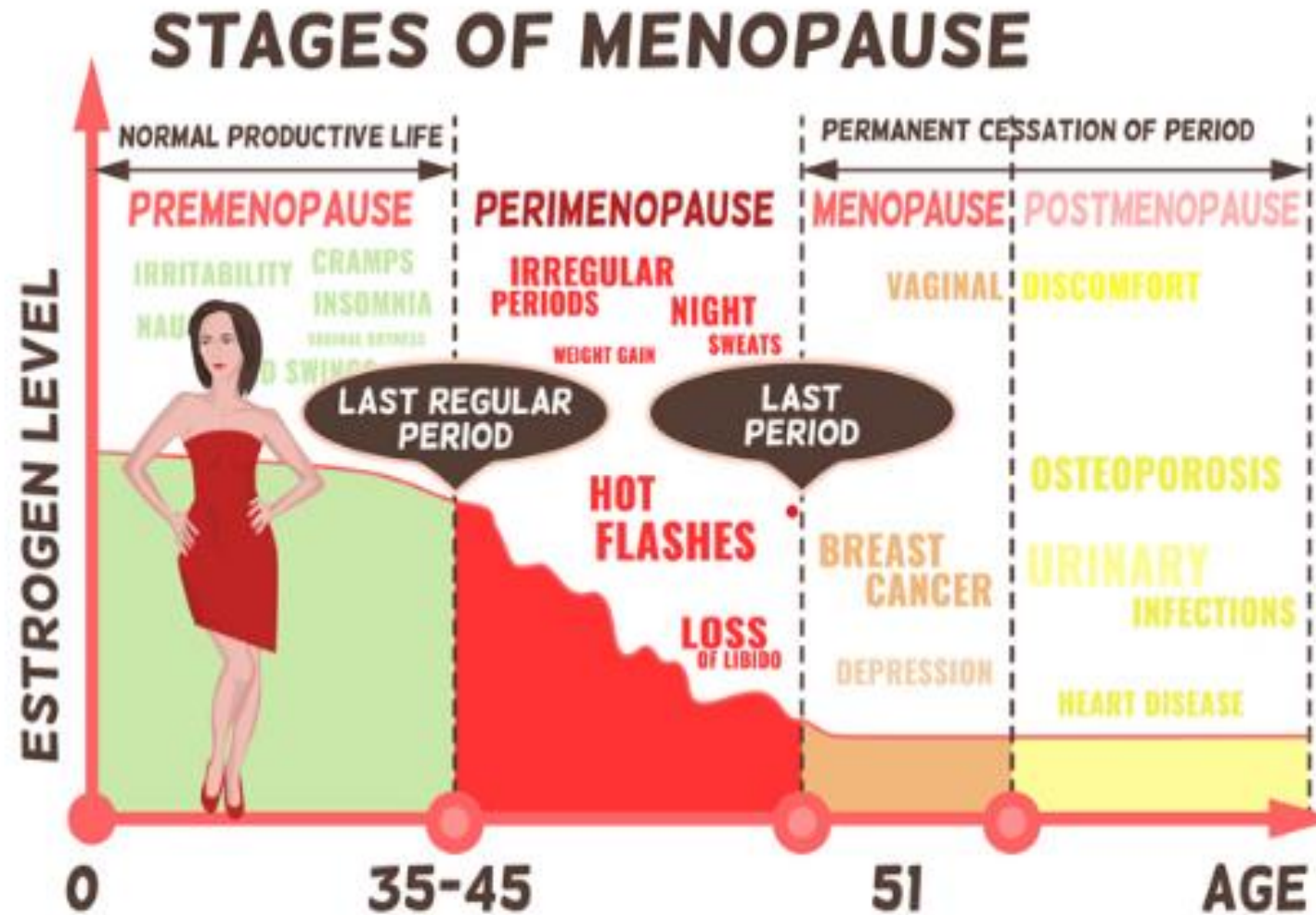
Menopause:

- You have had no periods for 12 straight months.
- Your ovaries stop producing eggs.
- Usually happens on its own but can occur earlier if:
 - You had surgery to remove the ovaries.
 - You had chemotherapy to the ovaries.

Post Menopause

- You are over 1 year since last period.
- You will remain in this stage for the rest of your life.

Stages of Menopause



(Netmeds.com)

Menopause Symptoms

Symptoms of menopause may begin suddenly and can be mild at first, occurring only once in a while, including:

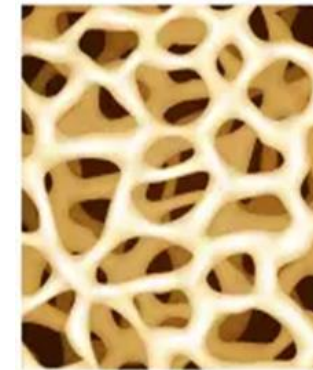
- Your periods (menses) may not come as regular as before.
- Your periods may last longer or be shorter.
- Your periods (menses) may stop for a few months and then start again.
- Your periods (menses) might be heavier or lighter than before.
- You might have hot flashes, hot flushes, night sweats, and problems sleeping.
- You may become forgetful or have trouble focusing
- You may begin experiencing depression or anxiety
- You might experience mood swings or be irritable.



