

WHAT IS MENOPAUSE ANYWAY?

The Menopause Transition

The Menopause Transition marks the end of a woman's fertility (when she no longer has a monthly menstruation cycle). This transition is divided into three phases: perimenopause, menopause, and post-menopause.

How a woman experiences menopause is unique to her. It's possible she may experience menopause, similar to how her mother experienced menopause. There are also possible similarities between a woman's menstrual cycle symptoms and her menopause symptoms. Some women will experience the telltale hot flush (85%), and others will not. Some women will experience debilitating menopause symptoms; others will not. Menopause is NOT a one-size-fits-all experience.

Perimenopause can start around mid 40s and last from 5 to 7 years. During perimenopause, the hormones estrogen and progesterone start to fluctuate and eventually decline. A woman will start to experience disruptions in her monthly menstrual cycle and possibly additional symptoms.

Many people don't know that Menopause is one day. It occurs after 365 days have passed without a menstrual cycle. The standard age for menopause is around 50 or 51. Everything after menopause until the end of life is considered post-menopause.

The symptoms are brought on by the fluctuation and eventual drop in estrogen and progesterone. These two hormones are significantly important throughout a woman's life. Many of their benefits are still unknown. However, before menopause, they protect women from many cancers and chronic illnesses. They help to maintain muscle mass and bone density and strengthen cardiovascular health.

The transition is marked with a plethora of symptoms, most notably the hot flush. Other symptoms can include but are not limited to:

- Menstrual Cycle Disruptions
- Mood Swings
- Depression
- Brain fog
- Fatigue and Lack of Energy
- Trouble Sleeping
- Weight Gain
- Hot Flushes
- Pelvic Health Concerns
- Digestive Issues
- Sexual Health Concerns
- Skin Dryness, Breakouts
- Thinning hair

- Joint & Muscle pain
- Loss of Bone Density leading to potential osteoporosis
- Loss of Muscle Mass
- Incontinence
- Oral issues include Xerostomia (dry mouth), Periodontal Disease, and Dysgeusia (altered taste).
- Impaired Vision

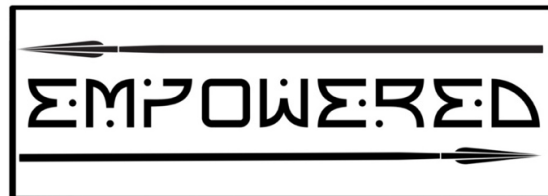
The fluctuation of these hormones affects nearly every system in a woman's body, including, but not limited to, the reproductive system, endocrine system, central nervous system, immune system, digestive system, cardiovascular system, skeletal and muscular system, respiratory system, and excretory system.

For more detailed information and a clinical viewpoint, I suggest these books:

- *The Menopause Manifesto* by Dr. Jen Gunter
- *The Vagina Bible* by Dr. Jen Gunter
- *Blood* by Dr. Jen Gunter
- *It's Not Hysteria* by Karen Tang, MD, MPH
- *The Menopause Brain* by Lisa Mosconi, PhD
- *The Definitive Guide to Perimenopause & Menopause* by Dr. Louise Newson
- *The New Menopause* by Mary Claire Haver, MD

The first three books listed by Dr. Jen Gunter, I'd recommend for EVERYONE, all women (15 and up) and MEN! Each book is like an in-depth owner's manual on its subject matter. Young girls should be educated on their bodies; these books do just that. Since women bear the weight of producing children, many complex systems are in place to perpetuate the species, and it's not always a cakewalk. It would be beneficial for men to be knowledgeable on a basic level about women's health. Consider this information a tool in your toolbox. It's important to be educated and show compassion towards the other half of the population.

Consult your physician if you have questions or concerns or would like medical guidance.



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