

MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

What to look out for

When hormone levels begin to decline in the lead-up to menopause, every system that has hormone receptors registers the change, including your brain. Ongoing fluctuation in hormone levels during this time can cause a range of symptoms, which may vary greatly between women and even change over time.

Symptoms can range from mild to severe, and while some women may not experience many symptoms, others may experience a variety of issues that can significantly impact their quality of life. Even minor symptoms can have a major effect, especially if they persist over time. The long-term effects of menopause include an increased risk of osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease. If you are experiencing symptoms, it is important to discuss them with your GP or gynaecologist to explore appropriate management strategies.

COMMON SYMPTOMS DURING PERIMENOPAUSE AND MENOPAUSE

Primary symptoms:

- Hot flushes
- Night Sweats
- Irregular periods
- Muscle and joint aches and pains
- Heart palpitations
- Sleep disturbances
- Dry or itchy skin
- Dry eyes and mouth
- Weight gain
- Thinning hair
- Bloating
- Low libido
- Vaginal dryness and soreness
- Frequent and sudden urges to urinate
- Headaches or migraines
- Mood changes
- Anxiety
- Feeling unhappy or depressed
- Feeling teary
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling tense or irritable
- Brain fog (temporary memory lapses)
- Loss of confidence
- Lethargy and tiredness/fatigue

VASOMOTOR SYMPTOMS (VMS)

Vasomotor symptoms, such as hot flushes and night sweats, affect about 80% of women. These symptoms can begin during perimenopause and may continue into menopause and beyond.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- **Cognitive changes:** Many women report cognitive symptoms, including memory difficulties and challenges with focus and decision-making, often termed "menopause-related cognitive dysfunctions."
- **Gastrointestinal symptoms:** Some women experience gastrointestinal issues, such as bloating, changes in bowel habits, and indigestion, which may be linked to hormonal changes during menopause.
- **Sexual health:** Menopause can lead to various sexual health issues, including discomfort during intercourse, decreased sexual satisfaction, and changes in both desire and arousal.
- **Skin and hair changes:** Beyond dry or itchy skin, menopause can cause increased skin sensitivity, thinning, and bruising. Hair thinning and hair loss are also common due to hormonal fluctuations.
- **Psychological and emotional symptoms:** The emotional impact of menopause can be broad, including irritability, sudden mood swings, panic attacks, and a sense of loss related to the end of reproductive years.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONALISED CARE

Symptoms can be intermittent and may vary greatly between individuals, with some symptoms clustering together. This variability highlights the importance of seeking personalised medical advice to tailor treatment to your specific needs.

MANAGING SYMPTOMS WITH LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Certain lifestyle factors, such as diet, exercise, and stress management, can influence the severity and duration of menopause symptoms. Incorporating healthy lifestyle choices into your daily routine can be helpful to manage symptoms effectively.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Symptom Checklist](#)
- [What is menopause](#)
- [Perimenopause](#)
- [Hormones what happens to them](#)
- [Primary Ovarian Insufficiency](#)
- [Brain Fog](#)
- [Sleep hygiene](#)
- [When to see a doctor and questions to ask?](#)