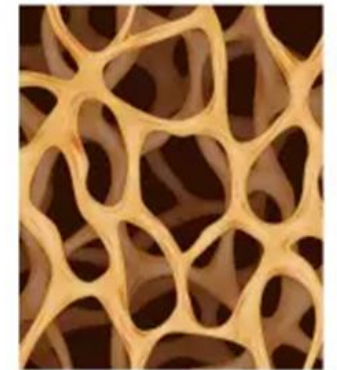
Menopause Symptoms

Symptoms of menopause, continued:

- You may have urinary problems including:
 - Leaking urine when you sneeze
 - Unable to hold your urine long enough to get to the bathroom
- You might experience vaginal dryness. Sex may be uncomfortable or painful.
- You may have less interest in sex. It may take longer for you to get aroused.
- **Other possible changes may not be as noticeable:**
- You may begin to lose bone density due to your body producing less estrogen which can lead to osteoporosis:
 - Osteoporosis causes bones to become weak and easily break.
 - The risk of osteoporosis and fractures increases as you age.
 - If you are at risk, your doctor may order a screening test known as a DEXA (DXA) scan to measure how dense your bone is and to assess your risk of bone loss and fracture.
- Changing estrogen levels can cause:
 - A rise in your cholesterol levels
 - Can put you at an increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.



Normal Bone



Bone with Osteoporosis

After Menopause

Post-menopause:

- It is the time after you have not had a period (menses) for 12 months.
- Your body is no longer releasing eggs (ovulating)
- Your ovaries are making VERY little of the estrogen and progesterone hormones
- Many of the menopausal symptoms you may have experienced in the past become milder or may go away completely.
 - Lingering symptoms may include
 - You having hot flashes
 - You have vaginal dryness and sexual discomfort
 - You may experience depression
 - You have changes in your sex drive
 - You may have trouble sleeping (Insomnia)
 - Your skin becomes dry
 - You may have weight changes
 - You may have hair loss
 - You may have urinary incontinence
- *You remain in this stage the rest of your life*



After Menopause

Post-menopause Continued:

- Postmenopausal bleeding is not a normal side effect of decreased hormone levels but can indicate other conditions:
 - Endometrial hyperplasia, which is a thickening of the lining of your uterus causing heavy or abnormal bleeding
 - Uterine fibroids are common, noncancerous tumor(s) which can cause you to have:
 - Heavy bleeding
 - Back pain
 - Frequent urination
 - Pain during sex
 - Endometritis an inflammation of the lining of the uterus (endometrium)
 - Ovarian Cancer

After Menopause

In post-menopause you have an increased risk of:

- Osteoporosis a condition where your bones weaken causing them to break (fracture) more easily.
 - The risk of osteoporosis and fractures increases as you age.
 - If you are at risk, your doctor may order a screening test known as DEXA (DXA) scan to measure how dense your bone is and to determine your risk of bone loss and fracture.
- Heart disease and strokes increase at and around menopause.

Treating Menopause

Talk to your doctor about managing symptoms of Menopause.

- Some medications your doctor may suggest to help relieve your symptoms:
 - Low dose hormonal birth control
 - May help stop or reduce hot flashes, vaginal dryness, and mood swings.
- Menopausal hormone therapy
 - Treat menopause symptoms after menopause.
- Non-hormonal *and* Hormonal medicines are available to treat menopausal symptoms.
 - Your doctor can discuss with you what medications may be right to treat your symptoms.
- Over the counter (OTC) products to help treat vaginal discomforts.
- Prescription medicines are available when OTC products don't work.
- Menopausal hormone therapy pill/patch can also help relieve severe vaginal dryness.



Staying Healthy with Menopause

Staying healthy during and after menopause:

- Continue seeing your doctor any medical concerns you may have.
- Continue to see your doctor for preventive health care including:
 - Health screening tests such as:
 - Colonoscopy
 - Mammograms
 - Cholesterol and Triglyceride screenings
 - Breast and pelvic exams
 - Thyroid testing (if suggested by your doctor)



Steps you can take to stay healthy in the menopause years:

- Quit smoking.
- Be active- getting 30 minutes of physical activity a day.
- Eat well.
- Talk to your doctor about dietary supplements and which ones would be right for you.
- Practice safe sex- after menopause, you can't get pregnant, but you still can get a sexually transmitted infection/disease (STI or STD).

Pa Health Wellness Resources

To learn more about PHW's Disease Management programs visit:

Visit pa health & wellness website: <https://www.pahealthwellness.com/>

Call Participant Services: 1-844-626-6813 (TTY:711)

Email: phwcasemanagement@pahealthwellness.com

Women's Health Resources

For more information on menopause:

Office on Women's Health

- *Department of Health and Human Services*
- *800-994-9662*
- *Weblink: <https://www.womenshealth.gov/>*

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

- *800-673-8444*
- *resources@acog.org*
- *Weblink: <https://www.acog.org/>*

North American Menopause Society

- *440-442-7550*
- *info@menopause.org*
- *Weblink: <https://www.menopause.org/>*

For more information on Aging or Health for Seniors visit:

National Institute on Aging

- Weblink: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/>

Administration on Aging

- Weblink: <https://acl.gov/>

National Council on Aging

- Weblink: <https://www.ncoa.org/>

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